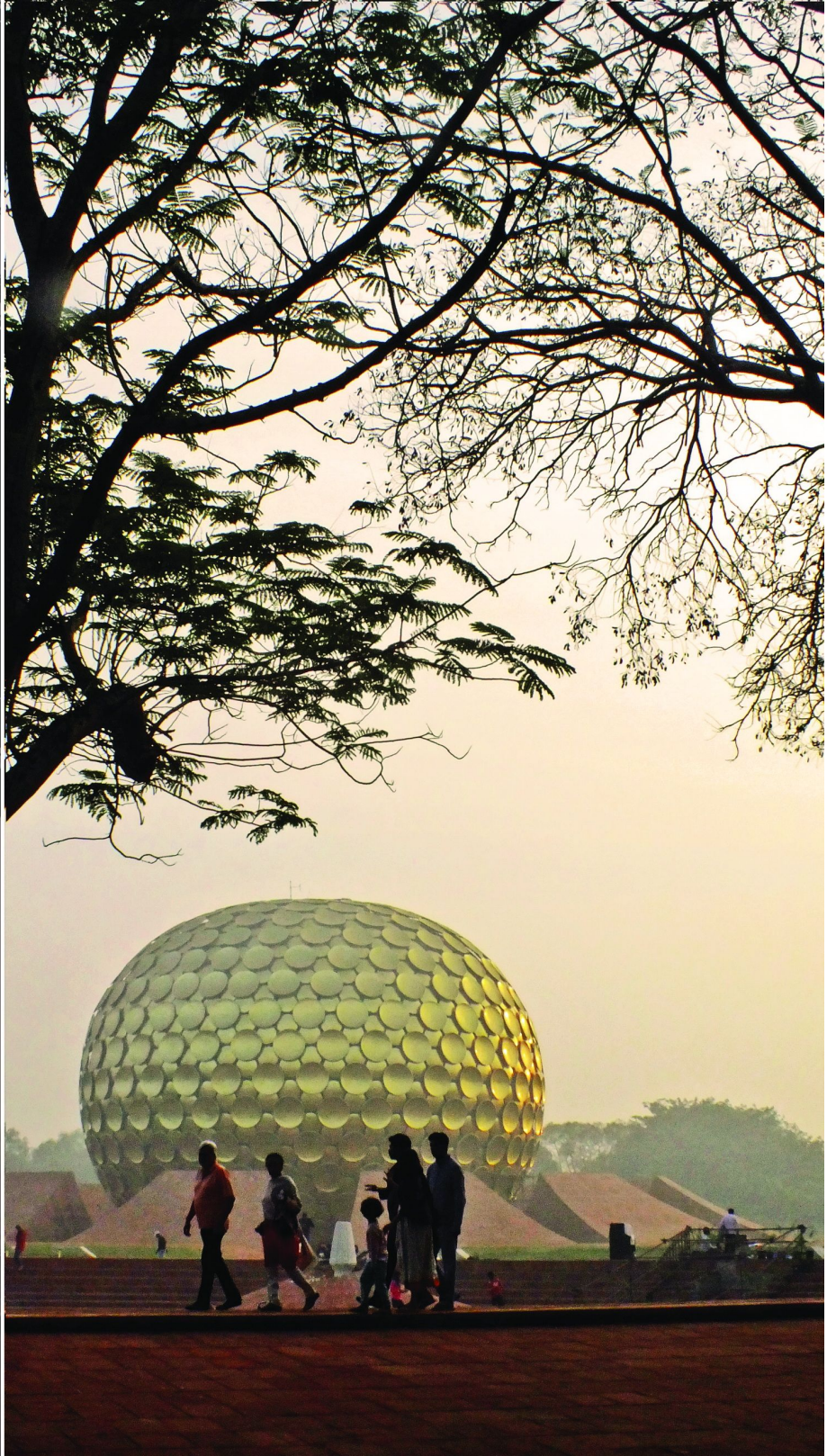


THE  
PROCESS  
OF  
THE  
INTEGRAL  
YOGA





# THE PROCESS OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA

*A compilation of Mother's writings  
and an essay about Sri Aurobindo  
on the Triple Transformation  
of the Integral Yoga*



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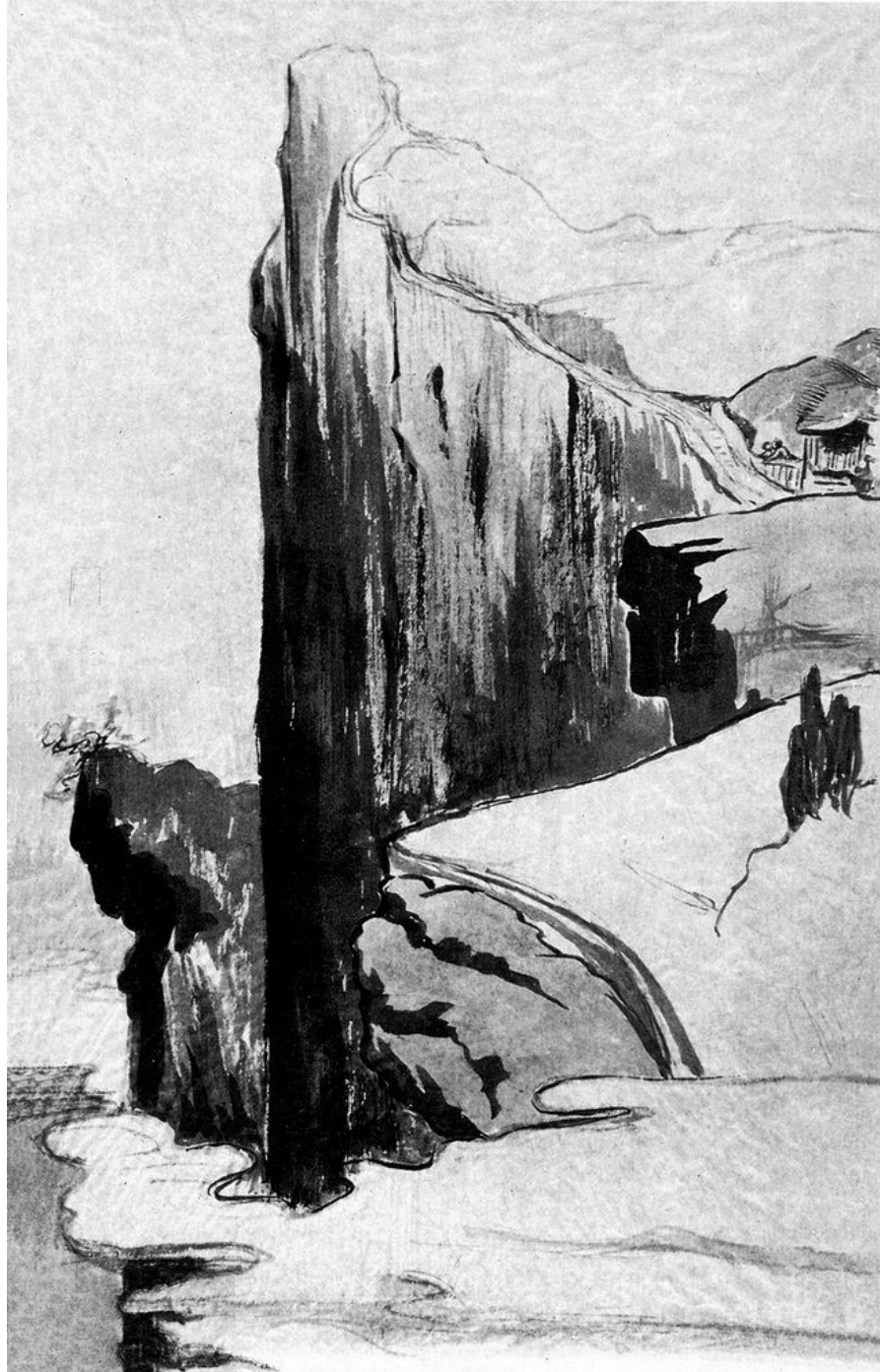
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1966

*Let us serve the Truth*







*ascent to the Truth*

## P R E F A C E

In *The Process of the Integral Yoga* I have gathered texts by the Mother, divided in chapters focusing on major tenets of this system of yoga. I have sacrificed some chapters of a philosophical and metaphysical nature to concentrate on the day-to-day sadhana, when the psychic comes forward and leads the evolutionary journey. The purpose of this compilation is to present a comprehensive, all-embracing view of a journey that brings about three major transformations: the psychic, the spiritual and, lastly, the supramental transformation, the crown of the entire process.

I conclude this wide selection with excerpts from conversations taken from *Notes on the Way* (volume 11 of Mother's Collected Works) where she minutely describes her work on the mind of Matter and the cellular mind. Announcing the consciousness of the superman and the supramental manifestation, heralding the birth of the new world, the Mother calls for the Great Adventure. The texts I reproduce are part of the conversations submitted by Satprem that she approved for publication in the Ashram's *Bulletin of Physical Education*, in French, English and Hindi. All Mother's texts are taken from the Collected Works, Edition 2003.

I am adding as an Appendix *Integral Yoga and the Triple Transformation*, a compendium I wrote to highlight the transition from spiritualization to supramentalisation as expounded by Sri Aurobindo.

The layout of this book commenced twelve years ago. In the meantime I brought out other books instead, but this unfinished work kept haunting me. Last February, attuned to the inner significance of Auroville's Golden Jubilee, I published *The Little Child and the Holy Knight – a Vedantin Tale*, highlighting Vedanta together with Integral Yoga in the spiritual pursuit. As a visual corollary to the 50th Anniversary celebrations, I displayed two photographic exhibitions; one to convey the idealism of the pioneers with images of their stern yet joyful life – and the other, work at the Matrimandir from the early days up to today's cleaning of the discs. Having bathed for months in this atmosphere,

suddenly I felt compelled to bring to completion my lifelong research on the Integral Supramental Yoga. As a tribute to the Mother, the founder of Auroville, but also as a prayer that we may never forget our real destination, I set to work, night and day moving, removing, adding texts, and in two weeks the layout of the book took its final form. But then the search started all over, from Self realisation and the descent of the Higher Consciousness to the Gnosis in the words of the Master.

I have published three books on Auroville during the Mother's years, another seven compilations of selected aspects of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's teachings, and an eighth book paying homage to Advaita Vedanta and the Integral Supramental Yoga. But the more I read our Gurus, the more I feel starting anew every day, from a tabula rasa where all mental preconceptions are blown away and only the essence remains, the unending quest. Gathering inspiration from my previous works, *The Process of the Integral Yoga* comes after forty-five years of following Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's teachings; the first twelve years at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, in the radiant atmosphere of some early sadhaks, models and inspirers to whom I am indebted for life – and afterwards in Auroville for the past thirty-three years, sharing an ongoing experience where the dedication and bravery of the pioneers mark the beginning of the great adventure.

This book is a kind of return to the centre, but also a synthesis of all that I have received, both at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and in Auroville. I hope this latest work may be of some help to fellow-seekers on a journey so complex, and yet so simple, if we just abandon ourselves to Mother's force and guidance, our only certainty.

At Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's lotus feet

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Auroville, August 15th, 2018



## INTRODUCTION

The path of Integral Yoga revolves essentially around three major transformations. In the first, the psychic centre takes the lead and by a process the Mother calls individualization reunifies all layers of being – mental, vital, physical, encompassing as well the subliminal (our subtle, occult being) and the subconscious, down to the inconscient. To this first transformation, psychicisation, ideally follows the second, spiritualization, although at times the two intersect. Both transformations are pre-conditions to commence the third and last one, supramentalisation.

Abolition of the ego and identification with the Divine – Self realisation – are the summit of the yogic paths and, broadly speaking, the spiritual realisation of the Integral Yoga. Along with transformation of the mind, these milestones are the outcome of the spiritual transformation, implying by this the ascent to, and descent from, the planes Sri Aurobindo calls Divine Mind up to the Mind of Light, at the edge of the Supermind. The spiritual transformation is initiated by the descent of the Higher Consciousness (the Mother's) into the lower nature; this momentous turning point opens the vistas to the supramental transformation.

Sri Aurobindo heralds the divinisation of the ordinary mind as the next stage of evolution; when the Mind of Light is reached an intermediary race of divine beings manifests, forerunning the Gnostic, supramental race that is the ultimate stage of the Integral Yoga. The whole of humanity will not follow at once, but there will be a progressive influence of the higher planes of Mind, the Mind of Light, and finally the Supermind. Gnosis or true Supermind is Knowledge by Identity, the chief attribute of the Supermind. One with the Supermind, intrinsic, Knowledge too is concealed in the deepest Inconscient out of which the human race evolves. The transition from *homo sapiens* to superman and, lastly, to Gnostic Being, triggering a transmutation so complete as to involve the very body and its organs, is the kernel of evolution as charted by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.



## PROLEGOMENON

We are living in an exceptional time at an exceptional turning point of the world's history. Never before, perhaps, did mankind pass through such a dark period of hatred, bloodshed and confusion. And, at the same time, never had such a strong, such an ardent hope awakened in the hearts of the people. Indeed, if we listen to our heart's voice, we immediately perceive that we are, more or less consciously, waiting for a new reign of justice, of beauty, of harmonious good-will and fraternity. And this seems in complete contradiction with the actual state of the world. But we all know that never is the night so dark as before the dawn. May not this darkness, then, be the sign of an approaching dawn? And as never was night so complete, so terrifying, maybe never will dawn have been so bright, so pure, so illuminating as the coming one.... After the bad dreams of the night the world will awaken to a new consciousness.

The civilisation which is ending now in such a dramatic way was based on the power of mind, mind dealing with matter and life. What it has been to the world, we have not to discuss here. But a new reign is coming, that of the Spirit: after the human, the divine.

Yet, if we have been fortunate enough to live on earth at such a stupendous, a unique time as this one, is it sufficient to stand and watch the unfolding events? All those who feel that their heart extends further than the limits of their own person and family, that their thought embraces more than small personal interests and local conventions, all those, in short, who realise that they belong not to themselves, or to their family, or even to their country, but to God who manifests Himself in all countries, through mankind, these, indeed, know that they must rise and set to work for the sake of humanity, for the advent of the Dawn.

THE MOTHER

*To the women of Japan, 2, p.158-9*





## THE TRUTH OR LAW OF ONE'S BEING

### THAT: One Divine, One Reality

Suppose that there are in the universe two opposing and contradictory forces, as some religions have preached: there was good and evil, and there always will be good and evil, there will be a conflict, a battle, a struggle. The one that is stronger, whether it be the good or the evil, will win; if there is more of the good, the good will win and if there is more of the evil, the evil will win; but the two will always exist. If it were like that, it would be hopeless; one wouldn't have to say then that it is either difficult or easy, it would be impossible. One would not be able to get out of it. But actually that is not so.

Actually there is but one Origin and this origin is the perfection of Truth, for that is the only thing which truly exists; and by exteriorising, projecting, scattering itself, it brings forth what we see, and a crowd of tiny brains, very gentle, very brilliant, in search of something they have not yet seized but which they can seize, because what they are in search of is within them. That is a certainty. It may take more or less time, but it is sure to come. The remedy is at the very core of the evil. *Voilà.*

It has been called by various names, each one has presented it in his own way. According to the angle of seeing, one's experience differs. All those who have found the Divine within themselves have found Him in a certain way, following a certain experience and from a certain angle, and this angle was self-evident to them. But then, if they are not well on their guard, they begin to say: "To find the Divine, one must do this and do that. And it is like that and it is that path one should follow", because for them that was the path of success. When one goes a little further, has a little more experience, one becomes aware that it is not necessarily like that, it can be done through millions of ways.... There is only one thing that is certain, it is that what is found is always the same. And that's remarkable, that whatever the path followed, whatever the form given to it, the result is always the same. Their experience and everyone's is the same. When they have touched the Thing, it is for all the same thing. And this is just the proof that they have touched That, because it is the same thing for all. If it is not the same thing, it means that they have not yet touched That. When they have touched That, it

is the same thing. And to That, you may give all the names you like, it makes no difference.

*27 May 1953, 5, 72-3*

The goal you set before you will assume, in the mind's formulation of it, different names according to the environment in which you have been brought up, the path you have followed and the affinities of your temperament. Those who have a religious tendency will call it God and their spiritual effort will be towards identification with the transcendent God beyond all forms, as opposed to the immanent God dwelling in each form. Others will call it the Absolute, the Supreme Origin, others Nirvana; yet others, who view the world as an unreal illusion, will name it the Only Reality and to those who regard all manifestation as falsehood it will be the Sole Truth. And every one of these expressions contains an element of truth, but all are incomplete, expressing only one aspect of that which is. Here too, however, the mental formulation has no great importance and once you have passed through the intermediate stages, the experience is identical. In any case, the most effective starting-point, the swiftest method is total self-giving. Besides, no joy is more perfect than the joy of a total self-giving to whatever is the summit of your conception: for some it is the notion of God, for others that of Perfection. If this self-giving is made with persistence and ardour, a moment comes when you pass beyond the concept and arrive at an experience that escapes all description, but which is almost always identical in its effects. And as your self-giving becomes more and more perfect and integral, it will be accompanied by the aspiration for identification, a total fusion with That to which you have given yourself, and little by little this aspiration will overcome all differences and all resistances, especially if with the aspiration there is an intense and spontaneous love, for then nothing can stand in the way of its victorious drive.

*Bulletin, February 1952, 12, 36*

It all depends on what meaning you put into the word "God". It is a word (I have told you this at least four or five times) to express "something" you do not know but are trying to attain. Well, if you have received a religious education, you are accustomed to call this "God". If you have received a more positivist and also a more philosophical education, you are accustomed to call this by all sorts of names, and you may at the

same time have the idea that it is the supreme truth. If one wants to speak of God and describe him, one is obliged to make use of things which are the most inaccessible to our consciousness, and to call God what is beyond anything we know and can grasp and be—all that is too far for us to be able to understand, we call God. Only some religions (there are some) give a precise form to the godhead; and sometimes they give several forms and they have several gods; sometimes they give one form and have only one God; but all this is human fabrication. There is “something”, there is a reality which is beyond all our expressions, but which we can succeed in contacting by practising a discipline. We can identify ourselves with it. Once one is identified with it one knows what it is, but one cannot express it, for words cannot say it. So, if you use one kind of vocabulary, if you have a particular mental conviction, you will use the vocabulary corresponding to that conviction. If you belong to another group which has another way of speaking, you will call it or even think about it in that way. I am telling you this to give you the true impression, that there is something there which cannot be grasped—grasped by thought—but which exists. But the name you give it matters little, that’s of no importance, it *exists*. And so the only thing to do is to enter into contact with it—not to give it a name or describe it. In fact, there is hardly any use giving it a name or describing it. One must try to enter into contact, to concentrate upon it, live it, live that reality, and whatever the name you give it is not at all important once you have the experience. The experience alone matters. And when people associate the experience with a particular expression—and in so narrow a way, so closed up in itself that apart from this formula one can find nothing—that is an inferiority. One must be able to *live* that reality through all possible paths, all occasions, all formations; one must live it, for that indeed is true, for that is supremely good, that is all-powerful, that knows everything, that... Yes, one can live that, but one cannot speak about it. And if one does speak, all that one says about it has no great importance. It is only one way of speaking, that is all. There is an entire line of philosophers and people who have replaced the notion of God by the notion of an impersonal Absolute or by a notion of Truth or a notion of justice or even by a notion of progress—of something eternally progressive; but for one who has within him the capacity of identifying himself with that, what has been said about it hasn’t much importance. Sometimes one may read a whole book of philosophy and not progress a step farther. Sometimes one may be

quite a fervent devotee of a religion and not progress. There are people who have spent entire lifetimes seated in contemplation and attained nothing. There are people (we have well-known examples) who used to do the most modest of manual works, like a cobbler mending old shoes, and who had an experience. It is altogether beyond what one thinks and says of it. It is a gift, that's all. And all that is needed is to be that—to succeed in identifying oneself with it and live it. At times you read one sentence in a book and that leads you there. Sometimes you read entire books of philosophy or religion and they get you nowhere. There are people, however, whom the reading of philosophy books helps to go ahead. But all these things are secondary. There is only one thing that's important: that is a sincere and persistent will, for these things don't happen in a twinkling. So one must persevere. When someone feels that he is not advancing, he must not get discouraged; he must try to find out what it is in the nature that is opposing, and then make the necessary progress. And suddenly one goes forward. And when you reach the end you have an experience. And what is remarkable is that people who have followed altogether different paths, with altogether different mental constructions, from the greatest believer to the most unbelieving, even materialists, have arrived at that experience, it is the same for everyone. Because it is true—because it is real, because it is the sole reality. And it is quite simply *that*. I do not say anything more. This is of no importance, the way one speaks about it, what is important is to follow the path, *your* path, no matter which—yes, to go there.

17 February 1954, 6, 25-7

There is only one reality and all that is is only a multiple expression of a single reality. Therefore, all the divine manifestations, all the forms it has taken in the course of time, all the names which men have given it, are only manifestations, forms and names of one sole, unique Godhead.

As human beings are very limited, it is usually easier for them to follow one path rather than another. But that is just a tiny little beginning; and if one wants to attain the heights, one must be able to find the Divine equally through all the paths, and understand that it is the sole and same Divine, whatever the different appearances may be.

This is what Sri Aurobindo tells you: that you cannot stop, you cannot be satisfied until you have felt *absolutely concretely* that there is only one *single* Divine, there is only one *single* Reality, and that, from whatever angle It is seen or whatever path is taken to attain It, it will

always be one sole and same thing which you will meet. So one who is developed enough, vast enough to be able to follow what we call the Integral Yoga, must have the capacity to approach the Divine by all possible paths. If he doesn't want to follow them himself because it takes time though there is a certain degree of development which enables one in a few days or a few hours to follow a path which would otherwise take a whole lifetime still, if one has no taste for this kind of gymnastics, at least one should have an understanding open enough to be aware that all this is fundamentally one sole and identical thing. And whether you give it this name or that or no name at all, you understand, or several names, you are always speaking of the same thing which is the single Divine who is all things.

Don't you catch it?

It is only the mind and the limited human consciousness which make distinctions. And through these differences you get into a confusion. You distinguish only by differences, and differences mean just the illusory outer consciousness. As soon as you really enter within, you immediately have the sense of a total identity and all these divergences seem absolutely ridiculous to you.

23 November 1955, 7, 375

## **Beyond all forms**

*When one is conscious does one perceive the Divine in His form in everything?*

Oh! that is, you expect to see a divine form in everything! I do not know, that may happen. But I have the feeling that a great deal of imagination enters into it, for it is not like that. You change consciousness, you change the state of consciousness and change the states of perception.

If I understand well what you mean, you expect to see a form, like the form of Krishna for example, or the form of Christ, of Buddha, in every person? That seems to me childishness. But still I do not say that it cannot happen; I think it may happen. But there is in it much human consciousness added to the perception, for that would no longer be exactly what I have just told you: for those who have the consciousness of the Divine, when they are in contact with the Divine, whoever they may be, whatever age, whatever country they may belong to, the experience is the same. Whereas if it were as you say,

then Indians would see one of their divinities, Europeans one of theirs, the Japanese one of their own, and so on. Then it would no longer be a pure perception, there would already be an addition of their own mental formation. It is no longer the Thing in its essence and purity, which is beyond all form.

But one may have a perception, and a very concrete perception of the Divine Presence, yes. One may have a very personal contact with the Divine, yes. But not in this way. And it is inexpressible, except for those who have had the experience. If you do not have an experience, I could speak to you for hours about it, you would understand nothing; it escapes all explanation. It is only when one has the experience that one can understand. And what do you expect? When you speak or write about things, there is necessarily a mental addition, otherwise you would not be able to speak, you would not be able to write. Well, it is this mental addition that has made people try to give an explanation of their experience, and then they have said or written things like this: “I see images of God.” These are ways of speaking. It is possible that the thing you are speaking about may happen: to be suddenly in a particular state and see a Divine Presence and this Presence taking a form that’s familiar to you—one is accustomed to associate certain forms with the Divine, due to one’s education, tradition, and that takes an external form. But it is not the supreme essence of the experience, it is the form, and this gives a sort of limitation to the experience, it must take away from it its universality and a great deal of its power.

27 May 1953, 5, 78-9

*When one is identified with the Divine, does one see Him in the form one thinks He has?*

Usually. It is very rare—unless one is able to get rid of one’s mental formation completely—it is very rare to see Him quite objectively. Besides, Sri Aurobindo always used to say that the relation with the Divine depended on what one wanted it to be. Everyone aspires for a particular form of relation, and for him the relation takes that form.

*Then, what is it in truth?*

Probably something that escapes form totally—or that can take all forms. There is no limitation to the expression of the Divine. He can express Himself without form and He can express Himself in all forms. And He expresses Himself in everyone according to each one’s need. For even if somebody succeeds in becoming sufficiently impersonal so

as to identify himself completely with the Divine, at that moment he will not be able to express it. And as soon as he is in a condition to express it, there will be something of the limited personality intervening and through this the experience has to pass. The moment of the experience is one thing and the expression of this experience is another. It may be simultaneous: there are people who while having the experience express what they feel in some form or other. Then it is simultaneous. But that does not prevent that which has the experience in its purity and that which expresses it from being two fairly different modes of being. And this difference is enough for one to be able to say in truth that it is impossible to know the Divine unless one becomes the Divine.

As for expressing Him, there is always a shifting; it always causes something like this (*gesture of changing levels*), whatever the mode of expression.

There remains only one field in which the experience has not been totally achieved, that is the purely material field. And there, it may be asked if truly, when the divine Consciousness descends into the body, the transformations will not be sufficient for there to be a possibility of integral expression.... But that is yet to come; it has not yet been done. And so long as it is not done, one cannot know. For even in the highest mental expression there is something which intervenes, due to the physical body. For the inspiration to come right down to the paper, for instance, well, despite everything, it must pass through very material vibrations which may change it. But if these very vibrations are transformed, then in that case it is possible that the outer expression is absolutely identical with the inner; that is, the corporeal manifestation truly becomes a manifestation of the divine essence.

*21 October 1953, 5, 322-3*

All those who are tired or disgusted with the God taught by the Chaldean religions, and especially by the Christian religion—a single God, jealous, severe, despotic and so much in the image of man that one wonders if it is not a demiurge as Anatole France said—these people when they want to lead a spiritual life no longer want the personal God, because they are too frightened lest the personal God resemble the one they have been taught about; they want an impersonal Godhead, something that doesn't *at all* resemble—or as little as possible—the human being; that's what they want.

But Sri Aurobindo says—something he has always said—that there

are the godheads of the Overmind who indeed are very similar—we have said this several times—very similar to human beings, infinitely greater and more powerful but with resemblances which are a little too striking. Beyond these there is the impersonal Godhead, the impersonal Divine; but beyond the impersonal Divine there is the Divine who is the Person himself; and we must go through the Impersonal to reach the Supreme Divine who is beyond.

Only it is good, as I said, for those who have been put by education into contact with too individual, too personal a God, to seek the impersonal Divine, because this liberates them from many superstitions. After that if they are capable they will go farther and have once again a personal contact with a Divine who indeed is beyond all these other godheads.

20 July 1955, 7, 240

*What exactly is meant by “the impersonal Divine”?*

It's what is called in some philosophies and religions the Formless; something that's beyond all form, even the forms of thought, you see, not necessarily physical forms: forms of thought, forms of movement. It is the conception of something which is beyond not only what can be thought or conceived or seen even with the most subtle eyes, but all that has any kind of perceptible form whatever, even vibrations more subtle than those which infinitely overpass all human perceptions, even in the highest states of being, something which is beyond all manifestation of any order whatever—usually that's how we define the impersonal God. He has nothing, none of the qualities we can conceive of, He is beyond all qualification. It is obviously the quest of something which is the opposite of the creation, and that is why some religions have introduced the idea of what they call Nirvana, that is, of something which is nothing; it is the same quest, the same attempt to find something which would be the opposite of all that we can conceive. So finally we define It, because how can we speak of It? But in experience one tries to go beyond all that belongs to the manifested world, and that is what we call the impersonal Divine.

Well, it happens—and this is very interesting—that there is a region like that, a region which... how to put it?... which is the negation of all that exists. Behind all the planes of being, even behind the physical, there is a Nirvana. We use the word Nirvana because it is easier, but we can say, “There is an impersonal Divine behind the physical, behind the mind, behind the vital, behind all the regions of being; behind,



beyond.” (We are obliged to express ourselves in some sort of way.) It is not necessarily more subtle, it’s something else, something absolutely different; that is, in a meditation, for example, if you meditate on Nirvana you can remain in a region of your mind and by a certain concentration produce a kind of reversal of your consciousness and find yourself suddenly in something which is Nirvana, nonexistence; and yet in the ascent of your consciousness you have not gone beyond the mind.

One can have a little understanding of these things if one knows the multiplicity of dimensions, if one has understood this principle. First of all you are taught the fourth dimension. If you have understood that principle, of the dimensions, you can understand this. For example, as I said, you don’t need to exteriorize yourself to go from one plane to another, when going to the most subtle planes to pass from the last most subtle plane to what we call Nirvana—to express it somehow. It is not necessary. You can, through a kind of interiorisation and by passing into another dimension or other dimensions... you can find in any domain whatever of your being this non-existence. And truly, one can understand a little bit of this without experiencing it. It is very difficult, but still, even without the experience one can understand just a little, if one understands this, this principle of the inner dimensions.

(*Silence*)

It can be put like this (you see, it’s one way of saying it) that you carry within yourself both existence and non-existence at the same time, the personal and the impersonal, and... yes... the manifest and unmanifest... the finite and the infinite... time and eternity. And all that is in this tiny little body.

There are people who go beyond—even mentally, you see... their mental atmosphere goes beyond their body, even their vital atmosphere goes beyond their body—there are people whose consciousness is vast enough to extend over continents and even over other earths and other worlds, but this is a spatial concept. Yet by an interiorisation in other dimensions, the fourth and more, you can find all this in yourself, in one point... the infinite.

*Then Mother, isn’t the infinite an extension of space?*

Oh, no! That’s the indefinite, not the infinite.

The infinite is the opposite of the finite. One can contain in himself the most finite finite and the most infinite infinite; in fact one does contain them, perhaps even in each one of the cells of the brain.

20 July 1955, 7, 244-6

*Is there any difference in the experience when one attains the Impersonal by his own effort and when he attains it by surrendering to the Mother?*

*(Long silence)*

Yes, there is a difference.

*(Silence)*

There would not be a difference, perhaps, if the goal to be reached was the impersonal Divine and if one wanted to be identified and united with the impersonal Divine and dissolve in that. I think that in this case there wouldn't be any difference. But if the aspiration is to realise what is beyond, we said, what Sri Aurobindo has called the supramental Reality, then here there's a difference, not only a difference in the path, for that's quite evident (it depends on different temperaments, besides), but if someone can truly know what surrender is and total trust, then it is *infinitely* easier, three-fourths of the worry and difficulties are over.

Now it is true that it can be said that one may find a very special difficulty in this surrender. This is true, that's why I said that it depends absolutely on the temperament. But it's not only that. If you like it may be compared to the difference between something linear which terminates in a point and a spherical path which terminates in a totality; a totality, that is, nothing would be excluded from the totality. Each one, individually, can reach the Origin and the utmost of his being; the origin and the utmost of his being are one with the Eternal, Infinite and Supreme. Therefore, if you reach this origin, you reach the Supreme. But you reach there by a line (don't take my words for an adequate description, you know, it's only to make myself understood). It is a linear realisation which ends in a point, and this point is united with the Supreme—your utmost possibility. By the other path it is a realization which may be called spherical, because that gives best the idea of something containing all, and the realisation is no longer a point but a totality from which nothing is excluded.

I can't speak of the "whole" and the "part", because there's no division any longer. It's not like that, it's not that. But it is the quality of the approach, so to say, which is different. It is like saying that a perfect identification with one drop of water would make you know what the ocean is and what a perfect identification not only with the ocean but with all possible oceans. And yet with a perfect identification with one drop of water one could know the ocean in its essence, and in the other way one could know the ocean not only in its essence but

in its totality. Something like that... I am trying to express it... It is very difficult but it's like that, there is something, there is a difference... It could be said that all that was individualised preserves at once the virtue of individuality and what might be called in a certain sense the limitations necessary to this individuality, when one relies only on his personal strength. In the other case one can benefit by the virtues of individuality without being under its limitations.

20 July 1955, 7, 246-7

Now I can feel Him everywhere, all the time, all the time... even a physical contact—it is subtle physical, but physical—in things, in the air, in people, in... like this. (*Mother presses her hands to her face.*) And then, it is not far to go, all I have to do is this (*Mother turns her hands slightly inwards*), one second of concentration—He is there! He is there, He is everywhere. He is far away only when we think He is far away.

Naturally, when we begin to think of all the zones, all the planes of universal consciousness and that it is at the very end, at the very end, right at the very end, then it becomes very far away, very, very far! (*Mother laughs.*) But when we think that He is everywhere, that He is everything and that it is only our perception that prevents us from seeing Him and feeling Him and that we only have to do this (*Mother turns her hands inwards*); it is a movement like this and like that (*Mother turns her hands alternately inwards and outwards*), it becomes very concrete: you do this (*outward movement*), everything becomes artificial, hard, dry, false, untrue, artificial; you do this (*inward movement*), everything becomes wide, tranquil, luminous, peaceful, vast, joyful. And it is simply this, that (*Mother turns her hands alternately inwards and outwards*). How? Where? It cannot be described, it is only, *only* a movement of consciousness, nothing else. A movement of consciousness. And the difference between the true consciousness and the false consciousness becomes more and more precise, and at the same time, *thin*—you don't have to do "great things" to come out of it. Before that, one has the impression that one is living inside something and that a great interiorisation, concentration, absorption, is needed to get out of it; but now the impression is of something one accepts (*Mother screens her face with her hand*), something like a thin little peel that is very hard—very hard but malleable, very, very dry, very thin, very thin, something like putting on a mask; and then one does this (*gesture*), and it disappears.

One can foresee the time when it will not be necessary to be aware of the mask; it will be so thin that one will be able to see, to feel, to act through it with no need to put the mask on again. That is what has just begun.

But this Presence in all things.... It is a vibration, but it is a vibration that contains everything—a vibration which contains a kind of infinite power, infinite delight and infinite peace, of vastness, vastness, vastness; there are no limits.... But it is only a vibration, it does not... Oh, Lord! it cannot be thought, so it cannot be said. If you think, as soon as you think, the whole muddle begins again. That is why one cannot speak.

No, He is very far away because you think He is very far away. Even, you know, if you think He is there, like this (*gesture close to her face*) touching you... if you could feel—it is not like the touch of a person, it is not like that. It is not something alien, external, which comes in from outside. It is not that.... It is everywhere.

Then you feel—everywhere, everywhere, everywhere: inside, outside, everywhere, everywhere—Him, nothing but Him —Him, His vibration.

No, you must stop that (*the head*), until you stop that, you cannot see the True Thing—you look for comparisons, you say, “It is like this, it is like that.” Oh!

And how often, how often the impression... there is no form—there is a form and there is no form, it cannot be put into words. And the impression of a look and there are no eyes—there are no eyes, but there is a look—a look and a smile, and there is no mouth, there is no face! And yet there is a smile, there is a look and (*Mother laughs*) one cannot help saying, “Yes, O Lord, I am stupid!” But He laughs, one laughs, one is happy.

*12 October 1962, 10, 152-4*

## **Each being carries in himself his spiritual law**

Just as we said that behind each animal type there was a spirit of the type, so behind each type of man there is a spirit of the type. This is what I call soul-type. It is a soul-type which may be progressive, but which is indestructible.

The soul-type corresponds, individually or in groups, to the *dharma* of things. Sometimes it is also called the truth of things, of each thing.

*11 November 1953, 5, 356*

There is the idea that everyone belongs to a certain type, that, for example, the pine will never become the oak and the palm never become wheat. This is obvious. But that is something else: it means that the truth of your being is not the truth of your neighbour's. But in the truth of your being, according to your own formation, your progress is almost unlimited. It is limited only by your own conviction that it is limited and by your ignorance of the true process, otherwise...

There is nothing one cannot do, if one knows how to do it.

12 December 1956, 8, 387

A being living according to its own nature, its own truth, should spontaneously discover its own way of using things. When you live according to the truth of your being, you have no need to learn things, you do them spontaneously, according to the inner law. When you follow your nature spontaneously and sincerely, you are divine. As soon as you think, see yourself doing and begin to discuss, you are full of sin.

It is man's mental consciousness that has filled all Nature with the idea of sin and all the misery which it brings! Animals are not unhappy in the way we are, not at all, not at all, except, as Sri Aurobindo says, those that have been corrupted. The corrupted ones are those that live with men. Dogs have the sense of sin and guilt. It is because their whole aspiration is to become like man—man is god—and then, dissimulation, falsehood. Dogs do lie. Men admire that; they say, "Oh! How intelligent they are!"

They have lost their divinity.

The human species, in the spiral ascent, is truly at a point which is not pretty.

19 July 1958, 15, 347-8

*"The absolute of every being is its unique relation with the Divine and its unique manner of expressing the Divine in the manifestation."*

This is what is called here in India the truth of the being or the law of the being, the *dharma* of the being: the centre and the cause of the individuality.

Everyone carries his truth within himself, a truth which is unique, which is altogether his own and which he must express in his life. Now what is this truth? This is the question I have been asked:

*"What is this truth of the being, and how is it expressed externally*

*in physical life?”*

It is expressed in this way: each individual being has a direct and unique relation with the Supreme, the Origin, That which is beyond all creation. It is this unique relation which must be expressed in one's life, through a unique mode of being in relation with the Divine. Therefore, each one is directly and exclusively in relation with the Divine—the relation one has with the Divine is unique and exclusive; so that you receive from the Divine, when you are in a receptive state, the *totality* of the relation it is *possible* for you to have, and this is neither a sharing nor a part nor a repetition, but exclusively and uniquely *the* relation which each one can have with the Divine. So, from the psychological point of view, one is *all alone* in having this direct relation with the Divine.

One is all alone with the Supreme.<sup>1</sup>

The relation one has with Him will never have an equal, will never be exactly the same as another's. No two are the same and therefore *nothing* can be taken away from you to be given to another, *nothing* can be withdrawn from you to be given to another. And if this relation disappeared from the creation, it would really disappear—which is impossible.

And this means that if one lives in the truth of one's being, one is an indispensable part of the creation. Naturally, I don't mean if one lives what one *believes* one should be, I am saying if one lives the truth of one's being; if, by a development, one is able to enter into contact with the truth of one's being, one is immediately in a unique and exclusive relation with the Divine, which hasn't its equal.

There, now.

And naturally, because it is the truth of your being, that is what you should express in your life.

22 August 1956, 8, 279-80

All the prophets, all the instructors who have come to bring the divine word to men, have, on one point at least, given an identical teaching.

All of them have taught us that the greatest truths are sterile unless they are transformed through us into useful actions. All have proclaimed the necessity of living their revelation in daily life. All have declared that they show us the path but that we must tread it ourselves; no being, however great, can do our work in our stead. (...) There is, without doubt, an almost ineradicable difference between individuals,

<sup>1</sup> This sentence was added by Mother on 13 May 1962.

the one arising from their special role, their place, their status in the infinite hierarchy of beings; but whatever this role or status may be, within it each one can develop his own qualities to perfection, each one can and must aspire to gain the perfect purity, the perfect sincerity, the deep harmony which bring us into accord with the laws of order in the universe.

I knew an old sage who used to compare men to minerals that were more or less crude, more or less rich, but all containing gold. Let this ore undergo the purifying flames of spiritualization and at the bottom of the crucible will be found an ingot which is more or less heavy, but always of pure gold.

We must therefore seek to release from its matrix the pure gold that is within us.

How many methods have been recommended for this!

They are all excellent, but each one applies to a special category of mentality and character, and each individual must find the one that best suits his temperament.

*10 March 1912, 2, 109-10*

*How should one express the particularity of one's being?*

You must live it, that is to say, live according to the inner law, the truth of your being. I have explained this at some length in "The Science of Living", I have said that this truth of the being is precisely the particularity of every one.

*But it differs with every one, doesn't it?*

The law of each being is different, yes, otherwise how would a distinction be made? From top to bottom, the nature, appearance, actions, all would be the same. If there were only one law, there would be only one law and every one would repeat the same thing. There would be no need at all to manifest a universe because it would be one single law. The very characteristic of the universe is an infinite multiplicity of laws which altogether, in their totality, reproduce the One. And it is this which is particularly marvelous in the physical world (in man and in the physical world, for it is proper to the terrestrial being), that it can be one of the innumerable elements which in their totality reproduce the One, and yet at the same time have a personal relation with the One—that is to say, contain in itself the consciousness of the One and the relation with the One, and at the same time be an element of the whole. But if the fact of becoming conscious of the One

and identifying oneself with it stopped one from being particular, one would cease existing as a personality. (...) And as I was saying, the miracle of this creation, as far as the terrestrial individuality goes, is that we may achieve this union, this complete identification with the Supreme, the One, and at the same time keep the consciousness of our diversity, of the particular law we have to express. It is more difficult but infinitely more complete, and it is the very truth of this universe. The universe has not been made for anything else but that, to unite these two poles, the two extremes of consciousness. And when they are united, one understands that these two extremes are exactly the same thing—a whole, at once one and innumerable.

*But one feels very different from others!*

Externally, this is evident.

*It is ignorance.*

No, the ignorance is to deny the essential identity, the one origin. And I consider it an ignorant absurdity to want to deny the external differences of the manifestation. Why should there be a manifestation then? What purpose would it serve? This would mean there has been an absurdity at the beginning of creation. If this had not been done on purpose, it would mean that things are not made on purpose or that He has made a mistake or even that He has not understood what He wanted to do! that He thought of doing one thing and did another! Besides, I hasten to tell you that if there were a universe in which all the elements were identical, truly one would immediately ask why it existed. If all of you in front of me, all, were all the same, speaking in the same way, thinking in the same way, reacting in the same way, I believe I would immediately run away!

17 April 1951, 4, 326-8

*I did not understand the explanation of the psychic you have given: "One could say, for example, that the creation of an individual being is the result of the projection, in time and space, of one of the countless possibilities latent in the supreme origin of all manifestation which, through the medium of the one and universal consciousness, takes concrete form in the law or the truth of an individual and so, by a progressive development, becomes his soul or psychic being."*

It is a little philosophical.... You know the difference between what is subjective and what is objective? You know it! Well, imagine precisely



this Reality we were speaking about, which is at the origin of all things, passing from the subjective to the objective state. That is, what was within becomes as though projected outside. It is the *same* thing: it is the state that changes. And so, within it there are all the possibilities of objective existence; within they are unexpressed, unmanifested; outside they are projected, as a picture is projected on the cinema-screen: we see it before us. And every element that was a possibility within, a law, becomes the law of a realisation. And every one of these possibilities becomes the reality of a being, of an individuality if you like, of something existing objectively. And it is that law which is the origin of the centre of the psychic being: it is the truth of the being or the law of the being. The Buddha called it the “law”, he spoke of the *Dharma*. It is the truth of the being. It is that which binds it again indestructibly to its origin. And that is the starting-point of the psychic being. And so, even as this develops, like the picture on the screen, it takes a more and more complex and precise form in the manifestation. But the reality of that form is one, it is bound to the One. And all the units are linked together and reproduce the One.

17 February 1954, 6, 27-8

*What is this “imperious law”, this “spiritual and supramental law”?*

It is the truth of each being.

Each being carries in himself his own spiritual law, his supramental law. It is not the same for everyone, it is not one single identical law. For each one it is the truth of his being, that is to say, *the* thing he must realise in the universe and *the* place he must occupy in the world.

That is the truth of his being.

16 May 1956, 8, 140-1

When you are absolutely sincere, you make a constant effort to live in harmony with the highest ideal of your being, the truth of your being. At every moment, in all that you think, all that you feel and all that you do, you try as perfectly as possible, as completely as possible, to put yourself in harmony with the highest ideal or, if you are conscious of it, with the truth of your being—then you have reached true sincerity. And if you are like that, if truly you do not act from egoistic motives or for personal reasons, if you act guided by your inner truth, that is, if you are perfectly sincere, it is absolutely the same to you whether the

whole world judges you in one way or another. In this state of perfect sincerity you do not need to appear good or to be approved by others, for the first thing you experience when you are in harmony with your true consciousness is that you do not care what you look like. Whether you look like this or like that, whether you seem indifferent, cold, distant, proud, all this is of no importance; provided, I repeat this, you are absolutely sincere, that is, you never forget that you live in order to realize your inner, central truth.

30 December 1950, 4, 17

Is it only one individual the Divine chooses to manifest Him or can He choose several?—He chooses several.

But here too there is a hierarchy. One can understand *nothing of the spiritual life* if one does not understand the true hierarchy.

Nowadays it's not in fashion. It is something which human thought doesn't favour at all. But from the spiritual point of view, it is automatic, spontaneous and indisputable. And so, if the hierarchy is true, there is a place for everybody; and for each individual in his own place, his individual truth is absolute. That is to say, each element which is truly in its place has a total and perfect relation with the Divine—in its place. And yet, on the whole, there is a hierarchy which too is quite absolute. But to understand spiritual life one must first understand that; and it isn't very easy.

Everyone can be a perfect expression of the Divine in himself, on condition that he knows his place and keeps to it.

*And if they do not know the hierarchy, they cannot know this?*

But they don't need to know that they form a hierarchy, it is not necessary to know it. It is only if one wants to physically organise a spiritual society—then one has to materialise the hierarchy. But generally, in the world as it is, there are so many gaps in this hierarchy that it seems a confusion.

The perfect hierarchy is a total hierarchy, and it is not concerned with time and space. But when you want to realise this physically it becomes very difficult. It's like weaving a piece of cloth with lots of holes everywhere; and the holes disturb the general harmony. Always people are missing, steps are missing, pieces are missing on the chessboard—all this is missing. So it looks like a confusion. But if everything were expressed and each thing in its place, it would be a perfect harmony and a perfect hierarchy.

There is somewhere—not in the material universe, but in the manifested universe—this perfect hierarchy; it exists. But it is not yet manifested upon earth.

Perhaps this will be one of the results of the supramental transformation: the world will be ready for a perfect, spontaneous, essentially true hierarchical manifestation—and without any kind of coercion — where everyone will become aware of his own perfection.

*Mother, what does a spiritual hierarchy mean exactly? Because when we speak of hierarchy that implies something graded in a superior and inferior order, doesn't it?*

Yes, and that's quite wrong. That is to say, materially it is like that. But this is not what I call a hierarchy.

*Then what is a hierarchy?*

It is the organisation of the functions and the manifestation in action of the particular nature of each person.

We have often tried to find comparisons, but they are worthless. For none of the things we know physically can answer to that condition. There is always the sense of superiority and inferiority as you say... Some have compared a hierarchy to the various functions of the body, for example. But that always gives the impression that the head is at the top and the feet at the bottom, so it is a nuisance!

*Each element is the whole Divine at the same time, then how can we speak of a hierarchy?*

Each element has a direct and perfect relation with the Divine.

*But can't they become the whole Divine?*

Yes, all become the Divine; but not the totality of the Divine, for the Divine is everything. You can't take a piece of the Divine and say, "This is the Divine." And yet, in his spiritual consciousness each one has a perfect relation with the Divine, that is to say, each one is the Divine as perfectly as he can be. But to reconstruct the Divine, all the Divine is necessary. And it is precisely this that constitutes the very essence of hierarchy. But as each one is perfect in himself, there can be no feeling of inferiority or superiority.

*18 January 1956, 8, 27-30*

For truly speaking, each one finds only what he wants to find the Divine. Sri Aurobindo has said this by turning it the other way round; he has said — I am not quoting the exact words, only the idea: what you expect from the Divine is what you find in the Divine; what you want

from the Divine is what you meet in the Divine. He will have for you the aspect you expect or desire.

And His manifestation is always adapted to each one's receptivity and capacity. They may have a real, essential contact, but this contact is limited by their own capacity for receiving and approach... It is only if you are able to go out of all limits that you can meet the total Divine as He totally is.

And this capacity for contact is perhaps what constitutes the true hierarchy of beings. For everyone carries within himself the Divine, and therefore everyone has the possibility of uniting with the Divine—that possibility is the same in all. But according to each one's capacity—in fact, according to his position in the divine hierarchy—his approach will be more or less partial or total.

It could be said—although these words deform things a lot—that the quality of the approach is the same in every being, but the quantity, the totality is very different... It is very difficult to explain in words, but if one may say so, the *point* at which you are identified with the Divine is perfect in itself, that is to say, your identification is perfect in itself, at this point, but the number of points at which you are identified differs immediately.

And this is very marked in the difference between the paths followed to approach the Divine. Usually people set limits; they limit themselves by excluding everything that is not exactly the path they have chosen, for this is much easier and they go much faster—relatively. But if, instead of following *one* road, you go forward in a sort of movement which could be called spherical, where everything is included, which takes in all the possibilities of approach to the Divine, naturally the result is much more complete—and it is this that Sri Aurobindo calls the integral yoga—but the progress is much more difficult and much slower.

One who chooses the path of knowledge—and even in the path of knowledge a special method, for everyone has his own method—and follows it, eliminating from his consciousness and life all that's not it, advances much more rapidly, for he is in search of only one aspect and this is much more direct, immediate. And so he rejects, rejects, rejects all that is not this, and limits his being just to the path he travels. And the more you want your approach to be integral, naturally the more will it become difficult, complicated, long, laborious.

But he who follows only one path, when he reaches his goal, that is, when he is identified with the Divine, his identification is perfect in

itself; that is to say, it is really an identification with the Divine—but it is partial. It is perfect; it is perfect and partial at the same time.

This is very difficult to explain, but it is a fact. He is really identified with the Divine and has found the Divine; he is identified with the Divine—but at one point. And so he who is able to identify himself in his totality with the Divine is necessarily, from the point of view of the universal realisation, on a much higher level of the hierarchy than one who could realise Him only on a single point.

And that is the true meaning of the spiritual hierarchy, this is why there is a whole spiritual hierarchical organisation, otherwise it would have no basis, for from the minute you touch the Divine, you touch Him perfectly: the point at which you touch Him is perfect in itself. And, from this point of view, all who are united with the Divine are equally perfect in their union—but not equally complete, if I may say so.

*1 February 1956, 8, 45-7*

## **Discovering the purpose of one's existence**

There is, without doubt, an almost ineradicable difference between individuals, the one arising from their special role, their place, their status in the infinite hierarchy of beings; but whatever this role or status may be, within it each one can develop his own qualities to perfection, each one can and must aspire to gain the perfect purity, the perfect sincerity, the deep harmony which bring us into accord with the laws of order in the universe.

*10 March 1912, 2, 109-10*

It would be very interesting to know how many of you, till I spoke to you about it, had asked yourselves how it happened that you were here?

Naturally, most of the time, the reply is perhaps very simple: “My parents are here, so I am here.” However, you were not born here. Nobody was born here. Not even you, were you? You were born in Bangalore. No one was born here.... And yet, you are all here. You have not asked yourselves why—it was like that because it was like that! And so, between even asking oneself and giving an external reply satisfactory enough to be accepted as final, and then telling oneself, “Perhaps it is an indication of a destiny, of the purpose of my life...” What a long way one must travel to come to that!

And for everybody there are more or less external reasons, which,

besides, are not worth much and explain everything in the dullest possible way, but there is a deeper reason which as yet you do not know. And are there many of you who would be very much interested in knowing why they are here? How many of you have asked yourselves this question: "What is the true reason for my being here?" And it is only when one has found, you see, found what he says, found that one has a divine Self and that consequently one must seek to know this divine Self.... This comes much later, and yet, in spite of everything, from the very moment of birth in a physical body, there is in the being, in its depths, this psychic presence which pushes the whole being towards this fulfilment. But who knows it and recognises it, this psychic being? That too comes only in special circumstances, and unfortunately, most of the time these have to be painful circumstances, otherwise one goes on living unthinkingly. And in the depths of one's being is this psychic being which seeks, seeks, seeks to awaken the consciousness and re-establish the union. One knows nothing about it.

When you were ten years old, did you know this? No, you didn't. Well, still in the depths of your being your psychic being already wanted it and was seeking for it. It was probably your psychic which brought you here.

There are so many things which happen and you don't even ask yourself why. You take them... it is like that because it is like that.

*16 January 1957, 9, 16-7*

For each activity, each realisation, each movement, there is a definite period of time, which differs. There are countless periods of time which are entangled; but each thing is regulated by a kind of rhythm which is this thing's own rhythm.

You see, for the facility of their outer existence, men have divided time more or less arbitrarily into years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds, etc.; it is a rhythm that's more or less arbitrary, because it has been created by man, but it has in itself a certain reality, for it corresponds to universal movements... as far as possible. And that is why, by the way, we celebrate the birthday, for example: because there is a certain rhythm in each one's existence which is established by this regular return of circumstances analogous to those in which he was born.

And all movements—when you observe them, you become aware that they have a certain rhythm—the movements of inner consciousness, for example, not only from the point of view of

understanding but that of personal reactions, of the ups and downs in progress; of a fairly regular periodic return, at once of advancing and recoiling, of difficulties and of helps. But if each person is attentive he realises that his own rhythm is absolutely particular to him; it is not the same rhythm as his neighbour's. But even as the seasons follow a certain rhythm, regular enough on the whole, so the individual life has its seasons. And when one studies oneself attentively, one finds out that there are even certain repetitions of analogous circumstances at regular intervals. Even, very sensitive people become aware that there are certain days of the week or certain hours of the day when they can do things more easily. Some of them have particular difficulties on particular days and at particular hours; some on the contrary have better inspirations at particular moments—but every one has to find this out in himself by observation. Naturally it is far from being absolute, it is not strict, and if it is troublesome, it can be eliminated very easily simply by a little effort of resolute will. But if it helps, one can make use of it.

And all this, each thing having its own rhythm, well, it makes an extremely complicated criss-crossing of rhythms, which results in what we see: something which seems to have none—because it is too complicated, it is too complex.

*How can we make use of it, Sweet Mother?*

Well, if... let us say, you know... we are speaking of yoga... if you observe in yourself a certain repetition of conditions, for example, that at a particular hour, a certain time of day, in certain circumstances, it is easier for you to concentrate or meditate, well, you make use of that by doing it at that time.

Naturally, you must not become its slave; one can use it but it must not become a necessity so that if the hour has gone by one can't meditate then. But if it is a good help, one uses the help; it's all a matter of observation.

If you study yourself you can become aware that in the year certain periods come due not only to personal conditions but more general ones—conditions of Nature in general. There are times when you meet more difficulties in the sadhana; there are times, on the contrary, when you feel in yourself a greater push for the growth of knowledge and consciousness. This helps you in the sense that, if at a given time you find yourself in the midst of special difficulties or something that seems like a stoppage, instead of lamenting you tell yourself, "Why, it's the usual time; it's because we are at this particular time of the year." And

you wait with patience for the time to pass; or do what you can, but without being discouraged and saying, “Ah, look, I am not getting on, I am not making any progress.” It helps you to be reasonable.

And naturally one can take one more step and take precautions in such a way... inner precautions to be independent of these external influences. But this comes much later, when one begins to be the conscious master of one’s sadhana. That comes afterwards.

*19 October 1955, 7, 332-4*

People are occupied with outward things. That means that the consciousness is turned towards external things—that is, all the things of life which one sees, knows, does—instead of being turned inwards in order to find the deeper truth, the divine Presence. This is the first movement. You are busy with all that you do, with the people around you, the things you use; and then with life: sleeping, eating, talking, working a little, having a little fun also; and then beginning over again: sleeping, eating, etc., etc., and then it begins again. And then what this one has said, what that one has done, what one ought to do, the lesson one ought to learn, the exercise one ought to prepare; and then again whether one is keeping well, whether one is feeling fit, etc. This is what one usually thinks about.

So the first movement—and it is not so easy—is to make all that pass to the background, and let one thing come inside and in front of the consciousness as *the* important thing: the discovery of the very purpose of existence and life, to learn what one is, why one lives, and what there is behind all this. This is the first step: to be interested more in the cause and goal than in the manifestation. That is, the first movement is a withdrawal of the consciousness from this total identification with outward and apparent things, and a kind of inward concentration on what one wants to discover, the Truth one wants to discover. This is the first movement.

*2 November 1955, 7, 349-350*

Strictly speaking, you can, when you have worked hard, have some slight effect on these appearances, change them a little—this is how, through science, you learn to manipulate matter—but there is no true change and there is no true power. And when you are in that state, you are wholly convinced that there is nothing you can do to change your character. You feel trapped in a kind of fatalism that weighs you down,



you know neither whence nor how; you are born like this, in such and such a place, into such and such an environment, with such and such a character, and you get through life as best you can, adapting to things without having much influence on them, and trying to mitigate the drawbacks of your own character without having the power to transform it. You feel caught in a net, you are the slave of something of which you are unaware. You are the plaything of circumstances, of unknown forces, of a will you do not submit to, but which constrains you. Even the most rebellious are slaves, because the only thing that liberates you is precisely the act of passing behind the veil and discovering what lies beyond it. Once you have seen, you know who you are and once you have established your true identity, you have the key to the true transformation.

We read, we try to understand, we explain, we try to know.

But a single minute of true experience teaches us more than millions of words and hundreds of explanations.

*24 October 1958, 10, 18-9*

Everyone must follow his path in accordance with his own nature, and there is always a preference for one way rather than another. As we read in one of our recent classes, for one who follows the path of action, it is much more difficult to feel that the human personality does not exist and that only the divine Force works. For one who follows the path of knowledge it is relatively very easy, it is something one discovers almost immediately. For one who follows the path of love it is elementary, since it is by giving himself that he progresses. But for one who follows the path of action it is much more difficult, and consequently for him the first step is to do what is said here in the passage of *The Synthesis of Yoga*<sup>1</sup> which we have just read: to create in himself this complete detachment from the fruit of action, to act because this is what must be done, to do it in the best possible way, and not to be anxious about the consequences, to leave the consequences to a Will higher than his own.

One can't make a general rule for the order of importance of the paths, it is an exclusively personal affair. And there is a time when one understands very well, it is apparent, that no two paths are alike, no two paths can be alike, and that every man follows his own path and that this is the truth of his being. One can, if one looks from a sufficient

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<sup>1</sup> SABCL vol.20, p.166. [*Comp.*]

height, see a difference in the speed of advance, but it does not always conform to the external signs; and one could say a little humorously, that it is not always the wisest who goes fastest!

(*Silence*)

It seems to me no longer possible to make general rules. Indeed, the Grace is upon all. And what is necessary to let it act? It is very difficult to say.

If one can see it, feel it, experience its action, so to say, be conscious of its presence and movement, then one has the joy of the movement, the progress, the realisation; but this does not mean that if one doesn't feel this joy, the action of the Grace is not there, the realisation not there.

And after all, all the ways of being of the Divine, all the forms of being in the manifestation are necessary to express the Divine. It is this manifestation as a whole, in its totality, which progresses towards a growing, infinite, eternal perfection. It is not each separate element, individually, it is all together, as a collective and total expression of the divine Truth. All this is moving forward constantly, eternally, towards a greater perfection. The universe of tomorrow will necessarily be more divine, if one may say so, than the universe of yesterday; and that of yesterday was more divine than the one preceding it. And so, it could be said that the Divine, in his expression of Himself, is in perpetual progress towards a more and more perfect, a more and more divine manifestation.

And in that case, each element has only to manifest, as perfectly as possible, its own law, what it should be in the whole, in order to do the utmost of what ought to be done. It is thus a conscious, an enlightened, one could almost say a disinterested, discovery of this truth of each being, which for it is the first and most important necessity.

*10 October 1956, 8, 323-5*

*“Thou must reach thy own summit,” says Sri Aurobindo. Is the summit the same for everybody or does each one have his particular summit?*

In the last analysis, it is always the same summit—the divine oneness which is behind all things—but everyone will reach his own summit, that is, through his own nature and own way of manifesting the divine unity. This is what we were saying the other day: each one represents a special way of having a relation with the Divine and manifesting the

Divine. You don't need to follow another's path! You must follow your own path and it is by this path that you will reach the summit, which is one, but found by your own route. The goal is beyond the summits—the goal is one and beyond the summits—but one may attain this summit each by his own road, climbing his own mountain, not the mountain of another.

*“Imagine not the way is easy; the way is long, arduous, dangerous, difficult. At every step is an ambush, at every turn a pitfall. A thousand seen or unseen enemies will start up against thee, terrible in subtlety against thy ignorance, formidable in power against thy weakness. And when with pain thou hast destroyed them, other thousands will surge up to take their place.”*

*Sri Aurobindo, “The Way”, Cent. Vol. 17, p. 39*

This is to give you courage, courage to act. You must be vigilant and must keep your will, whatever happens. If you put the two things end to end, you have the complete thing.

*23 April 1951, 4, 350*

## **The cosmic consciousness**

Cosmic spirit? It is the cosmic spirit, it is the universal spirit, it is the spirit that's in the whole universe. There is a universe. You know what the universe is? Well, this universe has a spirit, and this spirit is the cosmic spirit; this universe has a consciousness and its consciousness is the cosmic, universal consciousness.

One may very well imagine that the universe is only an entity in something which is still vaster, as the individual is only an entity in a much vaster totality. Now, each unit has its consciousness and its own spirit which contains all the others, as a group consciousness is made up of all the individual consciousnesses which constitute it and as a national consciousness is made up of all the individual consciousnesses which constitute it, and something more. The individual is only an element in the whole, even as the earth is a part of the solar system, and the solar system makes a part of all the systems of the universe. So just as there is an individual consciousness, there is a group consciousness and a consciousness of the system, a universal consciousness which is made up of the set of all the consciousnesses composing it, plus something,

something—something more subtle. Just like you: you have lots of cells in your body; each cell has its own consciousness and you have a consciousness which is the consciousness of your total individuality, though made up of all these small cellular consciousnesses.

*Mother, here it is written: "... there is a wall of separative ignorance between" the individual and the cosmic consciousness.*

*Then how to break down this wall?*

Get rid of the ignorance, enter the knowledge.

First of all you must know what I have just told you, that you are a part of the whole, that this whole is a part of a greater whole, and that this greater whole is a part of a still greater whole, right up to its forming one single totality. Once you know that, you begin to become aware that in reality there cannot be any separation between you and something greater than you of which you are a part. This is the beginning. Now, you must come to the point not only of thinking this but of feeling it and even living it, and then the wall of ignorance tumbles: one feels this unity everywhere and realises that he is only a more or less fragmentary part of a whole much vaster than he, which is the universe. Then one begins to have a more universal consciousness.

*13 July 1955, 7, 232-3*

*What is the meaning of "a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness"?*

You see, one always has the feeling either of a vertical ascent to the heights of the Supreme Consciousness or a kind of... how to put it?... horizontal widening into a universal consciousness.

A universal consciousness means becoming aware of the forces which manifest in the universe and in all that is manifested. For example, just this: there are many people here; well, let us take these people as representing the universe. Now, if you want to unite with them, you have a movement of consciousness spreading above them all and uniting with all, like this (*gesture*). It is a movement which spreads horizontally.

But if you want to unite with the supramental Force which wants to come down, you have the feeling of gathering all your aspiration and making it rise up in a vertical ascent to the higher forces which have to descend. It is just a question of movement, you see, it is a movement of widening or a movement of concentration and ascent.

*17 August 1955, 7, 266*

## Psychic realization versus spiritual realization

*Can one realise the Divine through love alone?*

Oh! yes, my child, certainly. It is even the most direct way.

One can realise the Divine, that is to say, identify oneself with the Divine, become fully conscious of the Divine and be an instrument of the Divine. But naturally, one does not realise the integral yoga, for it is only along one line. But from the point of view of identification with the Divine it is even the most direct path.

*But without mental development one won't be able to express the Divine?*

One cannot express Him intellectually, but one can express Him in action, one can express Him in feelings, one can express Him in life.

20 June 1956, 8, 190

*What is "the image of the dry coconut fruit"?*

It is said that when one has realised (it is in here that he says it), one becomes like the dry coconut which moves in the shell, which is free inside, no longer attached to the envelope and moving freely within. That's what I have heard; it is the image for there being no attachment any more. You have seen this, when a coconut becomes completely dry, the nut inside is no longer fixed to the shell; and so when you move it, it moves inside; it is completely free, it is absolutely independent of the shell. So the image of the being is given: the ordinary physical consciousness is the shell; and so long as the Atman is not completely formed it is attached, it holds on, it is stuck to the shell, and it cannot be detached; but when it is completely formed it is absolutely free inside, it rolls freely in the shell without being fixed to it. It must be this image.

15 June 1955, 7, 203

*Is not perfection the fulfilment of the Divine in all the parts of the being?*

No, what you are thinking of is again a rung in progress and not perfection.

Now we are going to try to find a definition which can fit all instances, that is, the individual, the collectivity, the earth and the universe.

We may say that perfection will be attained in the individual, the collectivity, on the earth and in the universe, when, at *every moment*,

the receptivity will be equal in quality and quantity to the Force which wants to manifest.

That is the supreme equilibrium.

Hence, there must be a perfect equilibrium between what comes from above and what answers from below, and when the two meet, that is perfect equilibrium, which is the Realisation—a realisation in constant progress.

30 December 1950, 4, 16

For some it can go faster; if suddenly something is reversed within them and they have an experience—even if it be only the experience of identification with the psychic—then all of a sudden they understand. Identification with the psychic means an identification with the divine Consciousness. So, immediately they understand; they understand and this even makes them laugh. One feels how foolish one was! (*Mother laughs.*)

This sense of one's own person becomes a kind of cage, a prison which shuts you in, prevents you from being true, from knowing truly, acting truly, understanding truly. It is as though someone had put you in a very hard shell and you were compelled to stay there.

This is the first sensation you have. Afterwards you begin to tap against the shell in order to break it. Sometimes it resists very long. But still, when you begin to feel this, that what you believed to be yourself, the person doing things and for whom they are done, the person who exists and makes you what you are, yes, when you pass from this to the consciousness that this is a prison preventing you from being truly yourself, then you have made great progress, and there is hope. You feel yourself stifled, crushed, absolutely shut up in a prison without air, without light, without an opening, and then you begin pushing from inside, pushing, pushing, pushing so that it may break.

And the day it breaks, the day it opens, suddenly, you enter the psychic consciousness. And then you understand. And then, truly, if you have a sense of humour, you laugh; you realise your stupidity.

22 September 1954, 6, 332-3

The higher perfection is the spiritual perfection, integral union with the Divine, identification with the Divine, freedom from all the limitations of the lower world. That is spiritual perfection, the perfection that comes from yoga—quite independent of the body and the physical

world—which, in ancient times, meant first rejecting the body and the physical life so as to have a relation only with the higher world and finally with the Divine. That is the higher perfection.

And the lower perfection is to be able to make the human being in his present form and in his body, in his relation with all terrestrial things, do the utmost he can. This is the case of all great men of genius: artistic genius, literary genius, genius in organisation, the great rulers, those who have carried physical capacities to their maximum perfection, human development to the limit of its possibilities; and, for instance, all those who have complete control over their bodies and succeed in doing miraculous things, as we saw, for example, during the war, with the airmen: they made their bodies do things which at first sight seemed quite impossible, they obtained from them an endurance, a skill, a power which were almost unthinkable. And from every point of view: from the point of view of physical strength, of intellectual realisation, of the physical qualities of energy and courage, of disinterestedness, goodness, charity; all human qualities carried to their utmost limits. That is the lower perfection.

The higher perfection is spiritual and super-human. The lower perfection is human perfection carried to its maximum limits, and this may be quite independent of all spiritual life, all spiritual aspiration. One can be a genius without having any spiritual aspiration. One can have all the most extraordinary moral qualities without having any spiritual life. And even, usually, those who have a very great power of human realisation are satisfied—more or less satisfied—with their condition. They feel they are self-sufficient, that they carry in themselves the source of their realisation and their joy, and it is usually very difficult to make them understand and feel that they are not the creators of their own creations, whatever they may be. Most of them, with very rare exceptions, if they were told, “You are not the originator of this work you are doing, it is a force higher than you and you are only its instrument”, they would dislike it very much—and they will send you about your business! Therefore, these two perfections are really divergent in ordinary life. It was said in the old yoga that the first condition for doing yoga was to be disgusted with life. But those who have realised this human perfection are very rarely disgusted with life, unless they have met with personal difficulties such as the ingratitude of people around them, the lack of understanding of their genius which was not sufficiently appreciated—so all this disgusts them, but

otherwise, so long as they are in their period of success and creation, they are perfectly satisfied. So, as they are satisfied—above all, self-satisfied—they don't need to seek anything else.

It is not essentially true, but this is usually how things happen, and unless there is in this genius a soul which is perfectly conscious of itself and has come to accomplish a specific work on earth, he may very well be born, grow up and die without knowing that there is anything other than this earthly life. And above all it is this, you see, this feeling of having achieved the utmost realisation which gives a satisfaction that keeps one from needing anything else.... If they have a soul that's fully conscious of itself and fully conscious of its purpose in the physical world, there could be a vague feeling that all this is pretty hollow, that all these achievements are a little too superficial and that something is lacking; but that comes only to those who are predestined, and after all, in the mass of humanity, there are not very many of them.

Only those who are predestined can combine these two perfections and realise something integral.... This is quite rare. The great spiritual leaders have very rarely been great realisers in the physical world. It has happened, but it is very rare. Only those who are conscious incarnations of the Divine naturally carry in themselves the possibility of the two perfections, but this is exceptional. People who had a spiritual life, a great spiritual realisation, were able at certain exceptional moments to have a capacity for outward realisation; this also was exceptional, but it was intermittent and never had the integrality, the totality, the perfection of those who concentrated on material realisation. And this is why those who live only in the external consciousness, for whom the earthly material life is all that really exists, concrete and tangible, perceptible to all, always feel that spiritual life is something hazy, something almost mediocre from the material point of view.

I have met many people—"many", well, quite a number—who wanted to demonstrate that spiritual powers gave a great capacity for outer realisation and who tried, in certain exceptional spiritual states or conditions, to paint or to compose music or write poetry; well, everything that they produced was thoroughly second-rate and could not be compared with the works of the great geniuses who had mastered material nature—and this of course gave the materialists a good opening: "You see, your so-called power is nothing at all." But this was because in their external life they were ordinary men; for the greatest spiritual power, if it enters material that's not educated, will



produce a result far superior to what that individual would have been able to achieve in his ordinary state, but far inferior to what a genius who has mastered matter can produce. It is not enough that “the Spirit bloweth”, the instrument must also be capable of manifesting it.

I believe that is one of the things Sri Aurobindo is going to explain: why it is necessary to give to the physical, external being, its full development, the capacity of controlling matter directly; then you put at the disposal of the Spirit an instrument capable of manifesting it, otherwise... Yes, I knew several people who in their ordinary state could not write three lines without making a mistake, not only spelling mistakes but mistakes of language, that is, who could not express one thought clearly—well, in their moments of spiritual inspiration, they used to write very beautiful things, but all the same these very beautiful things were not so beautiful as the works of the greatest writers. These things seemed remarkable in comparison with what they could do in their ordinary state; it was true, their present possibilities were used to the maximum, it was something that gave a value to what otherwise would have had none at all. But supposing you take a real genius—a musician or artist or writer of genius—who has fully mastered his instrument, who can use it to produce works that express the utmost human possibility, if you add to this a spiritual consciousness, the supramental force, then you will have something truly divine.

And this is precisely the key to the effort Sri Aurobindo wanted us to make.

And your body, if you draw from it all the possibilities it holds, if you educate it by the normal, well-known, scientific methods, if you make this instrument into something as perfect as possible, then, when the supramental truth manifests in that body, it will become *immediately*—without centuries of preparation—a marvellous instrument for the expression of the Spirit.

That is why Sri Aurobindo used to repeat and has always said: You must work from both ends, not let go of one for the other. And certainly, if you want to have a divine consciousness, you must not give up spiritual aspiration; but if you want to become an integral divine being on earth, take good care not to let go of the other end, and make your body the best possible instrument.

It is a disease of the ordinary human intellect—which comes, moreover, from separation, division—to make a thing always *either* this *or* that. If you choose this, you turn your back on that; if you choose

that, you turn your back on this.

It is an impoverishment. One must know how to take up everything, combine everything, synthesise everything. And then one has an integral realisation.

24 April 1957, 9, 91-5

*When one realises the Divine, does one no longer have enemies?*

Ah, indeed! Why? I believe it is rather just the opposite.

*Is it because there are adverse forces?*

Yes, surely. The earth is full of adverse forces and of men who respond to these adverse forces; usually, the more one realizes the Divine, the more enemies does he have around himself.

*Do they act against the Divine?*

Oh, yes! At least they try. I don't know if they succeed, but they try. They try, they have always tried.

*Why? The Divine hasn't done anyone any harm!*

*(Laughing)* You think one acts against others only when they have done some harm? Usually it is just the contrary. Can you tell me why the strong use their strength against the weak? It is not that the weak have harmed them, but simply because they have the strength and wish to use it for their own ends and want to compel the weak to obey their force, so they beat them; when they have a chance, they ill-treat them. It is not because the weak have made mistakes; it is because they want to use their strength for their own purposes, for the satisfaction of their desires.

Suppose, for instance, that there are forces in the universe which are accustomed to govern, as there are certain asuric forces governing the earth. They do not want to lose their authority. So all who put out a force which could compel them to withdraw, they attack with as much strength as they have. They do this to keep their power. But it is not because these people... in fact, you understand, it is not that they are wicked or bad. It is because the light and power they represent are completely opposed to the power represented by the other forces.

16 June 1954, 6, 169-70

There are worlds, there are beings, there are powers, they have their own existence; but what I mean is that their relation with the human consciousness depends upon this human consciousness for the form they take.

It is as with the gods, my child, it is the same thing. All these

beings of the Overmind, all these gods, the relation with them, the form of these relations, depend upon the human consciousness. You may be... It has been said, “Men are cattle for the gods”, but if men *accept* to be cattle. There is in the essence of human nature a sovereignty over all things which is spontaneous and natural, when it is not falsified by a certain number of ideas and so-called knowledge.

One could say that man is the all-powerful master of all the states of being of his nature, but that he has forgotten to be this.

His natural state is to be all-powerful—he has forgotten to be this.

In this state of forgetfulness, everything becomes concrete, yes, in the sense that one may have a mark left on the eye; it may translate itself like this, but it is because... because one has allowed it to happen.

It is the same thing with the gods. They can govern your life and torment you a lot (they can help you a lot also), but their power, *in relation to you*, to the human being, is the power you give them.

This is something I learnt gradually over several years. But now I am sure of it.

Naturally, in the evolutionary curve, it was necessary for man to forget his omnipotence, because it had simply puffed him up with pride and vanity, and so had become completely distorted; and he had to be made to feel that many things were stronger and more powerful than he. But essentially this is not true. It is a necessity of the curve of progress, that’s all.

Man is potentially a god. He believed himself an actual god. He needed to learn that he was nothing better than a poor little worm crawling on the earth, and so life scraped, scraped, scraped him in every way until he had... not understood, but at least felt a bit. But as soon as he takes the right stand, he knows that he is potentially a god. Only, he must become this, that is, overcome all that is not this.

This relationship with the gods is extremely interesting.... As long as man stands dazzled, lost in admiration of the power, beauty, accomplishments of these divine beings, he is their slave. But when these become for him different ways of being of the Supreme and nothing more, and himself yet another way of being of the Supreme, which he must become, then the relation changes and he is no longer their slave—he is *not* their slave.

*Then the only objectivity is the Supreme.*

There, you have said it, my child. It is this. It is exactly this.

If the word “objectivity” is taken to mean “real independent

existence”—self-existence, independent and real—there is only the Supreme.

*Nevertheless, there is something disquieting about this almost total subjectivity.*

Ah, why?

*One wonders what is real, what one really comes across? Isn't everything a tissue of imagination? This is rather disquieting.*

But when one has the positive experience of the one and only existence of the Supreme and that all is only the Supreme playing to Himself, instead of being something disquieting or unpleasant or troubling, it is on the contrary a sort of total security.

The one reality is the Supreme. And all this is a game He plays to Himself. I find this much more comforting than the opposite view.

And after all, this is the only certitude that all this may become something marvellous; otherwise...

And this too depends altogether on the stand one takes. A complete identification with the game as a game, as something self-existent and independent, is probably necessary in the beginning, in order to play the game properly. But there's a moment when one reaches precisely this detachment and so complete a disgust for all the falsehood of existence, that it is no longer tolerable unless one sees it as the inner play of the Lord in Himself, for Himself.

And then one feels this absolute and perfect freedom which makes the most marvellous possibilities become real, and all the most sublime things imaginable are realisable.

*(Mother enters into contemplation)*

You will see, there is a moment when one cannot bear oneself or life unless one takes the attitude that it is the Lord who is everything. You see, this Lord, how many things He possesses, He plays with all this—He plays, He plays at changing the positions. And so, when one sees this, this whole, one feels the illimitable marvel, and that all our most wonderful aspirations, all these are quite possible and will even be surpassed. Then one is comforted. Otherwise, existence... it is inconsolable. But like this, it becomes charming. I shall tell you about this one day.

When one feels the unreality of life, the unreality of life when compared with a reality which is certainly beyond, above, but at the same time *within* life, then, at that moment... “Ah, yes, at last this, it is true—at last this, it is true and deserves to be true. This is the

realisation of all possible splendours, all possible marvels, yes, of all possible felicities, all possible beauties, yes, this; otherwise...”

*18 May 1966, 11, 37-40*

Do not confuse the psychic realisation with the spiritual realisation, because the psychic realisation will leave you within time and space, within the manifested universe.

Whereas the effect of the spiritual realisation will be to project you outside all creation, outside time and space.

There is no joy more perfect than to give oneself totally to that which is greater than oneself. God, Supreme Origin, Divine Presence, Absolute Truth—it doesn't matter what name we give Him or what aspect we most easily approach Him through—to forget oneself totally in an integral consecration is the surest path towards Realisation.

*13 January 1952, 14, 102*

So one can say that the psychic life is immortal life, endless time, limitless space, ever-progressive change, unbroken continuity in the universe of forms. The spiritual consciousness, on the other hand, means to live the infinite and the eternal, to be projected beyond all creation, beyond time and space. To become conscious of your psychic being and to live a psychic life you must abolish all egoism; but to live a spiritual life you must no longer have an ego.

*Bulletin, February 1952, 12, 35-6*

## **Non-duality after the identification: the Divine is all**

One point is very remarkable—I don't remember whether Sri Aurobindo speaks about it in what follows—but among the four activities or realisations he mentions—religion, occultism, spiritual philosophy and spiritual experience—which are necessary for the development and transformation of man, all are not equally accessible to humanity.

The one which can be practised and, one might say, “understood”—although it is certainly not an “understanding”—by the greatest number of human beings—those who live almost exclusively in the physical consciousness—is the religious method, precisely because it is based on fixed creeds and practices. Simply by an act of faith or a collective suggestion—above all a collective suggestion—many human beings

who have not yet reached any considerable inner development can take up the path of religion.

For occultism we must already have come to a second stage of development and be more conscious in the vital world to be able to come into contact with the play of forces, which is indispensable in order to manipulate them.

As for spiritual philosophy, only the few who have a fairly complete mental development and are fully conscious on the intellectual plane, can usefully adopt this method; otherwise it is a dead letter for all those who don't have an ability for mental gymnastics and so cannot follow all the acrobatics of the mind.

And finally, Sri Aurobindo has told us somewhere in *The Life Divine* that to follow the path of spiritual experience, one must have within oneself a "spiritual being", one must be "twice born" as it is said, for if one doesn't have a spiritual being within, which is at least on the point of becoming self-aware, one may try to imitate these experiences but it will only be crude imitation or hypocrisy, it won't be a reality.

Therefore, in order to follow these four paths simultaneously and to practise them with an integral benefit for the being, one must already be a complete individual, capable of having a conscious life in the four principal elements of human and spiritual nature.

Of course, this inner development is not always apparent and we may meet someone who has within him a conscious spiritual entity, ready for the most beautiful experiences, though externally he seems quite crude and incomplete.

Nor is it necessary to follow this development in the order in which it has been mentioned, but if we want our realisation to be integral and to arrive at a total transformation of our being, we must be able to use the essence of what each of these methods can bring.

The psychic or spiritual consciousness gives you the deep inner realisation, contact with the Divine, liberation from external fetters; but for this liberation to be effective, for it to have an action on the rest of the being, the mind must be open enough to be able to hold the spiritual light of Knowledge, the vital must be powerful enough to handle the forces behind appearances and dominate them, and the physical should be disciplined, organised enough to be able to *express* the deep experience, in the movements of each day and each moment, and live it integrally.

If one of these things is lacking, the result is not complete. One can

make light of this thing or that under the pretext that it is not the most important, the central Thing—and to neglect outer things certainly cannot prevent you from entering into spiritual communion with the Supreme, but that is good only for a flight from life.

If we are to be total, complete beings, to have an integral realisation, we should be able to express our spiritual experience mentally, vitally and physically. And the more our expression is perfect, executed by a complete and perfect being, the more integral and perfect will our realisation be.

For someone who wants to follow the integral yoga nothing is useless and nothing must be neglected. The main thing is to know how to put each thing in its place and to hand over the government to what truly has the right to govern.

*18 June 1958, 9, 344-6*

For the integrality and the complete truth of the Yoga it is important not to limit one's aspiration to one form or another. But from the spiritual point of view, whatever the object of worship, if the movement is perfectly sincere, if the self-giving is integral and absolute, the spiritual result can be the same; for, whatever object you take, through it—sometimes in spite of it, despite it—you always reach the supreme Reality, in the measure and proportion of the sincerity of your consecration.

That is why it is always said that, no matter what aspect of the Divine you adore or even what guide you choose, if you are perfect in your self-giving and absolutely sincere, you are *sure* to attain the spiritual goal.

But the result is no longer the same when you want to realise the integral yoga. Then you must not limit yourself in any way, even in the path of your consecration.... Only, these are two very different things.

Spiritual realisation—as it was formerly understood, as it is still commonly understood—is union with the Supreme in some way or other, either within you or through some form or other; it is the fusion of your being with the Supreme, with the Absolute, almost the disappearance of your individuality in this fusion.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Later a disciple asked Mother: “Why did you say ‘almost’? Isn’t then the disappearance complete?” To which Mother answered: “Somewhere, I believe it is in ‘The Yoga of Self-Perfection’ [*The Synthesis of Yoga*], regarding those who wish to merge in the Supreme, Sri Aurobindo says or rather hints that this cannot be done, for the Supreme wants it otherwise. But Sri Aurobindo says it without saying it, it is just an allusion in

And that depends absolutely on the sincerity and the integrality of your self-giving, rather than on the choice you make of that to which you want to give yourself. For... the very sincerity of your aspiration will make you cross all limitations and find the Supreme, for you carry Him within yourself.

Whether you seek Him outside, whether you seek Him within, whether you seek Him in a form or without form, if your aspiration is sincere enough and your resolution sincere enough, you are sure to reach the goal.

But if you want to make the complementary movement of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, that is to say, to return to the outer consciousness and world after having realised this union in yourself, and transform this outer consciousness and world, then in this case you cannot limit yourself in any way, for otherwise you will not be able to accomplish your work.

Essentially, you must be able to find this oneness with the Divine in all forms, all aspects, in every way that has been used to reach Him. And you must go beyond that and find a new way.

So, the first point to clear up in your thought—and it is a point of capital importance: you must not confuse the integral yoga with other spiritual realisations, which may be very high but cover a very limited field, for theirs is a movement only in depth.

You may pierce a hole, you see, with your aspiration and make a movement in depth through anything at all. All depends on the intensity and sincerity of your aspiration—on the sincerity, that is to say, on how far your self-giving is complete, integral, absolute. But it does not depend on the form you have chosen: necessarily, you will have to pass through in order to find what is behind.

But if you want to transform your nature and your being, and if you want to participate in the creation of a new world, then this aspiration, this sharp and linear point is no longer enough. One must include everything and contain everything in one's consciousness.

Naturally, that is much more difficult.

*1 August 1956, 8, 243-5*

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passing. The idea is that beyond Being and Non-Being, the total Summit necessarily includes a form—what might be called an essential form—of the individuality, which no longer contradicts or is even distinct from the One, but is included in the One without any separation. But the words at our disposal mean nothing! And one is reduced to giving a childish explanation. That is why I said 'almost'."



All these ideas of good and evil, good and bad, higher, lower, all these notions belong to the ignorance of the human mind, and if one really wants to come into contact with the divine life, one must liberate oneself totally from this ignorance, one must rise to a region of consciousness where these things have no reality. The feeling of superiority and inferiority completely disappears, it is replaced by something else which is of a very different nature—a sort of capacity for filtering appearances, penetrating behind masks, shifting the point of view.

And these are not words, it is altogether true that everything changes its appearance, totally, that life and things are completely different from what they appear to be.

All this contact, this ordinary perception of the world loses its reality completely. This is what appears unreal, fantastic, illusory, non-existent. There is something—something very material, very concrete, very physical—which becomes the reality of the being, and which has nothing in common with the ordinary way of seeing. When one has this perception—the perception of the work of the divine force, of the movement being worked out behind the appearance, in the appearance, through the appearance—one begins to be ready to live something truer than the ordinary human falsehood. But not before.

There is no compromise, you see. It is not like a convalescence after an illness: you must change worlds. So long as your mind is real for you, your way of thinking something true for you, real, concrete, it proves that you are not there yet. You must first pass through to the other side. Afterwards you will be able to understand what I am telling you.

Pass through to the other side.

It is not true that one can understand little by little, it is not like that. This kind of progress is different. What is more true is that one is shut up in a shell, and inside it something is happening, like the chick in the egg. It is getting ready in there. It is in there. One doesn't see it. Something is happening in the shell, but outside one sees nothing. And it is only when all is ready that there comes the capacity to pierce the shell and to be born into the light of day.

It is not that one becomes more and more perceptible or visible: one is shut in—shut in—and for sensitive people there is even that terrible sensation of being compressed, of trying to pass through and then coming up against a wall. And then one knocks and knocks and knocks, and one can't go through.

And so long as one is there, inside, one is in the falsehood. And

only on the day when by the Divine Grace one can break the shell and come out into the Light, is one free.

This may happen suddenly, spontaneously, quite unexpectedly.

I don't think one can go through gradually. I don't think it is something which slowly wears and wears away until one can see through it. I haven't had an instance of this so far. There is rather a kind of accumulation of power inside, an intensification of the need, and an endurance in the effort which becomes free from all fear, all anxiety, all calculation; a need so imperative that one no longer cares for the consequences.

One is like an explosive that nothing can resist, and one bursts out from one's prison in a blaze of light.

After that one can no longer fall back again.

It is truly a new birth.

26 June 1957, 9, 135-7

After the identification, there is no longer the position, for example, of Master and disciple, the Lord and the aspirant. At the moment of identification that relationship disappears; there is no longer any Master or disciple, any Lord or aspirant: all is the Divine. So, who receives the lesson? That could only happen if there were an element of consciousness which did not participate in this identification, because it needed another approach than the one it had. And all would depend on how perfectly the aspirant has eliminated from his being all that has nothing to do with the exclusive path he follows. For instance, if he keeps latent in his consciousness, elements of devotion or love, then if he has followed the path of knowledge, well, at the time of identification these will miss something. And then he will be able to understand that his experience is not complete. But if they have been so well eliminated that they no longer exist, then who will notice that the union is not perfect? The union is perfect in itself at this particular point. It is purely a phenomenon of consciousness.

*(Turning to the child)* In your consciousness there is still the idea that you unite with "Something" which knows more about it than you and will make you recognise your mistake. But that no longer exists after the identification! That is just the first contact, but not the identification.

In identification there is no longer any difference between the one who is identified and what he is identified with: it is the same thing. So

long as there is a difference, it is not identification. I say that by any path whatever and by eliminating all that is not of this path, it is possible for each one to be perfectly identified with the Divine, that is to say, to become the Divine—but at only one point, the point he has chosen. But this point is perfect in itself. I don't say it contains everything, I say it is perfect in itself, that is, the identification is perfect—but it is not total.

*They have the full bliss?*

Perfect bliss—perfect bliss, eternity, infinity, everything.

*1 February 1956, 8, 47-8*

## CHOOSING THE INFINITE BEING CHOSEN BY THE INFINITE

### Paths of Yoga, preparing oneself

*142 – Be to the world as the lion in fearlessness and lordship, as the camel in patience and service, as the cow in quiet, forbearing and maternal beneficence. Raven in all the joys of God as a lion over its prey, but bring also all humanity into that infinite field of luxurious ecstasy to wallow there and to pasture.*

These are the qualities needed for the growth of the being until its divinisation; it is also a reminder that no transformation can be complete without the ascent of humanity.

*1 September 1969, 10, 247*

Whatever difference there is between the West and the East in relation to spiritual life lies not in the inner being or nature, which is an invariable and constant thing, but in the mental habits, in the modes of outer expression and presentation which are the result of education and environment and other external conditions. All people, whether occidental or oriental, are alike in their deepest feelings; they are different in their way of thinking. Sincerity, for example, is a quality which is the same everywhere. Those who are sincere, to whichever nation they belong, are all sincere in the same way. Only the forms given to this sincerity vary. The mind works in different ways in different peoples, but the heart is the same everywhere; the heart is a much truer reality, and the differences belong to the superficial parts. As soon as you go deep enough, you meet something that is one in all. All meet in the Divine. The sun is the symbol of the Divine in the physical nature. Clouds may modify its appearance, but when they are no longer there, you see it is the same sun always and everywhere.

*14 April 1929, 3, 12*

There are three principal paths of yoga: the path of knowledge, the path of love and the path of works. So Sri Aurobindo says that it depends on each case and person. Some people follow more easily the path of knowledge, others follow more easily the path of love, of devotion,

and others follow the path of works. He says that for the integral yoga the three must be combined and with them something else, but that everybody can't do everything at the same time and that there are people who need to be exclusive and to choose one of the three paths first in order to be able to combine them all later.

*1 February 1956, 8, 43*

*What is meant by the yoga of devotion and the yoga of knowledge?*

The yoga of knowledge is the path that leads to the Divine through the exclusive pursuit of the pure and absolute Truth. The yoga of devotion is the path that leads to union with the Divine through perfect, total and eternal love. In the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the two combine with the yoga of works and the yoga of self-perfection to make a homogeneous whole, culminating in the yoga of supramental realisation.

*5 February 1960, 16, 236*

There are disciplines such as Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga that one can practise and yet have nothing to do with the spiritual life; the former arrives mostly at body control, the latter at mind control. But to enter the spiritual life means to take a plunge into the Divine, as you would jump into the sea. And that is not the end but the very beginning; for after you have taken the plunge, you must learn to live in the Divine. How are you to do it? You have simply to jump straight in and not to think, "Where shall I fall? What will happen to me?" It is the hesitation of your mind that prevents you. You must simply let yourself go. If you wish to dive into the sea and are thinking all the time, "Ah, but there may be a stone here or a stone there", you cannot dive.

*21 April 1929, 3, 21*

*What is one to do to prepare oneself for the Yoga?*

To be conscious, first of all. We are conscious of only an insignificant portion of our being; for the most part we are unconscious.

It is this unconsciousness that keeps us down to our unregenerate nature and prevents change and transformation in it. It is through unconsciousness that the undivine forces enter into us and make us their slaves. You are to be conscious of yourself, you must awake to your nature and movements, you must know why and how you do things or feel or think them; you must understand your motives and impulses, the forces, hidden and apparent, that move you; in fact, you must, as

it were, take to pieces the entire machinery of your being. Once you are conscious, it means that you can distinguish and sift things, you can see which are the forces that pull you down and which help you on. And when you know the right from the wrong, the true from the false, the divine from the undivine, you are to act strictly up to your knowledge; that is to say, resolutely reject one and accept the other. The duality will present itself at every step and at every step you will have to make your choice. You will have to be patient and persistent and vigilant—“sleepless”, as the adepts say; you must always refuse to give any chance whatever to the undivine against the divine.

*Is the Yoga for the sake of humanity?*

No, it is for the sake of Divinity. It is not the welfare of humanity that we seek but the manifestation of the Divine. We are here to work out the Divine Will, more truly, to be worked upon by the Divine Will so that we may be its instruments for the progressive incorporation of the Supreme and the establishment of His reign upon earth. Only that portion of humanity which will respond to the Divine Call shall receive its Grace.

Whether humanity as a whole will be benefited, if not directly, at least, in an indirect way, will depend upon the condition of humanity itself. If one is to judge from the present conditions, there is not much hope. (...)

*How is that we have met?*

We have all met in previous lives. Otherwise we would not have come together in this life. We are of one family and have worked through ages for the victory of the Divine and its manifestation upon earth.

*7 April 1929, 3, 2-3*

Many people who are here forget one thing. They want to begin by the end. They think that they are ready to express in their life what they call the supramental Force or Consciousness, and they want to infuse this in their actions, their movements, their daily life. But the trouble is that they don't at all know what the supramental Force or Consciousness is and that first of all it is necessary to take the reverse path, the way of interiorisation and of withdrawal from life, in order to find within oneself this Truth which has to be expressed.

For as long as one has not found it, there is nothing to express. And by imagining that one is living an exceptional life, one lives only in the illusion of one's exceptional state. Therefore, at first not only must one find one's soul and the Divine who possesses it, but one must identify

oneself with it. And then later, one may begin to come back to outward activities, and then transform them; because then one knows in what direction to turn them, into what to transform them.

One can't jump over this stage. One must first find one's soul, this is absolutely indispensable, and identify oneself with it. Later one can come to the transformation. Sri Aurobindo has written somewhere: "Our Yoga begins where the others end." Usually yoga leads precisely to this identification, this union with the Divine—that is why it is called "yoga". And when people reach this, well, they are at the end of their path and are satisfied. But Sri Aurobindo has written: we begin when they finish; you have found the Divine but instead of sitting down in contemplation and waiting for the Divine to take you out of your body which has become useless, on the contrary, with this consciousness you turn to the body and to life and begin the work of transformation—which is very hard labour. It's here that he compares it with cutting one's way through a virgin forest; because as nobody has done it before, one must make one's path where there was none. But to try to do this without having the indispensable directive of the union with the Divine within, within one's soul, is childishness.

*2 November 1955, 7, 350-1*

Change, that is transform one's will into the divine Will? Is that what you want to say?

*Yes.*

Well, first you must want it. Afterwards you must have a great aspiration. And then you must continue to want it, and continue to aspire and not give way when difficulties come, and continue until you succeed. That's all. And then, a certain number of things are necessary, as for example not to be selfish, not to have a small narrow-mindedness, not to live with preferences, not to have desires, not to have mental opinions—many things. It is a fairly long process because you must change your ordinary nature. This is the first condition.

To break all the limits of one's mind, break all the desires of one's vital, break all the preferences of one's physical nature. After that one may hope to be in contact with the divine Will; and then, later, one must not only be in contact with it, but live integrally this Will, that is, be unified in all one's being: not have a single bit which goes on this side and another bit which goes on that. You must be entirely in one single will.

*31 December 1954, 6, 460-1*

## Only a minority is ready to do yoga

Even a fleeting idea in a child, at a certain moment in its childhood when the psychic being is most in front, if it succeeds in penetrating through the outer consciousness and giving the child just an impression of something beautiful which must be realised, it creates a little nucleus and upon this you build your action. There is a vast mass of humanity to whom one would never say, “You must realise the Divine” or “Do yoga to find the Divine.” If you observe well you will see that it is a tiny minority to whom this can be said. It means that this minority of beings is “prepared” to do yoga, it is that. It is that there has been a beginning of realisation—a beginning is enough. With others it is perhaps an old thing, an awakening which may come from past lives. But we are speaking of those who are less ready; they are those who have had at a certain moment a flash which has passed through their whole being and created a response, but that suffices. This does not happen to many people. Those ready to do yoga are not many if you compare them with the unconscious human mass. But one thing is certain, the fact that you are all here proves that at least you have had that—there are those who are very far on the path (sometimes they have no idea about it), but at least all of you have had that, that kind of spontaneous integral contact which is like an electric shock, a lightning-flash which goes through you and wakes you up to something: there is something to be realised. It is possible that the experience is not translated into words, only into a flame. That is enough. And it is around this nucleus that one organises oneself, slowly, slowly, progressively. And once it is there it never disappears. It is only if you have made a pact with the adverse forces and make a considerable effort to break the contact and not notice its existence, that you may believe it has disappeared. And yet a single flash suffices for it to come back.

If you have had this just once, you may tell yourself that in this life or another you are sure to realise.

26 March 1951, 4, 255-6

*Here it is said: “He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite.”*

It is a magnificent sentence!

And it is absolutely true. There is in *Thoughts and Glimpses* also a sentence like this where I think he [Sri Aurobindo] uses the word



“God” instead of the Infinite. But the idea is the same—that it is God who has chosen you, the Divine who has chosen you. And that is why you run after Him!

And this is what gives—that’s what he says, doesn’t he?—this is what gives that kind of confidence, of certitude, precisely, that one is predestined; and if one is predestined, even if there are mountains of difficulties, what can that matter since one is sure to succeed! This gives you an indomitable courage to face all difficulties and a patience that stands all trials: you are sure to succeed.

And it’s a fact—in fact, it is like that: the moment you thought about it, well, you thought about it because someone thought about you; you chose because you were chosen. And once you have been chosen, you are sure of the thing. Therefore, doubts, hesitations, depressions, uncertainties, all this is quite simply a waste of time and energy; it is of no use at all.

From the moment one has felt just once within himself: “Ah! *This* is the truth for me”, it is finished; it is finished, it is settled. Even if you spend years cutting your way through the virgin forest, it’s of no importance—it is finished, it is settled.

That is why I told you one day, “After all, you all are here because you have wanted it somewhere; and if you wanted it somewhere, it means that the Divine wanted it thus in you.”

So there are some who follow a very straight path and arrive very quickly; there are others who love labyrinths, it takes longer. But the end is there, the goal is there. I know by experience that there isn’t one being who, were it only once in his life, has had a great urge towards... it doesn’t matter what he calls it—let us say the Divine for facility of speech, who is not sure to arrive; even if he turns his back on Him at a certain time, it’s of no importance—he is sure to arrive. He will have to struggle more or less, will have more or less difficulty, but he is sure to succeed one day. It’s a soul that has been chosen, it has become conscious because its hour has come—once the hour has come, well, the result will follow more or less quickly. You can do this in a few months; you can do it in some years; you can do it in some lives—but you will do it.

And what is remarkable is that this freedom of choice is left to you and that, if you decide within yourself that you will do it in this lifetime, you will do it. And I am not speaking here of a permanent and continuous decision because then you can arrive in twelve months. No,

I mean: if you have suddenly been seized by this, “I want this”, even once, in a flash, the seal is put, there, like that.

There we are.

That’s not a reason for wasting time on the way; that’s not a reason for just following all the meanderings of the labyrinth and arriving with... with considerable rubbish when you are at the end. No. But, in any case it is a reason for never despairing, whatever the difficulties may be.

I am of the opinion that when there is something to do, it is better to do it as quickly as possible. But still, there are people who like to waste their time. Perhaps they need to turn and turn and turn and return and make lots of windings before reaching the place they have to. But that’s a question of choice. Unfortunately, those who are in this habit of turning and returning and turning aside and making all kinds of useless meanderings, are the ones who complain most; they moan, and they are the workers of their own misery!

If one decided to go quite straight upon his path, whatever the cost—knowing how to bear a few difficulties, facing discomforts, without weakness, you see—well, one would avoid much trouble. But some people go only if they are taken by the scruff of the neck and dragged with a terrible force. Then they shout that they are violently forced.

*19 October 1955, 7, 338-40*

## **Divinization of even the smallest details of life**

*Sri Aurobindo says, “This intellectual preparation can indeed be the first stage in a powerful Yoga, but it is not indispensable.”*

*The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 75*

A powerful yoga is a very complete yoga, which contains many things, takes in many elements. So this element of intellectual knowledge makes the yoga more powerful.

*Is it the same as the integral yoga?*

Not quite. An integral yoga is one which comprises all the parts of the being and all the activities of the being. But the activities of one being are not as powerful as the activities of another; and the integrality of one being is not as total as the integrality of another. You don’t understand?

If all your being, as it is, participates in the yoga, it becomes for you an integral yoga. But your participation may be very poor and mediocre compared with that of someone else, and the number of elements of

consciousness which you contain may be very small compared with the elements of consciousness contained in another person. And yet your yoga is integral for you, that is, it is done in all the parts and all the activities of your being.

You know, I had a cat which was doing yoga. Well, the yoga of the cat could not be as powerful as the yoga of man, and yet it was *as integral*, it was quite complete; even its body took part in its yoga. But its way of doing it, naturally, was not human.

*4 January 1956, 8, 7-8*

In the integral Yoga, the integral life down even to the smallest detail has to be transformed, to be divinised. There is nothing here that is insignificant, nothing that is indifferent. You cannot say, "When I am meditating, reading philosophy or listening to these conversations I will be in this condition of an opening towards the Light and call for it, but when I go out to walk or see friends I can allow myself to forget all about it." To persist in this attitude means that you will remain untransformed and never have the true union; always you will be divided; you will have at best only glimpses of this greater life. For although certain experiences and realisations may come to you in meditation or in your inner consciousness, your body and your outer life will remain unchanged. An inner illumination that does not take any note of the body and the outer life, is of no great use, for it leaves the world as it is. This is what has continually happened till now. Even those who had a very great and powerful realisation withdrew from the world to live undisturbed in inner quiet and peace; the world was left to its ways, and misery and stupidity, Death and Ignorance continued, unaffected, their reign on this material plane of existence. For those who thus withdraw, it may be pleasant to escape from this turmoil, to run away from the difficulty and to find for themselves a happy condition elsewhere; but they leave the world and life uncorrected and untransformed; and their own outer consciousness too they leave unchanged and their bodies as unregenerate as ever. Coming back to the physical world, they are likely to be worse there than even ordinary people; for they have lost the mastery over material things, and their dealing with physical life is likely to be slovenly and helpless in its movements and at the mercy of every passing force.

An ideal of this kind may be good for those who want it, but it is not our Yoga. For we want the divine conquest of this world, the

conquest of all its movements and the realization of the Divine here. But if we want the Divine to reign here we must give all we have and are and do here to the Divine. It will not do to think that anything is unimportant or that the external life and its necessities are no part of the Divine Life. If we do, we shall remain where we have always been and there will be no conquest of the external world; nothing abiding there will have been done.

28 April 1929, 3, 24-5

To begin with, the first thing to tell yourself is that you are almost entirely incapable of knowing whether you are making progress or not, for very often what seems to us to be a state of stagnation is a long—sometimes long, but in any case not endless—preparation for a leap forward. We sometimes seem to be marking time for weeks or months, and then suddenly something that was being prepared makes its appearance, and we see that there is quite a considerable change and *on several points* at a time.

As with everything in yoga, the effort for progress must be made for the love of the effort for progress. The joy of effort, the aspiration for progress must be enough in themselves, quite independent of the result. Everything one does in yoga must be done for the joy of doing it, and not in view of the result one wants to obtain.... Indeed, in life, always, in all things, the result does not belong to us. And if we want to keep the right attitude, we must act, feel, think, strive spontaneously, for *that* is what we must do, and not in view of the result to be obtained.

As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort. You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the Universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering your self; and whether this results in progress or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it.

If you wish to progress, if you make an effort to control yourself for instance, to overcome certain defects, weaknesses, imperfections, and if you expect to get a more or less immediate result from your effort, your effort loses all sincerity, it becomes a bargaining. You say, "See! I am going to make an effort, but that's because I want this in exchange

for my effort.” You are no longer spontaneous, no longer natural.

So there are two things to remember. First, we are incapable of judging *what* the result ought to be. If we put our trust in the Divine, if we say... if we say, “Well now, I am going to give everything, everything, all I can give, effort, concentration, and *He* will judge what has to be given in exchange or even whether anything should be given in exchange, and I do not know what the result should be.” Before we transform anything in ourselves, are we quite sure of the direction, the way, the form that this transformation should take?—Not at all. So, it is only our imagination and usually we greatly limit the result to be obtained and make it altogether petty, mean, superficial, relative. We do not know what the result can truly be, what it ought to be. We know it later. When it comes, when the change takes place, then if we look back, we say, “Ah! That’s it, that is what I was moving towards”—but we know it only later. Before that we only have vague imaginations which are quite superficial and childish in comparison with the true progress, the true transformation.

So we say, first point: we have an aspiration but we don’t really know the true result we ought to obtain. Only the Divine can know that.

And secondly, if we tell the Divine, “I am giving you my effort, but, you know, in exchange I must make progress, otherwise I won’t give you anything at all!”—that is bargaining. That’s all.

*(Silence)*

A spontaneous act, done because one cannot do otherwise, and done as an offering of goodwill, is the only one which truly has any value.

23 April 1958, 9, 316-8

*“A spiritual atmosphere is more important than outer conditions; if one can get that and also create one’s own spiritual air to breathe in and live in it, that is the true condition of progress.”<sup>1</sup> How can one get that and also create one’s true spiritual atmosphere?*

Get what? This—it is by... precisely by inner discipline; you can create your atmosphere by controlling your thoughts, turning them exclusively towards the sadhana, controlling your actions, turning them exclusively towards the sadhana, abolishing all desires and all useless, external, ordinary activities, living a more intense inner life, and separating yourself from ordinary things, ordinary thoughts, ordinary reactions, ordinary actions; then you create a kind of atmosphere around you.

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo’s *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 1, “Calm – Peace – Equality”. [Comp.]

For example, instead of reading any odd thing and chatting and doing anything whatever, if you read only what helps you to follow the path, if you act only in conformity with what can lead you to the divine realisation, if you abolish in yourself all desires and impulses turned towards external things, if you calm your mental being, appease your vital being, if you shut yourself against suggestions coming from outside and become immune to the action of people surrounding you, you create *such* a spiritual atmosphere that nothing can touch it, and it *no longer* depends *at all* on circumstances or on whom you live with or on the conditions you live in, because you are enclosed in your own spiritual atmosphere. And that is how one obtains it: by turning one's attention *solely* to the spiritual life, by reading only what can help in the spiritual life, by doing only what leads you to the spiritual life, and so on. Then you create your own atmosphere. But naturally, if you open all the doors, listen to what people tell you, follow the advice of this one and the inspirations of that one, and are full of desires for outside things, you cannot create a spiritual atmosphere for yourself. You will have an ordinary atmosphere like everybody else.

6 October 1954, 6, 356-7

## **The Witness and the Silent Self**

There are witnesses everywhere. It is a capacity of the being to detach itself, to stand back and look at what is happening, as when one looks at something happening in the street or when one looks at others playing and does not himself play, one remains seated, looking at the others moving but does not move. That's how it is.

In all the parts of the being there is one side which can do this: put itself at the back, remain quiet and look, without participating. This is what is called the witness. One has many witnesses inside oneself, and often one is a witness without even being aware of it. And if you develop this, it always gives you the possibility of being quiet and not being affected by things. One detaches oneself from them, looks at them as at a dramatic scene, without participating in it. This does not change things very much.

15 December 1954, 6, 426

*When one is conscious of the different parts of the being, what*

*part is it which is conscious?*

It is probably not always the same. Usually the work of becoming aware ought to be done by the psychic, but it is rarely the psychic. More often it is a part of the mind, more or less enlightened, which has acquired the capacity to stand back a little and look at the rest. But you know it well: if you are conscious in your mind, one part of the mind says one thing and the other replies, and there is an endless discussion between the two parts. Many people have these dialogues in their mind.

It is difficult to say generally what is conscious; but naturally, if something observes, it is always the “witness” element in this part—in each part of the being there is something which is a “witness”, which looks on. There is even a physical witness which can get very much in the way; for instance, if it watches you playing, this can paralyse you considerably. There is also a vital witness which looks at you, sees your desires and enjoys highly all that happens; it acts also as a brake. There is the mental witness which judges ideas, which says, “This idea contradicts this other”, and which arranges everything. Then there is the great psychic Witness, who is the inner divinity.

Sometimes there is no relation among these different witnesses—there ought to be, but it is not always there. But if there is in the being a will to become perfect, the relation is established quite quickly; one can refer to another and finally, if there is a sufficient sincerity, sufficient concentration, you come to the supreme inner Witness who can judge all things. But generally it may be said that it is always a part of the mind, more or less enlightened, in a little closer contact with the inner being, which observes and judges.

22 March 1951, 4, 232-3

*What does “the reduction of the mental being to the position of a witness” mean?*

Have you never felt this? As though you were a little behind or above things, and were looking at them taking place but were not doing anything yourself? Witness means an observer, someone who looks on and does not act himself. So, when the mind is very quiet, one can withdraw a little in this way from circumstances and look at things as though he were a witness, a spectator, and not participating in the action himself. This gives you a great detachment, a great quietude, and also a very precise sense of the value of things, because it cuts the attachment to action. When you know how to do this with yourself,

when you can withdraw and watch yourself acting, you learn many things about yourself. When you are all mixed up and take part in the action, you do not observe yourself acting, you don't know what you are like. But when you draw back and look at yourself, you can perceive many imperfections which you wouldn't have seen otherwise.

*13 October 1954, 6, 360*

*What is the witness soul?*

It is the soul entering into a state in which it observes without acting. A witness is one who looks at what is done, but does not act himself. So when the soul is in a state in which it does not participate in the action, does not act through Nature, simply draws back and observes, it becomes the witness soul. If one wants to stop the outer activities, this is the best method. One withdraws into one's soul, to the extreme limit of one's existence, in a kind of immobility—an immobility which observes but does not participate, does not even give orders. That's all.

You don't understand?

When one wants to detach oneself from something, from a certain movement or activity or state of consciousness, this is the most effective method; one steps back a little, watches the thing like that, as one would watch a scene in a play, and one doesn't intervene. And a moment later, the thing doesn't concern you any longer, it is something which takes place outside you. Then you become very calm.

Only, when you do this, you never remedy anything in the outer movement, it remains what it is, but it no longer affects you. We have said this already I don't know how many times: it is only a first step, it helps you not to feel much troubled by things. But things remain as they are—indefinitely. It is a negative state.

*4 April 1956, 8, 102-3*

*What does "the experience of the silent Self" mean?*

Everyone has in himself a being which he calls the "Self", and which is completely silent and immobile. So, if one becomes conscious of this being in himself, one has the experience of the silent Self. It is an immobile and silent being which is within, which is like an aspect of the true being and also an aspect of the witness we were just speaking about. It is this silent being which, when it turns to things and looks at them, becomes the witness. But it can turn inwards, not look on, be in its silent contemplation. It depends on which side one turns to. It is a



solid point in the being, in which the light of truth shines.

*13 October 1954, 6, 361-2*

### **Truly entering the spiritual path**

In ancient times the disciple had to undergo severe tests to prove his ability for initiation. Here we do not follow that method. Apparently there is no test and no trial. But if you see the truth, you will find that here it is much more difficult. There the disciple knew that he was undergoing a period of trial and after he had passed through some outward tests, he was taken in. But here you have to face life and you are watched at every moment. It is not only your outer actions that count. Each and every thought and inner movement is seen, every reaction is noticed. It is not what you do in the solitude of the forest, but what you do in the thick of the battle of life that is important.

Are you ready to submit yourself for such tests? Are you ready to change yourself completely? You will have to throw off your ideas, ideals, values, interests and opinions. Everything will have to be learnt anew. If you are ready for all this, then take a plunge; otherwise don't try to step in.

*14, 43-4*

In ancient times the teaching of the great spiritual truths was a secret teaching reserved for a small number of initiates.

Even now there are things that are spoken but cannot be written down, and still less can they be printed.

*15, 32*

In the beginning of the Yoga you are apt to forget the Divine very often. But by constant aspiration you increase your remembrance and you diminish the forgetfulness. But this should not be done as a severe discipline or a duty; it must be a movement of love and joy. Then very soon a stage will come when, if you do not feel the presence of the Divine at every moment and whatever you are doing, you feel at once lonely and sad and miserable.

Whenever you find that you can do something without feeling the presence of the Divine and yet be perfectly comfortable, you must understand that you are not consecrated in that part of your being.

That is the way of the ordinary humanity which does not feel any need of the Divine. But for a seeker of the Divine Life it is very different. And when you have entirely realized unity with the Divine, then, if the Divine were only for a second to withdraw from you, you would simply drop dead; for the Divine is now the Life of your life, your whole existence, your single and complete support. If the Divine is not there, nothing is left.

*In the initial stages of Yoga, is it well for the Sadhak to read ordinary books?*

You can read sacred books and yet be far away from the Divine; and you can read the most stupid productions and be in touch with the Divine. It is not possible to get an idea of what the transformed consciousness and its movements are until you have had a taste of the transformation. There is a way of consciousness in union with the Divine in which you can enjoy all you read, as you can all you observe, even the most indifferent books or the most uninteresting things. You can hear poor music, even music from which one would like to run away, and yet you can, not for its outward self but because of what is behind, enjoy it. You do not lose the distinction between good music and bad music, but you pass through either into that which it expresses. For there is nothing in the world which has not its ultimate truth and support in the Divine. And if you are not stopped by the appearance, physical or moral or aesthetic, but get behind and are in touch with the Spirit, the Divine Soul in things, you can reach beauty and delight even through what affects the ordinary sense only as something poor, painful or discordant.

*28 April 1929, 3, 26-7*

The first condition is not to have one's own personal interest as a goal.

The first qualities needed are boldness, courage and perseverance.

And then to be conscious that one knows nothing compared to what one ought to know, that one can do nothing compared to what one ought to do, that one is nothing compared to what one ought to be.

One must have an invariable will to acquire what is lacking in one's nature, to know what one does not yet know, to be able to do what one is not yet able to do.

One must constantly progress in the light and peace that come from the absence of personal desires.

One could take as a programme: "Always better. Forward!"

And to have only one goal: to know the Divine in order to be able

to manifest Him.

Persevere, and what you cannot do today you will be able to do tomorrow.

11 January 1972, 16, 430

When you come to the Divine, you must abandon all mental conceptions; but, instead of doing that, you throw your conceptions upon the Divine and want the Divine to obey them. The only true attitude for a Yogi is to be plastic and ready to obey the Divine Command whatever it may be; nothing must be indispensable to him, nothing a burden. Often the first impulse of those who want to live the spiritual life is to throw away all they have; but they do it because they want to be rid of a burden, not because they want to surrender to the Divine. Men who possess wealth and are surrounded by the things that give them luxury and enjoyment turn to the Divine, and immediately their movement is to run away from these things,—or, as they say, “to escape from their bondage”. But it is a wrong movement; you must not think that the things you have belong to you,—they belong to the Divine. If the Divine wants you to enjoy anything, enjoy it; but be ready too to give it up the very next moment with a smile.

19 May 1929, 3, 54-5

*When the consciousness feels imprisoned within its too narrow external mould, what should be done?*

You must particularly not be violent, for if you are violent, you will come out of it tired, exhausted, without any result. You must concentrate all the forces of aspiration. If you are conscious of the inner flame, you should put into this flame all that you find strongest in you by way of aspiration, of a call, and hold yourself as quiet as you can, calling, with a deep reliance that the answer will come; and when you are in this state, with your aspiration and concentrated force, with your inner flame, press gently upon this kind of outer crust, without violence, but with insistence, as long as you can, without getting agitated, irritated or excited. You must be perfectly quiet, must call and push.

It will not succeed the first time. You must begin again as many times as is necessary, but suddenly, one day... you are on the other side! Then you emerge in an ocean of light.

If you fight, if you are restless, if you struggle, you will get nothing at all; and if you become irritable you will only get a headache, that is all.

Yes, it is that. To gather together all your power of aspiration, make of it something intensely concentrated, in an absolute tranquillity, to be conscious of your inner flame and throw into it all you can that it may burn ever higher and higher, and then call with your consciousness and, slowly, push. You are sure to succeed one day.

*12 February 1951, 4, 10*

*Are there any signs which indicate that one is ready for the path, especially if one has no spiritual teacher?*

Yes, the most important indication is a perfect equality of soul in all circumstances. It is an absolutely indispensable basis; something very quiet, calm, peaceful, the feeling of a great force. Not the quietness that comes from inertia but the sensation of a concentrated power which keeps you always steady, whatever happens, even in circumstances which may appear to you the most terrible in your life. That is the first sign.

A second sign: you feel completely imprisoned in your ordinary normal consciousness, as in something extremely hard, something suffocating and intolerable, as though you had to pierce a hole in a brass wall. And the torture becomes almost unbearable, it is stifling; there is an inner effort to break through and you cannot manage to break through. This also is one of the first signs. It means that your inner consciousness has reached a point where its outer mould is much too small for it—the mould of ordinary life, of ordinary activities, ordinary relations, all that becomes so small, so petty; you feel within you a force to break all that.

There is yet another sign: when you concentrate and have an aspiration, you feel something coming down into you, you receive an answer; you feel a light, a peace, a force coming down; and almost immediately—you need not wait or spend a very long time—nothing but an inner aspiration, a call, and the answer comes. This also means that the relation has been well established.

*12 February 1951, 4, 97-8*

To walk on the path you must have a dauntless intrepidity, you must never turn back upon yourself with this mean, petty, weak, ugly movement that fear is.

An indomitable courage, a perfect sincerity, a total self-giving to the extent that you do not calculate or bargain, you do not give with the idea of receiving, you do not offer yourself with the intention of

being protected, you do not have a faith that needs proofs,—this is indispensable for advancing on the path,—this alone can shelter you against all dangers.

1961, 15, 190

*When can one say that one has truly entered the spiritual path?*

The first sign (it is not the same for everybody) but in a chronological order, I believe, is that everything else appears to you absolutely without importance. Your entire life, all your activities, all your movements continue, if circumstances so arrange things, but they all seem to you utterly unimportant, this is no longer the meaning of your existence. I believe this is the first sign.

There may be another; for example, the feeling that everything is different, of living differently, of a light in the mind which was not there before, of a peace in the heart which was not there before. That does make a change; but the positive change usually comes later, very rarely does it come at first except in a flash at the time of conversion when one has decided to take up the spiritual life. Sometimes, it begins like a great illumination, a deep joy enters into you; but generally, afterwards this goes into the background, for there are too many imperfections still persisting in you.... It is not disgust, it is not contempt, but everything appears to you so uninteresting that it is truly not worth the trouble of attending to it. For instance, when you are in the midst of certain physical conditions, pleasant or unpleasant (the two extremes meet), you say to yourself, “It was so important to me, all that? But it has no importance at all!” You have the impression that you have truly turned over to the other side.

12 February 1951, 4, 103

### **Suspended in the air with no support but one’s faith**

*In the case of some persons who turn to the Divine it happens that every material prop or everything they are fond of is removed from their life. And if they love someone, he also is taken away.*

It is a thing that does not happen to all. It happens to those that are called.

14 April 1929, 3, 11-12

*Why is one pursued by a host of adverse conditions, when one first becomes acquainted with Yoga? Someone has said that when you open the door to Yoga, you are confronted by a multitude of obstacles. Is this true?*

It is not an absolute rule; and much depends upon the person. Adverse conditions come to many as a test for the weak points in their nature. The indispensable basis for Yoga, which must be well established before you can walk freely on the path, is equanimity. Naturally, from that point of view, all disturbances are tests which you have to pass. But they are necessary too in order to break down the limits which your mental constructions have built around you and which prevent your opening to the Light and the Truth. The whole mental world in which you live is limited, even though you may not know or feel its limitations, and something must come and break down this building in which your mind has shut itself and liberate it. For instance, you have some fixed rules, ideas or principles to which you attribute an absolute importance; most often it is an adherence to certain moral principles or precepts, such as the commandment "Honour thy father and mother" or "Thou shalt not kill" and the rest. Each man has some fad or one preferred shibboleth or another, each thinks that he is free from this or that prejudice from which others suffer and is willing to regard such notions as quite false; but he imagines that his is not like theirs, it is for him the truth, the real truth. An attachment to a rule of the mind is an indication of a blindness still hiding somewhere.

*19 May 1929, 3, 52-3*

We enter here into a big problem.... The notion of what is good for a being and what isn't is not the same to his evolved consciousness as to the divine consciousness. What appears to you good, favourable, is not always what's best for you from a spiritual point of view. It is this which must be learnt from the beginning, that the divine perception of what will lead you fastest to the goal is absolutely different from yours, and that you cannot understand it. That is why you must say to yourself from the beginning, "It is all right. I shall accept everything and I shall understand later on."

So often you come across persons who, before they began yoga, had a relatively easy life, and as soon as they come to yoga, all the circumstances to which they were particularly attached break away from them more or less brutally. Then they are troubled; they do not

perhaps have the frankness to admit it to themselves, they perhaps take recourse to other thoughts and other words, but it comes to this: “How is it? I am good and I am not treated kindly!”

The entire human notion of justice is there. “You try to become good and what cataclysms befall you! All the things you loved are taken away from you, all the pleasures you have had are taken away from you, all the people whom you loved leave you; it is indeed not worth the trouble to be good and to have made an effort.” And if you follow your reasoning far enough, all of a sudden you come upon the canker—so, you wanted to do yoga out of self-interest, you wanted to be good out of self-interest, you thought your situation would be better and you would be given a bonbon for your wisdom! And that does not happen!... Well, this refusal is the best lesson that could ever be given to you. For as long as your aspiration hides a desire and as long as in your heart there is the spirit of bargaining with the Divine, things will come and give you blows till you wake up to the true consciousness within you which makes no conditions, no bargains.

*12 February 1951, 4, 101-2*

When you come to the Yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental buildings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you except your faith. You will have to forget your past self and its clingings altogether, to pluck it out of your consciousness and be born anew, free from every kind of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be; be altogether in what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family lie there; it is the DIVINE.

*9 June 1929, 3, 83-4*

*“At every moment one must know how to lose all in order to gain all.” What does this mean?*

We have already spoken about this. When we enter upon the path of yoga, why do our dear ones leave us? One loses all worldly possessions, all one’s attachments; sometimes, even, one loses one’s position, and to gain what?—the most important thing, the only thing which is valuable: the divine Consciousness. And to gain this one must know how to lose all the goods of this world, to let go of all one’s possessions, all desires, all attachments, all satisfactions; one must know how to lose all this if

one wants to get the divine Consciousness.

26 March 1951, 4, 247

## **The laughter and delight that dissolve shadow and suffering**

*How can one feel sweetness and joy when one is in difficulty?*

Exactly, when the difficulty is egoistic or personal, if one makes an offering of it and throws it into the fire of purification, one immediately feels the joy of progress. If one does it sincerely, at once there is a welling up of joy.

That is obviously what ought to be done instead of despairing and lamenting. If one offers it up and aspires sincerely for transformation and purification, one immediately feels joy springing up in the depths of the heart. Even when the difficulty is a great sorrow, one may do this with much success. One realises that behind the sorrow, no matter how intense it may be, there is a divine joy.

8 August 1956, 8, 251-2

Nothing can be eliminated, nothing *should* be eliminated, but each thing must be in its place in total harmony with all the rest. And then all these things that seem so “bad”, so “reprehensible”, so “unacceptable” to the puritan mind, would become movements of delight and freedom in a totally divine life. And then nothing would prevent us from knowing, understanding, feeling and living this wonderful laughter of the Supreme who takes infinite delight in watching Himself live infinitely.

This delight, this wonderful laughter that dissolves every shadow, every pain, every suffering! You only have to go deep enough within yourself to find the inner Sun, to let yourself be flooded by it; and then there is nothing but a cascade of harmonious, luminous, sunlit laughter, which leaves no room for any shadow or pain.

In fact, even the greatest difficulties, even the greatest sorrows, even the greatest physical pain—if you can look at them from that standpoint, from there, you see the unreality of the difficulty, the unreality of the sorrow, the unreality of the pain—and there is nothing but a joyful and luminous vibration.

In fact, this is the most powerful way of dissolving difficulties, overcoming sorrows and removing pain. The first two are relatively easy—I say relatively—the last one is more difficult because we are



in the habit of considering the body and its feelings to be extremely concrete, positive; but it is the same thing, it is simply because we have not learnt, we are not in the habit of regarding our body as something fluid, plastic, uncertain, malleable. We have not learnt to bring into it this luminous laughter that dissolves all darkness, all difficulty, all discord, all disharmony, everything that jars, that weeps and wails.

And this Sun, this Sun of divine laughter is at the centre of all things, the truth of all things: we must learn to see it, to feel it, to live it.

And for that, let us avoid people who take life seriously; they are very boring people.

As soon as the atmosphere becomes grave you can be sure that something is wrong, that there is a troubling influence, an old habit trying to reassert itself, which should not be accepted. All this regret, all this remorse, the feeling of being unworthy, of being at fault—and then one step further and you have the sense of sin. Oh! To me it all seems to belong to another age, an age of darkness.

But everything that persists, that tries to cling and endure, all these prohibitions and this habit of cutting life in two—into small things and big things, the sacred and the profane.... “What!” say the people who profess to follow a spiritual life, “how can you make such little things, such insignificant things the object of spiritual experience?” And yet this is an experience that becomes more and more concrete and real, even materially; it’s not that there are “some things” where the Lord is and “some things” where He is not. The Lord is *always* there. He takes nothing seriously, everything amuses Him and He plays with you, if you know how to play. You do not know how to play, people do not know how to play. But how well He knows how to play! How well He plays! With everything, with the smallest things: you have some things to put on the table? Don’t feel that you have to think and arrange, no, let’s play: let’s put this one here and that one there, and this one like that. And then another time it’s different again.... What a good game and such fun!

So, it is agreed, we shall try to learn how to laugh with the Lord.

*14 January 1963, 10, 155-7*

There are many different reasons which make one feel at times more alive, more full of force and joy... Usually, in ordinary life, there are people who, due to their very constitution, the way they are made, are in a certain harmony with Nature, as though they breathed with the

same rhythm, and these people are usually always joyful, happy; they succeed in all they do, they avoid many troubles and catastrophes, indeed they are in harmony with the rhythm of life and Nature. And, moreover, there are days when one is in contact with the divine Consciousness which is at work, with the Grace, and then everything is tinged, coloured with this Presence, and things which usually seem to you dull and uninteresting become charming, pleasant, attractive, instructive—everything lives and vibrates, and is full of promise and force. So, when one opens to that, one feels stronger, freer, happier, full of energy, and *everything* has a meaning. One understands why things are as they are and one participates in the general movement.

There are other times when, for some reason or other, one is clouded or closed or down in a hole, and so one no longer feels anything and all things lose their taste, their interest, their value; one goes about like a walking block of wood.

Now, if one is able to consciously unite with one's psychic being, one can *always* be in this state of receptivity, inner joy, energy, progress, communion with the divine Presence. And when one is in communion with That, one sees it everywhere, in everything, and all things take on their true meaning. On what does that depend?... On an inner rhythm. Perhaps a grace. In any case on a receptivity to something that is beyond you.

*26 September 1956, 8, 304-5*

But when you are good, when you are generous, noble, disinterested, kind, you create in you, around you, a particular atmosphere and this atmosphere is a sort of luminous release. You breathe, you blossom like a flower in the sun; there is no painful recoil on yourself, no bitterness, no revolt, no miseries. Spontaneously, naturally, the atmosphere becomes luminous and the air you breathe is full of happiness. And this is the air that you breathe, in your body and out of your body, in the waking state and in the state of sleep, in life and in the passage beyond life, outside earthly life until your new life.

Every wrong action produces on the consciousness the effect of a wind that withers, of a cold that freezes or of burning flames that consume.

Every good and kind deed brings light, restfulness, joy—the sunshine in which flowers bloom.

*3 January 1958, 3, 199-200*

Krishna is the immanent Divine, the Divine Presence in everyone and in all things. He is also, sovereignly, the aspect of Delight and Love of the Supreme; he is the smiling tenderness and the playful gaiety; he is at once the player, the play and all his playmates. And as both the game and its results are wholly known, conceived, willed, organised and played consciously in their entirety, there can be room for nothing but the delight of the play. Thus to see Krishna means to find the inner Godhead, to play with Krishna means to be identified with the inner Godhead and to share in his consciousness. When you achieve this state, you enter immediately into the bliss of the divine play; and the more complete the identification, the more perfect the state.

But if some corner of the consciousness keeps the ordinary perception, the ordinary understanding, the ordinary sensation, then you see the suffering of others, you find the play that causes so much suffering very cruel and you conclude that the God who takes pleasure in such a play must be a terrible Torturer; but on the other hand, when you have had the experience of identification with the Divine, you cannot forget the immense, the wonderful love which he puts into his play, and you understand that it is the limitation of our vision that makes us judge in this way, and that far from being a voluntary Torturer, he is the great beneficent love that guides the world and men, by the quickest routes, in their progressive march towards perfection, a perfection which, moreover, is always relative and is always being surpassed.

But a day will come when this apparent suffering will no longer be required to stimulate the advance and when progress can be made more and more in harmony and delight.

*6 April 1960, 10, 51-2*

*Here, you have said: "Whether Thou chooseth for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome."*

*Does the Divine give suffering or sorrow?*

Well, my child, that text, you know what it is: it is Radha's prayer to Krishna. And so, it is such a personification of divine forces that one is obliged to extend human feelings to the Divine in order to be able to express oneself. To understand it in its true form a whole long explanation would be required, and then it is no longer artistic—it becomes dogmatic or in any case didactic. It is to give the idea that all is in the Divine and all is divine. And necessarily, if one changes the state

of consciousness and is identified with the Divine, that changes the very nature of things. For example, what seemed pain or sorrow or misery—one becomes aware quite on the contrary that it is an opportunity for the Divine's growing closer to you, and that from this event perhaps one may draw a still greater joy than that experienced from something satisfying. Only, you must understand it like that, in that spirit and with that consciousness, for otherwise, if taken in the ordinary sense, it is the very contradiction of the principle that all is divine.

The same thing, exactly the same vibration, according to the way in which it is received and responded to, brings either an intense joy or considerable despair, exactly the same, according to the state of consciousness one is in. So there is nothing of which it could be said: it is a misfortune. There is nothing that could be called suffering. All that is necessary is to change one's state of consciousness. That is all. Only (I have written this somewhere, I don't know where now), if you yourself succeed in changing your state of consciousness and enter this condition of bliss, you can see others still quarrelling, fighting, being unhappy, suffering and feeling miserable, and you yourself feel that everything is so harmonious, so wonderful, so sweet, so pleasant, and you say: "Well, why don't they do what I do?" But the trouble is that everybody is not ready to do that! And for those who remain in the ordinary consciousness, for them suffering is something very real.

Now, there are people who don't care to be happy all alone and agree to renounce this perfect bliss in order to help others to walk a little farther on the path.

Attitudes in the world—attitudes towards virtue—are very subjective. And what may succeed with one may not do so with another. And every one must follow his own path. That is why it is always difficult to say to people: "Do what I do." This is what all gurus usually say: "Do as I do and you will reach the goal." All that one may say is: "Do as I do and you will be like me."

*9 December 1953, 5, 384-5*

This consciousness [Radha's] has the capacity of changing everything into a perpetual ecstasy, for instead of seeing things in their discordant appearance, one now sees only the divine Presence, the divine Will and the Grace everywhere; and every event, every element, every circumstance, every form changes into a way, a detail through which one can draw more intimately and profoundly closer to the Divine.

Discordances disappear, ugliness vanishes; there is now only the splendour of the divine Presence in a Love shining in all things.

It is obvious that from a practical point of view one must be able to remain at a constant and unshakable height in order to be in that state without exposing oneself to fairly troublesome consequences. That is probably why those who wished to live in this state used to withdraw from the world and find the universal contact through Nature.... I must say, without meaning to be unpleasant to men, that it is infinitely easier to realise this state of consciousness when one is surrounded by trees, flowers, plants and even animals than by human beings. It is easier but not indispensable. And if one wants the state to be truly integral, one must be able to keep it at every moment, in the presence of anyone and anything.

*18 July 1956, 8, 222-3*

So once you are in relation with this universal and eternal Bliss, you no longer need an outer object, an outer cause to have joy; it is objectless, and being objectless it can be continuous, “even”. Whatever the outer circumstances, whatever you may be doing, you are in the same state of joy, for this joy does not depend upon outer things, it depends upon your inner condition. You have found the source of joy in yourself, that is, the divine Presence, communion with the Divine; and having found this source of joy in yourself, you need nothing else, nothing whatsoever to have this joy. And as it has no cause, it does not cease; it is a constant state.

*5 December 1956, 8, 377*

As for me, I must confess to you that I feel much more essentially myself when I am joyful and when I play—in my own way—than when I am very grave and very serious—much more. Grave and serious that always gives me the impression that I am dragging the weight of all this creation, so heavy and so obscure, whereas when I play—when I play, when I can laugh, can enjoy myself—it gives me the feeling of a fine powder of delight falling from above and tinting this creation, this world with a very special colour and bringing it much closer to what it should essentially be.

*9 January 1957, 9, 13*

## PSYCHIC BEING, CENTRAL BEING, JIVATMAN

### Reincarnation

If we go a little way within ourselves, we shall discover that there is in each of us a consciousness that has been living throughout the ages and manifesting in a multitude of forms.

*24 January 1935, 15, 124*

You are not all of a single piece. Your present body is often an accident. If you have within you a conscious soul which has influenced the formation of your body, you are infinitely better prepared than someone, a soul, which falls head first into a body without knowing where it is going; in this latter case much hard work is needed to lift up the consciousness which has thus fallen into obscurity. The inner preparation may come from previous lives or from the present life; or you have reached a turning point in your integral growth and are in just the right relation with the circumstances necessary for the last step to be taken. But this does not mean that you have not lived a thousand times before reaching this turning-point.

*10 February 1951, 4, 95*

I have told you many times and I could not repeat it too often, that one is not built up of one single piece. We have within us many states of being and each state of being has its own life. All this is put together in one single body, so long as you have a body, and acts through that single body; so that gives you the feeling that it is one single person, a single being. But there are many beings and particularly there are concentrations on different levels: just as you have a physical being, you have a vital being, you have a mental being, you have a psychic being, you have many others and all possible intermediaries. But it is a little complicated, you might not understand. Suppose you were living a life of desire, passion and impulse: you live with your vital being dominant in you; but if you live with spiritual effort, with great good will, the desire to do things well and an unselfishness, a will for progress, you live with the psychic being dominant in you. Then, when you are about to leave your body, all these beings start to disperse. Only

if you are a very advanced yogi and have been able to unify your being around the divine centre, do these beings remain bound together. If you have not known how to unify yourself, then at the time of death all that is dispersed: each one returns to its domain. For example, with regard to the vital being, all your different desires will be separated and each one run towards its own realisation, quite independently, for the physical being will no longer be there to hold them together. But if you have united your consciousness with the psychic consciousness, when you die you remain conscious of your psychic being and the psychic being returns to the psychic world which is a world of bliss and delight and peace and tranquillity and of a growing knowledge. So, if you like to call that a paradise, it is all right; because in fact, to the extent to which you are identified with your psychic being, you remain conscious of it, you are one with it, and it is immortal and goes to its immortal domain to enjoy a perfectly happy life or rest. If you like to call that paradise, call it paradise. If you are good, if you have become conscious of your psychic and live in it, well, when your body dies, you will go with your psychic being to take rest in the psychic world, in a blissful state.

*1 July 53, 5, 133-4*

The condition of your being after death depends very much on whether the vital has been converted here or not. If you are only a medley of unorganised impulses, then at death, when the consciousness withdraws into the background, the different personalities in you fall apart, rushing hither and thither to seek their own suitable environments. One part may enter into another person who has an affinity for it, another may even enter an animal, while that which has been alive to the divine Presence may remain attached to the central psychic being. But if you are fully organised and converted into a single individual, bent on reaching the goal of evolution, then you will be conscious after death and preserve a continuity.

As to rebirth, it must be confessed that no rule holds good for all cases. Some people are reborn almost immediately—it most often happens with parents that a part of them gets assimilated into their children if the latter are very much attached to them. Some people, however, take centuries and even thousands of years to be reincarnated. They wait for the necessary conditions to mature which will provide them with a suitable *milieu*. If one is yogically conscious he can actually prepare the body of his next birth. Before the body is born he

shapes and moulds it, so that it is he who is the true maker of it while the parents of the new child are only the adventitious, purely physical agents.

I must here remark in passing that there is a common misconception about rebirth. People believe that it is they who are reincarnated, yet this is a palpable error, though it is true that parts of their being are amalgamated with others and so act through new bodies. Their whole being is not reborn, because of the simple fact that what they evidently mean by their “self” is not a real individualised entity but their exterior personality, the personality composed of the outward name and form. Hence it is wrong to say that A is reborn as B: A is a personality organically distinct from B and cannot be said to have reincarnated as B. You would be right only if you said that the same line of consciousness uses both A and B as the instruments of its manifestation. For, what does remain constant is the psychic being which is not the outward personality at all, but something deep within, something which is not the exterior name and form.

You want to know if all men retain their identities after the dissolution of their bodies. Well, it depends. The ordinary mass of men are so closely identified with their bodies that nothing of them survives when the physical disintegrates. Not that absolutely nothing survives—the vital and mental stuff always remains but it is not identical with the physical personality. What survives has not the clear impress of the exterior personality because the latter was content to remain a jumble of impulses and desires, a temporary organic unity constituted by the cohesion and coordination of bodily functions, and when these functions cease their pseudo-unity also naturally comes to an end. Only if there has been a mental discipline imposed on the different parts and they have been made to subserve a common mental ideal, can there be some sort of genuine individuality which retains the memory of its earthly life and so survives consciously. The artist, the philosopher and other developed persons who have organised, individualised and to a certain extent converted their vital being can be said to survive, because they have brought into their exterior consciousness some shadow of the psychic entity which is immortal by its very nature and whose aim is to progressively build up the being around the central Divine Will.

1930-1, 3, 144-6

*Sri Aurobindo says that some time after death the vital and*



*mental sheaths dissolve, leaving the soul free to retire to the psychic world before it takes up new sheaths. What becomes of the Karma and of the impressions—Samskaras—on the old sheaths? Do they also dissolve without producing any result, good or bad, which they should according to the theory of Karma? Also, what becomes of the vital and mental beings after the dissolution of the vital and mental sheaths?*

The outer form only dissolves, unless that too is made conscious and is organised round the divine centre. But the true mental, the true vital and even the true subtle physical persist: it is that which keeps all the impressions received in earthly life and builds the chain of Karma.

15, 123-4

*If it is not the mind, vital or physical which take birth again but only the psychic being, then the vital or mental progress made before is of no value in another life?*

It happens only to the extent the progress of these parts has brought them close to the psychic, that is, to the extent the progress lies in putting all the parts of the being successively under the psychic influence. For all that is under the psychic influence and identified with the psychic continues, and it is that alone which continues. But if the psychic is made the centre of one's life and consciousness, and if the whole being is organised around it, the whole being passes under the psychic influence, becomes united with it, and can continue—if it is necessary for it to continue. Indeed, if the physical body could be given the same movement—the same movements of progress and the same capacity to ascend that the psychic being has—well, it wouldn't be necessary for it to decompose. But that indeed is the difficulty.

And only that which is in contact with the psychic lasts, and only what can last can remember, for the rest disappears, is again dissolved into small pieces and utilised elsewhere—as the body is dissolved again to dust and used elsewhere. It goes back to the earth, plants use the soil, men eat the plants. It is in this way that it goes on. And then it returns to the earth and begins again. That's the way Nature progresses. In order to progress she makes a heap of forms, then, when that seems no longer important or necessary to her, she demolishes them, takes up all the elements again, chemical or other, and reconstitutes something else, and so it goes on changing all the time, coming and going. And she finds that very good, for she sees very far, her work extends over

centuries, and a small human life is nothing, just a breath in eternity. So she takes up, shapes; she takes a certain time, it's fun for her, she finds it very good; and then, when it is no longer so good, she demolishes it—she takes up, mixes everything, begins another form, makes something else. And so perhaps with this process which is evidently very slow, finally the whole of matter progresses. It is possible—always in this way, intermingling, breaking up, remixing, breaking up again.

*18 November 1953, 5, 358-9*

## **A developed psychic being chooses where it will be born**

*In what does a psychic being's progress consist?*

Individualisation, the capacity to take up all experiences and organise them around the divine centre.

The aim of the psychic being is to form an individual being, individualised, “personalised” around the divine centre. Normally, all the experiences of the external life (unless one does yoga and becomes conscious) pass without organising the inner being, while the psychic being organises these experiences serially. It wants to realise a particular attitude towards the Divine. Hence it looks for all favourable experiences in order to have the complete series of opportunities, so to say, which will allow it to realise this attitude towards the Divine.

*24 February 1951, 4, 149-50*

Let us take a divine spark which, through attraction, through affinity and selection, gathers around it a beginning of psychic consciousness (this work is already very perceptible in animals—don't think you are exceptional beings, that you alone have a psychic being and the rest of creation hasn't. It begins in the mineral, it is a little more developed in the plant, and in the animal there is a first glimmer of the psychic presence). Then there comes a moment when this psychic being is sufficiently developed to have a consciousness and a personal will. And then after innumerable lives more or less individualised, it becomes conscious of itself, of its movements and of the environment it has chosen for its growth. Arriving at a certain state of perception, it decides—generally at the last minute of the life it has just finished upon earth—the conditions in which its next life will be passed. Here I must tell you a very important thing: the psychic being can progress

and form itself only in the physical life and upon earth. As soon as it leaves a body, it enters into a rest which lasts for a more or less long time according to its own choice and its degree of development—a rest for assimilation, for a passive progress so to say, a rest for passive growth which will allow this same psychic being to pass on to new experiences and make a more active progress. But after having finished one life (which usually ends only when it has done what it wanted to do), it will have chosen the environment where it will be born, the approximate place where it will be born, the conditions and the kind of life in which it will be born, and a very precise programme of the experiences through which it will have to pass to be able to make the progress it wants to make.

*24 February 1951, 4, 144*

It is not the mind and vital which develop and progress from life to life—except in altogether exceptional cases and at a very advanced stage of evolution—it is the psychic. So, this is what happens: the psychic has alternate periods of activity and rest; it has a life of progress resulting from experiences of the physical life, of active life in a physical body, with all the experiences of the body, the vital and the mind; then, normally, the psychic goes into a kind of rest for assimilation where the result of the progress accomplished during its active existence is worked out, and when this assimilation is finished, when it has absorbed the progress it had prepared in its active life on earth, it comes down again in a new body bringing with it the result of all its progress and, at an advanced stage, it even chooses the environment and the kind of body and the kind of life in which it will live to complete its experience concerning one point or another. In some very advanced cases the psychic can, before leaving the body, decide what kind of life it will have in its next incarnation.

When it has become an almost completely formed and already very conscious being, it presides over the formation of the new body, and usually through an inner influence it chooses the elements and the substance which will form its body in such a way that the body is adapted to the needs of its new experience. But this is at a rather advanced stage. And later, when it is fully formed and returns to earth with the idea of service, of collective help and participation in the divine Work, then it is able to bring to the body in formation certain elements of the mind and vital from previous lives which, having been

organised and impregnated with psychic forces in previous lives, could be preserved and, consequently, can participate in the general progress. But this is at a very, very advanced stage.

When the psychic is fully developed and very conscious, when it becomes a conscious instrument of the divine Will, it organises the vital and the mind in such a way that they too participate in the general harmony and can be preserved.

A high degree of development allows at least some parts of the mental and vital beings to be preserved in spite of the dissolution of the body. If, for instance, some parts—mental or vital—of the human activity have been particularly developed, these elements of the mind and vital are maintained even “in their form”—in the form of the activity which has been fully organised—as, for example, in highly intellectual people who have particularly developed their brains, the mental part of their being keeps this structure and is preserved in the form of an organised brain which has its own life and can be kept unchanged until a future life so as to participate in it with all its gains.

In artists, as for instance in certain musicians who have used their hands in a particularly conscious way, the vital and mental substance is preserved in the form of hands, and these hands remain fully conscious, they can even use the body of living people if there is a special affinity—and so on.

Otherwise, in ordinary people in whom the psychic form is not fully developed and organised, when the psychic leaves the body, the mental and vital forms may persist for a certain time if the death has been particularly peaceful and concentrated, but if a man dies suddenly and in a state of passion, with numerous attachments, well, the different parts of the being are dispersed and live for a shorter or longer time their own life in their own domain, then disappear.

The centre of organisation and transformation is always the presence of the psychic in the body. Therefore, it is a very big mistake to believe that the progress continues or even, as some believe, that it is more complete and rapid in the periods of transition between two physical lives; in general, there is no progress at all, for the psychic enters into a state of rest and the other parts, after a more or less ephemeral life in their own domain, are dissolved.

Earthly life is the place for progress. It is here, on earth, that progress is possible, during the period of earthly existence. And it is the psychic which carries the progress over from one life to another, by

organising its own evolution and development itself.

*12 February 1958, 9, 268-70*

*When the psychic is about to enter into the world, does it choose in advance the form it is going to take?*

It is an interesting question. That depends. As I have just told you, there are psychic beings who are in the making, progressing; these generally, right at the outset, cannot choose much, but when they have arrived at a certain degree of growth and of consciousness (generally while they are still in a physical body and have had a certain amount of experience), they decide at that time what their next field of experience will be like.

I can give you some rather external examples. For instance, a psychic being needed to have the experience of mastery, of power in order to know the reactions and how it is possible to turn all these movements towards the Divine: to learn what a life of power may teach you. It took birth in a king or a queen. These enjoyed some power and during that time they had their experiences; they reached the end of the field of experience. Now, they know what they wanted to know, they are about to go, they are going to leave their body that's now become useless, and they are going to prepare for the next experience. Well, at that time, when the psychic being is still in the body and has noted what it has learnt, it decides for the next occasion. And sometimes it is a movement of action and reaction: because it has studied one entire field, it needs to study the opposite field. And very often it chooses a very different life from the one it had. So before leaving, it says: "Next time, it is in this domain that I shall take birth...." Suppose, for example, the psychic has reached a stage of growth when it would like to have the chance of working on the physical body to make it capable of coming consciously into contact with the Divine and of transforming it. Now, it is about to leave the body in which it had authority, power, activity, the body it has used for its growth; it says: "Next time I shall take birth in a neutral environment, neither low nor high, where it will not be necessary (how to put it?) to have a highly external life, where one will have neither great power nor great misery—altogether neutral, as you know, the life in between." It chooses that. It returns to its own psychic world for the necessary rest, for assimilation of the experience gained, for preparation of the future experience. It naturally remembers its choice and, before coming down once more, when it has finished its assimilation, when it is time to return, to come down upon earth,

it cannot, from that domain, see material things as we see them, you know: they appear to it in another form. But still the differences can be foreseen: the differences of environment, differences of activity in the environment are clearly seen, quite perceptible. It can have a vision that is total or global. It can choose. At times it chooses the country; when it wants a certain kind of education, civilisation, influence, it can choose its country beforehand. Sometimes it can't, sometimes it chooses only its environment and the kind of life it will lead. And then from up there, before it comes down, it looks for the kind of vibrations it wants; it sees them very clearly. It is as though it was aiming at the place where it is going to drop. But it is an approximation because of the fact that another condition is necessary: not only its choice but also a receptivity from below and an aspiration. There must be someone in the environment it has chosen, generally the mother (sometimes both the parents, but the most indispensable is the mother), she must have an aspiration or a receptivity, something sufficiently passive and open or a conscious aspiration towards something higher. And that kindles for the psychic being a little light. In the mass representing for it the environment in which it wants to be born, if under the influence of its own projected will a small light is kindled, then it knows that it is there it must go.

It is necessary, it is this that makes the difference in months or days, perhaps, not so much perhaps in years; however, this creates an uncertainty, and that is why it cannot foretell the exact date: "On that date, that day, at that hour I shall take birth." It needs to find someone receptive. When it sees that, it rushes down. But what happens is something like an image: it is not exactly that, but something very similar. It throws itself down into an unconsciousness, because the physical world, even human consciousness whatever it may be, is very unconscious in comparison with the psychic consciousness. So it rushes into an unconsciousness. It is as though it fell on its head. That stuns it. And so generally, apart from some very very rare exceptions, for a long time it does not know. It does not know any longer where it is nor what it is doing nor why it is there, nothing at all. It finds a great difficulty in expressing itself, especially through a baby that has no brain, naturally; it is only the embryo of a brain which is hardly formed and it does not have the elements for manifesting itself. So it is very rare for a child to manifest immediately the exceptional being it contains.... That happens. We have heard about such things. It happens, but generally some time is

needed. Only slowly it awakens from its stupor and becomes aware that it is there for some reason and by choice. And usually this coincides with the intensive mental education which shuts you completely from the psychic consciousness. So a mass of circumstances, happenings of all kinds, emotions, all sorts of things are necessary to open the inner doors so that one might begin to remember that after all one has come from another world and one has come for a particular reason.

Otherwise, if all went normally, it could very quickly have a connection, very quickly. If it had the luck to find someone possessing a little knowledge, and instead of falling into a world of ignorance, it fell upon a little bit of knowledge, everything would be done quite quickly.

*5 August 1953, 5, 213-5*

### **The psychic being has a form not in the third dimension**

*Sri Aurobindo says that the voice of the ordinary conscience is not the voice of the soul. What is it then?*

The voice of the ordinary conscience is an ethical voice, a moral voice which distinguishes between good and evil, encourages us to do good and forbids us to do evil. This voice is very useful in ordinary life, until one is able to become conscious of one's psychic being and allow oneself to be entirely guided by it—in other words, to rise above ordinary humanity, free oneself from all egoism and become a conscious instrument of the Divine Will. The soul itself, being a portion of the Divine, is above all moral and ethical notions; it bathes in the Divine Light and manifests it, but it can truly govern the whole being only when the ego has been dissolved.

*12 August 1960, 16, 248*

Some people ask, "How do we know whether this is the soul?" I have already answered this question several times. Those who ask this question, by the very fact of asking it, prove that they are not conscious of their souls, because as soon as you are conscious of your soul and identified with it, you have a positive knowledge of it and you no longer ask how you are to know. And that experience can neither be counterfeited nor imagined; you cannot pretend to be in contact with your soul—it is something which cannot be contrived or counterfeited.

When the soul governs your life, you know it with absolute certainty and no longer ask any questions.

*14 November 1958, 10, 23-4*

When people ask me how one may know whether he is in contact with his psychic being or how one may know whether he has found the Divine, well, it makes me laugh; for when it happens to you it is over, you can no longer ask any questions, it is done; you do not ask how it happens, it is done.

*8 June 1955, 7, 194*

*It is often said that children enter into possession of their psychic being when they are about seven. What does this mean exactly?*

This is not correct. There are people whose psychic being watches over their formation before their birth, even before they are in the womb of their mother. There are children whose psychic being comes into contact with them at the very moment they utter their first cry. There are also people whose psychic being comes a few hours after their birth, or some days after, or some weeks, some months, some years after or... never!

*24 February 1951, 4, 139-40*

Most of the time people do not have their psychic being within them. I would like to explain this in greater detail... You must remember that the inner beings are not in the third dimension. If you open up your body you will find only the viscera of the body which are in the third dimension. The inner beings are in another dimension, and when I say that some men do not have their psychic being within them, I do not mean that it is not at the centre of their being, but that their outer consciousness is so small, so limited, so obscure that it is not able to keep a contact, not only conscious but intimate, with the psychic being which extends beyond it in every way; it is so much higher and deeper than the other outer consciousness that there is no relation either of quality or of nature between them. Religions say that you have a divine spark in you—it is well they call it a “spark”, for it is so small indeed that it can be placed anywhere in the body without difficulty. But this does not mean that it is in the body: it is within the consciousness in another dimension, and there are beings who have a contact with it, others who haven't. But if you come to the divine Presence in the atom,



the image is easier to understand, for there you touch so infinitesimal a domain that you are on the border-line where you can no longer distinguish between two, three, four or five dimensions. If you study modern physics you will understand what I mean. The movements constituting an atom are, in the matter of size, so imperceptible that they cannot be understood with our three-dimensional understanding, the more so as they follow laws which elude completely this three-dimensional idea. So if you take refuge there, you may say that the divine spark is at the centre of each atom and you won't be far from the truth; but I was not speaking of the divine spark, I was speaking of the being, the psychic consciousness, which is another thing. The psychic being is an entity which has a form; it is organised around a central consciousness and, having a form it has a dimension, but a dimension of another kind than the third dimension of the outer consciousness.

24 February 1951, 4, 139-40

Within the individual, contained in each form, there is an organization of consciousness which is closer to and more directly under the influence of the inner divine Presence, and the form which is under this influence—this kind of inner concentration of energy—has a life independent of the physical form—this is what we generally call the “soul” or the “psychic being”—and since it is organised around the divine centre it partakes of the divine nature which is immortal, eternal. The outer body falls away, and this remains throughout every experience that it has in each life, and there is a progress from life to life, and it is the progress of the *same* individual. And this movement complements the other, in the sense that instead of a species which progresses relative to other species, it is an individual who passes through all the stages of progress of these species and can continue to progress even when the species have reached the limit of their possibilities and... stay there or disappear—it depends on the case—but they cannot go any farther, whereas the individual, having a life independent of the purely material form, can pass from one form to another and continue his progress *indefinitely*. That makes a double movement which completes itself. And that is why each individual has the possibility of reaching the utmost realisation, independent of the form to which he momentarily belongs.

30 October 1957, 9, 215-6

Everyone has countless possibilities within him of which he is unaware

and which develop only if he does what is to be done in the way it should be done.... But there are two types of progress, not only one; there is the progress that consists in perfecting more and more the capacities, possibilities, faculties and qualities you have—this is what is normally obtained by education; but if you go in for a little more thorough development by approaching a deeper truth, you can add, to the qualities you already have, other new ones which seem to be asleep in your being.

You can multiply your possibilities, enlarge and increase them; you can suddenly bring up something you did not think you had. I have already explained this to you several times. When one discovers one's psychic being within, at the same time there develop and manifest, quite unexpectedly, things one could not do at all before and which one didn't think were in one's nature. Of this too I have had numerous examples. I have given you this one, but I am repeating it to you once more to make myself understood.

I used to know a young girl who was born in a very ordinary environment, who had not received much education and wrote rather clumsy French, who had not developed her imagination and had absolutely no literary sense: that seemed to be among the possibilities she did not have. Well, when she had the inner experience of contact with her psychic being, and as long as the contact was living and very present, she wrote admirable things. When she fell back from that state into an ordinary one, she could not even put two sentences together correctly! And I saw examples of both kinds of her writing.

There is a genius within everyone of us—we don't know it. We must find the way to make it come out—but it is there sleeping, it asks for nothing better than to manifest; we must open the door to it.

*10 September 1958, 10, 396*

There are people in whom the psychic movement, the emotional impulse is stronger than intellectual understanding. They feel an irresistible attraction for the Divine without knowing, without having the slightest idea of what it is, of what it can be, what it represents—nothing, no intellectual notion—but a kind of impulse, attraction, a need, an inevitable need.

And these people who have that, if, I may say as a result of the Grace, they have a mind which does not trouble them, does not question, does not discuss, go very fast.

And then, what is quite miraculous according to ordinary ideas is that as soon as they reach that degree of consecration which identifies them through their psychic being with the Divine Presence, suddenly they become endowed with capacities of expression absolutely unknown to their nature. (...) There are others who understand first, who are very intellectual, have studied, can play with words and ideas, who will give you brilliant lectures on all the philosophies, all the religions, all human conceptions and who, perhaps, will take years to advance one step. Because all that goes on in the head.

Many things go on in the head. I have told you this already several times, the head is like a public square. Anything at all can enter there, come, cross over, go out, and create a lot of disorder. And people who are in the habit of playing with ideas are the ones most hampered from going farther. It is a game that's pretty, attractive; it gives you the impression that you are not altogether ordinary, at the level of ordinary life, but it cuts the wings.

It's not the head which has wings: it's the heart. It's this... yes, this inevitable need. Nothing else counts. That's everything. Only that.

And so, after all, one doesn't care a rap for obstacles and difficulties. What can that do to you?... It doesn't count. One laughs at time also. What does it matter to you if it takes long? For a much longer time you will have the joy of aspiration, of consecration, of self-giving.

For this is the one true joy. And this joy fades away when there is something egoistic, and because there is a demand—which one calls a need—which is mixed in the consecration. Otherwise the joy never disappears.

This is the first thing one obtains, and the last one realises. And it is the sign of Victory.

*7 December 1955, 7, 394-6*

## **Beginning of the true spiritual life**

The inner contact with the psychic is a concrete and undeniable fact which imposes itself on all sincere consciousness.

*5 April 1972, 14, 335*

The laws of Nature are imperative for the physical nature only so long as this nature is not under the influence of the psychic being (the soul);

for the psychic being is in possession of the divine power which can, for its own ends, use all processes and formulas and transform them at will.

5 August 1969, 10, 241-2

The being organised around the psychic: the first stage of transformation.

15, 88

*Sri Aurobindo says: "The nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi." Ordinarily is there not a nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness?*

Ordinarily means in the ordinary life? A relation between the psychic being...

Yes.

It is almost, almost totally unconscious.

In the ordinary life there's not one person in a million who has a conscious contact with his psychic being, even momentarily. The psychic being may work from within, but so invisibly and unconsciously for the outer being that it is as though it did not exist. And in most cases, the immense majority, almost the totality of cases, it's as though it were asleep, not at all active, in a kind of torpor.

It is only with the sadhana and a very persistent effort that one succeeds in having a conscious contact with his psychic being. Naturally, it is possible that there are exceptional cases—but this is truly exceptional, and they are so few that they could be counted—where the psychic being is an entirely formed, liberated being, master of itself, which has chosen to return to earth in a human body in order to do its work. And in this case, even if the person doesn't do the sadhana consciously, it is possible that the psychic being is powerful enough to establish a more or less conscious relation. But these cases are, so to say, unique and are exceptions which confirm the rule.

In almost, almost all cases, a very, very sustained effort is needed to become aware of one's psychic being. Usually it is considered that if one can do it in thirty years one is very lucky—thirty years of sustained effort, I say. It may happen that it's quicker. But this is so rare that immediately one says, "This is not an ordinary human being." That's the case of people who have been considered more or less divine beings and who were great yogis, great initiates.

17 August 1955, 7, 268-9

To judge that a thing comes from the Divine because you find it good may lead you into terrible mistakes.

This is not how one should sense things. It is not by a perception of this kind of consciousness, not in this way. It comes when one has a sufficiently delicate and refined sensitivity to perceive clearly the value of a vibration; all vibrations that come from external activities, whether mental, vital or physical, or even psychic, have a particular quality, but what comes from the divine influence is of an absolutely different nature and quality. In order to be able to distinguish this, one must first of all have felt both; and even when one has felt both, one must be very calm, very attentive, indeed very still within, to be able to distinguish between them and not make a mistake. If your active thought comes in the way, it is finished, you cannot distinguish clearly any longer; you begin to question. And then you make use of your notions of good and evil to judge whether this comes from the Divine or doesn't come from the Divine. That's absurd. It is impossible.

Even when one has had this double experience and can make the distinction, there are still precautions to be taken and a check to be kept in order to be sure of not being mistaken. Only when one has opened wide the door of the psychic being, has entered consciously, and had the absolute, total, complete contact with the Divine, when one has the feeling of being born to a new life, when one is another being, does not see anything in the same way any longer, does not feel anything in the same way anymore—then one knows intimately, profoundly, completely what the divine life is. And even afterwards, if the door closes again, one can keep a precise memory. And it is in this way that it is seen. It is impossible to make a mistake. It is something quite different, there is no comparison, none: one can compare nothing with this. It is unique and absolute. That is why I asked you, “Can you make the distinction?” For surely if one among you has had the experience, he knows in this way what comes from the Divine, and necessarily if he knows absolutely what comes from the Divine, he knows perforce all that does not. So there I asked you the question. For I should have been very happy that one among you could tell me with sincerity, “I have had the experience and I know.” But it is only after this experience that one knows, not before. That is why, if one sincerely wants to progress, one must at each step inquire, be sure from where the influence comes: “Who has given me this suggestion? Is it a part of myself? Is it something external? Does this come from the Divine?”

But before having had that experience, one is not capable of judging by oneself. Naturally, if one's surrender is truly sincere and there is this constant attitude in the being, this total self-giving to the Divine, "Thy Will be done", in this way, one can, without knowing, without understanding, instinctively, choose the thing that should be done and reject the one that should not, but this becomes an instinct, a sort of automatic thing, if your surrender is perfect. And that is the very advantage of surrender, for you can do the right thing in the right way automatically, *before* having the knowledge.

But as Sri Aurobindo says there, you understand, one must be in a state of perfect obedience which does not question, does not discuss and obeys spontaneously, acts rightly as one is guided. Nothing in the thought or the vital must revolt or contradict or question or try to justify, to prove to oneself (and sometimes even to the Divine) that one is right, that what one has done is the right thing. All that must be done with.

12 May 1954, 6, 130-2

*In everybody, is the psychic always pure or has it to be made pure?*

It is always pure. But it is either more or less individualized and independent in its action. What is psychic in the being is always pure, by its very definition, for it is that part of the being which is in contact with the Divine and expresses the truth of the being. But this may be like a spark in the darkness of the being or it may be a being of light, conscious, fully formed and independent. There are all the gradations between the two.

*Usually is it veiled?*

It is the outer consciousness that is not in contact with it, for it is turned outwards instead of being turned inwards—for it lives amidst all the external noises and movements, in what it sees, what it does, what it says, instead of looking within, into the depths of the being and listening to the inner inspirations.

*Has the psychic any power?*

Power? It is usually the psychic which guides the being. One knows nothing about it because one is not conscious of it but usually it is that which guides the being. If one is very attentive, one becomes aware of it. But the majority of men haven't the least idea of it. For instance, when they have decided, in their outer ignorance, to do something, and instead of their being able to do it, all the circumstances are so organised that they do something else, they start shouting, storming, flying into

a rage against fate, saying (that depends on what they believe, their beliefs) that Nature is wicked or their destiny baleful or God unjust, or... no matter what (it depends on what they believe). Whilst most of the time it is just the very circumstance which was most favourable for their inner development. And naturally, if you ask the psychic to help you to fashion a pleasant life for yourself, to earn money, have children who will be the pride of the family, etc., well, the psychic will not help you. But it will create for you all the circumstances necessary to awaken something in you so that the need of union with the Divine may be born in your consciousness. At times you have made fine plans, and if they had succeeded, you would have been more and more encrusted in your outer ignorance, your stupid little ambition and your aimless activity. Whilst if you receive a good shock, and the post you coveted is denied to you, the plan you made is shattered, and you find yourself completely thwarted, then, sometimes this opposition opens to you a door on something truer and deeper. And when you are a little awake and look back, if you are in the least sincere, you say: "Ah! it wasn't I who was right—it was Nature or the divine Grace or my psychic being who did it." It is the psychic being which organised that.

*Is it the psychic will which wants the being to be identified with the Divine?*

Yes, surely. It is the will of the psychic. It is also the very reason of its existence. It is for that it is there. For example, in the mind certain activities (and even at times in the physical and vital) certain activities awaken to the influence of the psychic without even knowing it. That is why those parts adhere to it and begin to aspire also for the divine knowledge, the divine union, the relation with the Divine.

*16 December 1953, 5, 393-4*

*Isn't the psychic fire always lit?*

It is not always lit.

*Then how to light it?*

By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection. Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to

make—if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense.

8 August 1956, 8, 251

*Where does our true spiritual life begin?*

The true spiritual life begins when one is in communion with the Divine in the psychic, when one is conscious of the divine Presence in the psychic and in constant communion with the psychic. Then the spiritual life begins, not before. The *true* spiritual life.

When one is united with one's psychic being and conscious of the divine Presence, and receives the impulses for one's action from this divine Presence, and when the will has become a conscious collaborator with the divine Will—that is the starting point.

Before that, one may be an aspirant to the spiritual life, but one doesn't have a spiritual life.

9 May 1956, 6, 135

It is indispensable that each one finds his psychic and unites with it definitively. It is through the psychic that the supramental will manifest itself.

24 June 1972, 14, 336

## **Jivatman: the eternal self of the reincarnated being**

*How does the psychic manifest the truth?*

I have said that it manifests the truth?

*“We give the name ‘psychic’ to the psychological centre of our being, the seat within us of the highest truth of our existence, that which can know this truth and set it in movement.”*

*On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 4*

Oh! the truth of our existence—not just the Truth. The truth of the being, that is, the central *raison d'être* of an existence. It is that, indeed, which organises circumstances so that the truth of the being may be expressed or the superficial outer being be led to turn round within—not find any



support outside, for instance, and turn within to have a support; it finds the psychic support.

*16 December 1953, 5, 394-5*

We are made up of many different parts which have to be unified around the psychic being, if we are conscious of it or at least around the central aspiration. If this unification is not done, we carry this division within us.

To do this, each thought, each feeling, each sensation, each impulse, each reaction, as it manifests, must be presented in the consciousness to the central being or its aspiration. What is in accord is accepted; what is not in accord is refused, rejected or transformed.

It is a long endeavour which may take many years—but once it is done, the unification is achieved and the path becomes easy and swift.

*10 May 1967, 16, 362-3*

*Is the central being the psychic being?*

For the immense majority of people the psychic being is the central being. But the central being can be identified with another consciousness and another state which is more central and is not purely human. And this is—I can't say that it is extremely rare, but still it is not frequent.

*8 December 1954, 6, 425*

*Here it is written: "Finally the soul or psychic being retires into the psychic world to rest there till a new birth is close." Then, Mother, what happens to the central being afterwards?*

This depends absolutely on the different instances. We said that the central being and the psychic being are the same thing but the part which stays and is in the Divine stays and is in the Divine.

The psychic is the delegate of this Divine in the earth life, for the growth on earth. But the part of the central being which is identified with the Divine remains identified with the Divine and does not change. Even during life it is identified with the Divine, and after death it remains what it was in life, for it this makes no difference. It is the psychic being which has alternations of experience and assimilation, experience and assimilation. But the Jivatman is in the Divine and remains in the Divine, and doesn't move from there; and it is not progressive. It is in the Divine, it is identified with the Divine, it remains identified with the Divine, not separated. It makes no difference to it, whether there is an earthly body or not.

*Is everyone's central being the same?*

No, for we are told that it is identified in multiplicity. It is the eternal truth of each being. From one point of view they are identical, from another they are multiple; because the truth of each being is an individual truth, but it is identified with the Divine. It is outside the manifestation but it is the origin of the manifestation. It is a unity which is not a uniformity.

It is indeed the same thing that I was explaining last time; each one is different and yet each one is identical. If you approach the Divine from various angles, He seems to you different, because of the angle from which you approach Him. It is the same thing for the Manifested. But in this angle it is all the same, if I may say so, the complete unity of the Divine which one attains. It is the meeting point which is different but beyond the meeting point it is a single totality.

It is very difficult to put it in words. But it is an experience which one can have. It is as though there were innumerable doors or paths by which one could reach the Divine. So when one approaches he does so from a certain angle, he enters by a certain door, but as soon as he has gone right in, he realizes that it is a single oneness, it is only the path leading to it or the particular approach which is different.

*Sweet Mother, "the Jivatman<sup>1</sup> ... the moment it presides over the dynamics of the manifestation, knows itself as one centre of the multiple Divine, not as the Parameshwara."<sup>2</sup>*

That's exactly what I have just said.

What?

*Sweet Mother, when Sri Aurobindo was in Alipore<sup>3</sup>, Vivekananda came for fifteen days and explained something special to him.*

*What part of Vivekananda was it, the psychic being or the atman?*

It could very well be his mind. It could very well be the mind because he had unified his mind around his psychic being. Therefore his mind could continue to exist indefinitely. It partakes of the immortality of the psychic being. It could very well be his mind.

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo defines the Jivatma (Jiva + Atman) as "the individual self", "the Atman, spirit or eternal self of the living being." Also, "the multiple Divine manifested here as the individual self or spirit of the created being." The Jivatma in its essence does not change or evolve, its essence stands above the personal evolution; within the evolution itself it is represented by the evolving psychic being which supports all the rest of the evolution."<sup>2</sup> (*Letters on Yoga*, 266 -- *Comp.*)

<sup>2</sup> The Supreme Lord.

<sup>3</sup> Sri Aurobindo was arrested for sedition on the 1st of May, 1908 and detained in Alipore jail for a year. The British Government, taking its stand on his articles and the reports of his speeches, held him in fact responsible for the entire revolutionary movement.

*Mother, can one enter into communion with his Jivatman without the ego being dissolved?*

That's what Sri Aurobindo says. He says that the ego survives the physical life, the bodily life; this is perfectly correct. There is a vital ego and a mental ego which can continue to exist for quite a long time. But one can have experiences without the ego being dissolved. Otherwise who would have experiences? How many people are there who have dissolved their ego? There can't be very many, I think.

When one has an experience it is as though one went through his ego to have his experience, and one can, if he continues, end up by diminishing the hardness—the obscurity and hardness—of the ego, making it more and more plastic and permeable by multiplying the experiences. That's something one feels very clearly, that one passes through something like a hard shell which prevents him from having the experience; one passes through, has the experience, and when he comes back, he again has the impression of going through a shell which shuts him in, imprisons him for a long time. That's how it is. But those who have succeeded in entering consciously into contact with their psychic being can keep this contact...

To pass completely to the other side of the ego so that it no longer intervenes, a fairly long time is needed, it doesn't happen at all immediately. And then you feel that thing which, seen from within, suffocates you; and seen from outside it has an insignificant consistency, but it prevents the being from feeling integrally the intensity of the experience; it is like a layer which diminishes the intensity of the vibrations and the intensity of the consciousness, and you feel that. You feel it as something very fixed and very opaque. Many people certainly have experiences but they don't remember them; that's because when they pass through this layer of the ego, they forget everything, they lose everything, lose the memory of their experience. But when one has formed the habit, perhaps the memory is a little dimmed, hasn't the intensity and exactness, but it remains.

6 July 1955, 7, 223-6

## **Rebirth into the Spirit**

In fact, so long as there is any doubt or hesitation, so long as one asks oneself the question of whether one has or hasn't realised this eternal

soul in oneself, it proves that the *true* contact has not taken place. For, when the phenomenon occurs, it brings with it an inexpressible something, so new and so definitive, that doubt and questioning are no longer possible. It is truly, in the absolute sense of the phrase, a new birth.

You become a new person, and whatever may be the path or the difficulties of the path afterwards, that feeling never leaves you. It is not even something—like many other experiences—which withdraws, passes into the background, leaving you externally with a kind of vague memory to which it is difficult to cling, whose remembrance grows faint, blurred—it is not that. You *are* a new person and definitively that, whatever happens. And even all the incapacity of the mind, all the difficulties of the vital, all the inertia of the physical are unable to change this new state—a new state which makes a *decisive* break in the life of the consciousness. The being one was before and the being one is after, are no longer the same. The position one has in the universe and in relation to it, in life and in relation to it, in understanding and in relation to it, is no longer the same: it is a true reversal which can never be undone again. That is why when people tell me, “I would like to know whether I am in contact with my soul or not”, I say, “If you ask the question, that is enough to prove that you are not. You don’t need an answer, you are giving it to yourself.” When it is *that*, it is that, and then it is finished, it is no longer anything else.

And since we are speaking of that, I shall remind you of what Sri Aurobindo has said, repeated, written, affirmed and said over and over again, that his yoga, the integral yoga, can begin *only after* that experience, not before.

So, one must not cherish any illusions and fancy that one can begin to know what the supermind is and form any idea of it or assess it in any way, however minimal, before having had *that* experience.

Therefore, if you want to advance on the path, you must very modestly start on your way towards the new birth, first, and realise it before cherishing the illusion that you can have supramental experiences.

To console you I may tell you that by the very fact that you live on earth at this time—whether you are conscious of it or not, even whether you want it or not—you are absorbing with the air you breathe this new supramental substance which is now spreading in the earth atmosphere. And it is preparing things in you which will manifest *very suddenly*, as

soon as you have taken the decisive step.

(*Silence*)

Whether this will help you to take the decisive step or not is another question which remains to be studied, for the experiences which are occurring and will occur more and more frequently now, being of a radically new kind, we can't know beforehand what is going to happen; we must study, and after a thorough study we shall be able to say with certainty whether this supramental substance makes the work of new birth easier or not.... I shall tell you this a little later. For the moment it is better not to rely on these things and, very simply, to start on your way to be born into the spiritual life.

When this happens to you, almost all the questions you ask yourself or ask me will be solved.

And anyway, your attitude to life will be *so* different that you will understand what is meant when one speaks of living spiritually. And at that moment you will also understand a *great* thing, a very great thing: how to live without ego.

Until then, you cannot understand it.

4 June 1958, 9, 336-8

There is a partial change of consciousness which makes you lose all interest in things that you once found desirable; but it is only a change of consciousness and not what we call the transformation. For the transformation is fundamental and absolute; it is not merely a change, but a reversal of consciousness: the being turns inside out, as it were, and takes a completely different position. In this reversed consciousness the being stands above life and things and deals with them from there; it is at the centre of everything and directs its action outwards from there. Whereas in the ordinary consciousness the being stands outside and below: from outside it strives to reach the centre; from below, crushed by the weight of its own ignorance and blindness, it struggles desperately to rise above them. The ordinary consciousness is ignorant of what things are in reality; it sees only their shell. But the true consciousness is at the centre, at the heart of reality and has the direct vision of the origin of all movements. Seated within and above, it knows the source, the cause and effect of all things and forces.

I repeat, this reversal is sudden. Something opens within you and all at once you find yourself in a new world. The change may not be final and definitive to begin with; it sometimes requires time to settle

permanently and become your normal nature. But once the change has taken place, it is there, in principle, once and for all; and then what is needed is to express it gradually in the details of practical life. The first manifestation of the transformed consciousness always seems to be abrupt. You do not feel that you are changing slowly and gradually from one state into another; you feel that you are suddenly awakened or newly born. No effort of the mind can lead you to this state, for with the mind you cannot imagine what it is and no mental description can be adequate.

Such is the starting-point of all integral transformation.

*Bulletin, August 1950, 12, 80-1*

*What is the role of the spirit?*

One might say that it is both the conscious intermediary between the Supreme and the manifestation, and the meeting-place of the manifestation with the Supreme.

Spirit is capable of understanding and communicating with the highest Godhead and at the same time it is the purest, one might say the least distorted intermediary of the highest Godhead in the outermost manifestation. It is spirit which, with the help of the soul, turns the consciousness towards the Highest, the Divine, and it is in the spirit that the consciousness can begin to understand the Divine.

It might be said that what is called “spirit” is the atmosphere brought into the material world by the Grace so that it may awaken to the consciousness of its origin and aspire to return to it. It is indeed a kind of atmosphere which liberates, opens the doors, sets the consciousness free. This is what enables the realisation of the truth and gives aspiration its full power of accomplishment.

From a higher standpoint, this could be put in another way: it is this action, this luminous and liberating influence that is known as “spirit”. All that opens to us the road to the supreme realities, pulls us out from the mud of the Ignorance in which we are stuck, opens the doors to us, shows us the path, leads us to where we have to go—this is what man has called “spirit”. It is the atmosphere created by the Divine Grace in the universe to save it from the darkness into which it has fallen.

The soul is a kind of individual concentration of this Grace, its individual representative in the human being. The soul is something particular to humanity, it exists only in man. It is like a particular expression of the spirit in the human being. The beings of the other

worlds do not have a soul, but they can live in the spirit. One might say that the soul is a delegation of the spirit in mankind, a special help to lead it faster. It is the soul that makes individual progress possible. The spirit, in its original form, has a more general, more collective action.

For the moment the spirit plays the part of a helper and guide, but it is not the all-powerful master of the material manifestation; when the Supermind is organised into a new world, the spirit will become the master and govern Nature in a clear and visible way.

What is called “new birth” is the birth into the spiritual life, the spiritual consciousness; it is to carry in oneself something of the spirit which, individually, through the soul, can begin to rule the life and be the master of existence. But in the supramental world, the spirit will be the master of this entire world and all its manifestations, all its expressions, consciously, spontaneously, naturally.

In the individual existence, that is what makes all the difference; so long as one just speaks of the spirit and it is something one has read about, whose existence one vaguely knows about, but not a very concrete reality for the consciousness, this means that one is not born into the spirit. And when one is born into the spirit, it becomes something much more concrete, much more living, much more real, much more tangible than the whole material world. And this is what makes the essential difference between beings. When *that* becomes spontaneously real—the true, concrete existence, the atmosphere one can freely breathe—then one knows one has crossed over to the other side. But so long as it is something rather vague and hazy—you have heard about it, you know that it exists, but... it has no concrete reality—well, this means that the new birth has not yet taken place. As long as you tell yourself, “Yes, this I can see, this I can touch, the pain I suffer from, the hunger that torments me, the sleep that makes me feel heavy, this is real, this is concrete...” (*Mother laughs*), that means that you have not yet crossed over to the other side, you are not born into the spirit.

*26 November 1958, 9, 428-31*

There is one phenomenon which obviously seems indispensable if one wants the realisation to become stable.... Experiences come, touch the consciousness, sometimes bring great illuminations, then get blurred, retreat into the background and, outwardly, in your ordinary consciousness, you don't feel that there is a great change, a great difference. And this phenomenon may occur very often, may repeat

itself for many years. Suddenly you get a sort of revelation, like an illumination, you are in the true consciousness and have the feeling of having got hold of the real thing. And then, slowly or suddenly, it seems to recede behind you, and you seek but do not find that there is any great change in you.... These things seem to come as heralds or as promises: “See, it will happen”, or to tell you, “Well, have faith, it *will* be like that.”

And this may recur very often. There is progress, obviously, but it is very slow and hardly apparent.

But then, suddenly—perhaps because one is sufficiently prepared, perhaps simply because the time has come, and it has been so decreed—suddenly, when such an experience occurs, its result in the part of the being where it takes place is a complete reversal of consciousness. It is a very clear, very concrete phenomenon. The best way of describing it is this: a complete reversal. And then the relation of the consciousness with the other parts of the being and with the outer world is as if completely changed. Absolutely like an overturning. And that reversal no longer comes back to the same old place, the consciousness no longer returns to its former position—Sri Aurobindo would say “status”. Once this has happened in any part of the being, this part of the being is stabilised.

And until that happens, it comes and goes, comes and goes, one advances and then has the impression of marking time, and one advances again and then marks time again, and sometimes one feels as though one were going backwards, and it is interminable—and indeed it is interminable. It may last for years and years and years. But when this reversal of consciousness takes place, whether in the mind or a part of the mind, whether in the vital or a part of the vital, or even in the physical consciousness itself and in the body-consciousness, once this is established, it is over; you no longer go back, you do not ever return to what you were before. And this is the true indication that you have taken a step forward definitively. And before this, there are only preparations.

Those who have experienced this reversal know what I am speaking about; but if one hasn't, one can't understand. One may have a kind of idea by analogy, people who have tried to describe yoga compare it with the reversal of a prism: when you put it at a certain angle, the light is white; when you turn it over, it is broken up. Well, this is exactly what happens, that is to say, you restore the white. In the ordinary consciousness there is decomposition and you restore the white. However, this is only an image. It is not really *that*, this is an



analogy. But the phenomenon is extremely concrete. It is almost as though you were to put what is inside out, and what is outside in. And it isn't that either! But if you could turn a ball inside-out, or a balloon—you can't, can you?—if you could put the inside out and the outside in, it would be something like what I mean.

And one can't say that one "experiences" this reversal—there is no "feeling", it is almost a mechanical fact—it is extraordinarily mechanical. (*Mother takes an object from the table beside her and turns it upside down...*) There would be some very interesting things to say about the difference between the moment of realisation, of *siddhi*—like this reversal of consciousness for example—and all the work of development, the *tapasya*; to say how it comes about... For the sadhana, *tapasya* is one thing and the *siddhi* another, quite a different thing. You may do *tapasya* for centuries, and you will always go as at a tangent—closer and closer to the realisation, nearer and nearer, but it is only when the *siddhi* is given to you... then, everything is changed, everything is reversed. And this is inexpressible, for as soon as it is put in words it escapes. But there is a difference—a real difference, essential, total—between aspiration, the mental tension, even the tension of the highest, most luminous mind and realisation: something which has been decided above from all time, and is absolutely independent of all personal effort, of all gradation. Don't you see, it is not bit by bit that one reaches it, it is not by a small, constant, regular effort, it is not that: it is something that comes suddenly; it is established without one's knowing how or why, but all is changed.

And it will be like that for everybody, for the whole universe: it goes on and on, it moves forward very slowly, and then one moment, all of a sudden, *it will be done*, finished—not finished: it's the beginning!

It is usually the first contact with the psychic being which brings this experience, but it is only partial, only that *part* of the consciousness—or of the activity in any part of the being—that part of the consciousness which is united with the psychic has the experience. And so, at the moment of that experience, the position of that part of the consciousness, in relation to the other parts and to the world, is completely reversed, it is different. And that is never undone. And if you have the will or take care or are able to put into contact with this part all the problems of your life and all the activities of your being, all the elements of your consciousness, then they begin to be organised in such a way that your being becomes one unity—a single multiplicity, a

multiple unity—complex, but organised and centralised around a fixed point, so well that the central will or central consciousness or central truth has the power to govern *all* the parts, for they are all in order, organised around this central Presence.

It seems to me impossible to escape from this necessity if one wants to be and is to be a conscious instrument of the divine Force. You may be moved, pushed into action and used *as unconscious* instruments by the divine Force, if you have a minimum of goodwill and sincerity. But to become a conscious instrument, capable of identification and conscious, willed movements, you must have this inner organisation; otherwise you will always be running into a chaos somewhere, a confusion somewhere or an obscurity, an unconsciousness somewhere. And naturally your action, even though guided exclusively by the Divine, will not have the perfection of expression it has when one has acquired a conscious organisation around this divine Centre.

It is an assiduous task, which may be done at any time and under any circumstances, for you carry within yourself all the elements of the problem. You don't need anything from outside, no outer aid to do this work. But it requires great perseverance, a sort of tenacity, for very often it happens that there are bad “creases” in the being, habits—which come from all sorts of causes, which may come from atavistic malformation or also from education or from the environment you have lived in or from many other causes. And these bad creases you try to smooth out, but they wrinkle up again. And then you must begin the work over again, often, many, many, many a time, without getting discouraged, before the final result is obtained. But nothing and nobody can prevent you from doing it, nor any circumstance. For you carry within yourself the problem and the solution.

6 June 1956, 8, 170-4

Is there anyone here who has already had the experience of this reversal of consciousness and who can explain what he has experienced?

*X: It was like a pain in the heart which lasted for a day. The next day, when I woke up it was as if I were coming out from a profound meditation and all my thoughts, all my actions seemed to be directed by something or someone who was watching beside my head. All the words which came out of my mouth were right.*

What was this pain like? a pressure? a tearing apart? a tension?

*X: It was as though something in me was not happy, but all that*

*changed during the night; the next day the uneasiness had gone.*

It was undoubtedly a mental opening to the higher consciousness, an ascent of the mental consciousness towards the higher consciousness. And it was probably a resistance in the emotional vital which caused the pain, that disagreeable sensation which disappeared during the night with the liberation of the consciousness in a higher domain.

*Y: When I stood before Sri Aurobindo, I felt a kind of sharp pain. I prayed to Sri Aurobindo to give me something. And suddenly the pain was changed into an intense joy.*

This was a contact with your psychic being.

*Z: One has often the experience of an ascent of the consciousness above the earth. One seems to enter a region where all problems, all questions disappear rather than receive an answer. They seem no longer of any importance. But still this is not "going from knowledge to knowledge".*

This is an opening of the inner being to the divine Presence in the psychic centre, and there you know at every moment not only what must be done but why it should be done and how it should be done, and you have the vision of the truth of things behind their appearances. Instead of seeing things in the usual way, that is, from outside, and so much from outside that, except in a few rare cases, one is incapable even of knowing what another person thinks (you must make a great effort, you see only the surface of things and nothing of what goes on behind); well, after this inner opening and this identification with the Presence in the psychic centre, you see things from within outwards, and the outer existence becomes an expression, more or less deformed, of what you see within: you are aware of the inner existence of beings and their form; their outer existence is only a more or less deformed expression of this inner truth. And it is because of this that I say that the basic equilibrium is completely changed. Instead of being outside the world and seeing it as something outside you, you are inside the world and see outer forms expressing in a more or less clumsy fashion what is within, which for you is the Truth.

*4 January 1951, 4, 19-21*

*When one has a world-personality, does one still need the individual personality?*

Need?... I don't understand.

*What is its use?*

But it is the individual personality which is transformed into the world-personality. Instead of having the sense of the individual as he ordinarily is—this altogether limited individual who is one little person amidst so many millions and millions of others, a little separate person—instead of feeling like that, this separate isolated individual, this little person amidst all the others, becomes aware of the world-individuality, the world-personality, and naturally becomes divine. It is a transformation. It is one thing being transformed into the other.

And Sri Aurobindo does not mean that one loses one's body, he does not speak of the body; he speaks of the vital consciousness, the psychological consciousness, the sense of the separate individual. Just think, you, child, you are one person amidst so many others, aren't you? Well, instead of being like that, you feel you are the world-personality; this sense of division and separation goes away, this limitation disappears. But you remain in your body, you are not compelled necessarily to lose your body; the body is something else.

And it is precisely the body that he is speaking about in the last paragraph: "Transform the animal into the Driver of the herds." When one becomes a divine consciousness, a divine personality, then one can become the master of all the bodily activities, because one is superior to them; one is not bound to these activities, not subject to them, one dominates them, one has a greater consciousness than that of the individual, of the little separate individual; one can make just a little more progress and instead of being subject to all these animal needs of the being, one dominates them. But these are not two consciousnesses, one superimposed on the other, it is one consciousness being transformed into another. (...) The most characteristic feature is precisely this change of consciousness. Instead of feeling like a little, isolated person, separated from others, one feels one is a universal person, containing all others and intimately united and identified with all others.

And I am asked:

*"How does this person speak and act?"*

Speak!... The question is not very well put, for if you ask how he speaks, well, he speaks as everybody does, with his voice, his tongue, his mouth and with words! If you were to ask what is the nature of what he says... obviously, if he expresses the state of consciousness in which he lives, he expresses a universal state of consciousness, and seeing things in a different way from ordinary men, he will express them differently, in

accordance with what he sees and feels. As for acting... if all the parts of his being are in harmony, his action will obviously express his state of consciousness.

Now, there are people who have very decisive experiences in one part of their being, but these are not necessarily translated, or at least not immediately, in the other parts of their being. It is possible that through sadhana or concentration or through Grace, somebody has attained the consciousness of a world personality, but that he still continues to act physically in quite an ordinary, nondescript way, because he has not taken care to unify his whole being, and though one part of his being is universally conscious, as soon as he begins to eat, to sleep, walk, act, he does this like all human animals. That may happen. So, it is again a purely personal question, it depends on each one, on his stage of development.

But if it is someone who has taken care to unify his being, to identify all its parts with the central truth, then naturally he will act with a total absence of egoism, with an understanding of others, an understanding which comes to him from his identification with others—and so he will act like a sage. But that depends on the care he has taken to unify his whole being around the central consciousness.

*5 December 1956, 8, 378-81*

To live the spiritual life, a reversal of consciousness is needed. This cannot be compared in any way with the different faculties or possibilities one has in the mental field. It may be said of someone that he hasn't much mental, vital or physical capacity, that his possibilities are very limited; in that case it may be asked how these capacities may be developed, that is, how new ones may be acquired, which is something rather difficult. But to live the spiritual life is to open to another world within oneself. It is to reverse one's consciousness, as it were. The ordinary human consciousness, even in the most developed, even in men of great talent and great realisation, is a movement turned outwards—all the energies are directed outwards, the whole consciousness is spread outwards; and if anything is turned inwards, it is very little, very rare, very fragmentary, it happens only under the pressure of very special circumstances, violent shocks, the shocks life gives precisely with the intention of slightly reversing this movement of exteriorisation of the consciousness.

But all who have lived a spiritual life have had the same experience: all of a sudden something in their being has been reversed, so to speak,

has been turned suddenly and sometimes completely inwards, and also at the same time upwards, from within upwards—but it is not an external “above”, it is within, deep, something other than the heights as they are physically conceived. Something has literally been turned over. There has been a decisive experience and the standpoint in life, the way of looking at life, the attitude one takes in relation to it, has suddenly changed, and in some cases quite definitively, irrevocably.

And as soon as one is turned towards the spiritual life and reality, one touches the Infinite, the Eternal, and there can no longer be any question of a greater or smaller number of capacities or possibilities. It is the *mental* conception of spiritual life which may say that one has more or less capacity to live spiritually, but this is not at all an adequate statement. What may be said is that one is more or less ready for the decisive and total reversal. In reality, it is the mental capacity to withdraw from ordinary activities and to set out in search of the spiritual life which can be measured.

But so long as one is in the mental field, in this state, as it were, on this plane of consciousness, one can't do much for others, either for life in general or for particular individuals, because one doesn't have the certitude oneself, one doesn't have the definitive experience, the consciousness has not been established in the spiritual world; and all that can be said is that they are mental activities which have their good and bad sides, but not much power and, in any case, not this power of spiritual contagion which is the only truly effective power.

The only thing that is truly effective is the possibility of transferring to others the state of consciousness in which one lives oneself. But this power cannot be invented. One cannot imitate it, cannot seem to have it; it only comes spontaneously when one is established in that state oneself, when one *lives* within it and not when one is trying to live within it—when one *is* there. And that is why all those who truly have a spiritual life cannot be deceived.

An imitation of spiritual life may delude people who still live in the mind, but those who have realised this reversal of consciousness in themselves, whose relation with the outer being is completely different, cannot be deceived and cannot make a mistake.

It is these people the mental being does not understand. So long as one is in the mental consciousness, even the highest, and sees the spiritual life from outside, one judges with one's mental faculties, with the habit of seeking, erring, correcting, progressing, and seeking once

again; and one thinks that those who are in the spiritual life suffer from the same incapacity, but that is a very gross mistake!

When the reversal of the being has taken place, all that is finished. One no longer seeks, one sees. One no longer deduces, one knows. One no longer gropes, one walks straight to the goal. And when one has gone farther—only a little farther—one knows, feels, lives the supreme truth that the Supreme Truth *alone* acts, the Supreme Lord *alone* wills, knows and does through human beings. How could there be any possibility of error there? What He does, He does because He wills to do it.

22 October 1958, 9, 413-5

For spiritual rebirth means the constant throwing away of our previous associations and circumstances and proceeding to live as if at each virgin moment we were starting life anew. It is to be free of what is called Karma, the stream of our past actions: in other words, a liberation from the bondage of Nature's common activity of cause and effect. When this cutting away of the past is triumphantly accomplished in the consciousness, all those mistakes, blunders, errors and follies which, still vivid in our recollection, cling to us like leeches sucking our life-blood, drop away, leaving us most joyfully free. This freedom is not a mere matter of thought; it is the most solid, practical, material fact. We really are free, nothing binds us, nothing affects us, there is no obsession of responsibility. If we want to counteract, annul or outgrow our past, we cannot do it by mere repentance or similar things, we must forget that the untransformed past has ever been and enter into an enlightened state of consciousness which breaks loose from all moorings. To be reborn means to enter, first of all, into our psychic consciousness where we are one with the Divine and eternally free from the reactions of Karma. Without becoming aware of the psychic, it is not possible to do so; but once we are securely conscious of the true soul in us which is always surrendered to the Divine, all bondage ceases. Then incessantly life begins afresh, then the past no longer cleaves to us. To give you an idea of the final height of spiritual rebirth, I may say that there can be a constant experience of the whole universe actually disappearing at every instant and being at every instant newly created!

3, 176-7

To sum up, never forget the purpose and goal of your life. The will

for the great discovery should be always there above you, above what you do and what you are, like a huge bird of light dominating all the movements of your being.

Before the untiring persistence of your effort, an inner door will suddenly open and you will emerge into a dazzling splendour that will bring you the certitude of immortality, the concrete experience that you have always lived and always shall live, that external forms alone perish and that these forms are, in relation to what you are in reality, like clothes that are thrown away when worn out. Then you will stand erect, freed from all chains, and instead of advancing laboriously under the weight of circumstances imposed upon you by Nature, which you had to endure and bear if you did not want to be crushed by them, you will be able to walk on, straight and firm, conscious of your destiny, master of your life.

And yet this release from all slavery to the flesh, this liberation from all personal attachment is not the supreme fulfilment. There are other steps to climb before you reach the summit. And even these steps can and should be followed by others which will open the doors to the future.

*Bulletin, February 1952, 12, 34-5*



## INDIVIDUALISATION UNIFIED AROUND THE PSYCHIC CENTRE

### **Finding the psychic through each part of the consciousness**

There are many different parts of the being and each one can open in its own way, you see; the mental opening and the vital opening are very different in nature and the physical opening is still more different.

*3 November 1954, 6, 388*

One can find the psychic through each part of the consciousness: you can find a psychic behind the physical... you can enter into contact with the psychic directly through the physical consciousness, directly through the vital consciousness, directly through the mental consciousness. It is not as though you had to cross all the states of being in order to find the psychic. You can enter the psychic without leaving your physical consciousness, through interiorisation, because it is not an ascent or gradation. It is an interiorisation, and this interiorisation can be done without passing through the other states of being, directly.

*9 March 1955, 7, 74*

It is not the psychic being that suffers for personal reasons, it is the mind, the vital and the ordinary consciousness of ignorant man. This is because the contact between the outer consciousness and the psychic consciousness is not well established. He in whom the contact has been well established is always happy.

The psychic being works with perseverance and ardour for the union to be made an accomplished fact, but it never complains and knows how to wait for the hour of realisation to come.

*14, 335*

There are some rather uneducated people, for instance, who suddenly develop a faculty and have a direct experience somewhere in the higher mind or the psychic being or in some other part of the being. There are many reasons for this: it may be the result of former lives, it may be a phenomenon of consciousness of this life, it could be many things. In any case, for it to be fully useful, it should be done with the will to

use it for one's progress and become conscious of the different parts of the being in order to be able to do what one ought to do to the best of one's ability. For instance, I have known people who were absolutely ignorant and uneducated but had a gift of vision, and a remarkable gift: they were put into trance and saw marvellously and described things—they knew how to see and describe all they saw whilst they were seeing it. But when they came out of that condition, they were absolutely ordinary beings without any education and intelligence. Yet that was a marvellous gift. That means there are beings who can make the greatest progress from the spiritual point of view, and even the intellectual, and who yet are apparently and in their outer life quite ordinary. There are others—I have known some who had an absolutely marvellous spiritual realisation, who lived constantly in the divine Presence and yet never had a vision in all their life! And they used to complain about it.... It is a question of temperament, destiny, and probably of the work one has to do, for evidently one can't do everything—physically it is impossible. Consequently one must choose.

*23 December 1953, 5, 400-1*

When people ask me how one may know whether he is in contact with his psychic being or how one may know whether he has found the Divine, well, it makes me laugh; for when it happens to you it is over, you can no longer ask any questions, it is done; you do not ask how it happens, it is done.

*8 June 1955, 7, 194*

*Here Sri Aurobindo has said: "If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this Yoga can be done..."*

*Why has he said "the inmost soul"? Is there a superficial soul?*

It is because this inmost soul, that is, the central psychic being, influences the superficial parts of the consciousness (superficial in comparison with it: mental parts, vital parts). The purest mind, the highest vital, the emotive being—the soul influences them, influences them to an extent where one has the impression of entering into contact with it through these parts of the being. So people take these parts for the soul and that is why he says "the inmost soul", that is, the central soul, the real soul.

For very often, when one touches certain parts of the mind which are under the psychic influence and full of light and the joy of that

light, or when one touches certain very pure and very high parts of the emotive being which has the most generous, most unselfish emotions, one also has the impression of being in contact with one's soul. But this is not the true soul, it is not the soul in its very essence. These are parts of the being under its influence and manifesting something of it. So, very often people enter into contact with these parts and this gives them illuminations, great joy, revelations, and they feel they have found their soul. But it is only the part of the being under its influence, one part or another, for... Exactly what happens is that one touches these things, has experiences, and then it gets veiled, and one wonders, "How is it that I touched my soul and now have fallen back into this state of ignorance and inconstancy?" But that's because one had not touched one's soul, one had touched those parts of the being which are under the influence of the soul and manifest something of it, but are not it.

I have already said many times that when one enters consciously into contact with one's soul and the union is established, it is over, it can no longer be undone, it is something permanent, constant, which resists everything, and which, at any moment whatever, if referred to can be found; whereas the other things—one can have very fine experiences, and then it gets veiled again, and one tells oneself, "How does that happen? I saw my soul and now I don't find it any more!" It was not the soul one had seen. And these things are very beautiful and give you very impressive experiences, but this is not the contact with the psychic being itself.

The contact with the psychic being is definitive, and it is about this that I say, when people ask, "Do I have a contact with my psychic being?", "Your question itself proves that you don't have it!"

*3 August 1955, 7, 259-60*

*In what part of the being does the power of observation develop?*

I think the power of observation develops in all the parts of the being. You may have a mental power of observation, a vital power of observation, a physical power of observation. When you observe ideas, for instance, the train of ideas, the logic of the ideas, it is not altogether the same power of observation as when you look at a friend doing athletics and see whether he is making his movements correctly or not. That is, the capacity of attention is there in both cases, but it works in a different field. It can't be said that it is one part of the being observing the others; it is the faculty of observation developing in each

part of the being—that is, the faculty of concentration and attention. For the capacity of observation must not be confused with the capacity of discernment. Discernment is an intellectual capacity. Something like a judgment already enters into it, what we call “discrimination”: you can distinguish between the origin of one thing and of another, and the reciprocal value of these things. But that ought to be founded on a correct observation. The power of observation comes first, discernment follows.

*Is there a power of observation in the psychic?*

More than that! There is the capacity for a direct vision of things. It is like a mirror in which all things are reflected, whatever they may be. But that is just what most children, when not deformed, have very clearly, a great sensibility—for example, to the atmosphere of those who approach them. There are children who, without any apparent reason, rush towards one person and run away in horror from another. For you both of them are equally good or not good, you make no difference. But in one instance the child is immediately attracted by the person, and in the other, try as hard as you may, it will weep, it will cry or it will run away, but it will have nothing to do with that person; and all this is a translation, in a consciousness of ignorance, of a psychic phenomenon: the vision of the psychic quality of that person.

27 January 1954, 6, 8-9

*With the human mind is it possible to recognise another person's soul?*

Things are not so clear-cut and separate as they are in speaking; that is just why it is quite difficult to see very distinctly and clearly in oneself the different parts of the being, unless one has had a very long training and a long discipline of study and observation. There are no watertight compartments between the soul and the mind, the vital and even the physical. There is an infiltration of the soul into the mind. In some people it is even quite considerable, it is perceptible. So, the part of the mind which has a kind of sensibility, of subtle contact with the psychic being, is capable of feeling the presence of the soul in others.

Those who have the ability to enter to a certain extent into the consciousness of others to the point of being able to see or feel directly their thought, their mental activity, who can enter the mental atmosphere of others without needing to use words to make themselves understood, can easily differentiate between someone whose soul is active and

someone whose soul is asleep. The activity of the soul gives a special colouring to the mental activity—it is lighter, more comprehensive and luminous—so that can be felt. For instance, by looking into someone’s eyes you can say with some certainty that this person has a living soul or that you don’t see his soul in his eyes. Many people can feel—“many”, I mean among evolved people—can say that. But naturally, to know exactly how far somebody’s soul is awake and active, how far it rules the being, is the master, one must have the psychic consciousness oneself, for that alone can judge definitively. But it is not altogether impossible to have that sort of inner vibration which makes you say, “Oh! This person has a soul.”

Now, obviously, most often what people—unless they are initiated—call “soul” is the vital activity. If someone has a strong, active, obstinate vital which rules the body’s activities, which has a very living or intense contact with people and things and events, if he has a marked taste for art, for all expressions of beauty, we are generally tempted to say and believe, “Oh! He has a living soul”; but it is not his soul, it is his vital being which is alive and dominates the activities of the body. That is the first difference between someone who is beginning to be developed and those who are still in the inertia and *tamas* of the purely material life. This gives, first to the appearance and also to the activity, a kind of vibration, of intensity of vibration, which often creates the impression that this person has a living soul; but it is not that, it is his vital which is developed, which has a special capacity, is stronger than the physical inertia and gives an intensity of vibration and life and action that those whose vital being is not developed do not possess. This confusion between the vital activity and the soul is a very frequent one.... The vital vibration is much more easily perceptible to the human consciousness than the vibration of the soul.

To perceive the soul in someone, as a rule the mind must be very quiet—very quiet, for when it is active, *its* vibrations are seen, not the vibration of the soul.

And then, when you look at someone who is conscious of his soul, and lives in his soul, if you look like this, the impression you have is of descending, of entering deep, deep, deep into the person, far, far, far, far within; while usually when you look into someone’s eyes, you very soon come to a surface which vibrates and answers your look, but you don’t have that feeling of going down, down, down, down, going deep as into a hole and very far, very, very, very far within, so you have...

a small, very quiet response. Otherwise, usually you enter—there are eyes you cannot enter, they are closed like a door; but still there are eyes which are open—you enter and then, quite close behind, you come to something vibrating there, like this, shining at times, vibrating. And then, that’s it; if you make a mistake, you say, “Oh! He has a living soul”—it is not that, it is his vital.

9 April 1958, 9, 308-10

*“Any part of the being that keeps to its proper place and plays its appointed role is helpful; but directly it steps beyond its sphere, it becomes twisted and perverted and therefore false. A power has the right movement when it is set into activity for the Divine purpose; it has the wrong movement when it is set into activity for its own satisfaction.”*

*Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931 (5 May 1929)*

*When a part of the being steps beyond its sphere, why does it get deformed and perverted?*

I use the word “sphere” in the sense of the place and the role one has to play. Each part of the being has its place in the whole and a definite role to play. If instead of playing that role, it wishes to play another, naturally it loses the qualities necessary for it to play its true role, and it cannot take up any others because they are foreign to it. So necessarily it gets deformed and perverted. For example, we say here that the true role of the mind is a formative role in relation to action. An idea enters the mind, the mind seizes it and gives it a form to realise it, changes it into a motive of action and sends it out towards the material field. The mind organises the idea so that it may be realised in action. This is its true role, and so long as it does that and does it with care, it fulfils its role, it abides in its place and is quite useful. But if the mind imagines that it knows, that it has no need of receiving knowledge and ideas from another part of the being—a higher part—if it imagines that it knows and, by the association of inner movements, believes it has found some knowledge, which can never be but a reflection of something else, and if it wants to impose this knowledge upon the physical life, then it leaves its role and becomes a tyrant—this happens quite often to it, it is then completely perverted and instead of helping the sadhana, it brings it down. You can easily make this observation. Naturally, one must be able to follow the true working, the activities within oneself.

It is the same thing with the vital. The vital is meant to put in the

drive, the realising force, the enthusiasm, the energy necessary for the idea formed by the mind to be transmitted to the body and realised in action. Well, so long as the vital limits itself to this activity, that is, sets all its energy, enthusiasm, strength to work in order to collaborate with the idea, it is very good. But if instead of that, all of a sudden, it is seized by a desire—and this happens to it quite often—and it uses all its qualities to realise, not the higher idea which wanted to manifest, but its own desire, then it steps beyond its zone of action, it gets perverted, it deforms everything and succeeds in creating catastrophes.

10 June 1953, 5, 99-100

*Between the vital being and the mental, which progresses faster generally?*

That depends on people. It is the vital in those who have a stronger vital and the mental in those who have a stronger mental being. You mean in the same person? That depends absolutely on which one is more active and more strong. In what way? In each person the combination is different, so one cannot make a general rule and say how it must be. One can say that in certain types of cases, it is like this, and in certain others it is like that.

But to tell the truth, I do not believe that much progress can be made if the two do not agree, if one pulls one way and the other another. It will always be difficult. And generally it is better if the mind is converted first, for it is the mind that must have the power to organise the other parts of the being.

9 September 1953, 5, 252-3

*When the psychic being will be able to manifest itself perfectly, will it have any need of the mind?*

It will not be able to manifest perfectly unless all the parts of the being collaborate. But I don't think that the mind was fashioned with the intention of making it disappear. It is a part of the general structure.

Your body, you see, if it were without a mind it would be quite at a loss. It would perhaps be more like a plant than a body. There is nothing that you do from morning to evening in which the mind does not have its action.

*But if the psychic guided it?*

Well, if the psychic guides the mind, the mind will act in a psychic way. Then it will be a remarkable mind, absolutely harmonious and doing

the right thing in the right way. But the vital—it is the same thing, exactly the same phenomenon for the vital. The vital as it is at present is said to be the cause of all the troubles and all the difficulties, the seat of the desires, passions, impulses, revolts, etc., etc. But if the vital is entirely surrendered to the psychic, it becomes a wonderful instrument, full of enthusiasm, power, force of realisation, impetus, courage.

And then there remains the poor physical... The poor physical being has been accused of all the misdeeds. In the days of old it was always said that it was impossible, one could do nothing with something so inert, so obscure, so little receptive. But if it too was surrendered to the psychic it also would do the right thing in the right way, and then it would have a stability, a quietude, an exactness in its movements which the other parts of the being don't have, a precision in the execution which one can't have without a body. You have only to see when the body is just a little out of order, when it is ill, how many things you can no longer do, even with a strong will, a great concentration of the vital and the mind. Even when one has the precise knowledge of what ought to be done, if the body is out of order one can no longer do it. Even... I mean, even an activity which is not purely physical, as for instance, writing something.

9 February 1955, 7, 43-4

For each one the method is different, but *first* one must feel the need, for whatever reason it may be—whether because one is tired or because one is overstrained or because one truly wants to rise beyond the state one lives in—one must first understand, feel the need of this quietude, this peace in the mind. And then, afterwards, one may try out successively all the methods, known ones and new, to attain the result.

Now, one quickly realises that there is another quietude which is necessary, and even very urgently needed—this is vital quietude, that is to say, the absence of desire. Only, the vital when not sufficiently developed, as soon as it is told to keep quiet, either goes to sleep or goes on strike; it says, “Ah! no. Nothing doing! I won't go any farther. If you don't give me the sustenance I need, excitement, enthusiasm, desire, even passion, I prefer not to move and I won't do anything any longer.” So there the problem becomes a little more delicate and perhaps even more difficult still; for surely, to fall from excitement into inertia is very far from being a progress! One must never mistake inertia or a somnolent passivity for calm.



Quietude is a very positive state; there is a positive peace which is not the opposite of conflict—an active peace, contagious, powerful, which controls and calms, which puts everything in order, organises. It is of this I am speaking; when I tell someone, “Be calm”, I don’t mean to say “Go and sleep, be inert and passive, and don’t do anything”, far from it!... True quietude is a very great force, a very great strength. In fact one can say, looking at the problem from the other side, that all those who are really strong, powerful, are always very calm. It is only the weak who are agitated; as soon as one becomes truly strong, one is peaceful, calm, quiet, and one has the power of endurance to face the adverse waves which come rushing from outside in the hope of disturbing one. This true quietude is always a sign of force. Calmness belongs to the strong.

And this is true even in the physical field. I don’t know if you have observed animals like lions, tigers, elephants, but it is a fact that when they are not in action, they are always so perfectly still. A lion sitting and looking at you always seems to be telling you, “Oh, how fidgety you are!” It looks at you with such a peaceful air of wisdom! And all its power, energy, physical strength are there, gathered, collected, concentrated and—without a shadow of agitation—ready for action when the order is given.

I have seen people, many people, who could not sit still for half an hour without fidgeting. They had to move a foot or a leg, or an arm or their head; they had to stir restlessly all the time, for they did not have the power or the strength to remain quiet.

This capacity to remain still when one wants to, to gather all one’s energies and spend them as one wishes, completely if one wants, or to apportion them as one wants in action, with a perfect calm even in action—that is always the sign of strength. It may be physical strength or vital strength or mental strength. But if you are in the least agitated, you may be sure there is a weakness somewhere; and if your restlessness is integral, it is an integral weakness.

So, if I tell someone “Be calm”, I may be telling him all kinds of things, it depends upon each person. But obviously, most often it is, “Make your mind quiet, don’t be restless all the time in your head, don’t stir up lots of ideas, calm yourself.”

*17 October 1956, 8, 328-3*

## Mind and intellect

You can prove anything with the mind. When you know how to use it and have mastered reasoning and deduction, you can prove anything. As a matter of fact, this is an exercise that is given in universities to make the mind supple: you are given a thesis to prove and immediately afterwards, with equal conviction, you have to prove its antithesis—in the hope that if you rise a little above both, you will discover the synthesis.

Therefore, once it is conceded that anything can be proved, it follows that reasoning leads nowhere; because if you can prove something and in the next moment prove its opposite, this is the proof that your proofs are worthless.

*5 December 1958, 10, 32*

It is a good thing to begin to learn at an early age that to lead an efficient life and obtain from one's body the maximum it is able to give, reason must be the master of the house. And it is not a question of yoga or higher realisation, it is something which should be taught everywhere, in every school, every family, every home: man was made to be a mental being, and merely to be a man—we are not speaking of anything else, we are speaking only of being a man—life must be dominated by reason and not by vital impulses. This should be taught to all children from their infancy. If one is not dominated by reason, one is a brute lower than the animal; for animals don't have a mind or a reason to dominate them, but they obey the instinct of the species. There is an instinct of the species which is an extremely reasonable instinct that regulates all their activities for their own good, and automatically, without knowing it, they are subject to this instinct of the species which is altogether reasonable from the point of view of that species, of each species. And those animals which for some reason or other become free of it—as I was saying just a while ago, those which live near man and begin to obey man instead of obeying the instinct of the species—are perverted and lose the qualities of their species. But an animal left to its natural life and free from human influence is an extremely reasonable being from its own point of view, for it only does things which are in conformity with its nature and its own good. Naturally, it meets with disasters, for it is constantly at war with all the other species, but it does not itself act foolishly. Stupidities and perversion begin with conscious mind and the

human species. It is the wrong use man makes of his mental capacity.

8 May 1957, 9, 101-2

I don't know a human being who does not have mental arrogance. There are those who have a little, there are those who have much, there are those who are entirely made up of it.... The mind, by its very nature, is something essentially arrogant. It fancies that it can know, it imagines that it can judge, and it spends its time passing judgments on everything—within you, on yourself, on others, on all things!

Recently, a very amusing incident happened. Someone wrote and began to express a doubt about something said by Sri Aurobindo. But then, afterwards, he added, "But we should not forget that he who wrote this is at least as intelligent as we!" (*Mother laughs.*) When people spend their time judging things, if they tell themselves, "But perhaps the other person is at least as intelligent as I am!", they would be less...

But you have only to observe yourselves... you can observe yourself, catch yourself at least a hundred times a day, with a mind which decides everything, knows everything, judges everything, knows very well what is good, what bad, what is true, what false, what is right... And also how one should act, what this person should have done, how to resolve that problem.... All men know, you see.... If they were at the head of governments, for instance, they would know very well how to manage everything! But people don't listen to them... that's all!

21 July 1954, 6, 241-2

On earth<sup>1</sup> man is a transitional being. Therefore, in the course of his evolution, he has had several natures in succession, which have followed an ascending curve and will continue to follow it until he reaches the threshold of the supramental nature and is transformed into the superman. This curve is the spiral of mental development.

We tend to call "natural" any spontaneous manifestation which is not the result of a choice or a preconceived decision, that is to say, without the intrusion of any mental activity. This is why when a man has a vital spontaneity which is very little mentalised, he seems more "natural" in his simplicity. But this naturalness is very much like that of the animal and is at the very bottom of the human evolutionary scale.

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1 Mother added: "This precise detail is not superfluous; I said 'on earth' meaning that man does not belong merely to earth: in essence man is a universal being, but he has a special manifestation on earth."

He will only regain this spontaneity free from mental intrusion when he attains to the supramental stage, that is to say, when he transcends mind and emerges into the higher Truth.

Until then all his behaviour is, naturally, natural! But with the mind evolution has become, one cannot say twisted, but distorted, because by its very nature the mind was open to perversion and almost from the beginning it became perverted, or, to be more precise, it was perverted by the Asuric forces. And this state of perversion gives us the impression that it is unnatural.

*17 March 1961, 10, 87*

With the mind individualisation began and a very acute feeling of separation, and also a kind of impression, more or less precise, of freedom of choice—all that, all these psychological states are the natural consequences of mental life and they open the door to everything we see now, from aberrations to the most rigorous principles. Mind has the impression that it can choose between one thing and another, but this impression is the distortion of a true principle which would be completely realisable only when the soul or psychic being appears in the consciousness and if the soul were to take up the governance of the being. Then man's life would truly become the manifestation of the supreme Will expressing itself individually, consciously. But in the normal human state this is something extremely exceptional which to the ordinary human consciousness does not seem at all natural—it seems almost supernatural!

Man questions himself because the mental instrument is intended to see all possibilities. And the immediate consequence of this is the concept of good and evil, or of what is right and what is wrong, and all the miseries that follow from that. One cannot say that it is a bad thing; it is an intermediate stage—not a very pleasant one, but still... one which was certainly inevitable for the complete development of the mind.

*17 March 1961, 10, 87-8*

*What is the proper function of the intellect? Is it a help or a hindrance to Sadhana?*

Whether the intellect is a help or a hindrance depends upon the person and upon the way in which it is used. There is a true movement of the intellect and there is a wrong movement; one helps, the other hinders. The intellect that believes too much in its own importance and wants

satisfaction for its own sake, is an obstacle to the higher realisation.

But this is true not in any special sense or for the intellect alone, but generally and of other faculties as well. For example, people do not regard an all-engrossing satisfaction of the vital desires or the animal appetites as a virtue; the moral sense is accepted as a mentor to tell one the bounds that one may not transgress. It is only in his intellectual activities that man thinks he can do without any such mentor or censor!

Any part of the being that keeps to its proper place and plays its appointed role is helpful; but directly it steps beyond its sphere, it becomes twisted and perverted and therefore false. A power has the right movement when it is set into activity for the divine's purpose; it has the wrong movement when it is set into activity for its own satisfaction.

The intellect, in its true nature, is an instrument of expression and action. It is something like an intermediary between the true knowledge, whose seat is in the higher regions above the mind, and realisation here below. The intellect or, generally speaking, the mind gives the form; the vital puts in the dynamism and life-power; the material comes in last and embodies.

5 May 1929, 3, 33

As long as the mind is convinced that it is the summit of human consciousness, that there is nothing beyond and above it, it takes its own functioning to be a perfect one and is fully satisfied with the progress it can make within the limits of this functioning, and with an increase of clarity, precision, complexity, suppleness, plasticity in its movements.

It always has a spontaneous tendency to feel very satisfied with itself and with what it can do, and if there were no greater force than its own, a higher power which irrefutably shows it its own limitations, its poverty, it would never make any effort to find its way out of all that by the right door: liberation into a higher and truer mode of being.

When the spiritual force is able to act, when it begins to have an influence, it jolts the mind's self-satisfaction and, by continuous pressure, begins to make it feel that beyond it there is something higher and truer; then a little of its characteristic vanity gives way under this influence and as soon as it realises that it is limited, ignorant, incapable of reaching the true truth, liberation begins with the possibility of opening to something beyond. But it must *feel* the power, the beauty, the force of this beyond to be able to surrender. It must be able to perceive its incapacity and its limitations in the presence of something

higher than itself, otherwise how could it ever feel its own weakness!

Sometimes one single contact is enough, something that makes a little rent in that self-satisfaction; then the yearning to go beyond, the need for a purer light awakes, and with this awakening comes the aspiration to win them, and with the aspiration liberation begins, and one day, breaking all limits, one blossoms in the Infinite Light.

If there were not this constant Pressure, simultaneously from within and without, from above and from the profoundest depths, nothing would ever change.

29 October 1958, 9, 418-9

*“In the inner life, why are there periods when one can no longer make a conscious effort, and if one enforces it, parts of the nature revolt or else everything in the being seems to become petrified; effort becomes the mechanical repetition of past movements. What should be done at such times?”*

This has been very well observed.

What is not mentioned here is the nature of the effort, for it is a certain kind of effort which leads to the result described here, which is either a revolt or a sort of—yes, petrification, truly, something that becomes absolutely insensible and no longer responds at all to this effort. This happens when the effort is almost exclusively mental and quite arbitrary, in the sense that it does not at all take into account the state of the rest of the being; it has its own idea, its own will, and without any consideration for the rest of the being, it imposes this will on the being as a whole. This is what usually brings about the revolt or the petrification. And the only thing to do is to make the mind quiet. And this is the time to make a movement of self-giving, full of peace, quietude, confidence. If one makes this movement of self-giving, of complete surrender to the divine Will, all the tension arising from the effort, an effort which could be called premature or unconsidered—all the tension arising from this effort gives way. There is a relaxation in the being. And the progress one could not make by this purely mental effort usually comes about almost automatically, by the very fact that one has relaxed in confidence and self-giving to the divine Will.

And then, this is what follows:

*“At other times, one has the impression of making no effort, but of feeling only the presence of a consciousness due to which in many circumstances of daily life a means of progress is found.*

*One wonders then what effort is and what its value? What we call effort—isn't it too mental a movement?"*

That is exactly what I have just explained, which shows that the observation is quite correct.

It is an arbitrary decision of the mind, and being arbitrary and not in conformity with the truth of things, it naturally brings about these wrong reactions. This does not imply that no effort must ever be made but the effort also must be spontaneous. So too I told you once that for meditation to be effective, it must be a spontaneous meditation which takes hold of you rather than one you make an effort to have; well, effort, that kind of tension of the will in the being, must also be something spontaneous, and not the result of a more or less inopportune mental decision.

*28 November 1956, 8, 370-1*

Communications from the psychic do not come in a mental form. They are not ideas or reasonings. They have their own character quite distinct from the mind, something like a feeling that comprehends itself and acts.

By its very nature, the psychic is calm, quiet and luminous, understanding and generous, wide and progressive. Its constant effort is to understand and progress.

The mind describes and explains.

The psychic sees and understands.

*13 December 1971, 16, 426*

I believe there is a vast difference between an effort for transformation which, precisely, comes from the psychic centre of the being and a kind of mental construction to obtain something.

I don't know, it is very difficult to make oneself understood, but so long as the thing goes on in the head in this way (*Mother turns a finger near her forehead*), it has no power. It has a very little force that is extremely limited. And all the time it belies itself. One feels that with great difficulty one has gathered up one's will, artificial enough, besides, and one tries to catch something, and the very next minute it has all vanished. And one doesn't even realise it; one asks oneself, "How did it happen?" I don't know, indeed it seems to me very difficult to do yoga with the head—unless one is gripped.

The will is not in the head.

The will—what I call the will—is something that's here (*Mother*

*points to the centre of the chest*), which has a power of action, a power of realisation.

What one does exclusively in the head is subject to countless fluctuations; it is not possible to construct a theory, for instance, without there intervening immediately things which give all the opposite arguments. And so, there's the great skill of the mind, you know: it can prove no matter what, argue about anything at all. Consequently one does not go a step farther. Even if momentarily one catches an idea that has a certain force, unless one can keep that state of intensity, as soon as there is a relaxation all the contrary things come along, and all, as you know, with the charm of their expression. So it is a ceaseless battle.

*19 May 1954, 6, 138-9*

*Mother, how can one prevent the mind from intervening?*

Ah! First you must will it, and then you must say, as to people who make a lot of noise, "Keep quiet, be quiet, be quiet!"; you must do this when the mind comes along with all its suggestions and all its movements. You must tranquillise it, pacify it, make it silent. The first thing is not to listen to it. Most of the time, as soon as all these come, all these thoughts, one looks, seeks to understand, one listens; then naturally that imbecile believes that you are very much interested: it increases its activity. You must not listen, must not pay attention. If it makes too much noise, you must tell it: "Be still! Now then, silence, keep quiet!" without making a lot of noise yourself, you understand? You must not imitate those people who begin shouting: "Keep quiet", and make such a noise themselves that they are even noisier than the others!

*19 May 1954, 6, 140-1*

Psychic life in the universe is a work of the divine Grace. Psychic growth is a work of the divine Grace and the ultimate power of the psychic being over the physical being will also be a result of the divine Grace. And the mind, if it wants to be at all useful, has only to remain very quiet, as quiet as it can, because if it meddles in it, it is sure to spoil everything.

*So there will be no need of the mind?*

Ah, excuse me, I did not say that one doesn't need the mind. The mind is useful for something else. The mind is an instrument for formation and organisation, and if the mind lets the psychic make use of it, that will be very good. But it is not the mind which will help the psychic to manifest. The roles are reversed. The mind can be an instrument for the



manifestation of the psychic later, when it has already taken possession of the outer consciousness. It is rarely so before that. Usually it is a veil and an obstruction. But surely it can't help in the manifestation. It can help in the action if it takes its true place and true movement. And if it becomes completely docile to the psychic inspiration, it can help to organise life, for this is its function, its reason of existence. But first of all the psychic being must have taken possession of the field, must be the master of the house. Then, later, things can be arranged.

*9 February 1955, 7, 41*

Naturally, for those who are fully conscious of their psychic, it is not possible to deceive themselves, for if they refer their problem to the psychic, they can from there have the divine answer. But even for those who are in relation with their psychic, the answer has not the same character as the mind's, which is precise, categorical, absolute, asserting itself; it is something more of a *tendency* than an assertion, something which can still have different interpretations in the mind.

*25 September 1968, 11, 128-9*

It is good to set apart some time every day when one can quietly go over one's thoughts and put one's synthesis in order. Once the habit is acquired, you can maintain control over your thoughts even during work and action, allowing only those which are useful for what you are doing to come to the surface. Particularly, if you have continued to cultivate the power of concentration and attention, only the thoughts that are needed will be allowed to enter the active external consciousness and they then become all the more dynamic and effective. And if, in the intensity of concentration, it becomes necessary not to think at all, all mental vibration can be stilled and an almost total silence secured. In this silence one can gradually open to the higher regions of the mind and learn to record the inspirations that come from there.

But even before reaching this point, silence in itself is supremely useful, because in most people who have a somewhat developed and active mind, the mind is never at rest. During the day, its activity is kept under a certain control, but at night, during the sleep of the body, the control of the waking state is almost completely removed and the mind indulges in activities which are sometimes excessive and often incoherent. This creates a great stress which leads to fatigue and the diminution of the intellectual faculties.

The fact is that like all the other parts of the human being, the mind too needs rest and it will not have this rest unless we know how to provide it. The art of resting one's mind is something to be acquired. Changing one's mental activity is certainly one way of resting; but the greatest possible rest is silence. And as far as the mental faculties are concerned a few minutes passed in the calm of silence are a more effective rest than hours of sleep.

When one has learned to silence the mind at will and to concentrate it in receptive silence, then there will be no problem that cannot be solved, no mental difficulty whose solution cannot be found. When it is agitated, thought becomes confused and impotent; in an attentive tranquillity, the light can manifest itself and open up new horizons to man's capacity.

*Bulletin, November 1951, 12, 28-9*

*What does Sri Aurobindo call "the heaven of the liberated mind"?*

The heaven of the liberated mind? It is a metaphorical phrase. When the mind is liberated, it rises to celestial heights. These higher regions of the mind Sri Aurobindo compares with the sky above the earth; they are celestial compared with the ordinary mind.

*22 August 1956, 8, 2*

## **Education of the vital and its conversion**

Of all education, vital education is perhaps the most important, the most indispensable. Yet it is rarely taken up and pursued with discernment and method. There are several reasons for this: first, the human mind is in a state of great confusion about this particular subject; secondly, the undertaking is very difficult and to be successful in it one must have endless endurance and persistence and a will that no failure can weaken.

Indeed, the vital in man's nature is a despotic and exacting tyrant. Moreover, since it is the vital which holds power, energy, enthusiasm, effective dynamism, many have a feeling of timorous respect for it and always try to please it. But it is a master that nothing can satisfy and its demands are without limit.

*Bulletin, August 1951, 12, 18*

*“It is certainly a mistake to bring down the light by force—to pull it down. The Supramental cannot be taken by storm. When the time is ready it will open of itself—but first there is a great deal to be done and that must be done patiently and without haste.”*

*Sri Aurobindo*

It is good for reasonable people. They will say, “There, he does not promise miracles.”

*Why? Do many people have the tendency to “pull down”?*

People are in a hurry, they want to see the results immediately. And then, they believe they are pulling down the Supramental—they pull down some small vital individuality who mocks at them and in the end makes them play the shabby fool. This is what happens most often—ninety-nine times out of a hundred. A small individuality, a vital entity who plays the big play and makes a great show, plays of light. Then the poor fellow who has “pulled” is bedazzled; he says, “There, it is the Supramental”, and he falls into a pit.

It is only when you have touched, seen in some way and had a contact with the true Light, that you can distinguish the vital, and you perceive that it is altogether like the plays of light on a stage, an artificial light. But otherwise, others are dazzled—it is dazzling, it is “wonderful”, and then they are deceived. It is only when you have *seen* and when you have had the contact with the Truth, ah! then you smile.

It is quackery, but you must know the truth in order to recognise quackery.

At bottom, it is the same for everything. The vital is like a superstage that gives shows—very attractive, dazzling, deceptive; it is only when you know the True Thing that you recognize immediately, instinctively, without reasoning, and you say, “No, I do not want that.”

And for everything it is so. (...)

Whatever one may say about it, however one may explain it, is of no use at all, because he or she who is caught says immediately, “Oh, this is not what it is for others”—what happens to yourself is never like what happens to others! One must have the true experience, then the whole vital appears like a masquerade—not attractive.

And when you “pull”, well, it is much more than ninety-nine times out of one hundred... out of a million there is found only one case where one happens to pull the True Thing—this proves one was ready. Otherwise it is always the vital which you pull, the appearance, the

theatrical show of the Thing, not the Thing itself.

To pull is always an egoistic movement. It is a deformation of aspiration. True aspiration consists in a giving, a self-giving, whereas to pull means to want for oneself. Even if in the mind you have a vaster ambition—the earth, the universe—that means nothing, these are mental activities.

27 November 1965, 11, 22-3

The vital soul is what animates the body, the life which animates the body. You see, in ordinary language it is said, “You die when your soul leaves your body” or “Your soul leaves your body when you die”, in one way or the other; but it is not the soul, it is not only this soul—what we call soul, I mean the psychic being—it is the vital being. When the vital being leaves the body for whatever reason, the body dies or death cuts off the vital being from the body.... So it is in the sense of animating, that is, giving life.

*Is this the “vital desire-soul”, Sweet Mother?*

Yes, the vital soul is full of desires. The vital being is full of desires. It is built of desires.

6 October 1954, 6, 355-6

*Has the vital nature of man come out from his true vital being?*

Come out? What do you call coming out? You mean that first there was the true vital being and that this expresses itself in the physical nature, the earth nature, by the vital which we see? Yes!

*Mother, why is it so contradictory?*

Why is the external world so total a contradiction of the divine world? It is exactly the same thing. It is like that.

The vital being, the true vital being which Sri Aurobindo describes, is the vital being which is in contact with the Divine, which is entirely surrendered to the Divine and is His instrument; whereas in the ordinary earth consciousness the vital being and also the physical being do not at all belong to the Divine, they think they belong to themselves, and the only thing that counts is their own little person; and that is why everything is like this. All the disorder in the universe is due to that.

29 June 1955, 7, 214

*A well-developed soul, when it incarnates, does it have less difficulty in transforming this soul of desire?*

That means?...

*The great masters have less difficulties?*

One can't say.

In principle it is like that, but in fact, the more the individuality is formed, the stronger is this false soul of desire. Those who have a well-formed, well-coordinated individuality, which has an existence of its own, with a minimum of dependence on the environment, have much more difficulty in coming into contact with the divine Presence than others, because they have a very coordinated, very organised separate existence, which is usually self-sufficient. One always finds it much more difficult to convert, we might say, a very living, fully realised personality than someone, for instance, who is full of goodwill but still open to all sorts of influences. When an individual is very strongly made and has the sense of his own personality, his own existence, it is much more difficult for him to think that he is nothing but an instrument of the divine Force, than for somebody who feels a little nebulous, like this (*gesture*) not very precise, who has no exact limits, no well-built individuality; he understands more easily that in himself he is nothing and that it is a force other than his own which makes him act. So you cannot say that a well-developed soul has less difficulties. It depends on the case.

What you mean, I think, is that if you are in contact with your soul—the true one—it is relatively easy to get rid of the soul of desire. But that is a different situation. You must first have found your psychic being and identified yourself with it; and then, later, you may turn to the soul of desire and convince it of its stupidity.

*26 September 1956, 8, 305-6*

Sri Aurobindo says that the vital part, the vital being is the greatest obstacle because it is unregenerate, and that there would be a possibility of transforming it if it surrendered entirely to Love and Knowledge; but as its predominant quality is force, energy, power, it does not like to submit to other parts of the being, and this justifies its refusal to submit itself, for those virtues in their essence are as high as the others. That is why it has neither the same power nor the same capacities, for it is not developed, it has not surrendered, and this is what causes the dilemma: it does not submit because it has this power, and this power cannot be utilised because it is not surrendered. So, how to get out of that? The vital, if it were surrendered, would be a very powerful help, extremely useful, it would make the whole process go much more rapidly. But

because it feels its own power, it refuses to submit to the others; and because it does not submit, its power cannot be utilised. (...)

If the vital were a mediocre being without definite qualities, there would be no difficulty in its surrendering, but it would be altogether useless. But, on the contrary, the vital is a sort of stronghold of energy and power—of all powers. Yet generally this power is diverted; it is no longer at the service of the Divine, it is at the service of the vital itself for its own satisfaction. So, as long as it is like that, it cannot be used.

It should come to understand that this energy and power which it feels within itself cannot become useful unless it enters into perfect harmony with the divine plan of realisation on earth. If it understands that, it becomes quiet and allows itself to be enlisted, so to say, in the totality of the being, and then it takes on its full strength and full importance. But otherwise, it cannot be used. And usually, all its activities are activities which always complicate things and take away their simplicity, their purity, often their beauty, and their effectiveness, for its action is blind, ignorant and very egoistic.

*19 September 1956, 8, 297-8*

*To transform the vital one must have will, perseverance, sincerity, etc. But in what part of the being are all these things found?*

The source of sincerity, of will, of perseverance is in the psychic being, but this translates itself differently in different people. Generally it is in the higher part of the mind that this begins to take shape, but for it to be effective at least one part of the vital must respond, because the intensity of your will comes from there, the realising power of the will comes from its contact with the vital. If there were only refractory elements in the vital, you would not be able to do anything at all. But there is always something, somewhere, which is willing—it is perhaps something insignificant, but there is always something which is willing. It is enough to have had once one minute of aspiration and a will even if it be very fugitive, to become conscious of the Divine, to realise the Divine, for it to flash like lightning through the whole being—there are even cells of the body which respond. This is not visible all at once, but there is a response everywhere. And it is by slowly, carefully, putting together all these parts which have responded, though it be but once, that one can build up something which will be coherent and organised, and which will permit one's action to continue with will, sincerity and perseverance.

*26 March 1951, 4, 254-5*

One of the commonest demands of the vital is for praise. It hates to be criticised and treated as if it were of little importance. But it must be always prepared for rebuffs and stand them with absolute calm; nor must it pay attention to compliments, forgetting that each movement of self-satisfaction is an offering at the altar of the lords of falsehood. The beings of the subtle world of the life-force, with which our vital is connected, live and flourish on the worship of their devotees, and that is why they are always inspiring new cults and religions so that their feasts of worship and adulation may never come to an end. So also your own vital being and the vital forces behind it thrive—that is to say, fatten their ignorance—by absorbing the flatteries given by others. But you must remember that the compliments paid by creatures on the same level of ignorance as oneself are really worth nothing, they are just as worthless as the criticisms levelled at one. No matter from what pretentious source they derive, they are futile and empty. Unfortunately, however, the vital craves even for the most rotten food and is so greedy that it will accept praise from even the very embodiments of incompetence.

*3, 137*

It must be your desire to hold nothing in esteem except the word of the Truth; and in order thus to raise your standard you must keep Agni, the soul's flame of transformation, burning in you. It is noteworthy how, when Agni flares up, you immediately develop a loathing for the cheap praise which formerly used to gratify you so much, and understand clearly that your love of praise was a low movement of the untransformed nature. Agni makes you see what a vast vista of possible improvement stretches in front of you, by filling you with a keen sense of your present insufficiency. The encomium lavished on you by others so disgusts you that you feel almost bitter towards those whom you would have once considered your friends; whereas all criticism comes as a welcome fuel to your humble aspiration towards the Truth. No longer do you feel depressed or slighted by the hostility of others. For, at least, you are able to ignore it with the greatest ease; at the most, you appreciate it as one more testimony to your present unregenerate state, inciting you to surpass yourself by surrendering to the Divine.

*3, 138*

It is very important that the vital should agree to change: it must learn to accept conversion. The vital is not in itself anything to be decried:

in fact, all energy, dynamism and push comes from it—without it you may be calm and wise and detached, but you will be absolutely immobile and uncreative. The body would be inert, just like a stone, without the force infused into it by the vital. If the vital is left out, you would be able to realize nothing. But like a spirited horse it is liable to be refractory and, therefore, requires good control. You have to keep your reins tight and your whip ready in order to keep the powerful beast in check. Of course, once the vital has consented to be transformed there is no need either of the tight reins or the ready whip: you proceed smoothly towards the goal, leaping lightly over each obstacle in the way. Otherwise, the vital will either stumble over the barriers or fight shy of jumping them. It is no use thinking that all would have been well if there had been no hurdles at all: they are a part of the game and if they are not faced and jumped in this life on earth you will have to surmount a hundred times greater ones on other planes and in other lives. The best thing is to make up your mind once for all and train your vital to run the race here while you are in the body and, if possible, win it. You are sure to win provided your physical mind reforms itself and helps the vital to change, instead of playing the role of a robber who holds down his victim while his accomplice makes a haul of the victim's property.

1930-1, 3, 144

*Does not the vital seek its own transformation? It aspires but it is always the victim of things, of impulses from outside.*

If it seeks to transform itself, it is truly wonderful! And if it aspires for transformation, it will try to free itself. If the vital is weak, its aspiration will be weak. And mark that weakness is an insincerity, a sort of excuse one gives oneself—not very, very consciously perhaps, but you must be told that the subconscious is a place full of insincerity. And the weakness which says, “I would like it so much, but I can't” is insincerity. Because, if one is sincere, what one cannot do today one will do tomorrow, and what one cannot do tomorrow one will do the day after, and so on, until one can do it.

26 March 1951, 4, 252

There must already be a beginning of realisation in the vital for it to revolt against the impulses that come to it. Most human beings and even those who expect to do yoga say, as soon as the impulse comes,



“It is quite all right, there is nothing to do, it is all right.” Then, if something in you revolts, if something says, “I don’t want it”, that is the higher part of your being. What takes the resolution to do yoga is not your body or your vital, not even your mind, it is the higher part of your mind or it is your psychic being. It is that alone which can take the resolution—your body does not know very well what it is all about, your vital looks at the beginning of transformation with some anxiety, the mind with its ideas declares, “This can be done in that way, can be explained like this”, and so on. So if you have made a resolution, it comes from the higher part of your being, and it is upon this that you have to take your support, not upon anything else—that is the “I”. And it must understand in the end that it is not a personal “I”, but universal and divine.

*But is it not the vital itself which finally should take the decision to change?*

I may assure you that the vital, left to itself, will never take the decision to be transformed—it is quite satisfied with itself and, over and above this, being an accomplice of the mind, the mind will furnish it with all possible explanations for whatever it does. People who live in their vital consciousness are, even when they do not say so, always very satisfied with themselves. They are also very satisfied with all that happens to them and they always say of their impulses, “How interesting it is, how interesting!” So, if you wait for the vital to take the decision, you may have to wait for a long time!

You must teach your vital that it must obey. Before feeling any satisfaction, it must understand that it has nothing else to do but obey. That is why I say that it is not very easy to begin the yoga; if you are not sincere, do not begin.

The body is very obedient; truly it tries to do its best, but it does not know whom to obey, for generally it is not in direct contact with the higher being or the psychic. Impulses come to it directly from the mind or from the mind clothed with the vital, and it does what they desire. Before the vital takes a decision (and I have told you, it is not very easy for it to take a decision), a light must begin to dawn in the highest part of the mind, a light which puts you in touch with a higher consciousness or with your psychic, and it is upon this light that you must take your support to explain things to the mind, to the vital and finally to the body.

*5 February 1951, 4, 78-9*

Depression, unless one has a strong will, suggests, “This is not worth while, one may have to wait a lifetime.” As for enthusiasm, it expects to see the vital transformed overnight: “I am not going to have any difficulty henceforth, I am going to advance rapidly on the path of yoga, I am going to gain the divine consciousness without any difficulty.” There are some other difficulties.... One needs a little time, much perseverance. So the vital, after a few hours—perhaps a few days, perhaps a few months—says to itself: “We haven’t gone very far with our enthusiasm, has anything been really done? Doesn’t this movement leave us just where we were, perhaps worse than we were, a little troubled, a little disturbed? Things are no longer what they were, they are not yet what they ought to be. It is very tiresome, what I am doing.” And then, if one pushes a little more, here’s this gentleman saying, “Ah, no! I have had enough of it, leave me alone. I don’t want to move, I shall stay in my corner, I won’t trouble you, but don’t bother me!” And so one has not gone very much farther than before.

This is one of the big obstacles which must be carefully avoided. As soon as there is the least sign of discontentment, of annoyance, the vital must be spoken to in this way, “My friend, you are going to keep calm, you are going to do what you are asked to do, otherwise you will have to deal with me.” And to the other, the enthusiast who says, “Everything must be done now, immediately”, your reply is, “Calm yourself a little, your energy is excellent, but it must not be spent in five minutes. We shall need it for a long time, keep it carefully and, as it is wanted, I shall call upon your goodwill. You will show that you are full of goodwill, you will obey, you won’t grumble, you will not protest, you will not revolt, you will say ‘yes, yes’, you will make a little sacrifice when asked, you will say ‘yes’ whole-heartedly.”

26 March 1951, 4, 249

*“These crises are of less duration and are less dangerous in the case of those who have established a contact with their psychic being sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration and the consciousness of the ideal to be realised. They can, with the help of this consciousness, deal with their vital as one deals with a child in revolt, with patience and perseverance showing it the truth and light, endeavouring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which for a moment was veiled.”*

*“The Science of Living”, On Education*

And the last consolation. For those who are truly sincere, truly good-willed, all these fits can be changed into a means for progress. Each time that you have an attack of this kind, a sort of storm, you can change the crisis into a new progress, into one more step towards the goal. If precisely you have the necessary sincerity to look straight in the face, within you, at the cause of the fit—the wrong you have done, the wrong you have thought, the wrong you have felt—if you see the weakness, the violence or the vanity (for I forgot to tell you that the vital is much more full of vanity than the mind), if you look at all that full in the face and if you recognise honestly and sincerely that what has happened is due to your fault, then you are able to put a red-hot iron as it were on the affected spot. You can purify the weakness and turn it into a new consciousness. And you find after the storm that you have grown a little more, you have truly made a progress.

*25 January 1951, 4, 51-2*

Another remarkable sign of the conversion of your vital, owing to Agni's influence, is that you face your difficulties and obstacles with a smile. You do not sit any more in sackcloth and ashes, lamenting over your mistakes and feeling utterly crestfallen because you are not at the moment quite up to the mark. You simply chase away depression with a smile. A hundred mistakes do not matter to you: with a smile you recognize that you have erred and with a smile you resolve not to repeat the folly in the future. All depression and gloom is created by the hostile forces who are never so pleased as when throwing on you a melancholy mood. Humility is indeed one thing and depression quite another, the former a divine movement and the latter a very crude expression of the dark forces. Therefore, face your troubles joyously, oppose with invariable cheerfulness the obstacles that beset the road to transformation. The best means of routing the enemy is to laugh in his face! You may grapple and tussle for days and he may still show an undiminished vigour; but just once laugh at him and lo! he takes to his heels. A laugh of self-confidence and of faith in the Divine is the most shattering strength possible—it disrupts the enemy's front, spreads havoc in his ranks and carries you triumphantly onwards.

The converted vital feels also a joy in the process of realisation. All the difficulties implied in that process it accepts with gusto, it never feels happier than when the Truth is shown it and the play of falsehood in its lower nature laid bare. It does not do the Yoga as if carrying

a burden on its back but as if it were a very pleasurable occupation. It is willing to endure the utmost with a smile if it is a condition of the transformation. Neither complaining nor grumbling, it endures happily because it is for the sake of the Divine that it does so. It has the unshakable conviction that the victory will be won. Never for an instant does it vacillate in its belief that the mighty work of Change taken up by Sri Aurobindo is going to culminate in success. For that indeed is a fact; there is not a shadow of doubt as to the issue of the work we have in hand. It is no mere experiment but an inevitable manifestation of the Supramental. The converted vital has a prescience of the victory, keeps up a will towards progress which never turns its back, feels full of the energy which is born of its certitude about the triumph of the Divine whom it is aware of always in itself as doing whatsoever is necessary and infusing in it the unfaltering power to resist and finally conquer its enemies. Why should it despair or complain? The transformation is going to be: nothing will ever stop it, nothing will frustrate the decree of the Omnipotent. Cast away, therefore, all diffidence and weakness, and resolve to endure bravely awhile before the great day arrives when the long battle turns into an everlasting victory.

3, 138-40

*“A... submission... of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood.”<sup>1</sup> Who is this “inner Warrior”?*

It is the vital being when it is converted. The vital turned completely to the Divine is like a warrior. It has even the appearance of a warrior. The vital is the place of power and it is this power which impels it to fight, which can fight and conquer, and of all things this is the most difficult, for it is precisely these very qualities of fighting which create in the vital the sense of revolt, independence, the will to carry out its own will. But if the vital understands and is converted, if it is truly surrendered to the divine Will, then these fighting capacities are turned against the anti-divine forces and against all the darkness which prevents their transformation. And they are all-powerful and can conquer the adversaries. The anti-divine forces are in the vital world; from there, naturally, they have spread out into the physical, but their true seat is in the vital world,

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<sup>1</sup> The complete sentence is: “A glad and strong and helpful submission is demanded to the working of the Divine Force, the obedience of the illumined disciple of the Truth, of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood, of the faithful servant of the Divine.”

and it is the converted vital force which has the true power to vanquish them. But of all things this conversion is the most difficult.

7 July 1954, 6, 203

## **The subconscious**

*Is the vital distorted from the very birth?*

If your birth was not an accident, you could very well think there was no distortion, but what you are at your birth is most of the time almost absolutely what your mother and father have made you, and also, through them, what your grandparents have made you. There are certain vital traditions in families and, besides, there is the state of consciousness in which you were formed, conceived—the moment at which you were conceived—and that, not once in a million times does that state conform to true aspiration; and it is only a true aspiration which could make your vital pure of all mixture, make the vital element attracted for the formation of the being a pure element, free from all contagion; I mean that if a psychic being enters there, it can gather elements favourable to its growth. In the world as it is, things are so mixed up, have been so mixed up in every way, that it is almost impossible to have elements of the vital sufficiently pure not to suffer the contagion of all other contaminated beings.

I think I have already spoken about that, I have said what kind of aspiration ought to be there in the parents before the birth; but as I said, this does not happen even once in a hundred thousand instances. The willed conception of a child is extremely rare; mostly it is an accident. Among innumerable parents it is quite a small minority that even simply bothers about what a child could be; they do not even know that what the child will be depends on what they are. It is a very small elite which knows this. Most of the time things go as they can; anything at all happens and people don't even realise what is happening. So, in these conditions how do you expect to be born with a vital being sufficiently pure to be of help to you? One is born with a slough to clean before one begins to live. And once you have made a good start on the way to the inner transformation and you go down to the subconscious root of the being—that exactly which comes from parents, from atavism—well, you do see what it is! And all, almost all difficulties are there, there are very few things added to existence after the first years of life. This

happens at any odd moment; if you keep bad company or read bad books, the poison may enter you; but there are all the imprints deep-rooted in the subconscious, the dirty habits you have and against which you struggle. For instance, there are people who can't open their mouth without telling a lie, and they don't always do this deliberately (that is the worst of it), or people who can't come in touch with others without quarrelling, all sorts of stupidities—they are there in the subconscious, deeply rooted. Now, when you have a goodwill, externally you do your best to avoid all that, to correct it if possible; you work, you fight; then become aware that this thing always keeps coming up, it comes up from some part which escapes your control.

But if you enter this subconscious, if you let your consciousness infiltrate it, and look carefully, gradually you will discover all the sources, all the origins of all your difficulties; then you will begin to understand what your fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers were, and if at a certain moment you are unable to control yourself, you will understand, "I am like that because they were like that."

If you have within you a psychic being sufficiently awake to watch over you, to prepare your path, it can draw towards you things which help you, draw people, books, circumstances, all sorts of little coincidences which come to you as though brought by some benevolent will and give you an indication, a help, a support to take decisions and turn you in the right direction.

But once you have taken this decision, once you have decided to find the truth of your being, once you start sincerely on the road, then everything seems to conspire to help you to advance, and if you observe carefully you see gradually the source of your difficulties: "Ah! Wait a minute, this defect was in my father; oh! this habit was my mother's; oh! my grandmother was like this, my grandfather was like that." Or it could well be the nurse who took care of you when you were small, or brothers and sisters who played with you, the little friends you met, and you will find that all this was there, in this person or that or the other. But if you continue to be sincere, you find you can cross all this quite calmly, and after a time you cut all the moorings with which you were born, break the chains and go freely on the path.

If you really want to transform your character, it is that you must do. It has always been said that it is impossible to change one's nature; in all books of philosophy, even of yoga, you are told the same story: "You cannot change your character, you are born like that, you are

like that.” This is absolutely false, I guarantee it is false; but there is something very difficult to do to change your character, because it is not your character which must be changed, it is the character of your antecedents. In them you will not change it (because they have no such intention), but it is in you that it must be changed. It is what they have given you, all the little gifts made to you at your birth—nice gifts—it is this which must be changed. But if you succeed in getting hold of the thread of these things, the true thread, since you have worked upon this with perseverance and sincerity, one fine morning you will be free; all this will fall off from you and you will be able to get a start in life without any burden. Then you will be a new man, living a new life, almost with a new nature.

And if you look back you will say, “It is not possible, I was never like that!”

29 March 1951, 4, 260-2

*Has the subconscious accepted the Higher Consciousness?*

If the subconscious were to accept the Consciousness, it would no longer be the subconscious, it would become consciousness.

I think that you mean: has the subconscious submitted to the rule, to the law of the higher Consciousness? This is not done as a whole, for the subconscious is vast and complex; there is a mental subconscious, a vital subconscious, a physical subconscious, a bodily subconscious. We have to wrest the subconscious fragment by fragment from its ignorant and inert resistance.

1 July 1935, 14, 363-4

*What should one do to reduce the range of the subconscious?*

To grow in consciousness is the very aim of life on earth. It is through the experience of successive lives that the range of the subconscious is gradually reduced.

By yoga and the effort to find the Divine in oneself and in life, one hastens the work considerably and it can be done in a few years.

5 November 1968, 16, 385

Can one learn to control one’s subconscious as one controls one’s conscious thought?

It is especially during the body’s sleep that one is in contact with the subconscious. In becoming conscious of one’s nights, control of the

subconscious becomes much easier.

The control can become total when the cells become conscious of the Divine in them and when they open themselves voluntarily to His influence. This is what the consciousness that descended on the earth last year is working for. Little by little the subconscious automatism of the body is being replaced by the consciousness of the Divine Presence governing the entire functioning of the body.

*13 April 1970, 14, 365*

I am not saying this to discourage you, but to give you patience and perseverance—for there is a moment when you do arrive. And note that the vital is a small part of your being—a very important part, we have said that it is the dynamism, the realising energy, it is very important; but it is only a small part. And the mind!... which goes wandering, which must be pulled back by all the strings to be kept quiet! You think this can be done overnight? And your body?... You have a weakness, a difficulty, sometimes a small chronic illness, nothing much, but still it is a nuisance, isn't it? You want to get rid of it. You make efforts, you concentrate; you work upon it, establish harmony, and you think it is finished, and then.... Take, for instance, people who have the habit of coughing; they can't control themselves or almost can't. It is not serious but it is bothersome, and there seems to be no reason why it should ever stop. Well, one tells oneself, "I am going to control this." One makes an effort—a yogic effort, not a material one—one brings down consciousness, force, and stops the cough. And one thinks, "The body has forgotten how to cough." And it is a great thing when the body has forgotten, truly one can say, "I am cured." But unfortunately it is not always true, for this goes down into the subconscious and, one day, when the balance of forces is not so well established, when the strength is not the same, it begins again. And one laments, "I believed that it was over! I had succeeded and told myself, 'It is true that spiritual power has an action upon the body, it is true that something can be done', and there! it is not true. And yet it was a small thing, and I who want to conquer immortality! How will I succeed?... For years I have been free from this small thing and here it is beginning anew!" It is then that you must be careful.

You must arm yourself with an endless patience and endurance. You do a thing once, ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times if necessary, but you do it till it gets done. And not done only here



and there, but everywhere and everywhere at the same time. This is the great problem one sets oneself. That is why, to those who come to me to tell me very light-heartedly, “I want to do yoga”, I reply, “Think it over, one may do the yoga for a number of years without noticing the least result. But if you want to do it, you must persist and persist with such a will that you should be ready to do it for ten lifetimes, a hundred lifetimes if necessary, in order to succeed.” I do not say it will be like that, but the attitude must be like that. Nothing must discourage you; for there are all the difficulties of ignorance of the different states of being, to which are added the endless malice and the unbounded cunning of the hostile forces in the world.... They are there, do you know why? They have been tolerated, do you know why?—simply to see how long one can last out and how great is the sincerity in one’s action. For everything depends upon your sincerity. If you are truly sincere in your will, nothing will stop you, you will go right to the end, and if it is necessary for you to live a thousand years to do it, you will live a thousand years to do it.

*26 March 1951, 4, 250-2*

These small physical inconveniences can also be made use of to hasten the progress. The seat of all these resistances is in the subconscious. We must enter there with a conscious will and establish the rule of the Divine even in semi-conscious matter.

*2 February 1938, 14, 364*

Your first attitude of detachment was the true one. The weakness that you are experiencing now is the result mostly of collective suggestion acting through subconscious memories of old ideas and feelings.

Our help and blessings are with you.

*6 January 1939, 14, 364*

## **The physical consciousness**

*Are there many kinds of openings?*

Oh, yes! First of all there are many different parts of the being and each one can open in its own way, you see; the mental opening and the vital opening are very different in nature and the physical opening is still more different.

*What is the physical opening?*

That's when the physical body opens to the divine influence and receives the divine forces.

For example, you see, there's a moment when the divine forces come and penetrate all the cells. To begin with, it is the physical consciousness, the body consciousness which opens first to the influence of the Divine and understands and wants nothing else but *this*, the divine Presence, the divine influence. There are also the body's feelings, and the very cells of the body, which can open to receive the force. For instance, when at a certain moment one feels a kind of very intense vibration spreading through the whole body and at that time one feels filled with a strength, an unusual force, a consciousness also, and all things become clear and perceptible, then that's an opening of the body; it is when the body knows, you see, and has succeeded in opening to the influence.

3 November 1954, 6, 388-9

There is a sort of association between the physical and the psychic and between the mental and the vital being. A mental being is very often a very vital being. A psychic being is very often a physical being. Children—just because this psychic consciousness is in the front—live also altogether in their body. But as soon as one begins to develop the mind, the need for association also develops, with all the deformations that go with it. People who make very strict distinctions between man and woman (I don't know why, for one is as good as the other), say that man is mental and vital and woman physical and psychic. There is some truth in it. But naturally it involves all possible exceptions and complications. These are arbitrary simplifications. In fact the physical being has a simplicity and even a goodwill (which is not always very enlightened, far from it), but still a simplicity and goodwill which put it in a closer relation with the psychic than the passions of the vital or the pretensions of the mind. And it is probably because of that also that in children the psychic can feel more at ease, being less constantly jostled by mental and vital contradictions.

27 January 1954, 6, 5-6

There is only one way for the outer being. Let us take the physical being—the physical being, the poor little physical being, the outer being, which knows nothing, can do nothing by itself. Well, for it there

is only one way of allowing the psychic being to manifest: with the candid warmth of a child (*Mother speaks very softly*) to aspire, pray, ask, want with all its strength, without reasoning or trying to understand. One can't imagine how great an obstruction reasoning and this effort to understand put in the experience. At the moment when you are on the point of reaching a state in which something will happen, some vibration will be changed in the consciousness of the being... you are all tense in an aspiration and have succeeded in fastening your aspiration, and you are standing there awaiting the answer, if this wretched mind begins to stir and to wonder, "What is happening, and what's going to happen, when is it going to happen, how is it going to happen, and why is it like that, and in what order will things manifest?" it is all over, you may get up and sweep out your room, you are not fit for anything else.

9 February 1955, 7, 41-2

Even in the body, for instance, when there is something like an attack, an accident, an illness trying to come in—something—an attack on the body, a body that is left to its natural spontaneity has an urge, an aspiration, a spontaneous will to call for help. But as soon as it goes to the head, it takes the form of things to which one is accustomed: everything is spoilt. But if the body is seen in itself, just as it is, there is something which suddenly wakes up and calls for help, and with such a faith, such an intensity, just as the tiny little baby calls its mamma, you know—or whoever is there, it says nothing if it cannot speak. But the body left to itself without this kind of constant action of the mind upon it... well, it has this: as soon as there is some disturbance, immediately it has an aspiration, a call, an effort to seek help, and this is very powerful. If nothing intervenes, it is very powerful. It is as though the cells themselves sprang up in an aspiration, a call.

In the body there are invaluable and unknown treasures. In all its cells, there is an intensity of life, of aspiration, of the will to progress which one does not usually even realise. The body-consciousness would have to be completely warped by the action of the mind and vital for it not to have an immediate will to reestablish the equilibrium. When this will is not there, it means that the entire body-consciousness has been spoilt by the intervention of the mind and vital. In people who cherish their malady more or less subconsciously with a sort of morbidity under the pretext that it makes them interesting, it is not their body at all—poor body!—it is something they have imposed

upon it with a mental or vital perversion. The body, if left to itself, is remarkable, for, not only does it aspire for equilibrium and well-being but it is capable of restoring the balance. If one leaves one's body alone without intervening with all those thoughts, all the vital reactions, all the depressions, and also all the so-called knowledge and mental constructions and fears—if one leaves the body to itself, spontaneously it will do what is necessary to set itself right again.

The body in its natural state likes equilibrium, likes harmony; it is the other parts of the being which spoil everything.

19 May 1954, 6, 139-40

*“The body has a wonderful capacity of adaptation and endurance. It is able to do so many more things than one usually imagines. If, instead of the ignorant and despotic masters that govern it, it is ruled by the central truth of the being, you will be amazed at what it is capable of doing. Calm and quiet, strong and poised, at every minute it will be able to put forth the effort that is demanded of it, for it will have learnt to find rest in action and to recuperate, through contact with the universal forces the energies it expends consciously and usefully.”*

*On Education, CWM, vol.12, p. 7*

*How can one have “rest in action”?*

That comes from a kind of certitude of inner choice. When one aspires for something, if at the same time one knows that the aspiration will be heard and answered in the best way possible, that establishes a quietude in the being, a quietude in its vibrations; whilst if there is a doubt, an uncertainty, if one does not know what will lead one to the goal or if ever one will reach it or whether there is a way of doing so, and so on, then one gets disturbed and that usually creates a sort of little whirlwind around the being, which prevents it from receiving the real thing. Instead, if one has a quiet faith, if whilst aspiring one knows that there is no aspiration (naturally, sincere aspiration) which remains unanswered, then one is quiet. One aspires with as much fervour as possible, but does not stand in nervous agitation asking oneself why one does not get immediately what one has asked for. One knows how to wait. I have said somewhere: “To know how to wait is to put time on one's side.” That is quite true. For if one gets excited, one loses all one's time—one loses one's time, loses one's energy, loses one's movements. To be very quiet, calm, peaceful, with the faith that what

is true will take place, and that if one lets it happen, it will happen so much the quicker. Then, in that peace everything goes much better.

*16 December 1953, 5, 395-6*

*Why does the body get tired? We have more or less regular activities, but one day we are full of energy and the next day we are quite tired.*

Generally this comes from a kind of inner disequilibrium. There may be many reasons for it, but it all comes to this: a sort of disequilibrium between the different parts of the being. Now, it is also possible that the day one had the energy, one spent it too much, though this is not the case with children; children spend it until they can no longer do so. One sees a child active till the moment he suddenly falls fast asleep. He was there, moving, running; and then, all of a sudden, pluff! finished, he is asleep. And it is in this way that he grows up, becomes stronger and stronger. Consequently, it is not the spending that harms you. The expenditure is made up by the necessary rest—that is set right very well. No, it is a disequilibrium: the harmony between the different parts of the being is no longer sufficient.

People think they have only to continue doing forever what they were doing or at least remain in the same state of consciousness, day after day do their little work, and all will go well. But it is not like that. Suddenly, for some reason or other, one part of the being—either your feelings or your thoughts or your vital—makes progress, has discovered something, received a light, progressed. It takes a leap in progress. All the rest remains behind. This brings about a disequilibrium. That is enough to make you very tired. But in fact, it is not tiredness: it is something which makes you want to keep quiet, to concentrate, remain within yourself, be like that, and build up slowly a new harmony among the different parts of the being. And it is very necessary to have, at a given moment, a sort of rest, for an assimilation of what one has learnt and a harmonisation of the different parts of the being.

*24 February 1954, 5, 35-6*

*How can the physical manage to aspire, since it is the mind that thinks?*

As long as it is the mind that thinks, your physical is something that's three-fourths inert and without its own consciousness. There is a

physical consciousness proper, a consciousness of the body; the body is conscious of itself, and it has its own aspiration. So long as one thinks of one's body, one is not in one's physical consciousness. The body has a consciousness that's quite personal to it and altogether independent of the mind. The body is completely aware of its own functioning or its own equilibrium or disequilibrium, and it becomes absolutely conscious, in quite a precise way, if there is a disorder somewhere or other, and (how shall I put it?) it is in contact with that and feels it very clearly, even if there are no external symptoms. The body is aware if the whole working is harmonious, well balanced, quite regular, functioning as it should; it has that kind of plenitude, a sense of plenitude, of joy and strength—something like the joy of living, acting, moving in an equilibrium full of life and energy. Or else the body can be aware that it is ill-treated by the vital and the mind and that this harms its own equilibrium, and it suffers from this. That may produce a complete disequilibrium in it. And so on.

One can develop one's physical consciousness so well that even if one is fully exteriorised, even if the vital goes completely out of the body, the body has a personal, independent consciousness which enables it to move, to do all kinds of very simple things without the vital's being there, quite independently. The body can learn how to speak: the mind and the vital may be outside it, very far away, busy elsewhere, but due to the link joining them with matter, they can still find expression through a body wherein there is no mind or vital, and which yet can learn to speak and repeat what the others say. The body can move; I don't mean that it can exert much, but it can move. It can do small, very simple things. It can write, for instance, learn how to write as it can learn to speak. It does speak: a little (how to put it?) slowly, with a little difficulty, but still it can speak clearly (sufficiently clearly) for one to understand. And yet the mind and vital may have gone out altogether, may be completely outside. There is a body-consciousness.

And so, when one has developed this body-consciousness, one can have a very clear perception of the opposition between the different kinds of consciousness. When the body needs something and is aware that this is what it needs, and the vital wants something else and the mind yet another, well, there may very well be a discussion among them, and contradictions and conflicts. And one can discern very clearly what the poise of the body is, the need of the body in itself, and in what way the vital interferes and destroys this equilibrium most

often and harms the development so much, because it is ignorant. And when the mind comes in, it creates yet another disorder which is added to the one between the vital and the physical, by introducing its ideas and norms, its principles and rules, its laws and all that, and as it doesn't take into account exactly the needs of the other, it wants to do what everybody does. Human beings have a much more delicate and precarious health than animals because their mind intervenes and disturbs the equilibrium. The body, left to itself, has a very sure instinct. For instance, never will the body if left to itself eat when it doesn't need to or take something which will be harmful to it. And it will sleep when it needs to sleep, it will act when it needs to act. The instinct of the body is very sure. It is the vital and the mind which disturb it: one by its desires and caprices, the other by its principles, dogmas, laws and ideas. And unfortunately, in civilisation as it is understood, with the kind of education given to children, this sure instinct of the body is completely destroyed: it is the rest that dominate. And naturally things happen as they do: one eats things that are harmful, one doesn't take rest when one needs to or sleeps too much when it is not necessary or does things one shouldn't do and spoils one's health completely.

*7 October 1953, 5, 293-5*

There comes a time when one begins to be almost ready, when one can feel in everything, every object, in every movement, in every vibration, in all the things around—not only people and conscious beings, but things, objects; not only trees and plants and living things, but simply any object one uses, the things around one—this delight, this delight of being, of being just as one is, simply being. And one sees that all this vibrates like that. One touches a thing and feels this delight. But naturally, I say, one must have followed the discipline I spoke about at the beginning; otherwise, so long as one has a desire, a preference, an attachment or affinities and repulsions and all that, one cannot—one cannot.

And so long as one finds pleasures—pleasure, well, yes, vital or physical pleasure in a thing—one cannot feel this delight. For this delight is everywhere. This delight is something very subtle. One moves in the midst of things and it is as though they were all singing to you their delight. There comes a time when it becomes very familiar in the life around you. Of course, I must admit that it is a little more difficult to feel it in human beings, because there are all their mental

and vital formations which come into the field of perception and disturb it. There is too much of this kind of egoistic asperity which gets mixed with things, so it is more difficult to contact the Delight there. But even in animals one feels it; it is already a little more difficult than in plants. But in plants, in flowers, it is so wonderful! They speak all their joy, they express it. And as I said, in all familiar objects, the things around you, which you use, there is a state of consciousness in which each one is happy to be, just as it is. So at that moment one knows one has touched true Delight. And it is not conditioned. I mean it does not depend upon... it depends on nothing. It does not depend on outer circumstances, does not depend on a more or less favourable state, it does not depend on anything: it is a communion with the *raison d'être* of the universe.

And when this comes it fills all the cells of the body. It is not even a thing which is thought out—one does not reason, does not analyse, it is not that: it is a state in which one lives. And when the body shares in it, it is so fresh—so fresh, so spontaneous, so... it no longer turns back upon itself, there is no longer any sense of self-observation, of self-analysis or of analysing things. All that is like a canticle of joyous vibrations, but very, very quiet, without violence, without passion, nothing of all that. It is very subtle and very intense at the same time, and when it comes, it seems that the whole universe is a marvelous harmony. Even what is to the ordinary human consciousness ugly, unpleasant, appears marvellous.

*23 January 1957, 9, 22-3*



## SINCERITY, GRACE, COMPASSION

### **If you are not sincere do not begin Yoga**

You know the story of Durga, don't you? Durga who every year has to destroy her asura; and always she is compelled to begin again. It goes on in this way till the end of the reign allotted to the titans. When they will be banished from this world, it will not be thus any longer. But till then, that is as long as they are useful (as I have said in this book) for intensifying the aspiration, clarifying the consciousness, for putting to the test the sincerity of people, they will be there. The day the test will not be needed, the day the sincerity will be pure and self-existent they will disappear. Then that day, Durga will no longer need to begin her battle over again every year.

*10 June 1953, 5, 96-7*

*You have said: "You must be vigilant and see that you do not use the Divine as a cloak for the satisfaction of your desires."*

*Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931 (14 April 1929)*

Many people accept certain theories, some of which are very convenient, and they say, "Everything is the result of the divine Will"; others say, "The Divine is everywhere and in everything and does everything"; yet others say, "My will is one with the divine Will, it is He who inspires me." Indeed, there are many theories and they say that. Naturally, their ego is as alive. They do all that they want to do, saying, "It is the Divine who is doing it in me." Whatever is supplied by their brain is the "divine Will". It is not a personal inspiration: "Everything is the result of the divine Will." "It is not I who am acting, it is the Divine who is acting through me." They do all that they wish to do. There are many people like that. Therefore I said, "Do not use the Divine as a pretty cloak to hide your desires."

*"The question is to be sincere. If you are not sincere, do not begin Yoga."*

*Ibid.*

Sincerity is perhaps the most difficult of all things and perhaps it is also the most effective.

If you have perfect sincerity, you are sure of victory. It is infinitely

difficult. Sincerity consists in making all the elements of the being, all the movements (whether outer or inner), all the parts of the being, all of them, have one single will to belong to the Divine, to live only for the Divine, to will only what the Divine wills, to express only the divine Will, to have no other source of energy than that of the Divine.

And you find that there is not a day, not an hour, not a minute when you do not need to intensify, rectify your sincerity—a total refusal to deceive the Divine. The first thing is not to deceive oneself. One knows one cannot deceive the Divine; even the cleverest of the Asuras cannot deceive the Divine. But even when one has understood that, one sees that quite often in one's life, in the course of the day, one tries to deceive oneself without even knowing it, spontaneously and almost automatically. One always gives favourable explanations for all that one does, for one's words, for one's acts. That is what happens first. I am not speaking of obvious things like quarrelling and saying, "It is the other one's fault", I am speaking of the very tiny things of daily life.

I know a child who knocked against a door and he gave a good kick to the door! It is the same thing. It is always the other one who is in the wrong, who has committed the mistake. Even when you have passed the stage of the child, when you have a little reason, you still give the stupidest of all excuses: "If he had not done that, I wouldn't have done this." But it should be just the other way round!

This is what I call being sincere. When you are with someone, if you are sincere, instantaneously your way of reacting should be to do the right thing, even when you are with someone who does not do it. Take the most common example of someone who gets angry: instead of saying things that hurt, you say nothing, you keep calm and quiet, you do not catch the contagion of the anger. You have only to look at yourself to see if this is easy. It is quite an elementary thing, a very small beginning to know whether you are sincere. And I am not speaking of those who catch every contagion, even that of coarse joking nor of those who commit the same stupidity as the others.

I tell you: if you look at yourself with sharp eyes, you will catch in yourself insincerities by the hundred, even though you are trying to be sincere in your general attitude. You will see how difficult it is.

I tell you: If you are sincere in all the elements of your being, to the very cells of your body and if your whole being integrally wants the Divine, you are sure of victory but for nothing less than that. That is what I call being sincere.

I am not speaking of glaring things like obeying your impulses, your caprices and then saying: “I do not belong to myself any more, I belong to the Divine; it is the Divine who is doing everything in me, who is acting in me”, that indeed is crude enough. I am speaking of more refined people, a little more noble, who put on a pretty cloak to cover their desires.

How many things in the course of the day, how many thoughts, sensations, gestures are turned exclusively towards the Divine in an aspiration? How many? I believe if you have a single one in the whole day, you may mark that in red letters.

When I say, “If you are sincere, you are sure of victory”, I mean true sincerity: to be constantly the true flame that burns like an offering. That intense joy of existing only by the Divine and for the Divine and feeling that without Him nothing exists, that life has no longer any meaning, nothing has any purpose, nothing has any value, nothing has any interest, unless it is this call, this aspiration, this opening to the supreme Truth, to all that we call the Divine (because you must use some word or other), the only reason for the existence of the universe. Remove that and everything disappears.

*25 March 1953, 5, 5-7*

There are many places where insincerity may be lodged, and hence it should never be said as so often people say to me, “I am perfectly sincere.” It is like those who assure you, “I have never told a lie.” If you were perfectly sincere, you would be the Divine, if you had never told a lie, that is, something that is not true, you would be the Truth! So, as you are neither the Divine nor the Truth in fact (you are that in essence but not in fact), you have always a long way to go to reach the Truth and sincerity.

*26 March 1951, 4, 252-3*

The vast majority of men are like prisoners with all the doors and windows closed, so they suffocate, which is quite natural. But they have with them the key that opens the doors and windows, and they do not use it.... Certainly there is a time when they don't know they have the key, but long after they have come to know it, long after they have been told about it, they hesitate to use it and doubt whether it has the power to open the doors and windows or even that it is a good thing to open them! And even when they feel that “after all, it might be good”, there

remains some fear: “What will happen when these doors and windows are opened?...” and they are afraid. They are afraid of being lost in that light and freedom. They want to remain what they call “themselves”. They like their falsehood and their bondage. Something in them likes it and goes on clinging to it. They still have the impression that without their limits they would no longer exist.

That is why the journey is so long, that is why it is difficult. For if one truly consented to cease to exist, everything would become so easy, so swift, so luminous, so joyful—but perhaps not in the way men understand joy and ease. In truth, there are very few people who do not enjoy fighting. There are very few who could accept the absence of night, few can conceive of light except as the opposite of darkness: “Without shadows there would be no picture. Without struggle, there would be no victory. Without suffering there would be no joy.” That is what they think, and so long as one thinks in this way, one is not yet born into the spirit.

*26 November 1958, 9, 430-1*

If you are in a state of conscious aspiration and very sincere, well, everything around you will be arranged in order to help in your aspiration, whether directly or indirectly, that is, either to make you progress, put you in touch with something new or to eliminate from your nature something that has to disappear. This is something quite remarkable. If you are truly in a state of intensity of aspiration, there is not a circumstance which does not come to help you to realise this aspiration. (...)

If you say to the Divine with conviction, “I want only You”, the Divine will arrange all the circumstances in such a way as to compel you to be sincere.<sup>1</sup> Something in the being... “I want only You.”... Then when all is removed, you begin to howl and complain; but later, if you are sincere and look at yourself straight in the eye... you have said to the Lord, you have said, “I want only You.” He will remain close to you, all the rest will go away.

*16 June 1954, 6, 176*

Naturally, it is always the same thing: one must... must sincerely want to be healed, for otherwise it does not work. If one wants to have the

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<sup>1</sup> “If earnestly you say to the Divine, ‘I want only Thee’, the Divine will arrange the circumstances in such a way that you are compelled to be sincere.”

experience solely for the experience's sake and then the next minute one returns to what one was before, this does not work. But if sincerely one wants to be healed, if one has a real aspiration to overcome the obstacle, to rise—rise above oneself, to give up all that pulls one back, to break the limits, become clear, purify oneself of all that blocks the way, if truly one has the *intense* will not to fall back into past errors, to surge up from the darkness and ignorance, to rise into the light, stripped of all that is too human, too small, too ignorant—then that works. It works, works powerfully. At times it works definitively and totally. But there must be nothing that clings to the old movements, keeps quiet at the moment, hides itself, and then later shows its face and says, “Yes, yes, it is very fine, your experience, but now it is my turn!” Then, when that happens, I do not answer for anything, because sometimes, as a reaction it becomes worse. That is why I always come back to the same thing, say always the same thing: one must be truly sincere, truly.

One must be ready, if there is something which is clinging, clinging tightly, one must be ready to tear it away completely, without its leaving any trace behind. This is why at times one makes the same mistake and repeats it, until the suffering is sufficiently great to impose a total sincerity. One must not try that method, it is bad. It is bad because it destroys many things, it wastes much energy, spreads bad vibrations. But if one can't do otherwise, well, in the intensity of suffering one can find the will for perfect sincerity.

*26 May 1954, 6, 146*

Only those who are already very sincere know that they are not completely sincere.

*1954, 14, 69*

To be pure, what does it mean? One is truly perfectly pure only when the whole being, in all its elements and all its movements, adheres fully, exclusively, to the divine Will. This indeed is total purity. It does not depend on any moral or social law, any mental convention of any kind. It depends exclusively on this: when all the elements and all the movements of the being adhere exclusively and totally to the divine Will.

Now, there are stages, there are degrees. For example, insincerity, which is one of the greatest impurities, always arises from the fact that a movement or a set of movements, an element of the being or a number of elements, want to follow their own will and not be the expression

of the divine Will. So this produces in the being either a revolt or a falsehood. I don't mean that one tells lies, but I mean that one is in a state of falsehood, of insincerity. And then, the consequences are more or less serious and more or less extensive according to the gravity of the movement itself and its importance. But these, if one sees from the point of view of purity, these are the real impurities.

22 December 1954, 6, 438-9

There are several degrees of sincerity.

The most elementary degree is not to say one thing and think another, claim one thing and want another. For example, what happens quite often: to say, "I want to make progress, and I want to get rid of my defects" and, at the same time, to cherish one's defects in the consciousness and take great care to hide them so that nobody intervenes and sends them off. This indeed is a very common phenomenon. This is already the second degree. The first degree, you see, is when someone claims, for example, to have a very great aspiration and to want the spiritual life and, at the same time, does completely... how to put it?... shamelessly, things which are most contradictory to the spiritual life. This is indeed a degree of sincerity, rather of insincerity, which is most obvious.

But there is a second degree which I have just described to you, which is like this: there is one part of the being which has an aspiration and says, even thinks, even feels that it would very much like to get rid of defects, imperfections; and then, at the same time, other parts which hide these defects and imperfections very carefully so as not to be compelled to expose them and get over them. This is very common.

And finally, if we go far enough, if we push the description far enough, so long as there is a part of the being which contradicts the central aspiration for the Divine, one is not perfectly sincere. That is to say, a perfect sincerity is something extremely rare. And most commonly, very very frequently, when there are things in one's nature which one does not like, one takes the greatest care to hide them from oneself, one finds favourable explanations or simply makes a little movement, like this (*gesture*). You have noticed that when things move like this you can't see them clearly. Well, where the defect is seated, there is a kind of vibration which does this, and so your sight is not clear, you no longer see your defects. And this is automatic. Well, all these are insincerities.

And perfect sincerity comes when at the centre of the being

there is the consciousness of the divine Presence, the consciousness of the divine Will, and when the entire being, like a luminous, clear, transparent whole, expresses this in all its details. This indeed is true sincerity.

When, at any moment, whatever may happen, the being has given itself to the Divine and wants only the divine Will, when, no matter what is going on in the being, at any moment whatever, always, the whole being in perfect unanimity can say to the Divine and feels for the Divine, “Let Thy Will be done”, when it is spontaneous, total, integral, *then* you are sincere. But until this is established, it is a mixed sincerity, more or less mixed, right up to the point where one is not at all sincere.

*10 November 1954, 6, 397-8*

I could give you innumerable examples of such contradictions in the being: when one part tries to take a step forward, the other one comes and demolishes everything. So you have to begin again all the time, and every time it is demolished. That is why you must do this work of sincerity which, when you perceive in your being a part that pulls the other way, makes you take it up carefully, educate it as one educates a child and put it in harmony with the central part. That is the work of sincerity and it is indispensable.

*29 August 1956, 8, 284*

You believe you are so good, so kind, so well disposed and always full of good feelings. You wish no harm to anybody, you wish only good—all that you tell yourself complacently. But if you look at yourself sincerely as you are thinking, you notice that you have in your head a collection of thoughts which are sometimes frightful and of which you were not at all aware.

For example, your reactions when something has not pleased you: how eager you are to send your friends, relatives, acquaintances, everyone, to the devil! How you wish them all kinds of unpleasant things, without even being aware of it! And how you say, “Ah, that will teach him to be like that!” And when you criticise, you say, “He must be made aware of his faults.” And when someone has not acted according to your ideas, you say, “He will be punished for it!” and so on.

You do not know it because you do not look at yourself in the act of thinking. Sometimes you know it, when it becomes a little too strong. But when the thing simply passes through, you hardly notice it—it

comes, it enters, it leaves. Then you find out that if you truly want to be pure and wholly on the side of the Truth, then that requires a vigilance, a sincerity, a self-observation, a self-control which are not common. You begin to realise that it is difficult to be truly sincere.

You flatter yourself that you have nothing but good feelings and good intentions and that whatever you do, you do for the sake of what is good—yes, so long as you are conscious and have control, but the moment you are not very attentive, all kinds of things happen within you of which you are not at all conscious and which are not very pretty.

If you want to clean your house thoroughly, you must be vigilant for a long time, for a very long time and especially not believe that you have reached the goal, like that, at one stroke, because one day you happened to decide that you would be on the right side. That is of course a very essential and important point, but it must be followed by a good many other days when you have to keep a strict guard on yourself so as not to belie your resolution.

*4 April 1958, 3, 231-2*

Since we have goodwill and endeavour to be integrally sincere, that is, to make our actions conform to our thoughts, we are now convinced that we act according to mental laws we receive from outside, not after having maturely considered and analysed them, not by deliberately and consciously receiving them, but because unconsciously we are subjected to them through atavism, by our upbringing and education, and above all because we are dominated by a collective suggestion which is so powerful, so overwhelming, that very few succeed in avoiding it altogether.

*15 December 1911, 2, 25*

Fundamentally, whatever be the path one follows—whether the path of surrender, consecration, knowledge—if one wants it to be perfect, it is always equally difficult, and there is but one way, one only, I know of only one: that is perfect sincerity, but *perfect* sincerity!

Do you know what perfect sincerity is?...

Never to try to deceive oneself, never let any part of the being try to find out a way of convincing the others, never to explain favourably what one does in order to have an excuse for what one wants to do, never to close one's eyes when something is unpleasant, never to let anything pass, telling oneself, "That is not important, next time it will be better."



Oh! It is very difficult. Just try for one hour and you will see how very difficult it is. Only one hour, to be *totally, absolutely* sincere. To let nothing pass. That is, all one does, all one feels, all one thinks, all one wants, is *exclusively* the Divine.

“I want nothing but the Divine, I think of nothing but the Divine, I do nothing but what will lead me to the Divine, I love nothing but the Divine.”

Try—try, just to see, try for half an hour, you will see how difficult it is! And during that time take great care that there isn’t a part of the vital or a part of the mind or a part of the physical being nicely hidden there, at the back, so that you don’t see it (*Mother hides her hands behind her back*) and don’t notice that it is not collaborating—sitting quietly there so that you don’t unearth it... it says nothing, but it does not change, it hides itself. How many such parts! How many parts hide themselves! You put them in your pocket because you don’t want to see them or else they get behind your back and sit there well-hidden, right in the middle of your back, so as not to be seen. When you go there with your torch—your torch of sincerity—you ferret out all the corners, everywhere, all the small corners which do not consent, the things which say “No” or those which do not move: “I am not going to budge. I am glued to this place of mine and nothing will make me move.”... You have a torch there with you, and you flash it upon the thing, upon everything. You will see there are many of them there, behind your back, well stuck.

Try, just for an hour, try!

12 May 1954, 6, 132-3

As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort. You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the Universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering your self; and whether this results in progress or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it.

If you wish to progress, if you make an effort to control yourself for instance, to overcome certain defects, weaknesses, imperfections, and if you expect to get a more or less immediate result from your

effort, your effort loses all sincerity, it becomes a bargaining.

23 April 1958, 9, 316-7

In your meditation the first imperative need is a state of perfect and absolute sincerity in all the consciousness. It is indispensable that you should not deceive yourself or deceive or be deceived by others. Often people have a wish, a mental preference or vital desire; they want the experience to happen in a particular way or to take a turn that satisfies their ideas or desires or preferences; they do not keep themselves blank and unprejudiced and simply and sincerely observe what happens. Then if you do not like what happens, it is easy to deceive yourself; you will see one thing, but give it a little twist and make it something else, or you will distort something simple and straightforward or magnify it into an extraordinary experience.

23 June 1929, 3, 98-9

*“To be absolutely sincere is not to have any division, any contradiction in one’s being.”*

If you are made of pieces which are not only different but often quite contradictory, these pieces necessarily create a division in your being. For example, you have one part in yourself which aspires for the divine life, to know the Divine, to unite with Him, to live Him integrally, and then you have another part which has attachments, desires—which it calls “needs”—and which not only seeks these things but is quite upset when it does not have them. There are other contradictions, but this one is the most flagrant. There are others, for instance, like wanting to surrender completely to the Divine, to give oneself up totally to His Will and His Guidance, and at the same time, when the experience comes—a common experience on the path when one sincerely tries to give oneself up to the Divine—the feeling that one is nothing, that one can do nothing, that one doesn’t even exist outside the Divine; that is to say, if He were not there, one would not exist and could not do anything, one would not be anything at all.... This experience naturally comes as a help on the path of total self-giving, but there is a part of the being which, when the experience comes, rises up in a terrible revolt and says, “But, excuse me! I insist on existing, I insist on being something, I insist on doing things myself, I want to have a personality.” And naturally, the second one undoes all that the first had done.

These are not exceptional cases, this happens very frequently. I

could give you innumerable examples of such contradictions in the being: when one part tries to take a step forward, the other one comes and demolishes everything. So you have to begin again all the time, and every time it is demolished. That is why you must do this work of sincerity which, when you perceive in your being a part that pulls the other way, makes you take it up carefully, educate it as one educates a child and put it in harmony with the central part. That is the work of sincerity and it is indispensable.

And naturally, when there is a unity, an agreement, a harmony among all the wills of the being, your being can become simple, candid and uniform in its action and tendencies. It is only when the whole being is grouped around a single central movement that you can be spontaneous. For if, within you, there is something which is turned towards the Divine and awaits the inspiration and impulse, and at the same time there is another part of the being which seeks its own ends and works to realise its own desires, you no longer know where you stand, and you can no longer be sure of what may happen, for one part can not only undo but totally contradict what the other wants to do.

*29 August 1956, 8, 283-5*

Sincerity is so rare a virtue in the world, one ought to bow down before it with respect when one meets it. Sincerity—what we call sincerity, that is to say, a perfect honesty and transparency: that there may be nowhere in the being anything which pretends, hides or wants to pass itself off for what it is not.

*22 February 1956, 8, 71-3*

But one has attachment, even for a disinterested work. That's what you must understand. Well, that brings in just a little bit of something like that, down below, quite hidden, quite a tiny thing which is a little... not very straight, a little bent, twisted. And then you do not know. But if that were not there, as soon as you failed to do exactly what should be done, you would know. You would know it absolutely precisely. It is as delicate a movement as the thousandth part of a millimetre would be. Yes, it is there, and that is sufficient, you know: "I was mistaken." But you must have that absolute sincerity which precisely does not want at any cost to blunder, which will do anything, give up everything, everything, rather than live in any kind of illusion.

*20 May 1953, 5, 54-5*

If one sincerely wants to progress, one must at each step inquire, be sure from where the influence comes: “Who has given me this suggestion? Is it a part of myself? Is it something external? Does this come from the Divine?”

But before having had that experience, one is not capable of judging by oneself. Naturally, if one’s surrender is truly sincere and there is this constant attitude in the being, this total self-giving to the Divine, “Thy Will be done”, in this way, one can, without knowing, without understanding, instinctively, choose the thing that should be done and reject the one that should not, but this becomes an instinct, a sort of automatic thing, if your surrender is perfect. And that is the very advantage of surrender, for you can do the right thing in the right way automatically, *before* having the knowledge.

12 May 1954, 6, 132

It is only the psychic being that has the strength to intervene. If your mind is in contact with your psychic being, if it receives the influence of the psychic being, then it is strong enough to organise the resistance. It knows what the true thing is and what the false; and knowing what the true thing is, if it has the goodwill, it will organise the resistance, give battle and gain the victory. But that is the only condition: it must be in contact with the psychic being.

For even the most beautiful theories, even if one knows mentally many things and holds admirable principles, that is not sufficiently strong to create a will capable of resisting an impulse. At one time you are quite determined, you have decided that it would be thus—for example, that you would not do such a thing: it is settled, you will not do it—but how is it that suddenly (you do not know how or why nor what has happened), you have not decided anything at all! And then you immediately find in yourself an excellent reason for doing the thing.... Among others, there is a certain kind of excuse which is always given: “Well, if I do it this time, at least I shall be convinced that it is very bad and I shall do it no longer and this will be the last time.” It is the prettiest excuse one always gives to oneself: “This is the last time I am doing it. This time, I am doing it to understand perfectly that it is bad and that it must not be done and I shall not do it anymore. This is the last time.” Every time, it is the last time! and you begin again.

Of course there are some who have less clear ideas and who say to themselves: “After all, why don’t I want to do it? These are theories,

they are principles that might not be true. If I have this impulse, what is it that tells me that this impulse is not better than a theory?..." It is not for them the last time. It is something they accept as quite natural.

Between these two extremes there are all the possibilities. But the most dangerous of all is to say: "Well, I am doing it once more this time, that will purify me of this. Afterwards I shall no longer do it." Now the purification is never enough!

It happens only when you have decided: "Well, this time, I am going to try not to do it, and I shall not do it, I shall apply all my strength and I shall not do it." Even if you have just a little success, it is much. Not a big success, but just a small success, a very partial success: you do not carry out what you yearn to do; but the yearning, the desire, the passion is still there and that produces whirls within, but outside you resist, "I shall not do it, I shall not move; even if I have to bind myself hand and foot, I shall not do it." It is a partial success—but it is a great victory because, due to this, next time you will be able to do a little more. That is to say, instead of holding all the violent passions within yourself, you can begin calming them a little; and you will calm them slowly at first, with difficulty. They will remain long, they will come back, they will trouble you, vex you, produce in you a great disgust, all that, but if you resist well and say: "No, I shall carry out nothing; whatever the cost, I shall not carry out anything; I will stay like a rock", then little by little, little by little, that thins out, thins out and you begin to learn the second attitude: "Now I want my consciousness to be above those things. There will still be many battles but if my consciousness stands above that, little by little there will come a time when this will return no longer." And then there is a time when you feel that you are absolutely free: you do not even perceive it, and then that is all. It may take a long time, it may come soon: that depends on the strength of character, on the sincerity of the aspiration. But even for people who have just a little sincerity, if they subject themselves to this process, they succeed. It takes time. They succeed in the first item: in not expressing. All forces upon earth tend towards self-expression. These forces come with the object of manifesting themselves and if you place a barrier and refuse to express them, they may try to beat against the barrier for a time, but in the end, they will tire themselves out and not being manifested, they will withdraw and leave you quiet.

So you must never say: "I shall first purify my thought, purify my body, purify my vital and then later I shall purify my action." That is the

normal order, but it never succeeds. The effective order is to begin from the outside: “The very first thing is that I do not do it, and afterwards, I desire it no longer and next I close my doors completely to all impulses: they no longer exist for me, I am now outside all that.” This is the true order, the order that is effective. First, not to do it. And then you will no longer have desire for anything and after that it will go out of your consciousness completely.

*5 August 1953, 5, 210-3*

As your aspiration is sincere, whatever was in the subconscious standing in the way of the Divine Realisation has come to the surface in order to be transformed; and you must rejoice at these occasions to make a progress.

*4 July 1955, 16, 364*

You will see, when you become absolutely sincere, that there is nothing in yourself that is absolutely unmixed. But it is only when you look yourself in the face, in the light of your highest consciousness, that whatever you want to eliminate from your nature will disappear. Without this striving for absolute sincerity, the defect, the little shadow, will stay in a corner biding its time to come out.

I am not speaking of the vital, which is hypocritical, I am merely speaking of the mind. If you have a small, disagreeable sensation, a slight uneasiness, see how quickly the mind gives you a favourable explanation! It lays the blame on someone else or on the circumstances, it says that what you did was right and that you are not responsible, and so on. If you look carefully into yourself, you will see that it is like that and you will find it most amusing too! If a child starts examining himself carefully very early, observing himself honestly so as not to deceive himself or deceive others, it will become a habit and spare him much struggling later on.

*6 January 1951, 15, 298*

### **Mahakali's blow and perfect sincerity**

To begin with, it must be said that sincerity is progressive, and as the being progresses and develops, as the universe unfolds in the becoming, sincerity too must go on perfecting itself endlessly. Every halt in that development necessarily changes the sincerity of yesterday into the insincerity of tomorrow.

To be perfectly sincere it is indispensable not to have any preference, any desire, any attraction, any dislike, any sympathy or antipathy, any attachment, any repulsion. One must have a total, integral vision of things, in which everything is in its place and one has the same attitude towards all things: the attitude of true vision. This programme is obviously very difficult for a human being to realise. Unless he has decided to divinise himself, it seems almost impossible that he could be free from all these contraries within him. And yet, so long as one carries them in himself, one cannot be perfectly sincere. Automatically the mental, the vital and even the physical working is falsified. I am emphasising the physical, for even the working of the senses is warped: one does not see, hear, taste, feel things as they are in reality as long as one has a preference. So long as there are things which please you and others which don't, so long as you are attracted by certain things, and repulsed by others, you cannot see things in their reality; you see them through your reaction, your preference or your repulsion. The senses are instruments which get out of order, in the same way as sensations, feelings and thoughts. Therefore, to be sure of what you see, what you feel, what you experience and think, you must have a complete detachment; and this is obviously not an easy task. But until then your perception cannot be wholly true, and so it is not sincere.

Naturally, this is the maximum. There are crass insincerities which everybody understands and which, I believe, it is not necessary to dwell upon, as for example, saying one thing and thinking another, pretending that you are doing one thing and doing another, expressing a wish which is not your real wish. I am not even speaking of the absolutely glaring lie which consists in saying something different from the fact, but even that diplomatic way of acting which consists in doing things with the idea of obtaining a certain result, in saying something and expecting it to have a certain effect; every combination of this kind which naturally makes you contradict yourself, is a kind of insincerity gross enough for everybody to easily recognise.

But there are others more subtle which are difficult to discern. For instance, so long as you have sympathies and antipathies, quite naturally and as it were spontaneously you will have a favourable perception of what is sympathetic to you and an unfavourable perception of what—or whom—you dislike. And there too the lack of sincerity will be flagrant. However, you may deceive yourself and not perceive that you are being insincere. Then in that case, you have, as it were, the collaboration of

mental insincerity. For it is true that there are insincerities of slightly different types according to the state of being or the parts of the being. Only, the origin of these insincerities is always a similar movement arising from desire and the seeking of personal ends—from egoism, from the combination of all the limitations arising from egoism and all the deformations arising from desire.

In fact, as long as the ego is there, one cannot say that a being is perfectly sincere, even though he is striving to become sincere. One must pass beyond the ego, give oneself up totally to the divine Will, surrender without reserve and without calculation... then one can be perfectly sincere, but not before.

That does not mean that one should not make an effort to be more sincere than one is, saying to oneself, “All right, I shall wait for my ego to disappear in order to be sincere”, because one may reverse the terms and say that if you do not try sincerely your ego will never disappear. Therefore, sincerity is the basis of all true realisation, it is the means, the path—and it is also the goal. Without it you are sure to make innumerable blunders and you have constantly to redress the harm you have done to yourself and to others.

There is, besides, a marvellous joy in being sincere. Every act of sincerity carries in itself its own reward: the feeling of purification, of soaring upwards, of liberation one gets when one has rejected even one tiny particle of falsehood.

Sincerity is the safeguard, the protection, the guide, and finally the transforming power.

*19 December 1956, 8, 397-400*

When one is very attentive and very sincere, one can have an indication, an inner but perceptible indication, of the value of what one has undertaken or the action one is doing. Truly, for someone who has an entire goodwill, that is, who in all sincerity, with the whole conscious part of his being, wants to do the right thing in the right way, there is always an indication; if for some reason or other one launches upon a more or less fatal action, one *always* feels an uneasiness in the region of the solar plexus; an uneasiness which is not violent, which doesn't compel recognition dramatically, but is very perceptible to someone who is attentive—something like a sort of regret, like a lack of assent. It may go as far as a kind of refusal to collaborate. But I must stress it, without violence, without brutal self-assertion: it makes no noise, does



not hurt, it is at the most a slight uneasiness. And if you disregard it, if you pay no attention, attach no importance to it, after a little while it will completely disappear and there will be nothing any longer.

It is not that it increases with the growing error, on the contrary, it disappears and the consciousness becomes veiled.

Therefore, one cannot give this as a sure sign, for if you have disobeyed this little indication several times, well, it will no longer come. But I tell you that if in all sincerity you are very attentive to it, then it will be a very sure and precious guide. But if there is an uneasiness, it comes at the beginning, almost immediately, and when it doesn't show itself, well, no matter what one has started, it is preferable to do it to the very end so that the experience may be complete, unless one receives, as I said, an absolutely precise and categorical indication that it should not be done.

30 January 1957, 9, 31-2

*Is there a difference between sincerity and loyalty?*

There is always a difference between two different things. Of course, it is very difficult, I suppose, to be loyal without being sincere, and vice versa. But I have known people who were loyal and yet lacked a certain kind of sincerity. The opposite is not unusual. The one doesn't automatically follow from the other, but it is obvious that honesty, straightforwardness, loyalty and sincerity are closely related. I think that it is extremely difficult for someone to be perfectly sincere without being loyal and honest, but of course this demands the utmost.

*Isn't loyalty limited by a feeling for something or someone? Isn't sincerity something wider?*

Yes, it is. Loyalty implies some kind of hierarchical relationship, so to say, with someone or something. There is a sort of interdependence. The usual idea is that loyalty means keeping one's word, doing one's duty scrupulously, etc.

Someone who lives all alone in a forest can practise total sincerity, but you can only practise loyalty in social life, in relation to other people. A person who is entirely consecrated in an act of inner devotion to the divine Presence, can be loyal to this Presence. This implies a relationship with something in front of you, or a relationship with the universal.

*The German generals were loyal to Hitler, but they weren't sincere with themselves.*

This is a very complex problem. They might have been sincere in relation to their own ideal. You do not know.

I have known beings who were the most active instruments against the divine life, against the divine realisation. Well, to some extent, they were loyal to their own ideal and very sincere in their...<sup>1</sup> These beings are called Asuras, but as I have just said, they were sincere in relation to their own ideal.

*So sincerity is not enough?*

I didn't say they had an absolute sincerity. I simply said that they were very sincere. Perhaps, in some part of their being, there was something that did not try to know any more than it knew. It is quite probable.

*Some people think they have achieved absolute sincerity.*

If you are *sure* you have achieved absolute sincerity, you can be sure that you are immersed in falsehood!

*6 January 1951, 15, 299-301*

Perfect sincerity comes when at the centre of the being there is the consciousness of the divine Presence, the consciousness of the divine Will, and when the entire being, like a luminous, clear, transparent whole, expresses this in all its details. This indeed is true sincerity.

When, at any moment, whatever may happen, the being has given itself to the Divine and wants only the divine Will, when, no matter what is going on in the being, at any moment whatever, always, the whole being in perfect unanimity can say to the Divine and feels for the Divine, "Let Thy Will be done", when it is spontaneous, total, integral, *then* you are sincere. But until this is established, it is a mixed sincerity, more or less mixed, right up to the point where one is not at all sincere.

*10 November 1954, 6, 398*

It is probable that perfect sincerity can only come when one rises above this sphere of falsehood that is life as we know it on earth, mental life, even the higher mental life.

When one springs up into the higher sphere, into the world of Truth, one will be able to see things as they truly are, and seeing them as they are, one will be able to live them in their truth. Then all falsehoods will naturally crumble. And since the favourable explanations will no longer have any purpose, they will disappear, for there will be nothing

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<sup>1</sup> Words missing in the transcription.

left to explain.

Things will be self-evident, Truth will shine through all forms, the possibility of error will disappear.

21 May 1958, 9, 329-30

And there is a moment—in everyone's life there is a moment—when this need for perfect sincerity comes as a definitive choice. There is a moment in one's individual life, also a moment in the collective life when one belongs to a group, a moment when the choice *must* be made, when the purification *must* be done. Sometimes this becomes very serious, it is almost a question of life and death for the group: it *must* make a decisive progress... if it wants to survive.

26 May 1954, 6, 146-7

*What is the way to accept the Grace with gratitude?*

Ah! First of all you must feel the need for it.

This is the most important point. It is to have a certain inner humility which makes you aware of your helplessness without the Grace, that truly, without it you are incomplete and powerless. This, to begin with, is the first thing.

It is an experience one can very well have. When, you see, even people who know nothing find themselves in quite difficult circumstances or facing a problem which must be solved or, as I just told you, an impulse which must be overcome or something that has disturbed them... and then they realise they are lost, they don't know what to do—neither their mind nor their will nor their feelings help—they don't know what to do, then it happens; there is within them something like a kind of call, a call to something which can do what one cannot. One aspires to something which is capable of doing what one can't do.

This is the first condition. And then, if you become aware that it is only the Grace which can do that, that the situation in which you find yourself, from there the Grace alone can pull you out, can give you the solution and the strength to come out of it, then, quite naturally an intense aspiration awakes in you, a consciousness which is translated into an opening. If you call, aspire, and if you hope to get an answer, you will quite naturally open yourself to the Grace.

And later—you must pay great attention to this (*Mother puts her finger on her lips*)—the Grace will answer you, the Grace will pull you

out of the trouble, the Grace will give you the solution to your problem or will help you to get out of your difficulty. But once you are free from trouble and have come out of your difficulty, don't forget that it is the Grace which pulled you out, and don't think it is yourself. For this, indeed, is the important point. Most people, as soon as the difficulty has gone, say, "After all, I pulled myself out of the difficulty quite well."

There you are. And then you lock and bolt the door, you see, and you cannot receive anything any more. You need once again some acute anguish, some terrible difficulty for this kind of inner stupidity to give way, and for you to realise once more that you can do nothing. Because it is only when you grow aware that you are powerless that you begin to be just a little open and plastic. But so long as you think that what you do depends on your own skill and your own capacity, truly, not only do you close one door, but, you know, you close lots of doors one upon another, and bolt them. You shut yourself up in a fortress and nothing can enter there. That is the great drawback: one forgets very quickly. Quite naturally one is satisfied with one's own capacity.

*But Mother, even when one tries to think that one is powerless, there is something which believes one is powerful. So?*

Ah, yes, ah, yes! Ah, it is very difficult to be sincere.... That is why the blows multiply and sometimes become terrible, because that's the only thing which breaks your stupidity. This is the justification of calamities. Only when you are in an acutely painful situation and indeed before something that affects you deeply, then that makes the stupidity melt away a little. But as you say, even when there is something that melts, there is still a little something which remains inside. And that is why it lasts so long...

How many blows are needed in life for one to know to the very depths that one is *nothing*, that one can do *nothing*, that one *does not exist*, that one is *nothing*, that there is no entity without the divine Consciousness and the Grace. From the moment one knows it, it is over; all the difficulties have gone. When one knows it integrally and there is nothing which resists... but till that moment... And it takes very long.

*Why doesn't the blow come all at once?*

Because that would kill you. For if the blow is strong enough to cure you, it would simply crush you, it would reduce you to pulp. It is only by proceeding little by little, little by little, very gradually, that you can continue to exist. Naturally this depends on the inner strength, the inner sincerity, and on the capacity for progress, for profiting by experience and, as I said a while ago, on *not forgetting*. If one is lucky enough not

to forget, then one goes much faster. One can go very fast. And if at the same time one has that inner moral strength which, when the red-hot iron is at hand, does not extinguish it by trying to pour water over it, but instead goes to the very core of the abscess, then in this case things go very fast also. But not many people are strong enough for this. On the contrary, they very quickly do this (*gesture*), like this, like this, in order to hide, to hide from themselves. How many pretty little explanations one gives oneself, how many excuses one piles up for all the foolishnesses one has committed.

*Does the number of blows depend on people, Sweet Mother?*

Yes, it depends on people; it depends, as I said, on their capacity for progress, and on their strength and their resistance. But I know very few people who don't need blows at all.

*Mother, is the blow which comes Mahakali's?*

The blow? Not necessarily.

If you swallow a poison and are poisoned, it won't be Mahakali's fault. It is you who will have swallowed the poison. If one puts oneself into absolutely ridiculous conditions, one is in a state in which one is bound to break one's head or arm or back; because you are not in a state of true equilibrium, you can't accuse the divine forces. It is the normal mechanical consequence of the stupidity committed, of the inner state.

*What is the nature of Mahakali's blow?*

It makes you feel very happy. It gives you a sweet warmth in the heart, like that. You feel quite satisfied.

*Does one have to aspire for it or does it come naturally?*

Yes, one must have a sincerity in the aspiration, really want to progress. One must truly say, "Yes, I want to progress" with sincerity... "Whatever happens, I want to progress." Then it comes.

But as I said, it comes with a power of plenitude which holds an intense joy. When one has taken a decision, has decided to stop something in oneself, just not to repeat a stupidity one has committed, or to do something which one finds impossible or difficult to do and which, one knows, should be done, and when one has taken the decision and has put in the full sincerity of one's will, well, then if a terrible blow comes to compel you to do what you have decided to do, it is a blow, but you feel glorified, you are quite happy, it is magnificent, you see, you feel something magnificent here (*Mother points to the heart*).

There is such a big difference between the mishaps that come to you just because you are in a purely external, mechanical, physical

consciousness and in a state of ignorance which makes you commit all possible follies which naturally bring their consequences, inevitably—there is such a great difference between this and the altogether higher state to which you rise when you have determined to master yourself, to live only in the consciousness of Truth, whatever the cost, no matter what the price of progress, to progress... and the things that happen to you then are so full of meaning, you see so clearly in them that shining truth, that light which illumines you on the path as though you had a beacon, here, to guide you... you see so clearly! It is no longer something that crushes you, like a block of stone falling on your back. It is an overpowering resplendence.

That is why one always says: it is only the first step that needs an effort. The first step means: come out from that level and climb to this one. After that everything, everything changes.

But one must come out completely from that level, one must not remain there, one must not try to keep one foot here and one foot there, for that will not do.

*22 September 1954, 6, 322-6*

## **Divine grace, compassion and gratitude**

The Greeks had a keen and exceptional sense of beauty, of eurhythmy, of harmony in forms and things. But at the same time they had an equally keen sense of men's impotence in face of an implacable Fate which none could escape. They were haunted by the inflexibility of this Fate, and even their gods seem to have been subject to it. In their mythology and in their legends, one finds little trace of the divine compassion and grace.

This notion of compassion and grace made its appearance in Europe later with the Christian religion—whereas in Asia and especially in India it had long before been the very essence of Buddha's teaching.

So in all the Greek stories, legends and tragedies we find this inexorable cruelty of the decrees of a Fate that nothing can deflect.

*15, 230*

*With the touch of the divine Grace, how do difficulties become opportunities for progress?*

Opportunities for progress? Yes! Well, this is something quite obvious.

You have made a big mistake, you are in great difficulty: then, if you have faith, if you have trust in the divine Grace, if you really rely on It, you will suddenly realise that it is a lesson, that your difficulty or mistake is nothing else but a lesson and that it comes to teach you to find within yourself what needs to be changed, and with this help of the divine Grace you will discover in yourself what has to be changed. And you will change it. And so, from a difficulty you will have made great progress, taken a considerable leap forward. This, indeed, happens all the time. Only, you must be truly sincere, that is, rely on the Grace and let It work in you—not like this: one part of you asking to be helped and another resisting as much as it can, because it doesn't want to change... this is the difficulty.

All that he [Sri Aurobindo] is saying, all the time, is: completely, totally, sincerely, without reserve. For there is one part of the being which has an aspiration, there is one part of the being which gives itself, and there are other parts—sometimes a small part, some times a big one which hides nicely, right at the bottom, and keeps absolutely quiet so that it may not be found out, but which *resists* with *all* its might, so as not to change.

And so one wonders... with, “Oh, I had such a beautiful aspiration, I had so much goodwill, I had such a great desire to change, and then, see, I cannot! Why?” Then, of course, your mental arrogance comes in and says, “I didn't get the response I deserved, the divine Grace doesn't help me, and I am left all alone to shift for myself”, etc., etc.

It is not that. It is that hidden somewhere there is a tiny something which is well coiled up, in there, *doubled up, turned in* upon itself and well hidden, right at the bottom, as at the bottom of a box, which refuses to stir. (*Mother speaks very softly.*) So when the effort, the aspiration wane, die down, this springs up like that, gently, and then it wants to impose its will and it makes you do exactly what you did not want to do, what you had decided you would not do, and which you do without knowing how or why! Because that thing was there, it had its turn—for small things, big things, for the details, even for the direction of life.

21 July 1954, 6, 242

Compassion and gratitude are essentially psychic virtues. They appear in the consciousness only when the psychic being takes part in active life.

The vital and the physical experience them as weaknesses, for they curb the free expression of their impulses, which are based on the power of strength.

As always, the mind, when insufficiently educated, is the accomplice of the vital being and the slave of the physical nature, whose laws, so overpowering in their half-conscious mechanism, it does not fully understand. When the mind awakens to the awareness of the first psychic movements, it distorts them in its ignorance and changes compassion into pity or at best into charity, and gratitude into the wish to repay, followed, little by little, by the capacity to recognise and admire.

It is only when the psychic consciousness is all-powerful in the being that compassion for all that needs help, in whatever domain, and gratitude for all that manifests the divine presence and grace, in whatever form, are expressed in all their original and luminous purity, without mixing compassion with any trace of condescension or gratitude with any sense of inferiority.

15 June 1952, 15, 277

*If one is not aware of the divine presence, can one enjoy the divine protection?*

There too it depends on the case. It may occur; it is not always like that, but it may occur. It may happen that the divine grace is given to someone without his knowing anything about it. This even happens more often than one thinks.

30 January 1951, 15, 322

*Doesn't the Divine help if he is not called?*

It is not altogether like that.... The divine Consciousness works always, everywhere and in the same way. The divine Grace is active everywhere, and in all circumstances in the same way. And so on. But according to your personal attitude, you create within yourself the conditions for receiving what is done or not receiving it. And trust—indeed, trust in the Truth, trust in the Grace, trust in the divine Knowledge—this puts you in that state of receptivity in which you can receive these things. Whilst, if you have no trust... you may still try to receive something—there are people, for instance, who fling a sort of challenge, they throw a challenge at the Divine and tell him: “Here’s the situation such as it is, I am in these conditions which seem to me at least inextricable, it is impossible to get out of them. But if the Divine pulls me out of the difficulty, I shall put my trust in him.” There are many people—they do not formulate it like this but many feel and think in this way. Well, this is the worst of all possible conditions. Generally it puts you into a



complete hole. And it is exactly the state most opposed to trustfulness. And besides, it is quite a vulgar bargaining: “If you do this for me, I shall have faith that you exist. I am going to try and see if you really exist and whether you are what they say. Do this, and we are going to see clearly if you succeed. Then I shall trust in you.” And many people do that, even without being aware of it. Any number of men say: “How can I have trust in the Divine? I have such a lamentable and unhappy life!” That is to say, they limit the divine Consciousness to their little personal needs.

*If one has the trust, does the help come automatically?*

Even an atom of sincerity suffices, and it comes. And if, truly, one calls very sincerely (not just calling and at the same time saying, “We are going to see now if it is going to succeed”—that naturally is not a very good condition), but if one calls very sincerely and sincerely needs the answer, one waits and it *always* comes. And if one can silence one’s mind and be a little quiet, one even perceives the coming of the help and what form it takes.

25 November 1953, 5, 370-1

*[About a passage in Letters on Yoga, SABCL, 609 — Comp.]:*

It is not the Grace that recedes, it is he himself who pushes It away, that is, he has put a distance between himself and the Grace. In fact, even “pushing away” doesn’t give the correct picture; you see, this is not written, it was not written to a philosopher, and it is not in philosophical terms. In one case, you see, he [Sri Aurobindo] has taken this particular attitude, but the phenomenon is the same; that is, there is a kind of psychological distance created between the Grace and the individual. And due to this psychological distance the individual cannot receive the Grace and feels that It is not there. But It is there, in fact; only, as he has established this distance between the two, he doesn’t feel It any longer. This is the real phenomenon. It isn’t that the Grace goes away, it isn’t even that he has the power to push It away, for if It doesn’t want to go, no matter how much he tries, It won’t go. But he makes himself incapable of feeling It and receiving its effect. He creates a psychological barrier between himself and the Grace.

7 July 1954, 6, 218

*“26 – Sir Philip Sidney said of the criminal led out to be hanged, “There, but for the grace of God, goes Sir Philip Sidney.” Wiser,*

*had he said, "There, by the grace of God, goes Sir Philip Sidney."  
I have not understood the meaning of this aphorism.*

Sir Philip Sidney was a statesman and a poet, but in spite of his success in life, he retained his humble nature. Seeing a criminal being taken to the gallows, he is supposed to have said the famous words which Sri Aurobindo quotes in his aphorism and which could be paraphrased like this, "That could have happened to me too, but for the Grace of God." Sri Aurobindo remarks that had Sir Philip Sidney been wiser he would have said, "That could have happened to me too, by the Grace of God." For the divine Grace is everywhere, always, behind everything and every event, whatever our reaction to that thing or event may be, whether it appears good or bad, catastrophic or beneficial.

And if Sir Philip had been a Yogi, he would have had the experience of human unity and he would have felt concretely that it was himself or a part of himself which was being led to the gallows and he would have known at the same time that everything that happens happens by the Grace of the Lord.

*30 March 1960, 10, 50-1*

No matter how great your faith and trust in the divine Grace, no matter how great your capacity to see it at work in all circumstances, at every moment, at every point in life, you will never succeed in understanding the marvellous immensity of Its Action, and the precision, the exactitude with which this Action is accomplished; you will never be able to grasp to what extent the Grace does everything, is behind everything, organises everything, conducts everything, so that the march forward to the divine realisation may be as swift, as complete, as total and harmonious as possible, considering the circumstances of the world.

As soon as you are in contact with It, there is not a second in time, not a point in space, which does not show you dazzlingly this perpetual work of the Grace, this constant intervention of the Grace.

And once you have seen this, you feel you are never equal to it, for you should never forget it, never have any fears, any anguish, any regrets, any recoils... or even suffering. If one were in union with this Grace, if one saw It everywhere, one would begin living a life of exultation, of all-power, of infinite happiness.

And that would be the best possible collaboration in the divine Work.

*1 August 1956, 8, 250*

In the whole manifestation there is an Infinite Grace constantly at work to bring the world out of the misery, the obscurity and the stupidity in which it lies. From all time this Grace has been at work, unremitting in its effort, and how many thousands of years were necessary for this world to awaken to the need for something greater, more true, more beautiful.

Everyone can gauge, from the resistance he meets in his own being, the tremendous resistance which the world opposes to the work of the Grace.

And it is only when one understands that all external things, all mental constructions, all material efforts are vain, futile, if they are not entirely consecrated to this Light and Force from above, to this Truth which is trying to express itself, that one is ready to make decisive progress. So the only truly effective attitude is a perfect, total, fervent giving of our being to That which is above us and which alone has the power to change everything.

When you open to the Spirit within you it brings you a first foretaste of that higher life which alone is worth living, then comes the will to rise to that, the hope of reaching it, the certitude that this is possible, and finally the strength to make the necessary effort and the resolution to go to the very end.

*First one must wake up, then one can conquer. 29 October 1958, 9, 419-20*

## LIVING THROUGH THE PSYCHIC CENTRE

### Aspiration

*Doesn't transformation demand a very high degree of aspiration, surrender and receptivity?*

Transformation demands a total and integral consecration. But isn't this the aspiration of all sincere sadhaks?

Total means vertically in all the states of being, from the most material to the most subtle.

Integral means horizontally in all the different and often contradictory parts which constitute the outer being, physical, vital and mental.

15, 88

Have you never watched a forest with all its countless trees and plants simply struggling to catch the light—twisting and trying in a hundred possible ways just to be in the sun? That is precisely the feeling of aspiration in the physical—the urge, the movement, the push towards the light. Plants have more of it in their physical being than men. Their whole life is a worship of light. Light is of course the material symbol of the Divine, and the sun represents, under material conditions, the Supreme Consciousness. The plants have felt it quite distinctly in their own simple, blind way. Their aspiration is intense, if you know how to become aware of it. On the plane of Matter they are the most open to my influence—I can transmit a state of consciousness more easily to a flower than to a man: it is very receptive, though it does not know how to formulate its experience to itself because it lacks a mind. But the pure psychic consciousness is instinctive to it. When, therefore, you offer flowers to me their condition is almost always an index to yours. There are persons who never succeed in bringing a fresh flower to me—even if the flower is fresh it becomes limp in their hands. Others, however, always bring fresh flowers and even revitalise drooping ones. If your aspiration is strong your flower-offerings will be fresh. And if you are receptive you will be also very easily able to absorb the message I put in the flowers I give you. When I give them, I give you states of consciousness; the flowers are the mediums and it all depends on your receptivity whether they are effective or not.

1930-1, 3, 132

*Should not one be born with a great aspiration?*

No, aspiration is a thing to be developed, educated, like all activities of the being. One may be born with a very slight aspiration and develop it so much that it becomes very great. One may be born with a very small will and develop it and make it strong. It is a ridiculous idea to believe that things come to you like that, through a sort of grace, that if you are not given aspiration, you don't have it—this is not true. It is precisely upon this that Sri Aurobindo has insisted in his letter and in the passage I am going to read to you in a minute. He says you must choose, and the choice is constantly put before you and constantly you must choose, and if you do not choose, well, you will not be able to advance. You must choose; there is no “force like that” which chooses for you, or chance or luck or fate—this is not true. Your will is free, it is deliberately left free and you have to choose. It is you who decide whether to seek the Light or not, whether to be the servitor of the Truth or not—it is you. Or whether to have an aspiration or not, it is you who choose. And even when you are told, “Make your surrender total and the work will be done for you”, it is quite all right, but to make your surrender total, every day and at every moment you must choose to make your surrender total, otherwise you will not do it, it will not get done by itself. It is you who must want to do it. When it is done, all goes well, when you have the Knowledge also, all goes well, and when you are identified with the Divine, all goes even better, but till then you must will, choose and decide. Don't go to sleep lazily, saying, “Oh! The work will be done for me, I have nothing to do but let myself glide along with the stream.” Besides, it is not true, the work is not done by itself, because if the least little thing thwarts your little will, it says, “No, not that!...” Then?

21 April 1951, 4, 342-3

Aspiration is like an arrow, like this (*gesture*). So you aspire, want *very* earnestly to understand, know, enter into the truth. Yes? And then with that aspiration you do this (*gesture*). Your aspiration rises, rises, rises, rises straight up, very strong and then it strikes against a kind of... how to put it?... lid which is there, hard like iron and extremely thick, and it does not pass through. And then you say, “See, what's the use of aspiring? It brings nothing at all. I meet with something hard and cannot pass!” But you know about the drop of water which falls on the rock, it ends up by making a chasm: it cuts the rock from top to bottom. Your

aspiration is a drop of water which, instead of falling, rises. So, by dint of rising, it beats, beats, beats, and one day it makes a hole, by dint of rising; and when it makes the hole suddenly it springs out from this lid and enters an immensity of light, and you say, “Ah, now I understand.”

It’s like that.

So one must be very persistent, very stubborn and have an aspiration which rises straight upwards, that is, which does not go roaming around here and there, seeking all kinds of things.

Only this: to understand, understand, understand, to learn to know, to be.

When one reaches the very top, there is nothing more to understand, nothing more to learn, one *is*, and it’s when one *is* that one understands and knows.

*Mother, when one understands, what is it in us that understands?*

It’s the like that knows the like. So it is only because you carry the thing in yourself that you discover it.

13 July 1955, 7, 235-6

Aspiration in everyone, no matter who it is, has the same power. But the effect of this aspiration is different. For aspiration is aspiration: if you have aspiration, in itself it has a power. Only, this aspiration calls down an answer, and this answer, the effect, which is the result of the aspiration, depends upon each one, for it depends upon his receptivity. I know many people of this kind: they say, “Oh! But I aspire all the time and still I receive nothing.” It is impossible that they should receive nothing, in the sense that the answer is sure to come. But it is they who do not receive. The answer comes but they are not receptive, so they receive nothing.

There are people, you know, who have a lot of aspiration. They call the force. The force comes to them—even enters deeply into them—and they are so unconscious that they don’t know it! That indeed happens quite frequently. It is their state of unconsciousness which prevents them from even feeling the force which enters into them. It enters into them, and does its work. I knew people who were gradually transformed and yet were so unconscious that they were not even aware of it. The consciousness comes later—very much later. On the other hand, there are people who are more passive, so to speak, more open, more attentive, and even if a very slight amount of force comes, they become aware of it immediately and use it fully.

When you have an aspiration, a very active aspiration, your

aspiration is going to do its work. It is going to call down the answer to what you aspire for. But if, later, you begin to think of something else or are not attentive or receptive, you do not even notice that your aspiration has received an answer. This happens very frequently. So people tell you: “I aspire and I don’t receive anything, I get no answer!” Yes, you do have an answer but you are not aware of it, because you continue to be active in this way, like a mill turning all the time.

28 April 1954, 6, 115-6

*Can a very proud person have a great aspiration?*

Why not? The very proud person may receive blows and become sensible; besides, when he receives a blow, that may awaken him a little! Then he has an aspiration. And if it is someone who has intensity in his nature and some strength, well, then his aspiration is powerful. *And without receiving blows?*

That may happen. Only in that case it will be very mixed up. In all instances it will be very mixed—but always everything is mixed. A long time is necessary for things to become clear. One may begin anywhere at all, at any stage whatever and in any condition. One can always begin. Only, in some cases it takes a very long time. For the mixture is such that with every step forward one takes half a step back. But there is no reason for this. Fundamentally, as it is the true *raison d’être* of life and of individual existence to become aware of the Divine, that may emerge anywhere at all, at any moment whatsoever. If there is the least possibility, it springs up. Naturally, if one is perfectly satisfied, then that is an obstacle, because one sleeps in self-satisfaction. But that cannot last. In life, in the world as it is at present, an egoistic satisfaction, a personal satisfaction cannot last, and—as long as it lasts, yes, one may grow hard, not aspire at all. But it does not last.

4 November 1953, 5, 350

*Sri Aurobindo says here, “... The aspiration and tapasya needed [are] too constant...”<sup>1</sup>*

Yes, one cannot do the yoga if one does not take it seriously. For one must be very serious to have a constant aspiration and do tapasya. If one is not serious, for five minutes one has an aspiration and for ten hours one hasn’t; for one day there is a great urge and for a month

<sup>1</sup> *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1310.

nothing, and so on. Well, one can't do yoga in these conditions. It must be a continuous, constant thing which does not flag. If one forgets or slackens, one cannot do yoga.

21 April 1951, 4, 342

*What is the true meaning of "tapasya"?*

Tapasya is the discipline one imposes upon oneself to arrive at the discovery of the Divine.

*Are tapasya and aspiration the same thing?*

No, you can't do tapasya without aspiration. Aspiration is first, the will to attain something. Tapasya is the process—there is indeed a process, a method.

21 April 1951, 4, 343

From the purely psychological point of view, aspiration is a self-giving, always, while desire is always something which one draws to oneself; aspiration is something which gives itself, not necessarily in the form of thought but in the movement, in the vibration, in the vital impulse.

True aspiration does not come from the head; even when it is formulated by a thought, it springs up like a flame from the heart. I do not know if you have read the articles Sri Aurobindo has written on the Vedas. He explains somewhere that these hymns were not written with the mind; they were not, as one thinks, prayers, but the expression of an aspiration which was an impulse, like a flame coming from the heart (though it is not the "heart" but the psychological centre of the being, to use the exact words). They were not "thought out", words were not set to experiences, the experience came wholly formulated with the precise, exact, inevitable words—they could not be changed. This is the very nature of aspiration: you do not seek to formulate it, it springs up from you like a ready flame. And if there are words (sometimes there aren't any), they cannot be changed: you cannot replace one word by another, every word is just the right one. When the aspiration is formulated, this is done categorically, absolutely, without any possibility of change. And it is always something that springs up and gives itself, whereas the very nature of desire is to pull things to oneself.

The essential difference between love in aspiration and love in desire is that love in aspiration gives itself entirely and asks nothing in return—it does not claim anything; whereas love in desire gives itself as little as possible, asks as much as possible, it pulls things to itself and



always makes demands.

*Aspiration always gives joy, doesn't it?*

Rather a feeling of plenitude—"joy" is a misleading word; a feeling of plenitude, of force, of an inner flame which fills you. Aspiration can give you joy, but a very special joy, which has no excitement in it.

22 February 1951, 4, 136-7

*Are there different aspirations, like mental or vital aspiration?*

Yes, each part of the being has its own aspiration which has the nature of the aspiring part. There is even a physical aspiration; the body can... The cells of the body understand what the transformation will be, and with all their strength, all the consciousness they contain, they aspire for this transformation. The very cells of the body—not the central will, thought or emotion—the cells of the body open in this way to receive the Force.

3 November 1954, 6, 391-2

*What is the difference between mental aspiration, vital aspiration and spiritual aspiration?*

In what way do you aspire in the mind and in the vital or aspire spiritually?

A mental aspiration means that the thought-power aspires to have knowledge, for instance, or else to have the power to express itself well or have clear ideas, a logical reasoning. One may aspire for many things; that all the faculties and capacities of the mind may be developed and placed at the service of the Divine. This is a mental aspiration.

Or you may have an aspiration in the vital; if you have desires or troubles, storms, inner difficulties, you may aspire for peace, to be quite impartial, without desire or preference, to be a good docile instrument without any personal whims, always at the Divine's disposal. This is a vital aspiration.

You may have a physical aspiration also; that the body may feel the need to acquire a kind of equipoise in which all the parts of the being will be well balanced, and that you may have the power to hold off illness at a distance or overcome it fast when it enters trickily, and that the body may always function normally, harmoniously, in perfect health. That is a physical aspiration.

A spiritual aspiration means having an intense need to unite with the Divine, to give oneself totally to the Divine, not to live outside the divine Consciousness so that the Divine may be everything for you in

your integral being, and you feel the need of a constant communion with Him, of the sense of his presence, of his guidance in all that you do, and of his harmonising all the movements of the being. That is a spiritual aspiration.

*Mother, does aspiration come from the psychic?*

Not necessarily. Each part of the being can have its own aspiration.

7 October 1953, 5, 292-3

Here is the flower we have called “Aspiration in the Physical for the Divine’s Love.” By the “Physical” I mean the physical consciousness, the most ordinary outward-going consciousness, the normal consciousness of most human beings, which sets such great store by comfort, good food, good clothes, happy relationships, etc., instead of aspiring for the higher things. Aspiration in the physical for the Divine’s Love implies that the physical asks for nothing else save that it should feel how the Divine loves it. It realises that all its usual satisfactions are utterly insufficient. But there cannot be a compromise: if the physical wants the Divine’s Love it must want that alone and not say, “I shall have the Divine’s Love and at the same time keep my other attachments, needs and enjoyments....”

The fundamental seat of aspiration from which it radiates or manifests in one part of the being or another is the psychic centre. When I speak of aspiration in the physical I mean that the very consciousness in you which hankers after material comfort and well-being should of itself, without being compelled by the higher parts of your nature, ask exclusively for the Divine’s Love. Usually you have to show it the Light by means of your higher parts; surely this has to be done persistently, otherwise the physical would never learn and it would take Nature’s common round of ages before it learns by itself. Indeed the round of Nature is intended to show it all possible sorts of satisfactions and by exhausting them convince it that none of them can really satisfy it and that what it is at bottom seeking is a divine satisfaction. In Yoga we hasten this slow process of Nature and insist on the physical consciousness seeing the truth and learning to recognise and want it. But how to show it the truth? Well, just as you bring a light into a dark room. Illumine the darkness of your physical consciousness with the intuition and aspiration of your more refined parts and keep on doing so till it realises how futile and unsatisfactory is its hunger for the low ordinary things, and turns spontaneously towards the truth. When it does

turn, your whole life will be changed—the experience is unmistakable.

When, as a child, I used to complain to my mother about food or any such small matter she would always tell me to go and do my work or pursue my studies instead of bothering about trifles. She would ask me if I had the complacent idea that I was born for comfort. “You are born to realise the highest Ideal,” she would say and send me packing. She was quite right, though of course her notion of the highest Ideal was rather poor by our standards. We are all born for the highest Ideal: therefore, whenever in our Ashram some petty request for more comfort and material happiness is refused, it is for your own good and to make you fulfil what you are here for. The refusal is actually a favour inasmuch as you are thereby considered worthy to stand before the highest Ideal and be shaped according to it.

1930-1, 3, 130-1

*If there is a part in one's nature that does not open, what is the method of aspiring so that this part may open?*

You may aspire that this part may open—let the part that is open aspire for the other to open. It will open after a certain time; one must continue, persist. That is the only thing to do. There is something that does not want it, an acute resistance there, which does not want it. It is like a stubborn child: “I don't want it, I shall remain what I am, I won't move.”... It does not say, “I am pleased with myself”, because it does not dare. But the truth is it is quite self-satisfied, it does not budge.

*But when one wants to aspire, shouldn't one know which part it is?* Ah! Yes, but if one is sincere, one will know it. If one looks at oneself sincerely, one is sure to know. It is only when one plays the ostrich that one does not know: one shuts one's eyes, turns one's head to the other side, and says, “It does not exist.” But if one looks at oneself straight in the face, one knows *very* well where it is—hidden somewhere in a corner quite nicely, turned upon itself, shut in, close-set. But then, when you go and flash a light like that, straight upon it, oh, it suddenly hurts, doesn't it?

28 April 1954, 6, 116-7

*Can one have faith through aspiration?*

What? Faith through aspiration? I think so, because it is rare to have it spontaneously, to be born with it. Very few people have this good luck to have a spontaneous faith. But if one is very sincere in one's

aspiration, one gets it. Aspiration can bring everything, provided it is sincere and constant. One always has a tiny element of faith within oneself, whether it be faith in what one's parents have said or in the books one has studied. After all, all your education is based upon a faith of this kind. Those who have educated you have told you certain things. You had no means of checking, because you were too young and had no experience. But you have faith in what they told you and you go forward on that faith. So everyone has a tiny bit of faith, and to increase it one can use one's aspiration.

*10 November 1954, 6, 394*

You can be at once in the state of aspiration, of willing, which calls down something—exactly the will to open oneself and receive, and the aspiration which calls down the force you want to receive—and *at the same time* be in that state of complete inner stillness which allows full penetration, for it is in this immobility that one can be penetrated, that one becomes permeable by the Force. Well, the two can be simultaneous without the one disturbing the other, or can alternate so closely that they can hardly be distinguished. But one can be like that, like a great flame rising in aspiration, and at the same time as though this flame formed a vase, a large vase, opening and receiving all that comes down.

And the two can go together. And when one succeeds in having the two together, one can have them constantly, whatever one may be doing. Only there may be a slight, very slight displacement of consciousness, almost imperceptible, which becomes aware of the flame first and then of the vase of receptivity—of what seeks to be filled and the flame that rises to call down what must fill the vase—a very slight pendular movement and so close that it gives the impression that one has the two at the same time.

*21 April 1954, 6, 113*

## **Prayer**

To be clearer, we may say that prayer is always formulated in words; but the words may have different values according to the state in which they are formulated. Prayer is a formulated thing and one may aspire. But it is difficult to pray without praying to someone. For instance, those who have a conception of the universe from which they have more or less

driven out the idea of the Divine (there are many people of this kind; this idea troubles them—the idea that there is someone who knows all, can do everything and who is so formidably greater than they that there can be no comparison; that’s a bit troublesome for their *amour-propre*; so they try to make a world without the Divine), these people evidently cannot pray, for to whom would they pray? Unless they pray to themselves, which is not the custom! But one can aspire for something without having any faith in the Divine. There are people who do not believe in the existence of a God, but who believe in progress. They have the idea that the world is in constant progress and that this progress will go on indefinitely without stopping, towards an ever greater good. Well, these people can have a very great aspiration for progress, and they don’t even need any idea of a divine existence for that. Aspiration necessarily implies a faith but not necessarily faith in a divine being; whilst prayer cannot exist if it is not addressed to a divine being. And pray to what? One does not pray to something that has no personality! One prays to someone who can hear us. If there is nobody to hear us, how could one pray? Hence, if one prays, this means that, even when one doesn’t acknowledge it, one has faith in somebody infinitely higher than us, infinitely more powerful, who can change our destiny and change us also, if one prays so as to be heard. That is the essential difference.

So the more intellectual people admit aspiration and say that prayer is something inferior. The mystics tell you that aspiration is all very well but if you want to be really heard and want the Divine to listen to you, you must pray, and pray with the simplicity of a child, a perfect candour, that is, a perfect trust: “I need this or that (whether it be a moral need or a physical or material need), well, I ask You for it, give it to me.” Or else: “You have given me what I asked of You, You have made me realise concretely those experiences which were unknown to me and are now marvels I can attain at will; yes, I am infinitely grateful to You and I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to sing Your praise and thank You for Your intervention.” It is like that. To aspire it is not necessary to direct the aspiration to someone, towards someone. One has an aspiration for a certain state of being, for knowledge, for a realisation, a state of consciousness; one aspires for something, but it is not necessarily a prayer; prayer is something additional.

Prayer is a personal thing, addressed to a personal being, that is, to something—a force or a being—who can hear you and answer you. Otherwise you can’t ask for anything. Do you understand?

*What is the difference between prayer and aspiration?*

I have written this somewhere. There are several kinds of prayers.

There is the purely mechanical, material prayer, with words which have been learnt and are mechanically repeated. That does not signify anything much. And that has usually only one single result, that of quietening the person who prays, for if a prayer is repeated several times, the words end up by making you calm.

There is a prayer which is a spontaneous formula for expressing something precise which one wants to ask for: one prays for this thing or that, one prays for one thing or another; one can pray for somebody, for a circumstance, for oneself.

There is a point where aspiration and prayer meet, for there are prayers which are the spontaneous formulation of a lived experience: these spring up all ready from within the being, like something that's the expression of a profound experience, and which offers thanksgiving for that experience or asks its continuation or asks for its explanation also; and that indeed is quite close to aspiration. But aspiration is not necessarily formulated in words; or if it is formulated in words, it is almost a movement of invocation. You aspire for a certain state; for instance, you have found something in yourself that is not in keeping with your ideal, a movement of darkness and ignorance, perhaps even of ill-will, something that's not in harmony with what you want to realise; then that is not going to be formulated in words; that will be like a springing flame and like an offering made of a living experience, asking to grow larger, be magnified and ever more and more clear and precise. All that may be put into words *later*, if one tries to remember and note down one's experience. But aspiration always springs up like a flame that rises high and carries in itself the thing one desires to be or what one desires to do or desires to have. I use the word "desire", but truly it is here that the word "aspire" should be used, for that does not have either the quality or the form of a desire.

It is truly like a great purifying flame of will, and it carries in its core the thing that asks to be realised.

For instance, if you have done something you regret having done, if that has unhappy consequences which disturb things, and several people are implicated, you do not know the reactions of the others, but you yourself wish that what has been done may take a turn for the best,

and that if there is a mistake, it may be understood, and that no matter what the mistake, this may be for you an opportunity for a greater progress, a greater discipline, a new ascent towards the Divine, a door open on a future that you want to be more clear and true and intense; so all this is gathered here (*pointing to the heart*) like a force, and then it surges up and rises in a great movement of ascent, and at times without the shadow of a formulation, without words, without expression, but like a springing flame.

That indeed is true aspiration. That may happen a hundred, a thousand times daily if one is in that state in which one constantly wants to progress and be more true and more fully in harmony with what the Divine Will wants of us.

Prayer is a much more external thing, generally about a precise fact, and always formulated for it is the formula that makes the prayer. One may have an aspiration and transcribe it as a prayer, but aspiration goes beyond prayer in every way. It is much closer and much more as it were self-forgetful, living only in the thing one wants to be or do, and the offering of all that one wants to do to the Divine. You may pray in order to ask for something, you may also pray to thank the Divine for what He has given you, and that prayer is much greater: it may be called an act of thanksgiving. You may pray in gratitude for the aspect of kindness the Divine has shown to you, for what He has done for you, for what you see in Him, and the praise you want to offer Him. And all this may take the form of a prayer. It is decidedly the highest prayer, for it is not exclusively preoccupied with oneself, it is not an egoistic prayer.

Certainly, one may have an aspiration in all the domains, but the very centre of aspiration is in the psychic being, whilst one may pray in all the domains, and the prayer belongs to the domain in which one prays. One may make purely material, physical prayers, vital prayers, mental prayers, psychic prayers, spiritual prayers, and each one has its special character, its special value.

There is a kind of prayer at once spontaneous and unselfish which is like a great call, usually not for one's own self personally, but like something that may be called an intercession with the Divine. It is extremely powerful. I have had countless instances of things which have been realised almost instantaneously due to prayers of this kind. It implies a great faith, a great ardour, a great sincerity, and a great simplicity of heart also, something that does not calculate, does not plan, does not bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving in

exchange. For, the majority of men give with one hand and hold out the other to get something in exchange; the largest number of prayers are of that sort. But there are others of the kind I have described, acts of thanksgiving, a kind of canticle, and these are very good.

8 July 1953, 5, 139-42

*When one prays sincerely for the intervention of the Grace, doesn't one expect a particular result?*

Excuse me, that depends on the tenor of the prayer. If one simply invokes the Grace or the Divine, and puts oneself in His hands, one does not expect a particular result. To expect a particular result one must formulate one's prayer, must ask for something. If you have only a great aspiration for the divine Grace and evoke it, implore it, without asking it for anything precise, it is the Grace which will choose what it will do for you, not you.

*That is better, isn't it?*

Ah! that's quite another question.

Why, it is higher in its quality, perhaps. But still, if one wants something precise, it is better to formulate it. If one has a special reason for invoking the Grace, it is better to formulate it precisely and clearly.

Of course, if one is in a state of complete surrender and gives oneself entirely, if one simply offers oneself to the Grace and lets it do what it likes, that is very good. But after that one must not question what it does! One must not say to it, "Oh! I did that with the idea of having this", for if one really has the idea of obtaining something, it is better to formulate it in all sincerity, simply, just as one sees it. Afterwards, it is for the Grace to choose if it will do it or not; but in any case, one will have formulated clearly what one wanted. And there is no harm in that.

Where it becomes bad is when the request is not granted and one revolts. Then naturally it becomes bad. It is at that moment one must understand that the desire one has, or the aspiration, may not have been very enlightened and that perhaps one has asked for something which was not exactly what was good for one. Then at that moment one must be wise and say simply, "Well, let Thy Will be done." But so long as one has an inner perception and an inner preference, there is no harm in formulating it. It is a very natural movement.

For example, if one has been foolish or has made a mistake and one truly, sincerely wishes never to do it again, well, I don't see any harm in asking for it. And in fact, if one asks for it with sincerity, a true



inner sincerity, there is a great chance that it will be granted.

You must not think that the Divine likes to contradict you.

He is not at all keen on doing it! He can see better than you what is really good for you; but it is only when it is absolutely indispensable that He opposes your aspiration. Otherwise He is always ready to give what you ask.

*8 August 1956, 8, 254-5*

## **Faith**

Essentially, it is quite possible that what is most lacking is faith. There is always a tiny corner in the thought which doubts and debates. So that spoils everything. It is only just when one is in an absolutely critical situation, when the mind realises that it can do nothing, absolutely nothing, when it stands there quite stupid and incapable, then, at that moment, if one aspires for a higher help, the aspiration has exactly that kind of intensity which comes from despair, and that takes effect. But if your thought continues to argue, if it says: “Yes, yes, I have aspired, I have prayed, but God knows if this is the moment, and whether it will come and whether it is possible”, well, then it is finished, it doesn’t work. This is one of the commonest of things. People are told: “If you want to advance in the yoga, you must have no desires”. One goes even a little further and says: “You must not have any needs.” One goes a little further still and says: “Never ask anything from the Divine.” Well, I don’t know, more than ninety-nine times out of a hundred, people’s reaction is: “Ah! If I don’t ask, I won’t have what I need.” They don’t see that they cut the whole movement at the very root! They don’t have faith. “I need this....”

*18 November 1953, 5, 366-7*

Faith is certainly a gift given to us by the Divine Grace. It is like a door suddenly opening upon an eternal truth, through which we can see it, almost touch it.

As in everything else in the ascent of humanity, there is the necessity—especially at the beginning—of personal effort. It is possible that in some exceptional circumstances, for reasons which completely elude our intelligence, faith may come almost accidentally, quite unexpectedly, almost without ever having been solicited, but

most frequently it is an answer to a yearning, a need, an aspiration, something in the being that is seeking and longing, even though not in a very conscious and systematic way. But in any case, when faith has been granted, when one has had this sudden inner illumination, in order to preserve it constantly in the active consciousness individual effort is altogether indispensable. One must *hold on* to one's faith, *will* one's faith; one must seek it, cultivate it, protect it.

In the human mind there is a morbid and deplorable habit of doubt, argument, scepticism. *This* is where human effort must be put in: the refusal to admit them, the refusal to listen to them and still more the refusal to follow them. No game is more dangerous than playing mentally with doubt and scepticism. They are not only enemies, they are terrible pitfalls, and once one falls into them, it becomes tremendously difficult to pull oneself out.

Some people think it is a very great mental elegance to play with ideas, to discuss them, to contradict their faith; they think that this gives them a very superior attitude, that in this way they are above "superstitions" and "ignorance"; but if you listen to suggestions of doubt and scepticism, *then* you fall into the grossest ignorance and stray away from the right path. You enter into confusion, error, a maze of contradictions.... You are not always sure you will be able to get out of it. You go so far away from the inner truth that you lose sight of it and sometimes lose too all possible contact with your soul.

Certainly a personal effort is needed to preserve one's faith, to let it grow within. Later—much later—one day, looking back, we may see that everything that happened, even what seemed to us the worst, was a Divine Grace to make us advance on the way; and then we become aware that the personal effort too was a grace. But before reaching that point, one has to advance much, to struggle much, sometimes even to suffer a great deal.

To sit down in inert passivity and say, "If I am to have faith I shall have it, the Divine will give it to me", is an attitude of laziness, of unconsciousness and almost of bad-will.

For the inner flame to burn, one must feed it; one must watch over the fire, throw into it the fuel of all the errors one wants to get rid of, all that delays the progress, all that darkens the path. If one doesn't feed the fire, it smoulders under the ashes of one's unconsciousness and inertia, and then, not years but lives, centuries will pass before one reaches the goal.

One must watch over one's faith as one watches over the birth of something *infinitely* precious, and protect it very carefully from everything that can impair it.

In the ignorance and darkness of the beginning, faith is the most direct expression of the Divine Power which comes to fight and conquer.

9 July 1958, 9, 350-2

*What are the conditions in which there is a descent of faith?*

The most important condition is an almost childlike trust, the candid trust of a child who is sure that it will come, who doesn't even ask himself about it; when he needs something he is sure that it is going to come. Well, it is this, this kind of trust—this indeed is the most important condition.

To aspire is indispensable. But some people aspire with such a conflict inside them between faith and absence of faith, trust and distrust, between the optimism which is sure of victory and a pessimism which asks itself when the catastrophe will come. Now if this is in the being, you may aspire but you don't get anything. And you say, "I aspired but didn't get anything." It is because you demolish your aspiration all the time by your lack of confidence. But if you truly have trust... Children when left to themselves and not deformed by older people have such a great trust that all will be well! For example, when they have a small accident, they never think that this is going to be something serious: they are spontaneously convinced that it will soon be over, and this helps so powerfully in putting an end to it.

Well, when one aspires for the Force, when one asks the Divine for help, if one asks with the unshakable certitude that it will come, that it is impossible that it won't, then it is sure to come. It is this kind... yes, this is truly an inner opening, this trustfulness. And some people are constantly in this state. When there is something to be received, they are always there to receive it. There are others, when there is something to have, a force descends, they are always absent, they are always closed at that moment; while those who have this childlike trust are always there at the right time.

And it is strange, isn't it, outwardly there is no difference. They may have exactly the same goodwill, the same aspiration, the same wish to do good, but those who have this smiling confidence within them, do not question, do not ask themselves whether they will have it or not have it, whether the Divine will answer or not—the question

does not arise, it is something understood... “What I need will be given to me; if I pray I shall have an answer; if I am in a difficulty and ask for help, the help will come—and not only will it come but it will manage everything.” If the trust is there, spontaneous, candid, unquestioning, it works better than anything else, and the results are marvellous. It is with the contradictions and doubts of the mind that one spoils everything, with this kind of notion which comes when one is in difficulties: “Oh, it is impossible! I shall never manage it. And if it is going to be aggravated, if this condition I am in, which I don’t want, is going to grow still worse, if I continue to slide down farther and farther, if, if, if, if...” like that, and one builds a wall between oneself and the force one wants to receive. The psychic being has this trust, has it wonderfully, without a shadow, without an argument, without a contradiction. And when it is like that, there is not a prayer which does not get an answer, no aspiration which is not realised.

*17 November 1954, 6, 403-4*

The perception of the exterior consciousness may deny the perception of the psychic. But the psychic has the true knowledge, an intuitive instinctive knowledge. It says, “I know; I cannot give reasons, but I know.” For its knowledge is not mental, based on experience or proved true. It does not believe after proofs are given: faith is the movement of the soul whose knowledge is spontaneous and direct. Even if the whole world denies and brings forward a thousand proofs to the contrary, still it knows by an inner knowledge, a direct perception that can stand against everything, a perception by identity. The knowledge of the psychic is something which is concrete and tangible, a solid mass. You can also bring it into your mental, your vital and your physical; and then you have an integral faith—a faith which can really move mountains. But nothing in the being must come and say, “It is not like that”, or ask for a test. By the least half-belief you spoil matters. How can the Supreme manifest if faith is not integral and immovable? Faith in itself is always unshakable—that is its very nature, for otherwise it is not faith at all. But it may happen that the mind or the vital or the physical does not follow the psychic movement. A man can come to a Yogi and have a sudden faith that this person will lead him to his goal. He does not know whether the person has knowledge or not. He feels a psychic shock and knows that he has met his master. He does not believe after long mental consideration or seeing many miracles.

And this is the only kind of faith worthwhile. You will always miss your destiny if you start arguing. Some people sit down and consider whether the psychic impulse is reasonable or not.

It is not really by what is called blind faith that people are misled. They often say, "Oh, I have believed in this or that man and he has betrayed me!" But in fact the fault lies not with the man but with the believer: it is some weakness in himself. If he had kept his faith intact he would have changed the man: it is because he did not remain in the same faith-consciousness that he found himself betrayed and did not make the man what he wanted him to be. If he had had integral faith, he would have obliged the man to change. It is always by faith that miracles happen. A person goes to another and has a contact with the Divine Presence; if he can keep this contact pure and sustained, it will oblige the Divine Consciousness to manifest in the most material. But all depends on your own standard and your own sincerity; and the more you are psychically ready the more you are led to the right source, the right master. The psychic and its faith are always sincere, but if in your exterior being there is insincerity and if you are seeking not spiritual life but personal powers, that can mislead you. It is that and not your faith that misleads you. Pure in itself, faith can get mixed up in the being with low movements and it is then that you are misled.

1930-1, 3, 152-3

*[Sri Aurobindo] has written "Faith is a feeling in the whole being."*

The whole being, yes. Faith, that's the whole being at once. He says that belief is something that occurs in the head, that is purely mental; and confidence is quite different. Confidence—one can have confidence in life, trust in the Divine, trust in others, trust in one's own destiny, that is, one has the feeling that everything is going to help him, to do what he wants to do.

Faith is a certitude without any proof.

*Mother, on what does faith depend?*

Probably on Divine Grace. Some people have it spontaneously. There are others who need to make a great effort to have it.

*How can faith be increased?*

Through aspiration, I suppose. Some have it spontaneously... You see, it is difficult to pray if one doesn't have faith, but if one can make prayer a means of increasing one's faith, or aspiring, having an aspiration, having an aspiration to have faith... Most of these qualities require an

effort. If one does not have a thing and wants to have it, well, it needs great, great, great sustained efforts, a constant aspiration, an unflagging will, a sincerity at each moment; then one is sure, it will come one day—it can come in a second. There are people who have it, and then they have contrary movements which come and attack. These people, if their will is sincere, can shield their faith, repel the attacks. There are others who cultivate doubt because it is a kind of dilettantism—that, there's nothing more dangerous than that. It is as though one were letting the worm into the fruit: it eventually eats it up completely. This means that when a movement of this sort comes—it usually comes first into the mind—the first thing to do is to be very determined and refuse it. Surely one must not enjoy looking on just to see what is going to happen; that kind of curiosity is terribly dangerous.

It is perhaps more difficult for intellectuals to have faith than for those who are simple, sincere, who are straightforward, without intellectual complications. But I think that if an intellectual person has faith, then that becomes very powerful, a very powerful thing which can truly work miracles.

5 May 1954, 6, 120-1

Faith that what happens is always for the best. We may for the moment not consider it as the best because we are ignorant and also blind, because we do not see the consequences of things and what will happen later. But we must keep the faith that if it is like that, if we rely on the Divine, if we give Him the full charge of ourselves, if we let Him decide everything for us, well, we must know that it is always what is best for us which happens. This is an absolute fact. To the extent to which you surrender, the best happens to you. This may not be in conformity with what you would like, your preference or desire, because these things are blind: it is the best from the spiritual point of view, the best for your progress, your development, your spiritual growth, your *true* life. It is always that. And you must keep this faith, because faith is the expression of a trust in the Divine and the full self-giving you make to the Divine. And when you make it, it is something absolutely marvellous. That's a fact, these are not just words, you understand, it is a fact. When you look back, all kinds of things which you did not understand when they happened to you, you realise as *just* the thing which was necessary in order to compel you to make the needed progress. *Always*, without exception. It is our blindness which prevents us from seeing it.

Now, you are speaking of “dynamic faith”. Dynamic faith is something different. If one has within him faith in the divine grace, that the divine grace is watching over him, and that no matter what happens the divine grace is there, watching over him, one may keep this faith all one’s life and always; and with this one can pass through all dangers, face all difficulties, and nothing stirs, for you have the faith and the divine grace is with you. It is an infinitely stronger, more conscious, more lasting force which does not depend upon the conditions of your physical build, does not depend upon anything except the divine grace alone, and hence it leans on the Truth and nothing can shake it. It is very different.

7 October 1953, 5, 297

*If one has faith in the Divine and also trust, what is the difference between faith and trust?*

Faith is something much more integral—that is what Sri Aurobindo has written—much more integral than trust. You see, you have trust in the Divine, in the sense that you are convinced that all that comes from Him will always be the best for you: whatever His decision and whatever the experience He sends you or the circumstances in which He puts you, it will always be what is best for you. This is trust. But faith—that kind of unshakable certitude in the very existence of God—faith is something that seizes the whole being. It is not only mental, psychic or vital: it is the whole being, entirely, which has faith. Faith leads straight to experience.

*Can’t trust be total and entire?*

Not necessarily. Well, there is a shade of difference—however, I don’t know, it is not the same thing.

One has given oneself totally to the divine work, one has faith in it, not only in its possibility, but faith that it is *the* thing which is true and which must be, and one gives oneself entirely to it, without asking what will happen. And so, therein or thereon may be grafted a certitude, a confidence that one is capable of accomplishing it, that is, of participating in it and doing it because one has given oneself to it—a confidence that what one is going to do, what one wants to do, one will be able to do; that this realisation one wants to attain, one will attain. The first does not put any questions, does not think of

the results: it gives itself entirely—it gives itself and then that's all. It is something that absorbs one completely. The other may be grafted upon it. Confidence says: "Yes, I shall participate, realise what I want to realise, I shall surely take part in this work." The other one has faith in the Divine, that it is the Divine who is all, and can do all, and does all... and who is the only real existence—and one gives oneself entirely to this faith, to the Divine, that's all. One has faith in the existence of the Divine and gives oneself; and there can also be grafted upon this a trust that this relation one has with the Divine, this faith one has in the Divine, will work in such a way that all that happens to him—whatever it may be, all that happens to him—will not only be an expression of the divine will (that of course is understood) but also the best that could happen, that nothing better could have happened to him, since it is the Divine who is doing it for him. This attitude is not necessarily a part of faith, for faith does not question anything, it does not ask what the consequence of its self-giving will be—it gives itself, and—that's all; while confidence can come and say, "That's what the result will be." And this is an absolute fact, that is, the moment one gives oneself entirely to the Divine, without calculating, in a total faith, without bargaining of any kind—one gives oneself, and then, come what may! "That does not concern me, I just give myself"—automatically it will always be for you, in all circumstances, at every moment, the best that will happen... not the way you conceive of it (naturally, thought knows nothing), but in reality. Well, there is a part of the being which can become aware of this and have this confidence. This is something added on to faith which gives it more strength, a strength—how shall I put it?—of total acceptance and the best utilisation of what happens.

*5 May 1954, 6, 122-3*

There should be two parallel movements in the evolution of an individual; and it is because he generally neglects one or the other of these movements in order to concentrate on one alone, that his progress is so halting and so unbalanced.

One of these movements is to become conscious of all the constituent elements of the being, material and sensory as well as intellectual and spiritual; we must become acquainted with the mechanism of the life within us, with all its tendencies, qualities, faculties and varied activities, very impartially, that is, without any preconceived idea of good or evil, without any absolute or arbitrary judgment (for our judgments are



inevitably lacking in clear-sightedness) about what should subsist and what should disappear, what should be encouraged and what should be suppressed. Our vision of what we are must be objective, without bias, if we want it to be sincere and integral: we are faced with a universe which we must explore down to its smallest details, know in its most obscure and infinitesimal elements, with a scientific attitude of perfect mental impersonality, that is, without any *a priori* judgments.

Whatever we may think, this work of observation, analysis and introspection is never completed. At all events, as long as we are on earth in a physical body, we should always study the immensely complex being that we are, so that no element may elude our knowledge and therefore our control: *for we can only master what we know and command what we have mastered.*

This brings us to the second movement which should exist parallel to and simultaneous with the first. It is the consecration, the constant and constantly repeated surrender of all the elements subject to our control to the Supreme and Divine Law.

Each element that has become conscious of itself, each tendency, each faculty, must surrender to the Sovereign Guidance of the Eternal Essence of Being, with the simple trust of a child; She will order, classify and utilise all these elements in the right way; She and She alone can separate what can be used from what cannot, what must be encouraged from what must be eliminated; and, no doubt, as before Her all is of equal value, all can be used, since by Her all is transformed, illumined, transfigured: all that becomes conscious of Her and gives itself to Her becomes Herself and thus escapes all notions of good and evil, which are purely external and human.

One of these movements, one of these attitudes without the other is incomplete and one-sided. To consecrate our being in one block to the Supreme Essence is not enough: all the elements that we do not know and have not mastered elude this consecration and therefore follow their own law instead of conforming to the Eternal Law, and become the source of every disturbance, every unexpected revolt in one who had yet thought himself to be entirely a servant of The Law. But he was forgetful of all the unknown nooks in his being which also have a claim to life and activity and which are manifested in their turn, but in an activity that is disorderly and disharmonious relative to the being as a whole, since they elude the central will.

On the other hand, to become conscious of ourselves in our smallest

details is vain and sterile, even dangerous, if it is not done for the sake of order, so that the Divine Essence can be made the Omnipotent ruler of all these elements, if we do not secure their unreserved surrender to Her supreme guidance, to The Sovereign Law.

Only in the balanced union of these two attitudes can one truly, integrally, call oneself a Servant of the Eternal.

2, 32-3

## Surrender

What is surrender?

*It means that one gives oneself entirely to the Divine.*

Yes, and then what happens? If you give yourself entirely to the Divine, it is He who does the Yoga, it is no longer you; hence this is not very difficult; while if you do *tapasya*, it is you yourself who do the yoga and you carry its whole responsibility—it is there the danger lies. But there are people who prefer to have the whole responsibility, with its dangers, because they have a very independent spirit. They are not perhaps in a great hurry—if they need several lives to succeed, it does not matter to them. But there are others who want to go quicker and be more sure of reaching the goal; well, these give over the whole responsibility to the Divine.

5 February 1951, 4, 72

There are two paths of yoga, one of *tapasya* (discipline), and the other of surrender. The path of *tapasya* is arduous. Here you rely solely upon yourself, you proceed by your own strength. You ascend and achieve according to the measure of your force. There is always the danger of falling down. And once you fall, you lie back in the abyss and there is hardly a remedy. The other path, the path of surrender, is safe and sure. It is here, however, that the western people find their difficulty. They have been taught to fear and avoid all that threatens their personal independence. They have imbibed with their mothers' milk the sense of individuality. And surrender means giving up all that. In other words, you may follow, as Ramakrishna says, either the path of the baby monkey or that of the baby cat. The baby monkey holds to its mother in order to be carried about and it must hold firm otherwise if it loses its grip, it falls. On the other hand, the baby cat does not hold to its

mother, but is held by the mother and has no fear nor responsibility, it has nothing to do but to let the mother hold it and cry *ma ma*.

If you take up this path of surrender fully and sincerely, there is no danger or serious difficulty. The question is to be sincere. If you are not sincere, do not begin yoga. If you were dealing in human affairs, then you could resort to deception; but in dealing with the Divine there is no possibility of deception anywhere. You can go on the path safely when you are candid and open to the core and when your only end is to realize and attain the Divine and to be moved by the Divine. (...) Become like a child, give yourself up to the Mother, let her carry you, and there is no more danger for you.

This does not mean that you have not to face other kinds of difficulties or that you have not to fight and conquer any obstacles at all. Surrender does not ensure a smooth and unruffled and continuous progression. The reason is that your being is not yet one, nor your surrender absolute and complete. Only a part of you surrenders; and today it is one part and the next day it is another. The whole purpose of the Yoga is to gather all the divergent parts together and forge them into an undivided unity. Till then you cannot hope to be without difficulties—difficulties, for example, like doubt or depression or hesitation. The whole world is full of the poison. You take it in with every breath.

*14 April 1929, 3, pp. 4-6*

*What is the place of training or discipline in surrender? If one surrenders, can he not be without discipline? Does not discipline sometimes hamper?*

Maybe. But a distinction must be made between a method of development or discipline and a willed action. Discipline is different; I am speaking of willed action. If you surrender you have to give up effort, but that does not mean that you have to abandon also all willed action. On the contrary, you can hasten the realisation by lending your will to the Divine Will. That too is surrender in another form.

What is required of you is not a passive surrender, in which you become like a block, but to put your will at the disposal of the Divine Will.

*But how can one do this before the union has been effected?* You have a will and you can offer that will. Take the example of becoming conscious of your nights. If you take the attitude of passive surrender, you would say, “When it is the Divine Will that I should become conscious, then I shall become conscious.” On the other hand,

if you offer your will to the Divine, you begin to will, you say, "I will become conscious of my nights." You have the will that it should be done; you do not sit down idle and wait. The surrender comes in when you take the attitude that says, "I give my will to the Divine. I intensely want to become conscious of my nights, I have not the knowledge, let the Divine Will work it out for me." Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved. This is the first step. If you are vigilant, if your attention is alert, you will certainly receive something in the form of an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do. Only, you must remember that to surrender is to accept whatever is the result of your action, though the result may be quite different from what you expect. On the other hand, if your surrender is passive, you will do nothing and try nothing; you will simply go to sleep and wait for a miracle.

Now to know whether your will or desire is in agreement with the Divine Will or not, you must look and see whether you have an answer or have no answer, whether you feel supported or contradicted, not by the mind or the vital or the body, but by that something which is always there deep in the inner being, in your heart.

*21 April 1929, 3, 18-9*

And there comes a time when one feels a kind of inner guidance, something which is leading one very perceptibly in all that one does. But then, for the guidance to have its maximum power, one must naturally add to it a conscious surrender: one must be sincerely determined to follow the indication given by the higher force. If one does that, then... one saves years of study, one can seize the result extremely rapidly. If one also does that, the result comes very rapidly. But for that, it must be done with sincerity and... a kind of inner spontaneity. If one wants to try without this surrender, one may succeed—as one can also succeed in developing one's personal will and making it into a very considerable power—but that takes a very long time and one meets many obstacles and the result is very precarious; one must be very persistent, obstinate, persevering, and one is sure to succeed, but only after a great labour.

Make your surrender with a sincere, complete self-giving, and you will go ahead at full speed, you will go much faster—but you must not do this calculatingly, for that spoils everything!

Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. Without this decision nothing is at all possible; if you do not surrender, the Yoga is entirely out of the question. Everything else comes naturally after it, for the whole process starts with surrender. You can surrender either through knowledge or through devotion. You may have a strong intuition that the Divine alone is the truth and a luminous conviction that without the Divine you cannot manage. Or you may have a spontaneous feeling that this line is the only way of being happy, a strong psychic desire to belong exclusively to the Divine: "I do not belong to myself," you say, and give up the responsibility of your being to the Truth. Then comes self-offering: "Here I am, a creature of various qualities, good and bad, dark and enlightened. I offer myself as I am to you, take me up with all my ups and downs, conflicting impulses and tendencies—do whatever you like with me." In the course of your self-offering, you start unifying your being around what has taken the first decision—the central psychic will. All the jarring elements of your nature have to be harmonised, they have to be taken up one after another and unified with the central being. You may offer yourself to the Divine with a spontaneous movement, but it is not possible to give yourself effectively without this unification. The more you are unified, the more you are able to realise self-giving. And once the self-giving is complete, consecration follows: it is the crown of the whole process of realisation, the last step of the gradation, after which there is no more trouble and everything runs smoothly. But you must not forget that you cannot become integrally consecrated at once. (...) The complete consecration is undoubtedly not an easy matter, and it might take an almost indefinitely long time if you had to do it all by yourself, by your own independent effort. But when the Divine's Grace is with you it is not exactly like that. With a little push from the Divine now and then, a little push in this direction and in that, the work becomes comparatively quite easy. Of course the length of time depends on each individual, but it can be very much shortened if you make a really firm resolve. Resolution is the one thing required—resolution is the master-key.

1929-30, 3, 126-7

The only way of being truly free is to make your surrender to the Divine entire, without reservation, because then all that binds you, ties you

down, chains you, falls away naturally from you and has no longer any importance. If someone comes and blames you, you may say, “On what authority does he blame me, does he know the supreme will?” And the same thing when you are congratulated. This is not to advise you not to profit by what comes to you from others—I have learnt throughout my life that even a little child can give you a lesson. Not that he is less ignorant than you but he is like a mirror which reflects the image of what you are; he may tell you something which is not true but also may show you something that you did not know. You can hence profit a great deal by it if you receive the lesson without any undesirable reaction.

Every hour of my life I have learnt that one can learn something; but I have never felt bound by the opinion of others, for I consider that there is only one truth in the world which can know something, and this is the Supreme Truth. Then one is quite free. And it is this freedom that I want of you—free from all attachment, all ignorance, all reaction; free from everything except a total surrender to the Divine. This is the way out from all responsibility towards the world. The Divine alone is responsible.

*It is not possible, is it, for the surrender to be total from the very beginning?*

Generally, no. It needs time. But there are instantaneous conversions; to explain all that to you in detail would take too much time. You know perhaps that in all schools of initiation it used to be said that it takes thirty-five years to change one’s character! So you must not expect the thing to be done in a minute.

10 February 1951, 4, 91-2

*If one needs thirty-five years to change one’s character, how can one make, from now, a total surrender to the Divine?*

It may go quicker, you know! All depends on the way that one follows.

You remember, we spoke once of the attitude of the baby cat and that of the baby monkey.<sup>1</sup> If you agree to be like a docile baby cat (there are also baby cats which are very undisciplined, I have seen them), like a docile little child, this may go very fast. Note that it is very easy to say, “Choose the attitude of the baby cat”, but it is not so easy to do. You must not believe that adopting the attitude of the baby cat lets

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<sup>1</sup> Sri Ramakrishna used to say that a disciple can choose one of two attitudes: the passive trust of the baby cat which lets itself be carried by its mother (this is the way of surrender, the surest) and the active attitude of the baby monkey which clings to its mother (the way of personal effort).

you off from all personal effort. Because you are not a baby cat, human beings are not baby cats! There are in you innumerable elements which are accustomed to trusting only themselves, which want to do their own work, and it is much more difficult to control all these elements than to let oneself go in all circumstances. It is very difficult. First of all, there is always that wonderful work of the mind which likes so very much to observe, criticise, analyse, doubt, try to solve the problem, say, “Is it good thus?”, “Would it not be better like that?”, and so on. So that goes on and on, and where is the baby cat?... For the baby cat does not think! It is free from all this and hence it is much easier for it!

Whatever be the way you follow, personal effort is always necessary till the moment of identification. At that moment all effort drops from you like a worn-out robe, you are another person: what was impossible for you becomes not only possible but indispensable, you cannot do otherwise.

You must be attentive, silent, must await the inner inspiration, not do anything from external reactions, you must be moved by the light that comes from above, constantly, regularly, must act only under the inspiration of that light and nothing else. Never to think, never to question, never to ask “Should I do this or that?”, but to know, to see, to hear. To act with an inner certitude without questioning and without doubting, because the decision does not come from you, it comes from above. Well, this may come very soon or one may have to wait perhaps a long time—that depends upon one’s previous preparation, upon many things. Till then you must will and will with persistence, and above all never lose patience or courage. If necessary, repeat the same thing a thousand times, knowing that perhaps the thousandth time you will realise the result.

*10 February 1951, 4, 93-5*

*You have said: “If you surrender you have to give up effort, but that does not mean that you have to abandon also all willed action.”*

*Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931 (21 April 1929)*

*But if one wants to do something, it means personal effort, doesn't it? What then is the will?*

There is a difference between the will and this feeling of tension, effort, of counting only on oneself, having recourse to oneself alone which personal effort means; this kind of tension, of something very acute

and at times very painful; you count only on yourself and you have the feeling that if you do not make an effort every minute, all will be lost. That is personal effort. But the will is something altogether different. It is the capacity to concentrate on everything one does, do it as best one can and not stop doing it unless one receives a very precise intimation that it is finished.

If you said to yourself, my children, “We want to be as perfect instruments as possible to express the divine Will in the world”, then for this instrument to be perfect, it must be cultivated, educated, trained. It must not be left like a shapeless piece of stone. When you want to build with a stone you chisel it; when you want to make a formless block into a beautiful diamond, you chisel it. Well, it is the same thing. When with your brain and body you want to make a beautiful instrument for the Divine, you must cultivate it, sharpen it, refine it, complete what is missing, perfect what is there.

13 May 1953, 5, 45-6

*(A child) Sweet Mother, the following question has been put here: “What is the sign to indicate that a sadhak’s determination to surrender to the Divine is having practical effect in his life?” And Sri Aurobindo replies: “The sign is that he has full obedience without question or revolt or demand or condition and that he answers to all divine influences and rejects all that are not from the Divine.”*

*Isn’t this a resigned surrender?*

Resigned? What does that mean, “resigned”?

*Passive!*

I don’t know what you mean. He is asking for the sign which shows that his surrender is perfect. There is no question of active or passive surrender there. He says that the determination to surrender brings certain results. The first result is simply to be obedient without questioning, and the second is to have the power of rejecting all influences except that of the Divine. These are great results. When one has attained these, one is already quite advanced.

12 May 1954, 6, 129

One can—if one wants to split hairs, as it is said—one can make a distinction between self-giving, consecration and offering. These are three... they may be three different phases. But that is if truly one wants



to create complications; because in writing, as I said, one can very well use one word in place of another, according to the rhythm of the sentence, and this keeps the meaning intact.

14 July 1954, 6, 228

*Does not surrender consist in offering one's work like a good servant?*

Work is a good discipline. But it is not this idea, it is not the idea of a passive, unconscious and almost involuntary submission. It is not that. It does not lie only in work.

The most important surrender is the surrender of your character, your way of being, so that it may change. If you do not surrender your very own nature, never will this nature change. It is this that is most important. You have certain ways of understanding, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of feeling, almost certain ways of progressing, and above all, a special way of looking at life and expecting from it certain things—well, it is this you must surrender. That is, if you truly want to receive the divine Light and transform yourself, it is your whole way of being you must offer—offer by opening it, making it as receptive as possible so that the divine Consciousness which sees how you ought to be, may act directly and change all these movements into movements more true, more in keeping with your own truth. This is infinitely more important than surrendering what one does. It is not what one does (what one does is very important, that's evident) that is the most important thing but what one *is*. Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of consciousness in which it is done that is important. You may work, do disinterested work without any idea of personal profit, work for the joy of working, but if you are not at the same time ready to leave this work, to change the work or change the way of working, if you cling to your own way of working, your surrender is not complete. You must come to a point when everything is done because you feel within, very clearly, in a more and more imperious way, that it is this which must be done and in this particular way, and that you do it only because of that. You do not do it because of any habit, attachment or preference, nor even any conception, even a preference for the idea that it is the best thing to do—else your surrender is not total. As long as you cling to something, as long as there is something in you which says, “This may change, that may change, but *that*, that will not change”, as long as you say about

anything at all, “That will not change” (not that it refuses to change, but because you can’t think of its changing), your surrender is not complete.

It goes without saying that if in your action, your work, you have in the least this feeling, “I am doing it because I have been told to do it”, and there is not a total adherence of the being, and you do not do the work because you feel it must be done and you love doing it; if something holds back, stands apart, separate, “I was told it had to be done like that so I did it like that”, it means there is a great gulf between you and surrender. True surrender is to feel that one wants, one has, this complete inner adherence: you cannot do *but that*, that which you have been given to do, and what you have not been given to do you cannot do. But at another moment the work may change; at any moment it may be something else, if it is decided that it be something else. It is there that plasticity comes in. That makes a very great difference. It is well understood that those who work are told, “Yes, work, that is your way of surrendering”, but it is a beginning. This way has to be progressive. It is only a beginning, do you understand?

28 April 1951, 4, 371-3

*For self-surrender, should one continue to do what one ought to do?*

Continue to do what one *ought* to, what is clearly shown as the thing that ought to be done, what is to be done—whether one succeeds or does not succeed, whether the result is what one thinks or expects or isn’t—that has no importance; one continues.

*But when one tries, if one makes a mistake unconsciously, how can one know?*

If you are quite sincere, you know. Not to know one’s fault is always the sign of an insincerity somewhere. And generally, it is hidden in the vital. When the vital consents to collaborate (which is already a big step), when it decides that it too is going to work, to devote all its effort and all its energy to accomplish the work, even then there is underneath, well hidden somewhere, a sort of—how shall we call it?—an expectation that things will turn out well and the result will be favourable. And that veils the complete sincerity. For this expectation is an egoistic, personal thing, and this veils the full sincerity. Then you do not know.

But if one is altogether, absolutely sincere, as soon as what one is doing is not exactly what should be done, one feels it very clearly—not

violently but very clearly, very precisely: “No, not this.” And then if one has no attachment, immediately it stops, instantaneously it stops.

20 May 1953, 5, 53-4

The word “*soumission*” does not have the precise meaning that’s necessary. “*Soumission*” (“submission”) compared with “surrender” gives the same difference that there is—perhaps less strongly—but a difference analogous to that between obedience and collaboration. In one case there is a perfect adherence, and in the other there is an acceptance which perhaps reserves itself; it accepts because it realises that it can’t do otherwise, but it does not collaborate entirely.... One does not give total adherence.

14 July 1954, 6, 228-9

*Is not surrender the same as sacrifice?*

In our Yoga there is no room for sacrifice. But everything depends on the meaning you put on the word. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, a making sacred to the Divine. But in the significance that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is a deprivation, a self-immolation. It is your possibilities that you sacrifice, the possibilities and realisations of your personality from the most material to the highest spiritual range. Sacrifice diminishes your being. If physically you sacrifice your life, your body, you give up all your possibilities on the material plane; you have done with the achievements of your earthly existence. In the same way you can morally sacrifice your life; you give up the amplitude and free fulfilment of your inner existence. There is always in this idea of self-immolation a sense of forcing, a constriction, an imposed self-denial. This is an ideal that does not give room for the soul’s deeper and larger spontaneities. By surrender we mean not this but a spontaneous self-giving, a giving of all your self to the Divine, to a greater Consciousness of which you are a part. Surrender will not diminish, but increase; it will not lessen or weaken or destroy your personality, it will fortify and aggrandise it. Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving; there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slightest feeling that you are making a sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender. For it means that you reserve yourself or that you are trying to give, with grudging or with pain and effort, and have not the joy of the gift, perhaps not even

the feeling that you are giving. When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way. True surrender enlarges you; it increases your capacity; it gives you a greater measure in quality and in quantity which you could not have had by yourself. This new greater measure of quality and quantity is different from anything you could attain before: you enter into another world, into a wideness which you could not have entered if you did not surrender. It is as when a drop of water falls into the sea; if it still kept there its separate identity, it would remain a little drop of water and nothing more, a little drop crushed by all the immensity around, because it has not surrendered. But, surrendering, it unites with the sea and participates in the nature and power and vastness of the whole sea.

There is no ambiguity or vagueness in the movement, it is clear and strong and definite. If a small human mind stands in front of the Divine Universal Mind and clings to its separateness, it will remain what it is, a small bounded thing, incapable of knowing the nature of the higher reality or even of coming in contact with it. The two continue to stand apart and are, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, quite different from each other. But if the little human mind surrenders, it will be merged in the Divine Universal Mind; it will be one in quality and quantity with it; losing nothing but its own limitations and deformations, it will receive from it its vastness and luminous clearness. The small existence will change its nature; it will put on the nature of the greater truth to which it surrenders. But if it resists and fights, if it revolts against the Universal Mind, then a conflict and pressure are inevitable in which what is weak and small cannot fail to be drawn into that power and immensity. If it does not surrender, its only other possible fate is absorption and extinction. A human being, who comes into contact with the Divine Mind and surrenders, will find that his own mind begins at once to be purified of its obscurities and to share in the power and the knowledge of the Divine Universal Mind. If he stands in front, but separated, without any contact, he will remain what he is, a little drop of water in the measureless vastness. If he revolts, he will lose his mind; its powers will diminish and disappear. And what is true of the mind is true of all the other parts of the nature. It is as when you fight against one who is too strong for you—a broken head is all you gain. How can you fight something that is a million times stronger? Each time you revolt, you get a knock, and each blow takes away a portion of your strength, as when one who engages in a pugilistic encounter with a far superior rival

receives blow after blow and each blow makes him weaker and weaker till he is knocked out. There is no necessity of a willed intervention, the action is automatic. Nothing else can happen if you dash yourself in revolt against the Immensity. As long as you remain in your corner and follow the course of the ordinary life, you are not touched or hurt; but once you come in contact with the Divine, there are only two ways open to you. You surrender and merge in it, and your surrender enlarges and glorifies you; or you revolt and all your possibilities are destroyed and your powers ebb away and are drawn from you into That which you oppose.

There are many wrong ideas current about surrender. Most people seem to look upon surrender as an abdication of the personality; but that is a grievous error. For the individual is meant to manifest one aspect of the Divine Consciousness, and the expression of its characteristic nature is what creates his personality; then, by taking the right attitude towards the Divine, this personality is purified of all the influences of the lower nature which diminish and distort it and it becomes more strongly personal, more itself, more complete. The truth and power of the personality come out with a more resplendent distinctness, its character is more precisely marked than it could possibly be when mixed with all the obscurity and ignorance, all the dirt and alloy of the lower nature. It undergoes a heightening and glorification, an aggrandisement of capacity, a realization of the maximum of its possibilities. But to have this sublimating change, he must first give up all that, by distorting, limiting and obscuring the true nature, fetters and debases and disfigures the true personality; he must throw from him whatever belongs to the ignorant lower movements of the ordinary man and his blind limping ordinary life. And first of all he must give up his desires; for desire is the most obscure and the most obscuring movement of the lower nature.

*4 August 1929, 3, 114-7*

To sacrifice means to give up something to which one clings. To sacrifice one's life is to give up one's life to which one clings; otherwise it would not be a sacrifice, it would be a gift. If you use the word "sacrifice", it means it is something which makes you suffer when you give it up. The word "sacrifice" is used at random, that is understood, but I am speaking of the true sense. One can sacrifice only what one holds dear. If one does not cling to it, it is not a sacrifice, it is a gift

with all the joy of the giving. Surrender has no value if it is painful, if it is a sacrifice. Surrender must be truly a joyous offering (I am using the word *soumission* in the sense of surrender, but it is not quite surrender—surrender is between *soumission* and *abandon*). One gives up something, surrenders oneself, but without sacrifice.

14 April 1951, 4, 314

*How can we make our submission gladly?*

It must be sincere. If it is truly sincere, it becomes happy. So long as it is not—you may reverse the thing—so long as it is not happy, you may be sure it is not perfectly sincere; for if it is perfectly sincere, it is always happy. If it is not happy, it means that there is something which holds back, something which would like things to be otherwise, something that has a will of its own, a desire of its own, its own purpose and is not satisfied, and therefore is not completely surrendered, not sincere in its surrender. But if one is sincere in one's surrender, one is perfectly happy, automatically; rather, one automatically enjoys an ineffable happiness. Therefore, as long as this ineffable happiness is not there, it is a *sure* indication that you are not sincere, that there is something, some part of the being, larger or smaller, which is not sincere.

*Sweet Mother, how to discover this part?*

Aspire, insist, put the light on it, pray if necessary. There are many ways. Sometimes surgical operations are necessary, putting a red hot iron on the wound, as when there is a nasty abscess somewhere which will not burst.

7 July 1954, 6, 210-1

## **Self-offering and consecration**

*“Yoga means union with the Divine, and the union is effected through offering—it is founded on the offering of yourself to the Divine.”*

*Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)*

*What is the difference between surrender and offering?*

The two words are almost synonymous: “I make the offering of myself and I surrender myself”, but in the gesture of offering there is something more active than in the gesture of surrender. Unfortunately, *soumission*, in French, is not the true word; in English we use “surrender”; between

the words “surrender” and “offering” there is hardly any difference. But the French word *soumission* gives the impression of something more passive: you accept, while offering is a giving—a voluntary giving.

*What is the exact meaning of the word “consecration?”*

“Consecration” generally has a more mystical sense but this is not absolute. A total consecration signifies a total giving of one’s self; hence it is the equivalent of the word “surrender”, not of the word *soumission* which always gives the impression that one “accepts” passively. You feel a flame in the word “consecration”, a flame even greater than in the word “offering”. To consecrate oneself is “to give oneself to an action”; hence, in the yogic sense, it is to give oneself to some divine work with the idea of accomplishing the divine work.

*Does not offering imply surrender?*

Not at all. You can give for the joy of giving, without any idea of surrender. In a movement of enthusiasm, when you have glimpsed something infinitely higher than yourself, you can give yourself in an *élan*, but when it is a question of living that every minute, of surrendering oneself every minute to the higher Will and when every minute requires this surrender, it is more difficult. But if by “offering” you mean the integral offering of all your movements, all your activities, that is equivalent to surrender, without implying it necessarily. But then it is no longer a movement made in enthusiasm, it is something which has to be realised in detail. One may say that any movement made in ardour and enthusiasm is relatively easy (that depends upon the intensity of the movement in you), but when it is a question of realising one’s aspiration every minute of one’s life and in all its details, the enthusiasm recedes a little and one feels the difficulty.

22 February 1951, 4, 132-3

*What is the difference between “self-forgetfulness” and “self-giving”?*

Self-forgetfulness may simply be a passive state resulting from a total lack of egoism. Self-giving, which takes its full value when it is directed towards the Divine, is an active movement which includes love in its purest and highest form.

A total self-giving to the Divine is the true purpose of existence.

30 November 1969, 10, 276

*Are not offering and surrender to the Divine the same thing?*

They are two aspects of the same thing, but not altogether the same. One is more active than the other. They do not belong to quite the same plane of existence.

For example, you have decided to offer your life to the Divine, you take that decision. But all of a sudden, something altogether unpleasant, unexpected happens to you and your first movement is to react and protest. Yet you have made the offering, you have said once for all: “My life belongs to the Divine”, and then suddenly an extremely unpleasant incident happens (that can happen) and there is something in you that reacts, that does not want it. But here, if you want to be truly logical with your offering, you must bring forward this unpleasant incident, make an offering of it to the Divine, telling him very sincerely: “Let Your will be done; if You have decided it that way, it will be that way.” And this must be a willing and spontaneous adhesion. So it is very difficult.

Even for the smallest thing, something that is not in keeping with what you expected, what you have worked for, instead of an opposite reaction coming in—spontaneously, irresistibly, you draw back: “No, not that”—if you have made a complete surrender, a total surrender, well, it does not happen like that: you are as quiet, as peaceful, as calm in one case as in the other. And perhaps you had the notion that it would be better if it happened in a certain way, but if it happens differently, you find that this also is all right.

*20 May 1953, 5, 52-3*

But as Sri Aurobindo says there<sup>1</sup>, you understand, one must be in a state of perfect obedience which does not question, does not discuss and obeys spontaneously, acts rightly as one is guided. Nothing in the thought or the vital must revolt or contradict or question or try to justify, to prove to oneself (and sometimes even to the Divine) that one is right, that what one has done is the right thing. All that must be done with.

*12 May 1954, 6, 130-2*

*What is meant by “the Divine gives Himself”?*

It means exactly this: that the more you give yourself the more you have the experience—it is not just a feeling or impression or sensation, it is a total experience—that the more you give yourself to the Divine the more He is with you, totally, constantly, at every minute, in all your

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1 *Elements of Yoga*, Chapter 6, “Surrender”. [Comp.]



thoughts, all your needs, and that there's no aspiration which does not receive an immediate answer; and you have the sense of a complete, constant intimacy, of a total nearness. It is as though you carried... as though the Divine were all the time with you; you walk and He walks with you, you sleep and He sleeps with you, you eat and He eats with you, you think and He thinks with you, you love and He is the love you have. But for this one must give himself entirely, totally, exclusively, reserve nothing, keep nothing for himself and not keep back anything, not disperse anything also: the least little thing in your being which is not given to the Divine is a waste; it is the wasting of your joy, something that lessens your happiness by that much, and all that you don't give to the Divine is as though you were holding it in the way of the possibility of the Divine's giving Himself to you. You don't feel Him close to yourself, constantly with you, because you don't belong to Him, because you belong to hundreds of other things and people; in your thought, your action, your feelings, impulses... there are millions of things which you do not give Him, and that is why you don't feel Him always with you, because all these things are so many screens and walls between Him and you. But if you give Him everything, if you keep back nothing, He will be constantly and totally with you in all that you do, in all that you think, all that you feel, always, at each moment. But for this you must give yourself absolutely, keep back nothing; each little thing that you hold back is a stone you put down to build up a wall between the Divine and yourself. And then later you complain: "Oh, I don't feel Him!" What would be surprising is that you could feel Him.

*20 July 1955, 7, 243*

This world is a world of conflict, suffering, difficulty, strain; it is made of it. It has not yet changed, it will take some time before changing. And for each one there is a possibility of getting out. If you lean back on the presence of the Supreme Grace, that is the only way out. That I have been telling you since two or three days, like that constantly.

Now?

*What to do?*

What? For your work there is nothing to say. You are doing it perfectly well, exactly as it has to be done; it is all right. Your work is quite all right.

*That is what I wanted to ask: whether this work is in any manner needed or not? Why should I go on doing it?*

Excellent, go on doing it. You do it perfectly well. Don't expect human appreciation—because human beings don't know on what grounds to appreciate something, and, moreover, when there is something that is superior to them, they don't like it.

*But where to get such a strength?*

Within you. The Divine Presence is in you. It is in you. You look for it outside; look inside. It is in you. The Presence is there. You want the appreciation of others to get strength—you will never get it. The strength is in you. If you want, you can aspire for what seems to you the supreme goal, supreme light, supreme knowledge, supreme love. But it is in you—otherwise you would never be able to contact it. If you go deep enough inside you, you will find it there, like a flame that is always burning straight up.

And don't believe that it is so difficult to do. It is because the look is always turned outside that you don't feel the Presence. But if, instead of looking outside for support, you concentrate and you pray—inside, to the supreme knowledge—to know at each moment what is to be done, the way to do it, and if you give all you are, all you do in order to acquire perfection, you will feel that the support is there, always guiding, showing the way. And if there is a difficulty, then instead of wanting to fight, you hand it over, hand it over to the supreme wisdom to deal with it—to deal with all the bad wills, all the misunderstandings, all the bad reactions. If you surrender completely, it is no more your concern: it's the concern of the Supreme who takes it up and knows better than anybody else what is to be done. The only way out, only way out.

*11 May 1967, 15, 399-400*

## **Victory is to the most persistent**

Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. Without this decision nothing is at all possible; if you do not surrender, the Yoga is entirely out of the question. Everything else comes naturally after it, for the whole process starts with surrender. You can surrender either through knowledge or through devotion. You may have a strong intuition that the Divine alone is the truth and a luminous conviction that without the Divine you cannot manage. Or you may have a spontaneous feeling that this line is the only way of being happy, a strong psychic desire to belong exclusively to the Divine: "I do not

belong to myself,” you say, and give up the responsibility of your being to the Truth. Then comes self-offering: “Here I am, a creature of various qualities, good and bad, dark and enlightened. I offer myself as I am to you, take me up with all my ups and downs, conflicting impulses and tendencies—do whatever you like with me.” In the course of your self-offering, you start unifying your being around what has taken the first decision—the central psychic will. All the jarring elements of your nature have to be harmonised, they have to be taken up one after another and unified with the central being. You may offer yourself to the Divine with a spontaneous movement, but it is not possible to give yourself effectively without this unification. The more you are unified, the more you are able to realize self-giving. And once the self-giving is complete, consecration follows: it is the crown of the whole process of realisation, the last step of the gradation, after which there is no more trouble and everything runs smoothly. But you must not forget that you cannot become integrally consecrated at once. You are often deluded into such a belief when, for a day or two, you have a strong movement of a particular kind. You are led to hope that everything else will automatically follow in its wake; but in fact if you become the least bit self-complacent you retard your own advance. For your being is full of innumerable tendencies at war with one another—almost different personalities, we may say. When one of them gives itself to the Divine, the others come up and refuse their allegiance. “We have not given ourselves,” they cry, and start clamouring for their independence and expression. Then you bid them be quiet and show them the Truth. Patiently you have to go round your whole being, exploring each nook and corner, facing all those anarchic elements in you which are waiting for their psychological moment to come up. And it is only when you have made the entire round of your mental, vital and physical nature, persuaded everything to give itself to the Divine and thus achieved an absolute unified consecration that you put an end to your difficulties. Then indeed yours is a glorious walk towards transformation, for you no longer go from darkness to knowledge but from knowledge to knowledge, light to light, happiness to happiness.... The complete consecration is undoubtedly not an easy matter, and it might take an almost indefinitely long time if you had to do it all by yourself, by your own independent effort. But when the Divine’s Grace is with you it is not exactly like that. With a little push from the Divine now and then, a little push in this direction and in that, the work becomes comparatively

quite easy. Of course the length of time depends on each individual, but it can be very much shortened if you make a really firm resolve. Resolution is the one thing required—resolution is the master-key.

1930-1931, 3, 128-9

There comes a moment when life becomes intolerable without the Divine Presence. Therefore, give yourself entirely to the Divine and you will emerge into the Light.

17 December 1971, 16, 427

*[Mother shows the white Champak flower she is holding in her hand. She has named the flower "Psychological Perfection".]*

Who remembers this?

*(Counting the petals)* One, two, three, four, five psychological perfections. What are the five psychological perfections?

For they can be changed. And in fact, to tell you my secrets, every time I give it to someone, they are not always the same psychological perfections. That depends on people's needs. Even to the same person I may give at different times different psychological perfections; so it's not fixed. (...) In any case, what is always there, in all combinations and to whomever I give it, the first among them all is sincerity. For if there is no sincerity, one cannot advance even by half a step. So that is the first, and it is always there.

But it is possible to translate it by another word, if you prefer it, which would be "transparency". I shall explain this word:

Someone is in front of me and I am looking at him; I look into his eyes. And if this person is sincere or "transparent", through his eyes I go down and I see his soul—clearly. But—this is precisely the experience—when I look at somebody and see a little cloud, then I continue, I see a screen, and then sometimes it is a wall, and afterwards it is something quite black; and all this must be crossed, and holes bored in order to go through; and even then I am not sure if at the last minute I may not find myself before a door of bronze so thick that I shall never get through and see his soul; so, of such a person I can immediately say that he is not sincere. But I can also say, figuratively, that he is not transparent. That is the first thing.

There is a second, which is obviously, as indispensable if you want to go forward; it is to have faith. Or another word, which seems more limited but is for me more important, because (it is a question of

experience) if your faith is not made of a complete trust in the Divine, well, you may very easily remain under the impression that you have faith and yet be losing all trust in the divine Power or divine Goodness, or the Trust the Divine has in you. These are the three stumbling-blocks:

Those who have what they call an unshakable faith in the Divine, and say, "It is the Divine who is doing everything, who can do everything; all that happens in me, in others, everywhere, is the work of the Divine and the Divine alone", if they follow this with some kind of logic, after some time they will blame the Divine for all the most terrible wrongs which take place in the world and make of Him a real demon, cruel and frightful—if they have no trust.

Or again, they do have faith, but tell themselves, "Well, I have faith in the Divine, but this world, I see quite well what it's like! First of all, I suffer so much, don't I? I am very unhappy, far more unhappy than all my neighbours"—for one is always far more unhappy than all one's neighbours—"I am very unhappy and, truly, life is cruel to me. But then the Divine is divine, He is All-Goodness, All-Generosity, All-Harmony, so how is it that I am so unhappy? He must be powerless; otherwise being so good how could He let me suffer so much?"

That is the second stumbling-block.

And the third: there are people who have what may be called a warped and excessive modesty or humility and who tell themselves, "Surely the Divine has thrown me out, I am good for nothing, He can do nothing with me, the only thing for me is to give up the game, for He finds me unworthy of Him!"

So, unless one adds to faith a total and complete trust in the Divine Grace, there will be difficulties. So both are necessary....

Now, we have put "devotion" in this series. Yes, devotion is all very well, but unless it is accompanied by many other things it too may make many mistakes. It may meet with great difficulties.

You have devotion, and you keep your ego. And then your ego makes you do all sorts of things out of devotion, things which are terribly egoistic. That is to say, you think only of yourself, not of others, nor of the world, nor of the work, nor of what ought to be done—you think only of your devotion. And you become tremendously egoistic. And so, when you find out that the Divine, for some reason, does not answer to your devotion with the enthusiasm you expected of Him, you despair and fall back into the same three difficulties I was just speaking about: either the Divine is cruel—we have read that, there are many

such stories, of enthusiastic devotees who abuse the Divine because He is no longer as gentle and near to them as before, He has withdrawn, “Why hast Thou deserted me? Thou hast abandoned me, O monster!...” They don’t dare to say this, but think it, or else they say, “Oh! I must have made such a serious mistake that I am thrown out”, and they fall into despair.

But there is another movement which should constantly accompany devotion.... That kind of sense of gratitude that the Divine exists; that feeling of a marvelling thankfulness which truly fills you with a sublime joy at the fact that the Divine exists, that there is something in the universe which is the Divine, that it is not just the monstrosity we see, that there is the Divine, the Divine exists. And each time that the least thing puts you either directly or indirectly in contact with this sublime Reality of divine existence, the heart is filled with so intense, so marvellous a joy, such a gratitude as of all things has the most delightful taste.

There is nothing which gives you a joy equal to that of gratitude. One hears a bird sing, sees a lovely flower, looks at a little child, observes an act of generosity, reads a beautiful sentence, looks at the setting sun, no matter what, suddenly this comes upon you, this kind of emotion—indeed so deep, so intense—that the world manifests the Divine, that there is something behind the world which is the Divine.

So I find that devotion without gratitude is quite incomplete, gratitude must come with devotion.

I remember that once we spoke of courage as one of the perfections; I remember having written it down once in a list. But this courage means having a taste for the supreme adventure. And this taste for supreme adventure is aspiration—an aspiration which takes hold of you completely and flings you, without calculation and without reserve and without a possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the divine discovery, the great adventure of the divine meeting, the yet greater adventure of the divine Realisation; you throw yourself into the adventure without looking back and without asking for a single minute, “What’s going to happen?” For if you ask what is going to happen, you never start, you always remain stuck there, rooted to the spot, afraid to lose something, to lose your balance.

That’s why I speak of courage—but really it is aspiration. They go together. A real aspiration is something full of courage.

And now, surrender. In English the word is “surrender”, there is

no French word which gives exactly that sense. But Sri Aurobindo has said—I think we have read this—that surrender is the first and absolute condition for doing the yoga. So, if we follow what he has said, this is not just one of the necessary qualities: it is the first attitude indispensable for beginning the yoga. If one has not decided to make a total surrender, one cannot begin.

But for this surrender to be total, all these qualities are necessary. And I add one more—for so far we have only four—I add endurance. For, if you are not able to face difficulties without getting discouraged and without giving up, because it is too difficult; and if you are incapable... well, of receiving blows and yet continuing, of “pocketing” them, as they say—when you receive blows as a result of your defects, of putting them in your pocket and continuing to go forward without flagging—you don’t go very far; at the first turning where you lose sight of your little habitual life, you fall into despair and give up the game.

The most... how shall I put it? the most material form of this is perseverance. Unless you are resolved to begin the same thing over again a thousand times if need be... You know, people come to me in despair, “But I thought it was done and now I must begin again!” And if they are told, “But that’s nothing, you will probably have to begin again a hundred times, two hundred times, a thousand times; you take one step forward and think you are secure, but there will always be something to bring back the same difficulty a little farther on. You think you have solved the problem, you must solve it yet once again; it will turn up again looking just a little different, but it will be the same problem”, and if you are not determined that: “Even if it comes back a million times, I shall do it a million times, but I shall go through with it”, well, you won’t be able to do the yoga. This is absolutely indispensable.

People have a beautiful experience and say, “Ah, now this is it!...” And then it settles down, diminishes, gets veiled, and suddenly something quite unexpected, absolutely commonplace and apparently completely uninteresting comes before you and blocks your way. And then you say, “Ah! what’s the good of having made this progress if it’s going to start all over again? Why should I do it? I made an effort, I succeeded, achieved something, and now it’s as if I had done nothing! It’s indeed hopeless.” For you have no endurance.

If one has endurance, one says, “It’s all right. Good, I shall begin again as often as necessary; a thousand times, ten thousand times, a

hundred thousand times if necessary, I shall begin again—but I shall go to the end and nothing will have the power to stop me on the way.”

This is most necessary. Most necessary.

So here’s my proposal: we put surrender first, at the top of the list, that is, we accept what Sri Aurobindo has said—that to do the integral yoga one must first resolve to surrender entirely to the Divine, there is no other way, this is *the* way. But after that one must have the five psychological virtues, five psychological perfections, and we say that these perfections are:

Sincerity or Transparency

Faith or Trust (Trust in the Divine, naturally)

Devotion or Gratitude

Courage or Aspiration

Endurance or Perseverance.

One form of endurance is *faithfulness*, faithfulness to one’s resolution—being faithful. One has taken a resolution, one is faithful to one’s resolution. This is endurance.

There you are.

If one persists, there comes a time when one is victorious.

Victory is to the most persistent.

25 January 1956, 8, 36-42



## CUTTING THE KNOT OF THE EGO

### **Hostile forces: opposing the divine life**

What is usually called “conscience” is a mental formation based on the idea of good and evil, a moral entity or rather an element of goodwill which tries to keep the individual on what is commonly known as the straight path.

This element acts as a defense against the hostile forces which can quite easily take possession of one who has disregarded the advice of his conscience.

But all this is a mental approximation of the Truth. It is not the Truth itself.

*15 February 1967, 16, 347*

If you do something contrary, for example, if you are under the protection of the Divine and for a moment you have a thought of doubt or ill-will or revolt, immediately you go out of the protection. So the protection acts around you to prevent adverse forces from coming upon you or an accident from happening, that is to say, even if you lose consciousness, because of the protection even your lack of consciousness will not produce a bad result immediately. But if you go out of the protection and are not all the time vigilant, then either you will be attacked by the adverse forces or an accident will happen.

*22 July 1953, 5, 165-6*

The world as it is today is in its greater part under the influence of the adverse forces. We call them adverse because they do not want the divine life; they oppose the divine life. They want things to remain as they are, because it is their field and their power in the world. They know very well that they will lose all power and all influence the moment the Divine manifests. So they are fighting openly and completely against the Divine, and we have to tear away from them bit by bit, little by little, all the things they have conquered in the outer life. And so when it is torn away from them, it is so much gained.

On the other hand, if, as was done formerly, we try what is called clearing the ground, that is, if we let go all the things we consider as

not capable of being transformed, then it is so much lost for the divine realisation.

All the realisations of Nature in the outer life, all that it has created—for example upon earth all this vegetable and animal kingdom, you see, and this ordinary human world which it has created—if we give up all this as an illusion incapable of expressing the Divine, then this is so much left in the hands of the adverse forces which try to keep it, no doubt, for their own ends. Whereas if we consider that all this may be at present deformed but that in its essence and origin not only does it belong to the Divine but is the Divine Himself, then we can work consciously, deliberately at the transformation and wrest all these things from the hostile influence which now governs them.

*14 December 1955, 7, 400-1*

*Do these hostile forces generally come from outside or inside?*

If you think or feel that they come from inside, you have possibly opened yourself to them and they have settled in you unnoticed. The true nature of things is one of harmony; but there is a distortion in certain worlds that brings in perversion and hostility. If you have a strong affinity for these worlds of distortion, you can become friends with the beings that are there and answer fully to them. That happens, but it is not a very happy condition. The consciousness is at once blinded and you cannot distinguish the true from the false, you cannot even tell what is a lie and what is not.

In any case, when an attack comes the wisest attitude is to consider that it comes from outside and to say, “This is not myself and I will have nothing to do with it.” You have to deal in the same way with all lower impulses and desires and all doubts and questionings in the mind. If you identify yourself with them, the difficulty in fighting them becomes all the greater; for then you have the feeling that you are facing the never easy task of overcoming your own nature. But once you are able to say, “No, this is not myself, I will have nothing to do with it”, it becomes much easier to disperse them.

*Where can the line be drawn between the inside and the outside?*

The line is very flexible; it can be as near to you and as far from you as you will. You may take everything upon yourself and feel it as a part and parcel of your real self; or you may throw it away as you would a bit of hair or nail without being touched at all.

There have been religions whose followers would not part

even with a bit of hair or nail, fearing that they would lose thereby something of their personality. Those who are capable of extending the consciousness as wide as the world, become the world; but those who are shut up in their little bodies and limited feelings stop at those limits; their bodies and their petty feelings are to them their whole self.

5 May 1929, 3, 35-6

*[This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's Bases of Yoga, Chapter 1.]*  
*"The forces that stand in the way of sadhana are the forces of the lower mental, vital and physical nature. Behind them are adverse powers of the mental, vital and subtle physical worlds. These can be dealt with only after the mind and heart have become one-pointed and concentrated in the single aspiration to the Divine."*

So ?...

*Sweet Mother, what are the adverse powers of the subtle physical?*  
What are the adverse forces? There are as many of them as there are elements in the world. Only, unless they express themselves physically, we do not see them. So we are not aware of them. But I told you the other day that the atmosphere is full of countless formations which are usually made up of thoughts, desires, impulses, wills, and which are as mixed as men's thoughts. There are good ones, there are bad ones; and behind that there are all the formations of the vital world, a world *essentially* hostile to the Divine. Only the vital in man, under the psychic influence, can change and become a collaborator in the divine work. Otherwise, the vital world is essentially formed of beings *hostile* to the divine work, and those who open themselves to these forces without any control are naturally under the influence of the adverse forces. So, one can't say what these adverse forces are. It would be easier to say what they are *not*.

8 September 1954, 6, 305

*When we come to the spiritual life with an aspiration, can the adverse forces attack us?*

Everybody, without exception.

*Even though they look very nice?*

Sometimes, yes. Sometimes these are the most dangerous.

*But how can we know?*

Ah! The easiest way, when you have a Guru, is to go and ask him. It is

within the reach of everyone. It is enough to have faith in one's Guru, to go and find him and ask him; he will tell you, for he indeed knows.

If you do not have a Guru, then it is a little more difficult, because these forces are very clever; they do not put on a look of catastrophe and misery and wickedness, for you will immediately find it out and will not let yourself be taken in; generally they come in the garb of a friend. If you are very sincere, soon you notice some little indications, like small suggestions that satisfy your vanity or awaken in you doubts or make you a bit unconscious of what exactly is to be done—very tiny things. If you are very sincere, you see through them; particularly if you are alert enough not to allow yourself to be deceived by compliments or attempts that encourage you in these satisfactions of *amour-propre*. Things that give just a little encouragement to your vanity—that is the surest sign; something that makes you think: “After all, I am not so bad. All that I do, I do well. My attempt is very praiseworthy. My sincerity is above all reproach, etc.” You become more and more self-satisfied and then there you may be sure. But even there, it does not always take these forms. There are other things, depending upon the persons. For some it is this; for others, they awaken ideas of grandeur: “If I continue in this way I shall become a great Yogi. I shall have great powers. I shall do much fine work. How nicely I am going to serve the Divine, how happy he will be with me!” It is very dangerous. The very opposite thing may happen: “After all, perhaps I am good for nothing. Is it worth while my making any effort? Nothing will come out of this effort. Am I capable of the spiritual life? Probably I shall never do anything, I am giving up tangible things for the sake of an unrealisable dream. And what am I after all? A grain of dust. Is it worth my making an effort to find the Divine? Probably I shall find nothing at all and all my efforts are futile.” That is even much more dangerous. I could cite hundreds of examples like that.

There is only one thing that can truly save you, it is to have a contact, even the slightest, with your psychic being—to have felt the *solidity* of that contact. Then whatever comes to you from this person or that circumstance you place in front of that and see whether it is all right or not. Even if you are satisfied—in every way—even if you say to yourself: “At last I have found the friend I wanted to have. I am in the best circumstances of my life, etc.”, then put that before this little contact with your psychic being, you will see whether it keeps its bright colour or suddenly there comes a little uneasiness, not much, nothing

making a great noise, but just a little uneasiness. You are no longer so sure that it was as you thought! Then you know: yes, it is that small voice which one must listen to always. It is that which is the truth and the other can't trouble you any longer.

*15 July 1953, 5, 155-7*

Generally, all progress made on one side is set off by an attack of the adverse forces on the other. So, the more you advance, the more vigilant must you become. And the most essential quality is perseverance, endurance, and a... what shall I call it?—a kind of inner good humour which helps you not to get discouraged, not to become sad, and to face all difficulties with a smile. There is an English word which expresses this very well—cheerfulness. If you can keep this within you, you fight much better, resist much better, in the light, these bad influences which try to hinder you from progressing.

That is the work. It is vast and complex. And one must never forget anything.

*18 January 1956, 8, 23*

Fundamentally, the avalanche of troubles is always for sincere people. Those who are not sincere receive things with the most beautiful bright colours just to deceive them, and then in the end to enable them to find out that they are mistaken! But when someone has big troubles, it proves that he has reached a certain degree of sincerity.

*15 July 1953, 5, 157-8*

## **Testing process for purification**

*When we are faced with a difficulty, does this mean that the Divine is trying to make us conscious of the defects of our nature?*

If you face it, yes. That is, as soon as you are in front of a difficulty, if instead of giving way like a coward you begin trying to conquer it, then you may be sure that the Divine is behind you. But if you are cowardly, the Divine will not be there. That is, your cowardice cuts you off from the Divine. But if you resist and want to conquer, you may be sure that the Divine will be there to help you. There's not the shadow of a doubt about it.

*But I want to know—if the difficulty comes—whether the Divine is trying to make us conscious that we have defects?*

Whether he deliberately puts difficulties in your path? No. That's not his way.

*No, I don't mean that. If a difficulty comes, does this mean that the Divine is trying to make us conscious of the defects of our nature, to show us that we have defects?*

No, but think of what you are saying. If by having a difficulty you become conscious, you see, it does not mean that the Divine created the difficulty to make you conscious; and your question seems to say that.

*Yes.*

But it isn't true. One can say from an altogether impersonal point of view that the adverse forces—which of course are responsible for all difficulties—that the adverse forces are tolerated in the world in so far as they serve to make the world completely conscious. This indeed is true. But it seems to me a very human way of putting it because it could be said that as long as the world is not perfectly conscious, this allows the existence of these adverse forces. That is, it conditions them. The world's unconsciousness conditions the existence of these forces. So, one can as well say this as say that the forces are tolerated so long as the world is unconscious. I don't know if you are following. These are two opposite ways of saying the same thing and neither is perfectly true. But both contain something correct, yet something which is quite different. And in fact, if one wants to say the thing exactly, one can only say, "Things are like that because they are like that."

This is the only way of not making a mistake. If you say, "The world is like that because it is like that", then here you are sure you are saying something approximately correct—approximately. But if you try to explain, you will see an atom in a world and will take this atom for an explanation. You would have to give all the explanations and even many others in order to approach the reality.

*31 December 1954, 6, 461-2*

*Will a time come when the hostile forces will be there no longer?*

When their presence in the world is no more of any use, they will disappear. Their action is used as a testing process, so that nothing may be forgotten, nothing left out in the work of transformation. They will allow no mistake. If you have overlooked in your own being even a single detail, they will come and put their touch upon

that neglected spot and make it so painfully evident that you will be forced to change. When they will no longer be required for this process, their existence will become useless and they will vanish. They are suffered to exist here, because they are necessary in the Great Work; once they are no more indispensable, they will either change or go.

*Will it be a long time before that happens?*

All depends upon your point of view. For time is relative; you can speak of it from the ordinary external human standpoint or from the deeper viewpoint of an inner consciousness or from the outlook of the Divine.

Whether the thing to be done takes a thousand years or only a year according to the human computation, does not matter at all, if you are one with the Divine Consciousness; for then you leave outside you the things of the human nature and you enter into the infinity and eternity of the Divine Nature. Then you escape from this feeling of a great eagerness of hurry with which men are obsessed, because they want to see things done. Agitation, haste, restlessness lead nowhere. It is foam on the sea; it is a great fuss that stops with itself. Men have a feeling that if they are not all the time running about and bursting into fits of feverish activity, they are doing nothing. It is an illusion to think that all these so-called movements change things. It is merely taking a cup and beating the water in it; the water is moved about, but it is not changed for all your beating. This illusion of action is one of the greatest illusions of human nature. It hurts progress because it brings on you the necessity of rushing always into some excited movement. If you could only perceive the illusion and see how useless it all is, how it changes nothing! Nowhere can you achieve anything by it. Those who are thus rushing about are the tools of forces that make them dance for their own amusement. And they are not forces of the best quality either.

Whatever has been done in the world has been done by the very few who can stand outside the action in silence; for it is they who are the instruments of the Divine Power. They are dynamic agents, conscious instruments; they bring down the forces that change the world. Things can be done in that way, not by a restless activity. In peace, in silence and in quietness the world was built; and each time that something is to be truly built, it is in peace and silence and quietness that it must be done. It is ignorance to believe that you must run from morning to night and labour at all sorts of futile things in order to do something for the world.

Once you step back from these whirling forces into quiet regions, you see how great is the illusion! Humanity appears to you like a mass of

blind creatures rushing about without knowing what they do or why they do it and only knocking and stumbling against each other. And it is this that they call action and life! It is empty agitation, not action, not true life.

I said once that, to speak usefully for ten minutes, you should remain silent for ten days. I could add that, to act usefully for one day, you should keep quiet for a year! Of course, I am not speaking of the ordinary day-to-day acts that are needed for the common external life, but of those who have or believe that they have something to do for the world. And the silence I speak of is the inner quietude that those alone have who can act without being identified with their action, merged into it and blinded and deafened by the noise and form of their own movement. Stand back from your action and rise into an outlook above these temporal motions; enter into the consciousness of Eternity. Then only you will know what true action is.

26 May 1929, 3, 66-8

When the adverse forces want to attack those who are around me and when they do not succeed in making them openly hostile to Sri Aurobindo's work or in turning them against me personally, they proceed in the matter always in the same way, with the same argument: "You may have all the inner realisations you like," they say, "the most beautiful experiences possible within the four walls of the Ashram, but on the outer plane your life is spoiled, wasted. There is an abyss that you will never fill between the inner experience and the concrete realisation in the world."

This is the number one argument of the adverse forces. I know it. For millions of years I have heard the same thing repeated and each time I have unmasked it. It is a falsehood—it is *the* falsehood. Everything that tends to establish a divorce between earth and the Spirit, is good for them, everything that separates the inner experience from the divine realisation in the world. But it is the contrary that is true: it is the inner realisation that is the key to the outer realisation. How can you expect to know the true thing which you have to realise in the world so long as you do not possess the truth of your being?

1958 (2), 15, 344

I have noticed one thing, that in at least ninety-nine cases out of a hundred this [attack by adverse forces] is an excuse which people give to themselves. I have seen that practically almost all who write to me:



“I am violently attacked by adverse forces”, give this as an excuse. It is because there are many things in their nature which do not want to surrender, so they put all the blame on the adverse forces.

In reality I am turning more and more towards something where the role of the adverse forces will be reduced to that of an examiner; that is to say, they are there to test the sincerity of your spiritual seeking. These things have their reality in the action and for the work—and it is a great reality—but when you have gone beyond a certain region, all that reaches a point where it is no longer so distinct and clear-cut. In the occult world, or rather, if you look at the world from the occult point of view, these adverse forces are very real, their action is very real, completely concrete, and their attitude towards the divine realisation is positively hostile. But as soon as you pass beyond this domain and enter into the spiritual world where there is nothing other than the Divine, who is everything, and where there is nothing that is not divine, these “adverse forces” become a part of the total play and they can no longer be called adverse forces. It is only a posture that they have taken; to speak more exactly, it is only a posture that the Divine has taken in his play.

This also forms part of the dualities of which Sri Aurobindo speaks in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, the dualities that are reabsorbed. I do not know if he has spoken of this particular one—I do not think so—but it is the same thing; it is just a way of seeing. He has spoken of the dualities Personal-Impersonal, Ishwara-Shakti, Purusha-Prakriti. There is one more: the Divine and the Anti-Divine.

30 May 1958, 15, 345-6

### **The adverse forces will disappear when the ego disappears**

Generally, all progress made on one side is set off by an attack of the adverse forces on the other. So, the more you advance, the more vigilant must you become. And the most essential quality is perseverance, endurance, and a... what shall I call it?—a kind of inner good humour which helps you not to get discouraged, not to become sad, and to face all difficulties with a smile. There is an English word which expresses this very well—cheerfulness. If you can keep this within you, you fight much better, resist much better, in the light, these bad influences which try to hinder you from progressing.

That is the work. It is vast and complex. And one must never forget anything.

*18 January 1956, 8, 23*

When the world is ready to receive the new creation, the adverse forces will disappear. But so long as the world needs to be tempted, kneaded, churned in order to be prepared, the adverse forces will be there to be the temptation and that which strikes you, pushes you, prevents you from sleeping, compels you to be absolutely sincere.

A being that is absolutely sincere becomes the master of the adverse forces. But so long as there is egoism in a being or pride or ill-will, it will always be the object of temptation, of attack; and it will always be fully subject to this constant conflict with what, under the appearance of hostile beings, toils in spite of itself at the divine Work.

The time is not absolutely determined. I have already explained this to you several times. There are many fields of consciousness, zones of consciousness superimposed upon one another; and in each one of these fields of consciousness or action there is a determinism which seems absolute. But the intervention in one field of even the next higher field, like the intervention of the vital in the physical, introduces the determinism of the vital in that of the physical, and necessarily transforms the determinism of the physical. And if through aspiration, the inner will, self-giving and true surrender one can enter into contact with the higher regions or even the supreme region, from up there the supreme determinism will come down and transform all the intermediate determinisms and it will be able to bring about in a so-to-say almost inexistent span of time what would have otherwise taken either years or lives to be accomplished. But this is the only way.

If at the time of some event or circumstance—take for instance, to simplify things, of a danger—if at that time instead of trying to struggle in the domain where one is, one can traverse in a great soaring all the domains which are rungs in the consciousness, and go to the supreme region, what Sri Aurobindo calls the Transcendent, if one can enter into contact with this Transcendent, in a state of perfect surrender, it is He who will act and change everything, in all circumstances—to the extent that this will be what people call miracles, because they do not understand how it can happen.

The sole secret is to know how to climb up right to the top.

*9 November 1955, 7, 361-2*

The ego seems to have been indispensable at one time for the formation of the individual consciousness, but with the ego were born all the obstacles, sufferings, difficulties, all that now appears to us as adverse and anti-divine forces. But these forces themselves were a necessity for attaining an inner purification and the liberation from ego. The ego is at once the result of their action and the cause of their prolongation. When the ego disappears, the adverse forces will also disappear, having no longer any reason for their existence in the world.

With the inner liberation, with a total sincerity and perfect purity, all suffering will disappear, because it will no longer be necessary for the progress of the consciousness towards its final goal.

Wisdom, then, consists in working energetically at the inner transformation so that you may emerge victorious from a struggle which will have borne its fruits but will no longer have any need to exist.

*14 March 1958, 3, 220*

To tell the truth, you are never freed from hostile forces until you come out for good into the Light, above the lower hemisphere. And there the phrase “hostile forces” loses its meaning; only the forces of progress are there in order to compel you to progress. But you must come out of the lower hemisphere in order to see things in that way; because below, they are very real in their opposition to the divine plan.

It was said in the old traditions that one could not live more than twenty days in that higher state without leaving one’s body and returning to the supreme origin. Now that is no longer true.

It is precisely this state of perfect harmony, beyond all attacks, that will become possible with the supramental realisation. It is that which will be realised for all who are destined for the supramental transformation. The adverse forces know quite well that in the supramental world they will automatically disappear: having no more use, they will be dissolved without the need to do anything, simply through the presence of the supramental force. That is why they rush about in a rage, negating everything, everything.

*15 November 1958, 15, 36*

## **Wholly molded by the ego**

The extent of your difficulties gives you the measure of your ego.

*23 March 1957, 14, 258*

*Why do human beings always want to have something in exchange for what they give?*

Because they are shut up in themselves.

They sense their limitation and think that in order to grow, increase and even survive, they need to take things from outside, for they live in the consciousness of their personal limitation. So, for them, what they give makes a hole and this hole must be filled up by receiving something!... Naturally, this is a mistake. And the truth is that if instead of being shut up in the narrow limits of their little person, they could so widen their consciousness as to be able not only to identify themselves with others in their narrow limits, but to come out of these limits, pass beyond, spread out everywhere, unite with the one Consciousness and become all things, then, at that moment the narrow limits will vanish, but not before. And as long as one senses the narrow limits, one wants to take, for one fears to lose. One spends and wants to replenish. It is due to that, my child. For if one were spread out in all things, if all the vibrations which come and go expressed the need to merge into everything, to widen oneself, grow, not by remaining within one's limits but coming out of them, and finally to be identified with everything, one would no longer have anything to lose for one would have everything. Only, one doesn't know this. And so, as one doesn't know, one can't do it. One tries to take, accumulate, accumulate, accumulate, but that is impossible, one can't accumulate. One must identify oneself. And then, the little bit one gives, one wants to get back: one has a kind thought, one expects some recognition; one gives a little affection, one expects it from others... for one doesn't have the ability to become the kind thought in everything, one doesn't have the ability to be the affection, the tender love in all things. One feels just like that, all cut up and limited, and fears to lose everything, fears to lose what one has because one would be impoverished. On the other hand, if one were able to identify oneself, one would no longer need to pull. The more one spreads out, the more one has. The more one gets identified, the more one becomes. And then, instead of taking, one gives. And the more one gives, the more one grows.

But for this, one must be able to come out of the limits of one's little ego. One must be identified with the Force, identified with the Vibration instead of being identified with one's ego.

It is very difficult, but one can succeed.

*19 August 1953, 5, 231-2*

The first condition is to find it essential not to have the ego any longer. One must really understand that one doesn't want it. It is not so easy. It is not so easy! For one can very well turn words over in the head and say, "I don't want the ego any more, I no longer want to be separated from the Divine." All this goes on inside, like that. But it remains just there, it hasn't much effect on your life. The next moment you do something purely egoistic, you see, and find it quite natural. It doesn't even shock you.

One must first begin to understand truly what this means. The first method... you see, there are many stages... first, one must try not to be selfish—which is something quite different, isn't it?... If you take the English words you understand the difference. In English, you see, there is the word "selfish", and there is also the word "egoism". The ego—"ego"—exists in English, and "selfish". And these are two very different things; in French there is not this distinction. They say, "I don't want to be selfish", you see. But this is a very small thing, very small! People, when they stop being selfish, think they have made tremendous progress! But it's a very small thing. It is simply, oh, it is simply to have a sense of its ridiculousness. You can't imagine how ridiculous these selfish people are!

When one sees them thinking all the time about themselves, referring everything to themselves, governed simply by their own little person, placing themselves in the centre of the universe and trying to organise the whole universe including God around themselves, as though that were the most important thing in the universe. If one could only see oneself objectively, you know, as one sees oneself in a mirror, observe oneself living, it is so grotesque! (*Laughing*) That's enough for you to... One suddenly feels that he is becoming—oh, so absolutely ridiculous!

I remember I read in French—it was a translation—a sentence of Tagore's which amused me very much. He was speaking of a little dog. He said... he compared it with something... I don't remember the details now, but what struck me was this: the little dog was sitting on its mistress's lap and fancying itself the centre of the universe! This struck me very strongly. It is true! I used to know a little dog like this! But there are many like that, almost all are like that. You see, they want everybody to pay attention to them, and in fact they succeed very well. Because when there is a little dog, as when there is a little child—it's almost the same thing—everyone attends to them.

Haven't you noticed that when a child of this height (*Mother indicates the height*) comes along, everything else stops? Before that, people could speak, say interesting things, be busy with something higher; but as soon as a child comes along, everybody begins to smile, to mimic a baby, to try to make it speak, to attend to it. One can't bring along a child without everybody fussing over it, wanting to take it, to make it speak. So naturally the child feels itself the centre of the universe! It is quite natural!

For a puppy it is the same thing, for a kitten it is the same. It is a kind of... it is a very poor deformation of a kind of need to protect something that's smaller than oneself. And this is one of the forms, one of the earliest forms of unegoistic manifestation of the ego! It feels so comfortable when it can protect something, busy itself with something much smaller, much weaker than itself, which is almost at its mercy, almost—even entirely—at its mercy, which has no power to resist. And so one feels good and generous because one doesn't crush it!

This is the first manifestation of generosity in the world. But all this, when one can see behind it and a little above, it cures you from being selfish, for truly it is ridiculous! It is truly ridiculous!

So there is a long, long, long way to go before merging one's ego in the Divine.

28 July 1954, 6, 254-6

Egoism is a relatively easy thing to correct, because everyone knows what it is. It is easy to discover, easy to correct, if one truly wants to do it and is bent on it.

But the ego is much more difficult to seize, because, in fact, to realise what the ego is one must already be out of it, otherwise one cannot find it out. You are wholly moulded from it, from head to foot, from the outermost to the innermost, from the physical to the spiritual, you are steeped in ego. It is mixed with everything and you are not aware of what it is. You must have already conquered it, come out of it, freed yourself from it, at least partially, at least in some little corner of your being somewhere, in order to realise what the ego is.

The ego is what helps us to individualise ourselves and what prevents us from becoming divine. It is like that. Put that together and you will find the ego. Without the ego, as the world is organised, there would be no individual, and with the ego the world cannot become divine.

It would be logical to conclude, "Well, let us first of all become

conscious individuals and then we shall send away the ego and become divine.” Only, when we have become conscious individuals, we have grown so accustomed to living with our ego that we are no longer able to discern it and much labour is needed to become aware of its presence.

On the other hand, everyone knows what egoism is. When you want to pull everything towards you and other people do not interest you, that is called egoism; when you put yourself at the centre of the universe and all things exist only in relation to you, that is egoism. But it is very obvious, one must be blind not to see that one is egoistic. Everybody is a little egoistic, more or less, and at least a certain proportion of egoism is normally acceptable; but even in ordinary life, when one is a little too egoistic, well, one receives knocks on the nose, because, since everyone is egoistic, no one much likes egoism in others.

It is taken for granted, it is part of public morality. Yes, one must be a little bit egoistic, not too much, so it is not conspicuous! On the other hand, nobody speaks of the ego, because nobody knows it. It is such an intimate companion that one does not even recognise its existence; and yet so long as it is there one will never have the divine consciousness.

*2 May 1958, 3, 240-1*

*Can't you change someone who has already made progress?*

*Can't one change men who are getting old?*

It can be done, it can be done. It is being done. It can be done but it is much more difficult and the more they are convinced of having attained something, the more difficult it is.

That can be done, it has been done, but it is much more difficult. And sometimes it takes more time.

*30 September 1953, 5, 287*

It is not necessarily someone who has some experience who is most advanced. He lacks an element of simplicity, modesty, and the plasticity that comes from the fact that one is not yet totally developed. As one grows, something crystallizes in the head; it gets more and more fixed and unless you try very hard you finish by becoming fossilised. This is what usually happens to people, particularly those who have tried for some realisation and succeeded in it or those who have come to believe they have reached the goal. In any case, it was their personal goal. They have reached it, they have attained. It is done, they remain there; they settle there, they say “that’s it.” And they do no more any more. So,

after that they may live ten years more, or twenty or thirty, they will not budge. They are there, they will stay there. Such people lack all the suppleness of stuff that's necessary for going further and progressing. They are stuck. They are very good objects to be put in a museum, but not for doing work. They are like samples to show what can be done but they are not the stuff to do more. For me personally, I admit I prefer for my work someone who knows very little, has not laboured too much, but who has a great aspiration, much goodwill and who feels in himself this flame, this need for progressing. He may know very little, may have realised still less, but if he has that within him, it is good stuff with which one can go very far, much further. For one must know the way (it is the same thing here as with your library), one must know the way to go. Well, usually in life when you climb a mountain or go to an unknown land, you look for a man who has been there, who is a guide, and you ask him to direct you. It is the same thing. If you follow the guide, you can go much quicker than someone else who has made much effort, found his own way and is usually quite proud of himself and, in any case, has the feeling of having come to the end, reached the goal he aimed at, finally arrived—and he stops, settles down. And he does not move any more.

*30 September 1953, 5, 285*

*“What is the easiest way of forgetting oneself?”*

Naturally that depends on each one; everyone has his special way of forgetting himself, which is the best for him. But obviously there is a fairly general method which may be applied in various forms: to occupy oneself with something else. Instead of being occupied with oneself, one may be busy with someone else or with others or some work or an interesting activity requiring concentration.

And it is still the same thing: instead of doubling up on oneself and brooding over oneself or coddling oneself as it were, like the most precious thing in the world, if one can unfold oneself and get busy with something else, something which is not quite one's own self, then that is the simplest and quickest way of forgetting oneself.

There are many others but this one is within everyone's reach.

*29 August 1956, 8, 287*

There is an old age much more dangerous and much more real than the amassing of years: the incapacity to grow and progress.

As soon as you stop advancing, as soon as you stop progressing,



as soon as you cease to better yourself, cease to gain and grow, cease to transform yourself, you truly become old, that is to say, you go downhill towards disintegration.

There are young people who are old and there are old people who are young. If you carry in you this flame for progress and transformation, if you are ready to leave everything behind so that you may advance with an alert step, if you are always open to a new progress, a new improvement, a new transformation, then you are eternally young. But if you sit back satisfied with what has been accomplished, if you have the feeling that you have reached your goal and you have nothing left to do but enjoy the fruit of your efforts, then already more than half your body is in the tomb: it is decrepitude and the true death.

Everything that has been done is always nothing compared with what remains to be done.

Do not look behind. Look ahead, always ahead and go forward always.

25 April 1958, 3, 238

### **Spiritual ego: much more dangerous**

*What are the dangers of Yoga? Is it especially dangerous to the people of the West? Someone has said that Yoga may be suitable for the East, but it has the effect of unbalancing the Western mind.*

Yoga is not more dangerous to the people of the West than to those of the East. Everything depends upon the spirit with which you approach it. Yoga does become dangerous if you want it for your own sake, to serve a personal end. It is not dangerous, on the contrary, it is safety and security itself, if you go to it with a sense of its sacredness, always remembering that the aim is to find the Divine.

Dangers and difficulties come in when people take up Yoga not for the sake of the Divine, but because they want to acquire power and under the guise of Yoga seek to satisfy some ambition. If you cannot get rid of ambition, do not touch the thing. It is fire that burns.

14 April 1929, 3, 4

*“To get over our ego is not an easy task. Even after overcoming it in the material consciousness, we meet it once more—*

*magnified—in the spiritual.”*

*Words of the Mother; CWM, Vol. 14, p. 258*

*How can one meet one's ego in the spiritual consciousness?*

There is a spiritual ego even as there is a physical, vital and mental ego. There is a spiritual ego. There are people who have made a great effort to overcome all their egoism and all their limitations, and attained a spiritual consciousness; and there, they have all the vanity and the sense of their importance and contempt for those who are not in the same condition as they. Indeed, all that is ridiculous and bad in the ego, they find there once again. There are many, many like that. They have overcome what was there in the physical or vital consciousness but the very effort they have made to master themselves and this victory they have gained give them the sense of their extreme importance. So they become puffed up and assert their authority.

This happens so frequently that it is not even noticed.

*9 December 1953, 5, 382*

One who holds a particular faith or who has found out some truth, is disposed to think that he alone has found the Truth, whole and entire. This is human nature. A mixture of falsehood seems necessary for human beings to stand on their legs and move on their way. If the vision of the Truth were suddenly given to them they would be crushed under the weight.

Each time that something of the Divine Truth and the Divine Force comes down to manifest upon earth, some change is effected in the earth's atmosphere. In the descent, those who are receptive are awakened to some inspiration from it, some touch, some beginning of sight. If they were capable of holding and expressing rightly what they receive, they would say, "A great force has come down; I am in contact with it and what I understand of it, I will tell you." But most of them are not capable of that, because they have small minds. They get illumined, possessed, as it were, and cry, "I have the Divine Truth, I possess it whole and entire." There are now upon earth at least two dozen Christs, if not as many Buddhas; India alone can supply any number of Avatars, not to speak of minor manifestations. But in this way, the whole thing begins to look grotesque; but if you see what is behind, it is not so stupid as it seems at the first glance. The truth is that the human personality has come in contact with some Being, some Power, and under the influence of education and tradition calls it Buddha or Christ or by any other familiar name. It is difficult to

affirm that it was Buddha himself or the very Christ with whom there was the contact, but none can assert either that the inspiration did not come from that which inspired the Christ or the Buddha. These human vessels may very well have received the inspiration from some such source. If they were modest and simple, they would be content to say that much and no more; they would say, "I have received this inspiration from such and such a Great One", but instead they proclaim, "I am that Great One." I knew one who affirmed that he was both Christ and Buddha! He had received something, had experienced a truth, had seen the Divine Presence in himself and in others. But the experience was too strong for him, the truth too great. He became half crazy and the next day went out into the streets, proclaiming that in him Christ and Buddha had become one.

One Divine Consciousness is here working through all these beings, preparing its way through all these manifestations. At this day it is here at work upon earth more powerfully than it has ever been before. There are some who receive its touch in some way, or to some degree; but what they receive they distort, they make their own thing out of it. Others feel the touch but cannot bear the force and go mad under the pressure. But some have the capacity to receive and the strength to bear, and it is they who will become the vessels of the full knowledge, the chosen instruments and agents.

9 June 1929, 3, 79-80

*Still, the spiritual ego is better than the ordinary ego, isn't it?*

It is much more dangerous than the ordinary one! For one is not aware that it is the ego. Outwardly, when one is egoistic, not only does one know it oneself but others make you realise it still more, and circumstances prove it to you every moment. But there, as unfortunately you meet people who respect you highly, you are not even aware that you are terribly egoistic.

Very dangerous. Spiritual vanity is much more serious than physical vanity.

*Then, Sweet Mother, with the ego can one realise the Divine?*

Not at the moment one unites with Him. It is evident that at that moment the ego disappears. But that state does not last. Or in any case we can put it in another way: those who have brought along their ego with them cannot keep the consciousness for long. They become aware of themselves again whilst having the experience. It is that which is most

terrible. They look at themselves having the experience and admire themselves. And they feel they are exceptional beings, much higher than others, and then that becomes deplorable.

*9 December 1953, 5, 383-4*

There are people who spend their life organising their mind. I have known some who had made of their mind a kind of fortress, a huge construction (I am speaking of people who had uncommon mental capacities). They had made of their mind quite a big edifice, very powerful and of such a fixity, with such solid walls that they had lost all contact with the outer mental world: they lived completely within their own construction and all the phenomena of their consciousness were of their own making—they had no longer any contact with the outside mental world. They retained contact with their own vital and their body, in a way, but all the phenomena of their consciousness were lodged within their mental construction—they could no longer get out of it. Well, this happens very strongly to people who seek for a spiritual life through the classical methods of a renunciation of the material consciousness, a concentration on their inner being and identification with it. If I gave you the names of some, you would be quite astonished. They construct for themselves a conception in which one finds all the gradations of the mind, a construction so solid and so fixed that they become imprisoned within it and when they believe they have reached the supreme Truth, they have only reached the centre of their own mental construction.

And they have all the experiences they used to foresee: the experience of liberation, the experience of going out of the body, the experience of identification with the Supreme, all, all, but all of their own making; this has no contact with the universal reality. Then if someone touches it, if for some reason or other someone has the power to touch it or simply to make a breach in one of the walls, at first they are completely upset, then they come to regard the force that could do this as a force of terrible destruction, a manifestation of a hostile force of the worst kind!

*10 March 1951, 4, 193-4*

Ascetics used to go away into forests and sit under a tree; there, of course, they had not to fear any contagion from other human beings. But it is very difficult to go to the very end of this resolution, for it

quickly gets known that a saint is sitting under a tree in meditation, and immediately everybody rushes there! Not only does he not escape from the difficulty, but he increases it, for there is not a thing more dangerous than to teach others. You know just a little and you begin to teach others, and you are immediately compelled to say more than you know, because people put questions to you which you cannot answer, unless you are a hero of silence. In the world, those who want to pass themselves off as spiritual teachers—when people come and ask them something they do not know, they invent it. Therefore, if in your inner discipline you begin to pretend, you may be sure of falling into the worst hole—of all things pretence is the most ruinous. In the world you may perhaps pass for what you are not, for people allow themselves to be easily deceived, and that will not lead you to a catastrophe (although if you exaggerate, it always leads to a catastrophe), but in the spiritual world, you don't have to deal with human beings, you have to deal with the Divine; it is impossible for you to pretend that you are this or that, for the Divine knows better than you, doesn't He? He knows what you are and it is not what you will say which will influence Him.

*5 February 19 51, 4, 75-6*

The impulses and desires that come up by the pressure of Yoga should be faced in a spirit of detachment and serenity, as something foreign to yourself or belonging to the outside world.

They should be offered to the Divine, so that the Divine may take them up and transmute them. If you have once opened yourself to the Divine, if the power of the Divine has once come down into you and yet you try to keep to the old forces, you prepare troubles and difficulties and dangers for yourself. You must be vigilant and see that you do not use the Divine as a cloak for the satisfaction of your desires. There are many self-appointed Masters, who do nothing but that. And then when you are off the straight path and when you have a little knowledge and not much power, it happens that you are seized by beings or entities of a certain type, you become blind instruments in their hands and are devoured by them in the end. Wherever there is pretence, there is danger; you cannot deceive God. Do you come to God saying, "I want union with you" and in your heart meaning "I want powers and enjoyments"? Beware! You are heading straight towards the brink of the precipice. And yet it is so easy to avoid all catastrophe.

*14 April 1929, 3, 5- 6*

It is a kind of absolute rule from the spiritual point of view: it is by an inner discipline and by consecration to the Divine that the powers come to you. But if with your aspiration, your discipline and consecration, an ambition is mixed up, that is, an intention to obtain powers, then if they come to you it is almost like a curse. Usually they don't come to you, but something vital which tries to imitate them comes to you with adverse influences which put you entirely under the domination of beings who give you powers simply with the intention of making use of you, using you to do all the work they have the intention of doing, and to create all the disorder they want to create. And when they find that you have served them enough and are no longer good for anything, they just destroy you. They may not be able to destroy you physically because they don't always have the power to do it, but they destroy you mentally, vitally and in your consciousness, and after that you are good for nothing, even before dying. And after death, as you are entirely under their influence, the first thing they do is to swallow you up, because this is their way of making use of people—to swallow them. So it cannot be a very pleasant experience. It is a very, very, very dangerous game.

But everywhere, in all the teachings, in all the disciplines, in all ages, the same thing has been repeated: that one must never intermingle ambition and personal interest with the sadhana, otherwise he is inviting trouble. So it is not only a particular case, it is all the instances of this kind which have fatal consequences.

*3 August 1955, 7, 260-1*

In life you do something—whatever you do, good, bad, indifferent, it doesn't matter—whatever it may be, it immediately has a series of consequences. In fact you do it to obtain a certain result, that is why you act, with an eye to the result. For example, if I stretch out my hand like this to take the mike, I am looking for the result, you see, to make sounds in the mike. And there is always a consequence, always. But if you loosen the knot and let a Force coming from above—or elsewhere—act through you and make you do things, though there are consequences of your action, they don't come to you any longer, for it was not you who initiated the action, it was the Force from above. And the consequences pass above, or else they are guided, willed, directed, controlled by the Force which made you act. And you feel *absolutely* free, nothing comes back to you of the result of what you have done.

There are people who have had this experience—but these things come first in a flash, for a moment, and then withdraw; it is only when one is quite ready for the transformation that this comes and is established—well, some people have had this experience once, perhaps for a few seconds in their lives, they have had the experience; and then the movement has been withdrawn, the state of consciousness has withdrawn; but the memory remains. And they imitate that. And if by chance they happen to be people who know how to make speeches, like certain gurus who have disciples to whom they teach the path, they tell them this, “When it is the Divine who acts through you and when you have loosened the knot of desire, you no longer suffer any moral or other consequences of what you do. And you can do anything whatever: you can kill your neighbour, you can violate a woman, you can do everything the Divine wants in you—and you will never suffer any consequences.”

And indeed they do it! Yes, they take the experience as a cloak to cover all their excesses.... This is just by the way, to put you on your guard against people who pretend to be what they are not.

But, as a matter of fact, the result is very simple, for immediately they suffer the consequences of their pretences—they say they don’t, but they suffer them. (...) So the moral of the story is that one must not pretend, one must be; that one must be absolutely sincere and not cover up one’s desires with fine theories.

I have met many people who claimed they had perfect equality of soul and perfect freedom, and hid themselves behind these theories: “All is the divine Will”, and who, in fact, in their thought, were substituting their own will for the divine Will, and were very far from realising what they claimed. They were idlers who didn’t want to make any effort and preferred keeping their nature as it was, rather than working to transform it. *Voilà!*

*Sweet Mother, do these people have powers?*

Yes! There are some who have great powers. But these powers come from the vital and from an association with vital entities.

There are all kinds of powers. Only, those powers don’t hold out before the true divine Power—they can’t resist. But over ordinary human beings they have much power.

*Then, they can do harm?*

Much. Not only they can, they do it. They do a lot of harm. The number of people who are tormented because they had the misfortune of meeting

a so-called sannyasin,<sup>1</sup> is considerable, considerable. I am not telling you this to frighten you, because here you are protected, but it is a fact. While receiving initiation these men have received the imposition of a force from the vital world, which is extremely dangerous.... This is not always the case, but most often this is what happens.

Because sincerity is so rare a virtue in the world, one ought to bow down before it with respect when one meets it. Sincerity—what we call sincerity, that is to say, a perfect honesty and transparency: that there may be nowhere in the being anything which pretends, hides or wants to pass itself off for what it is not.

22 February 1956, 8, 71-3

### **Enclosed in knots holding one in bondage**

*What does the “knot of the ego” mean?*

Knot? Oh! It is an image, you see. But it is something that clings to you and holds you as tightly as a well-made rope knot. And so it is always said that in order to progress truly the first thing to do is to cut the knot of the ego. It is very expressive and makes a good image, doesn't it?—one is tied up, one is shut up in oneself, bound as in a prison by knots which tie up all the parts of the being together; it is this which produces a cohesion. But at the same time it is a limitation, a limiting. You cannot receive all the forces you would like to, because you are enclosed in this shell made of a heap of knots in the rope that's tying you.

*Sweet Mother, how can we cut the knot of the ego?*

How to cut it? Take a sword and strike it (*laughter*), when one becomes conscious of it. For usually one is not; we think it quite normal, what happens to us; and in fact it is very normal but we think it quite good also. So to begin with one must have a great clear-sightedness to become aware that one is enclosed in all these knots which hold one in bondage. And then, when one is aware that there's something altogether tightly closed in there —so tightly that one has tried in vain to move it—then one imagines one's will to be a very sharp sword-blade, and with all

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<sup>1</sup> Later the Mother added the following commentary: “Of course, this refers only to those who put on the orange robe with the sole purpose of hiding their egoistic passions behind the veil of a dress which is generally respected. There can be no question about those who have a pure heart and whose dress is simply the outer sign of their integral consecration to the spiritual life.”



one's force one strikes a blow on this knot (imaginary, of course, one doesn't take up a sword in fact), and this produces a result. Of course you can do this work from the psychological point of view, discovering all the elements constituting this knot, the whole set of resistances, habits, preferences, of all that holds you narrowly closed in. So when you grow aware of this, you can concentrate and call the divine Force and the Grace and strike a good blow on this formation, these things so closely held, like that, that nothing can separate them. And at that moment you must resolve that you will no longer listen to these things, that you will listen only to the divine Consciousness and will do no other work except the divine work without worrying about personal results, free from all attachment, free from all preference, free from all wish for success, power, satisfaction, vanity, all this.... All this must disappear and you must see only the divine Will incarnated in your will and making you act. Then, in this way, you are cured.

3 November 1954, 6, 390-1

*What attitude should one take to get out of the ego?*

Attitude? It is rather a will, isn't it? You must will it.... What should one do, are you asking that?

The surest means is to give oneself to the Divine; not to try to draw the Divine to oneself but try to give oneself to the Divine. Then you are compelled at least to come out a little from yourself to begin with. Usually, you know, when people think of the Divine, the first thing they do is to "pull" as much as they can into themselves. And then, generally, they receive nothing at all. They tell you, "Ah! I called, I prayed and I did not have the answer. I had no answer, nothing came." But then, if you ask, "Did you offer yourself?"—"No, I pulled."—"Ah, yes, that is why it did not come!" It is not that it did not come, it is that when you pull you remain so shut up in your ego, as I told you just now, that it raises a wall between what is to be received and yourself. You put yourself in prison and then you are astonished that in your prison you feel nothing.

A prison, and worse: without any windows on the street.

Throw yourself out (*Mother opens her hands*), give yourself without holding back anything, simply for the joy of giving yourself. Then there's a chance that you may feel something.

19 May 1954, 6, 137

It is like all the wonders that are there around you; you do not see them. Do you see them?... No. Sometimes, one moment when you are just a tiny bit more receptive, or else when in sleep you are less exclusively busy with your small affairs, you have a gleam of something and see, feel something. But usually, as soon as you are awake again, all this is obliterated—first, as you know, by the formidable ego which is all full of itself, and the whole universe moves in accordance with this ego: you are at the centre, and the universe turns round you. If you look at yourself attentively, you will see it is like that. Your vision of the universe—that's you at the centre and the universe all around. So there is no place for anything else. It is not the universe you see: it is yourself you see in the universe.

So, at first, to begin with, one must be able to get out of the ego. Afterwards, it has to be, you understand, in a certain state of inexistence. Then you begin to perceive things as they are, from a little higher up. But if you want to know things as they really are, you must be *absolutely* like a mirror: silent, peaceful, immobile, impartial, without preferences and in a state of total receptivity. And if you are like that, you will begin to see that there are many things you are not aware of, but which are there, and which will start becoming active in you.

Then you will be able to be *in* these things instead of being exclusively enclosed within the little point you are in the universe.

There are all kinds of ways of getting out of yourself. But it is indispensable if you want to begin to know things as they are and not in terms of yourself.

19 May 1954, 6, 136-7

What happens most often when one makes the inner effort that's needed to discover one's soul, to unite with it and allow it to govern one's life, is a kind of marvellous enchantment with this discovery, as a result of which the first instinct is to tell oneself, "Now I have what I need, I have found Infinite delight!" and no longer to be concerned with anything else.

In fact this is what has happened to almost all those who have made this discovery, and some of them have even set up this experience as a principle of realisation and said, "When you have done that, everything is done, there is nothing more to do; you have reached the goal and the end of the road."

Indeed, a great courage is necessary to go farther; this soul one

discovers must be an intrepid warrior soul which does not at all rest satisfied with its own inner joy while comforting itself for the unhappiness of others with the idea that sooner or later everybody will reach that state and that it is good for others to make the same effort that one has made or, at best, that from this state of inner wisdom one can, with “great benevolence” and “deep compassion” help others to reach it, and that when everybody has attained it, well, that will be the end of the world and that’s so much the better for those who don’t like suffering!

But... there is a “but”. Are you sure that this was the aim and intention of the Supreme when he manifested?

(*Silence*)

The whole creation, the whole universal manifestation appears at best like a very bad joke if it only comes to this. Why begin at all if it is only to get out of it! What is the use of having struggled so much, suffered so much, of having created something which, at least in its external appearance, is so tragic and dramatic, if it is simply to teach you how to get out of it—it would have been better not to begin at all.

But if one goes to the very depth of things, if, stripped not only of all egoism but also of the ego, one gives oneself totally, without reserve, so completely and disinterestedly that one becomes capable of understanding the plan of the Lord, then one knows that it is *not* a bad joke, *not* a tortuous path by which you return, a little battered, to the starting-point; on the contrary, it is to teach the entire creation the delight of being, the beauty of being, the greatness of being, the majesty of a sublime life, and the perpetual growth, perpetually progressive, of that delight, that beauty, that greatness. Then everything has a meaning, then one no longer regrets having struggled and suffered, one has only the enthusiasm to realise the divine goal, and one plunges headlong into the realisation with the *certitude* of the goal and victory.

But to know that, one must stop being egoistic, being a separate person turned in on oneself and cut off from the supreme origin. That is what must be done: to cast off one’s ego. Then one can know the true goal—and this is the only way!

To cast off one’s ego, to let it fall off like a useless garment.

The result is worth the efforts that must be made. And then, one is not all alone on the way. One is helped, if one has trust.

If you have had even a second’s contact with the Grace—that marvellous Grace which carries you along, speeds you on the path, even makes you forget that you have to hurry—if you have had only a

second's contact with that, then you can strive not to forget. And with the candour of a child, the simplicity of a child for whom there are no complications, give yourself to that Grace and let it do everything.

What is necessary is not to listen to what resists, not to believe what contradicts—to have trust, a real trust, a confidence which makes you give yourself fully without calculating, without bargaining. Trust! The trust that says, “Do this, do this for me, I leave it to You.”

That is the best way.

*12 November 1958, 9, 425-7*

## **Turning one's ego into an instrument of the Divine**

*When the little ego is abolished, can't one “find oneself in the Divine” directly?*

But one can find oneself in the Divine even before having completely abolished one's little ego, for, to abolish one's little ego is not a small matter!

*But how is it to be done?*

How is it to be done? How to abolish the ego?—First of all, you must want to do it, and there are very few people who want to. And that is exactly what they say, it is this justification of their way of being, “That is the way I am made, I can't do otherwise. And then, if I change this, if I change that or if I do without this thing or if I get rid of that other, I shall no longer exist!” And if one doesn't say this openly, one thinks it. And all these little desires, these little satisfactions, these little reactions, all these small ways of being, one clings to them, clings hard—one sticks to them, one doesn't want to let them go. I have seen hundreds of cases where someone's difficulty had been removed (with a particular power a certain difficulty had been removed), but after a few days he brought it back with enthusiasm. He said, “But without that I do not exist any longer!” I have known people who had been given mental silence almost spontaneously and who, after a day or two, came back frightened: “Have I become an idiot?”—for the mental machine was not working all the time.... You cannot imagine it, you don't know how very difficult it is to separate oneself from this little ego; how much it gets into the way though it is so small. It takes up so much room while being so microscopic. It is very difficult. One pushes it away in certain very obvious things; for example, if there is something

good and someone rushes forward to make sure of having it first, even jostling his neighbour (this happens very frequently in ordinary life), then here one becomes quite aware that this is not very, very elegant, so one begins to suppress these crudities, one makes a big effort—and one becomes highly self-satisfied: “I am not selfish, I give what is good to others, I don’t keep it for myself”, and one begins to get puffed up. And so one is filled with a moral egoism which is much worse than physical egoism, for it is conscious of its superiority. And then there are those who have left everything, given up everything, who have left their families, distributed their belongings, gone into solitude, who live an ascetic life, and who are terribly conscious of their superiority, who look down at poor humanity from the height of their spiritual grandeur—and they have, these people, such a formidable ego that unless it is broken into small bits, never, never will they see the Divine. So it is not such an easy task. It takes a lot of time. And I must tell you that even when the work is done, it must always be begun again.

19 April 1951, 4, 332-3

*“This liberation, perfection, fullness too must not be pursued for our own sake, but for the sake of the Divine.” But isn’t the sadhana we do done for ourselves?*

But he<sup>1</sup> stresses precisely that. It is simply in order to stress the point. It means that all this perfection which we are going to acquire is not for a personal and selfish end, it is in order to be able to manifest the Divine, it is put at the service of the Divine. We do not pursue this development with a selfish intention of personal perfection; we pursue it because the divine Work has to be accomplished.

*But why do we do this divine Work? It is to make ourselves...*

No, not at all! It is because that’s the divine Will. It is not at all for a personal reason, it must not be that. It is because it’s the divine Will and it’s the divine Work.

So long as a personal aspiration or desire, a selfish will, get mingled in it, it always creates a mixture and is not exactly an expression of the divine Will. The only thing which must count is the Divine, His Will, His manifestation, His expression. One is here for that, one is that, and nothing else. And so long as there is a feeling of self, of the ego, the person, which enters, well, this

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1 Mother reads from Sri Aurobindo’s Lights on Yoga, “The Goal”.

proves that one is not yet what one ought to be, that's all. I don't say that this can be done overnight but still this indeed is the truth.

Even in this field, the spiritual field, there are far too many people (I could say even the majority of those who take to the spiritual life and do yoga), far too many of these who do it for personal reasons, all kinds of personal reasons: some because they are disgusted with life, others because they are unhappy, others still because they want to know more, others because they want to become spiritually great, others because they want to learn things which they may be able to teach others; indeed there are a thousand personal reasons for taking up yoga. But the simple fact of giving oneself to the Divine so that the Divine takes you and makes of you what He wills, and this in all its purity and constancy, well, there are not many who do that and yet this indeed is the truth; and with this one goes straight to the goal and never risks making mistakes. But all the other motives are always mixed, tainted with ego; and naturally they can lead you here and there, very far from the goal also.

8 June 1955, 7, 189-90

*What is the most effective way to overcome the ego?*

The simplest and most effective way is *to offer it to the Divine*; the more sincere and radical this offering is, the more quickly the result will come.

28 May 1968, 16, 379

You live vitally in the vital world with all the currents of vital force entering, going out, joining and opposing each other, quarrelling and intermingling in your consciousness, and even if you have made a personal effort to purify your vital consciousness, to master in it the desire-being and the little human ego, you are constantly under a sort of obligation to absorb all the contrary vibrations which come from those with whom you live. One can't shut oneself up in an ivory tower, it is yet more difficult vitally than physically, and one takes in all sorts of things; and unless one is constantly wide awake, constantly on one's guard, and has quite an efficient control over all that enters, so as not to admit in one's consciousness unwanted elements, one catches the constant contagion of all desires, all the lower movements, all the small obscure reactions, all the unwanted vibrations which come to us from those around us.

Mentally, it is still worse. The human mind is a public place open on all sides, and in this public place, things come, go, cross from all directions; and some settle there and these are not always the best. And there, to obtain control over that multitude is the most difficult of all controls. Try to control the thought coming into your mind, you will see. Simply, you will see to what a degree you have to be watchful, like a sentinel, with the eyes of the mind wide open, and then keep an extremely clear vision of the ideas which conform to your aspirations and those which do not. And you must police at every minute that public place where roads from all sides meet, so that all passers-by do not rush in. It is a big job. Then, don't forget that even if you make sincere efforts, it is not in a day, not in a month, not in a year that you will reach the end of all these difficulties. When one begins, one must begin with an unshakable patience. One must say, "Even if it takes fifty years, even if it takes a hundred years, even if it takes several lives, what I want to accomplish, I shall accomplish."

Once you have decided upon this, once you are quite conscious that it is so and that the goal is worth the trouble of a constant and sustained effort, you may begin. Otherwise, after a time you will fall flat; you will get discouraged, you will tell yourself, "Oh! It is very difficult—I do it and then it is undone, I do it again and it is once again undone, and then I do it again and it is perpetually undone.... Then what? When will I get there?" One must have plenty of patience. The work may be undone a hundred times, you will do it again a hundred and one times; it may be undone a thousand times, you will re-do it a thousand and one times, until finally it is no longer undone. And finally it is no longer undone.

*19 April 1951, 4, 334-5*

The ego is what makes one conscious of being separate from others. If there were no ego, you would not perceive that you are a person separate from others. You would have the impression that you are a small part of a whole, a very small part of a very great whole. On the other hand, every one of you is most certainly quite conscious of being a separate person. Well, it is the ego that gives you this impression. As long as you are conscious in this way, it means that you have an ego.

When you begin to be aware that everything is yourself, and that this is only a very small point in the midst of thousands and thousands of other points of the same person that you are everywhere, when you

feel that you are yourself in everything and that there is no separation, then you know that you are on the way towards having no more ego.

There even comes a time when it is impossible to conceive oneself and say, "It is not I", for even to express it in this way, to say that the All is you, that you are the All or that you are the Divine or that the Divine is you, proves that something still remains.

There is a moment—this happens in a flash and can hardly stay—when it is the All that thinks, it is the All that knows, it is the All that feels, it is the All that lives. There is not even... not even the impression that... you have reached that point.

Then it is all right. But until then, there is still a little remnant of ego somewhere; usually it is the part which looks on, the witness that looks on.

So do not assert that you have no more ego. It is not accurate. Say you are on the way towards having no more ego, that is the only correct thing to say.

I do not believe that it has happened to you, has it?—not yet! And yet it is indispensable, if you truly intend to know what the supramental is. If you are a candidate for supermanhood, you must resolve to dispense with your ego, to go beyond it, for as long as you keep it with you, the supermind will be for you something unknown and inaccessible.

But if through effort, through discipline, through progressive mastery, you surmount your ego and go beyond it, even if only in the tiniest part of your being, this acts like the opening of a small window somewhere, and by looking carefully through the window, you will be able to glimpse the supermind. And that is a promise. When you glimpse it, you find it so beautiful that you immediately want to get rid of all the rest... of the ego!

Please note that I am not saying that you must be totally free from all ego in order to have a glimpse of the supramental; for then that would be something almost impossible. No, to be free from ego, just a little bit somewhere, in some corner of your being, even only a little corner of the mind; if it is the mind and the vital, it is well and good, but if by chance—oh! not by chance—if by repeated efforts you have entered into contact with your psychic being, then the door is wide open. Through the psychic you can suddenly have a very clear and beautiful vision of what the supermind is, only a vision, not a realisation. That is the great way out. But even without going so far as this beautiful realisation, the psychic realisation, if you succeed in liberating some



part of your mind or your vital, that makes a kind of hole in the door, a keyhole; through this keyhole you have a glimpse, just a little glimpse. And that is already very attractive, very interesting.

*2 May 1958, 3, 241-2*

It is the hour to be heroic.

Heroism is not what it is said to be: it is to become wholly unified—and the Divine help will always be with those who have resolved to be heroic in full sincerity. There!

You are here at this moment, that is to say upon earth, because you chose it at one time—you do not remember it any more, but I know it—that is why you are here. Well, you must rise to the height of the task. You must strive, you must conquer all weaknesses and limitations; above all you must tell your ego:

“Your hour is gone.” We want a race that has no ego, that has in place of the ego the Divine Consciousness. It is that which we want: the Divine Consciousness which will allow the race to develop itself and the supramental being to take birth.

*2 April 1972, 11, 307*

## THE OCCULT WORLDS

### The subliminal and the inner physical

The world we live in is a world of images. It is not the thing itself in its essence, it is the reflection of the thing. One could say that we are, in our material existence, only a reflection, an image of what we are in our essential reality. And the modalities of these reflections bring in every error and falsification—what you see in the essence is perfectly true and pure and exists from all eternity; the images are essentially variable. And according to the degree of falsehood that enters into the vibrations, the degree of distortion and alteration increases. One could say that every circumstance, every event, every thing has a pure existence, which is the true existence, and a considerable number of impure or distorted existences, which are the existence of the same thing in the various domains of being. For example, in the intellectual domain, there is already a good deal of distortion; in the mental domain there is a considerable amount of distortion, and as all the emotional and sensorial domains come in, the distortions increase. And once you reach the material plane, it is most often unrecognisable. It is completely distorted—so much so that it is sometimes very difficult to know that this is the material expression of that—they are no longer very much alike.

It is a rather novel way of approaching the problem and it may be the key to many things.

Thus when you know someone well and you often see him physically, if you see him in the subtle physical, already there are things which become more marked, more visible, more outstanding, which you had not seen physically, because in the greyness of the material world they had merged with many other things on the same plane. There are characteristics or expressions of character which become outstanding enough to be quite visible, although they had not been physically apparent. When you look at a person physically, there is the complexion, the features, the expression; at the same moment, if you see this face in the subtle physical, you suddenly notice that one part of the face is one colour, another part another colour; that in the eyes there is an expression and a kind of light which were not at all visible;

and that the whole has quite a different appearance and, above all, gives a very different feeling, which to our physical eyes would seem rather extravagant, but which to the subtle vision is very expressive and revealing of the character, or even of the influences acting on this person. What I say here is the record of an experience that I had again a few days ago.

So according to the degree to which you are conscious and the extent to which you see, you perceive images, see events that are more or less near, and you see them more or less accurately. The only vision that is true and sure is the vision of the divine Consciousness. So the problem is to become aware of the divine Consciousness and to keep this consciousness in all details all the time.

Until then, there are all sorts of ways of receiving indications. The precise, accurate, familiar vision that certain people have may come from several sources. It may be a vision by identity with circumstances and things, when you are used to extending your consciousness all around you. It may be an indication given by a talkative being from the invisible world who amuses himself by informing you of what is going to happen; this happens very often. Then everything depends on the moral character of your “informant”; if he is amusing himself at your expense, he tells you all kinds of tales—and this is what happens most of the time to people who get information from entities. To lure people on, they may very often tell them things as they really will be, since they have a universal vision in some domain of the vital or of the mind; and then when they are quite sure that you will trust them, they may start telling you tales and you make a fool of yourself. This happens very often. You yourself should be in a higher state of consciousness than these individuals or entities or these little gods, as some people call them, and be able to verify from above what their statements are worth.

If you have a universal mental vision, you can see all mental formations. Then you see—and it is very interesting—how the mental world is organised to realise itself on the physical plane. You see the various formations, the way in which they approach and fight each other, combine together and organise themselves, the ones that prevail and gain influence and achieve a more complete realisation. Now if you really want to have a higher vision, you must rise above the mental world and see the original wills as they descend to express themselves. In this case, you may not possess all the details, but the central *fact*, the fact in its central truth, is indisputable, undeniable, absolutely correct.

Some people also have the power to predict things which already exist on earth, but at a distance, at a great distance, very far from the physical eyes. These are usually people who are capable of widening and extending their consciousness. They have a physical, but slightly more subtle vision, which depends on an organ that is more subtle than the purely material one—what might be called the life of this organ—and so, by projecting their consciousness with a will to see, they can see very well, they can see things: these things already exist, only they are not within the field of our ordinary vision. People who have this capacity and who tell what they see, who are sincere and who are not bluffers, see in a way that is absolutely precise and exact.

In fact, an important factor for those who predict or see, is their absolute sincerity. Unfortunately, because of people's curiosity, their insistence, the pressure they apply—which very few can resist—what happens, when there is something they do not see exactly and precisely, is that there is an almost involuntary faculty of inner imagination, which adds the little missing element. This is what causes the flaws in their predictions. Very few have the courage to say, "Oh no, I do not know about that, it eludes me." They do not even have the courage to say it to themselves. And then, just a touch of imagination, acting almost subconsciously, and they fill in the vision, the information—anything can happen. Very few people can resist that. I have known many, many clairvoyants, I have known many people who had a marvellous gift; very few of them would stop when they come to the end of their knowledge. Or else they would add some little detail. This is what always gives these faculties a rather doubtful quality. One must truly be a saint—a great saint, a great sage—and completely free, not at all influenced by other people. Naturally, I am not speaking of those who seek fame, because there they fall into the crudest traps; but even goodwill, the wish to make people happy, to please them, to help them, is enough to create a distortion.

*27 February 1962, 10, 125-8*

The world as we see it and our outer consciousness are the result of something which is behind, which Sri Aurobindo calls the subliminal. And this itself, as he says, is set in motion by impulses which come from the subconscious below and the superconscious above, and so it is as though it were assembled there, and once it is organised there it is expressed in the outer consciousness, the ordinary consciousness.

The best way is to go there; once you go there you understand what it is. And it is not difficult; one goes there constantly in dreams, very easily, without any effort.

*How can we understand that we have gone there?*

If you remember, you understand. If one remembers the kind of difference of impression one had: one has a certain impression, and when one returns one feels something like a disconnection, the impression is different, even the point of view one had about things is different. Well, if one remembers this, one understands. If one is in the habit, one can even while speaking or doing something, perceive very well—above all when speaking or thinking or reflecting on something—a second layer which is behind, much vaster, in which things are organised much more synthetically (not positively understandable) than in the outer consciousness. If one reflects just a little and looks at oneself thinking, one can see this at the back very well, one can see the two things moving together like this (*gesture*)... like the formulated thought and the source of the thought which is behind. And then when one thinks, you see, one has a feeling of being like this, enclosed in something; whereas, there, immediately one feels that one is in contact with many other things; and it is much greater.

6 April 1955, 7, 110-11

*What does “the subliminal being” mean, exactly?*

Well, it is what he [Sri Aurobindo] says, you know. It's what is behind. I think it is what could be called the subtle physical, the subtle vital, the subtle mind. It is something that's behind what is manifested.

One can imagine that what is manifested is like a layer or like a crust or a bark; it is that which we see and with which we are in touch. And it clothes something, it clothes or expresses something which is more subtle and serves as its support.

When one dreams, one goes very often into his subliminal being, and there things are almost the same and yet not absolutely the same; there is a great resemblance and yet there is a difference; and usually this is greater. One has the impression of entering into something that's vaster; and, for example, one feels that one can do more, that one knows more, one has a power and clear-sightedness which one doesn't have in the ordinary consciousness; one has the impression while dreaming that one knows many more things than when one is awake. No? Doesn't this happen? You don't have dreams like that?...

when one dreams and knows a lot, for example, about the secret causes of things, about what a movement expresses... all that, one feels that one knows it. For instance, when one dreams of someone, one knows better what he thinks, what he wants, all these things, better than when one is in waking contact with him. This happens when one has entered the subliminal. Very often one dreams in the subliminal.

*Has the subliminal a contact with the psychic?*

Not directly, not more directly than the outside being. If externally, in your ordinary consciousness you have a contact with the psychic, that also has a contact with the psychic, or rather one can put it the other way round: if that has a contact with the psychic, it helps you to have a contact with the psychic, but not necessarily, not always; it depends on the degree of development of the being. It is not necessarily more enlightened, more balanced—no. It is more subtle, it is less dull than our outer consciousness. Our external consciousness is so dull, it has no depth; as our outer understanding has no depth, our sensations have no depth; all this is something as though flat. So here it is fuller, but not necessarily more true.

*Then why is it the most important?*

Because it is internal. This is what supports the outer. The outer is only an appearance of this. As I said, in a dream when one goes there, one knows things which one doesn't know, one can do things, one is in touch with things which one doesn't know in the waking consciousness, because it is too superficial. It is like the inside of something. The outside is the expression of that, but an altogether surface expression. So naturally it looks the same; in any case more than a resemblance, it has an identity with what we see of it from outside. We see the form, don't we, the expression; well, this expression has necessarily an analogy—more than an analogy—an identity with what is inside. So if, externally, we see that someone is absolutely ignorant of his psychic being, it is impossible that internally he is quite conscious of it; he can be closer, but he cannot be conscious of the psychic without its being reflected outside. Therefore, if it is not reflected outside, it means that it is not truly established within.

6 April 1955, 7, 107-8

*Does the vital body also need rest?*

Yes. The vital body surrounds the physical body with a kind of envelope which has almost the same density as the vibrations of heat observable

when the day is very hot. And it is this which is the intermediary between the subtle body and the most material vital body. It is this which protects the body from all contagion, fatigue, exhaustion and even from accidents. Therefore if this envelope is wholly intact, it protects you from everything, but a little too strong an emotion, a little fatigue, some dissatisfaction or any shock whatsoever is sufficient to scratch it as it were and the slightest scratch allows any kind of intrusion. Medical science also now recognises that if you are in perfect vital equilibrium, you do not catch illness or in any case you have a kind of immunity from contagion. If you have this equilibrium, this inner harmony which keeps the envelope intact, it protects you from everything. There are people who lead quite an ordinary life, who know how to sleep as one should, eat as one should, and their nervous envelope is so intact that they pass through all dangers as though unconcerned. It is a capacity one can cultivate in oneself. If one becomes aware of the weak spot in one's envelope, a few minutes' concentration, a call to the force, an inner peace is sufficient for it to be all right, get cured, and for the untoward thing to vanish.

27 January 1951, 4, 63

*What is "the inner physical"?*

Well, the other day we had this question in connection with the subliminal. It is the same thing, you see.

The outer physical, what we see of the body, the appearance is, so to say, supported, upheld by a kind of inner existence and substance, which is expressed through the outer thing. You feel this clearly when something from outside hits you, and it is not pleasant; then when you draw back from that, you recoil from that contact with circumstances or things; well, the first impression is of drawing back inside into your physical being itself, a physical being which is there, which presses, so to say, on the outer form in order to create a new form.

This is what makes children grow up, it is a kind of inner thing which pushes, pushes for action, pushes for movement, pushes for progress. But it is physical, it is not a vital or mental consciousness, it is purely physical. It is something which pushes from within towards manifestation and is concentrated and channelled in the manifestation. It is vaster and more imprecise within. It is what Sri Aurobindo calls "the inner physical". It is more vague, more imprecise. One can dream there. For example, one dreams, one sees a room, one's own room.

Well, it is one's own room but still there are little differences; it is not absolutely what one sees with his two eyes when he is completely awake. It is a physical vision but with just a little shade of difference; compared with the most material there are slight changes.

4 May 1955, 7, 137-8

## Stopping illness

*When one sees an illness coming, how can one stop it?*

Ah! First of all, you must not want it and nothing in the body must want it. You must have a very strong will not to be ill. This is the first condition.

The second condition is to call the light, a light of equilibrium, a light of peace, quietude and balance, and to push it into all the cells of the body, enjoining them not to be afraid, because that again is another condition.

First, not to want to be ill, and then not to be afraid of illness. You must neither attract it nor tremble. You must not want illness at all. But you must not because of fear not want it; you must not be afraid; you must have a calm certitude and a complete trust in the power of the Grace to shelter you from everything, and then think of something else, not be concerned about this any longer. When you have done these two things, refusing the illness with all your will and infusing a confidence which completely eliminates the fear in the cells of the body, and then busying yourself with something else, not thinking any longer about the illness, forgetting that it exists... there, if you now how to do that, you may even be in contact with people who have contagious diseases, and yet you do not catch them.

But you must know how to do this.

Many people say, "Oh, yes, here I am not afraid." They don't have any fear in the mind, their mind is not afraid, it is strong, it is not afraid; but the body trembles, and one doesn't know it, because it is in the cells of the body that the trembling goes on. It trembles with a terrible anxiety and this is what attracts the illness. It is there that you must put the force and the quietude of a perfect peace and an absolute trust in the Grace. And then, sometimes you are obliged to drive away with a similar force in your thought all suggestions that after all, the physical world is full of illnesses, and these are contagious, and because one



was in contact with somebody who is ill, one is sure to catch it, and then, that the inner methods are not powerful enough to act on the physical, and all kinds of stupidities of which the air is full. These are collective suggestions which are passed on from one person to another by everybody. And if by chance there are two or three doctors, then it becomes terrible. (*Laughter*)

*When Sri Aurobindo says that illness comes from outside, what exactly is it that comes?*

It is a kind of vibration made up of a mental suggestion, a vital force of disorder and certain physical elements which are the materialisation of the mental suggestion and the vital vibration.

And these physical elements can be what we have agreed to call germs, microbes, this and that and many other things.

It may be accompanied by a sensation, may be accompanied by a taste, also by a smell, if one has very developed subtle senses.

There are these formations of illness which give a special taste to the air, a special smell or a slight special sensation.

People have many senses which are asleep. They are terribly tamasic. If all the senses they possess were awake, there are many things they would perceive, which can just pass by without anyone suspecting anything.

*11 May 1955, 7, 142-4*

There is always a way of isolating oneself by an atmosphere of protection, if one knows how to have an extremely quiet vibration, so quiet that it makes almost a kind of wall around you. But all the time, all the time one is vibrating in response to vibrations which come from outside. If you become aware of this, all the time there is something which does this (gesture), like this, like this, like this (gestures), which responds to all the vibrations coming from outside. You are never in an absolutely quiet atmosphere which emanates from you, that is, which comes from inside outward (not something which comes from outside within), something which is like an envelope around you, very quiet, like this—and you can go anywhere at all and these vibrations which come from outside do not begin to do this (gesture) around your atmosphere.

If you could see that kind of dance, the dance of vibrations which is there around you all the time, you would see, would understand well what I mean. (...) Yet, even in less serious cases, each one of you

individually has around him something which instead of being this very individual and very calm envelope which protects you from all that you don't want to receive... I mean, your receptivity becomes deliberate and conscious, otherwise you do not receive; and it is only when you have this conscious extremely calm atmosphere, and as I say, when it comes from within (it is not something that comes from outside), it is only when it's like this that you can go with impunity into life, that is, among others and in all the circumstances of every minute...

Otherwise if there is something bad to be caught, for example, anger, fear, an illness, some uneasiness, you are sure to catch it. As soon as it starts doing this (gesture), it is as though you called all similar vibrations to come and get hold of you.

What is to be wondered at is the unconsciousness with which men go through life; they don't know how to live, there's not one in a million who knows how to live, and they live like that somehow or other, limping along, managing, not managing; and all that for them, bah! What is it? Things that happen.

They don't know how to live. All the same one should learn how to live. That's the first thing one ought to teach children: to learn how to live.

11 May 1955, 7, 144-6

## **The twelve senses**

The protection may come from many different sources. Very often it was someone who informed me: a little entity, or some kind of being; sometimes it was the aura that protected me. And it was for all kinds of things. That is to say, life was seldom limited to the physical body—this is convenient, this is good. It is necessary, it increases your capacities. This is what the person who taught me occultism told me straightaway: “You are depriving yourself of senses which are most useful *even for the most ordinary life*.” And this is true, quite true. We can know infinitely more things than we usually do, simply by using our own senses. And not only from the mental point of view, but also from the vital and even the physical point of view.

*But what is the method?*

Oh, the method is very easy. There are disciplines. It depends on what you want to do.

It depends. For each thing there is a method. And the first method is to want it, to begin with, that is, to take a decision. Then you are given a description of all these senses and how they work—that takes some time. You take one sense or several, or the one which is easiest for you to start with, and you decide. Then you follow the discipline. It is the equivalent of exercises for developing the muscles. You can even succeed in creating a will in yourself.

But for more subtle things, the method is to make for yourself an exact image of what you want, to come into contact with the corresponding vibration, and then to concentrate and do exercises—such as to practise seeing through an object or hearing through a sound,<sup>1</sup> or seeing at a distance. (...) But for each one of these things you must practise for months with patience, with a kind of obstinacy. You take the senses one by one, hearing, sight, and you can even arrive at subtle realities of taste, smell and touch.

From the mental point of view it is easier, for there you are accustomed to concentration. When you want to think and find a solution, instead of following the deductions of thought, you stop everything and try to concentrate and concentrate, intensify the point of the problem. You stop everything and wait until, by the intensity of the concentration, you obtain an answer. This also requires some time. But if you used to be a good student, you must be quite used to doing that and it is not very difficult.

There is a kind of extension of the physical senses. Red Indians, for example, possess a sense of hearing and smell with a far greater range than our own—and dogs!

27 February 1962, 10, 131-3

### *How can the senses be used for self-development?*

Developing through sensations? It is very much in fashion. It is much in fashion. Now in the schools certain disciplines are invented to develop children's power of observation, the quickness of decision, of choice, the capacity to reckon with the eyes, appreciation, all that. All kinds of games are made for children now, to teach them all that. The sense of

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<sup>1</sup> Mother explained later: "To hear behind the sound is to come into contact with the subtle reality which is behind the material fact, behind the word or the physical sound or behind music, for example. One concentrates and then one hears what is behind. It means coming into contact with the vital reality which is behind the appearances. There can also be a mental reality, but generally, what lies immediately behind the physical sound is a vital reality."

hearing can also be developed, the sense of smell, the sense of sight—all these can be methodically developed. If, instead of merely living in one's sensations—this is “pleasant or unpleasant”, this is “pleasing or displeasing” and all kinds of things which are perfectly useless—one succeeds in calculating, measuring, comparing, noting, studying in detail all the vibrations.... You see, human beings live like blind men, constantly, absolutely unconscious, and they plunge into sensations and reactions, all the impulses, and so it is pleasant, it is unpleasant, it is pleasing, it is displeasing, all that. What is all that, then? What's the sense in it?—None at all. One ought to be able to appreciate, calculate, judge, compare, note, know exactly and scientifically the full value of the vibrations, the relations between things, study everything, everything—for instance, study all sensations in connection with the reactions they produce, follow the movement from the sensation to the brain, and then follow the movement of response from the brain to the sensations. And in this way one succeeds in controlling one's will, one's sensations completely, to such an extent that if there is something one does not want to feel, it is enough, with one's will, to cut it off: one feels it no longer. There are many disciplines of this kind. Some of them keep you busy for a lifetime, and if they are well followed, you don't waste a moment and are altogether interested. You no longer have time for impulses, this takes away all impulses. When you become scientific in these studies, you are no longer like a cork: one wave sending you here, another sending you there! There is a passing movement of Nature. Nature, oh how she plays with men! Good heavens, when you see how it is, oh! Truly it is enough to make you revolt. I don't understand how they do not revolt.... She sends round a wave of desire, and they are all like sheep running after their desires; she sends round a wave of violence, they are once again like other sheep living in violence, and so on, for everything. Anger—she just does “poof”, and everybody gets into a rage. She has but to make a gesture—a gesture of her caprice—and the human mobs follow. Or else it passes from one to another, just like that; they don't know why. They are asked, “Why?”—“Well, suddenly I felt angry. Suddenly I was seized by desire.” Oh! It is shameful.

*24 March 1954, 6, 78-80*

Actually, for the physical being—note that I say the physical being—to be fully developed, it must have twelve senses. It is one of these senses

which gives you the kind of perception I was speaking of. You cannot say that it is taste, smell, hearing, etc., but it is something which gives you a very precise impression of the difference of quality. And it is very precise, as distinct as seeing black and white, it is truly a sense perception.

19 March 1951, 4, 230

*What are the twelve senses?*

We are granted five, aren't we? In any case, there is another one which, precisely, has a relation with consciousness. I don't know if you have ever been told this, but a person who is blind, for instance, who does not see, can become aware of an object at some distance through a kind of perception which is not touch for he does not feel it, which is not vision for he does not see, but which is a contact—something that enables him to make a contact without hearing, seeing or touching. This is one of the most developed senses apart from those we habitually use. There is another sense, a sort of sense of proximity: when one comes close to a thing, one feels it as if one had contacted it. Another sense, which is also physical, puts you in touch with events at a great distance; it is a physical sense for it belongs to the physical world, it is not purely mental: there is a sensation. Some people have a sort of sensation of contact with what is happening at a very great distance. You must not forget that in the physical consciousness there are several levels; there is a physical vital and a physical mind which are not solely corporeal. Foresight on the material plane is also one of the physical senses.... We have, then, something that sees at a short distance, something that sees at a long distance and something that sees ahead; this already makes three. These are a sort of improvement of the senses we have; as for instance, hearing at a great distance—there are people who can hear noises at a great distance, who can smell at a great distance. It is a kind of perfecting of these senses.

22 March 1951, 4, 234-5

*[This talk is based upon Mother's essay "Vital Education".]*

*"In some ancient initiations it was stated that the number of senses that man can develop is not five but seven and in certain special cases even twelve. Certain races at certain times have, out of necessity, developed more or less perfectly one or another of these supplementary senses. With a proper discipline*

*persistently followed, they are within the reach of all who are sincerely interested in this development and it results. Among the faculties that are often mentioned, there is, for example, the ability to widen the physical consciousness, project it out of oneself so as to concentrate it on a given point and thus obtain sight, hearing, smell, taste and even touch at a distance.”*

*What are the names of these twelve senses?*

The names? In the Chaldean tradition they were in Chaldaic. In other traditions, in other languages; in Egypt they were written in hieroglyphs. Each system gave its names. I had a list of the names—not only of the names but also of what they represented, what kind of sense each represented—but it was a very long time ago, I don't remember them any longer. As I have said there, it is in the field of things seen, felt, done at a distance by a concentrated projection of consciousness. For instance, one is in a room and, due to an illness or an accident, one cannot move. Next to this room there is another; next to that there is a sort of bridge; after the bridge there are steps going down; and these steps go down to a big studio in the middle of a garden. Now, the person laid up in the room wishes to know what is going on in the studio. He concentrates his consciousness and then extends it, so to say (truly it is as though he extended it almost materially), and he goes along the whole way and reaches the studio. If he does this properly, he sees what there is in the studio, can hear what is going on, though he is not there himself: the body is lying in a bed in a room, but the consciousness is projected. It is a physical consciousness. It is not an inner state, for one sees physically, hears physically. If there are people in the room one sees them, and if they are speaking one hears them speaking. Naturally, it is not from the very first day that one succeeds; it asks for a very rigorous discipline. It corresponds a little (a little) to that capacity which was developed in the Red Indians due to the conditions of their life. I don't know how it is at present, but formerly they used to put their ear to the earth, and they had so fine an ear that they could hear steps more than a mile away. They heard the steps of those who were walking at a distance of more than two or three kilometres simply by putting their ear to the ground. Or take the dog which, if given something to smell, finds the trail of that scent again, can follow it with its nose. Well, it is one kind of super-sense, that is, a sense that has reached such a degree of intensity and refinement that it can indeed feel what the ordinary sense does not feel, can see at a distance, really see, see physically at a

distance, through walls. It is said that the blind develop a sense which enables them to feel an object at a distance. They do not see, they walk in darkness as in a black night; but they have a kind of sense of touch at a distance, a material contact due to which, long before touching the object, they know; for example, if there is a piece of furniture in their way, long before knocking against it, they feel it from a distance.

3 February 1954, 5, 10-1

## **Beings of the overmental world and occult planes of existence**

*Do the gods of the Puranas and the gods of Greek and Egyptian mythology have any real existence?*

Between the gods of the Puranas and the gods of Greek and Egyptian mythology, all kinds of similarities are found; it could be an interesting subject for study. To the modern Western world, all these divinities—the Greek gods and other “pagan” gods, as they call them—are simply a product of human imagination and correspond to nothing real in the universe. But this is a gross error.

To understand the mechanism of universal life, even that of terrestrial life, one has indeed to know that all these are real and living beings, each in its own realm, and have an independent reality. They would exist even if men did not exist. The majority of these gods existed before man existed.

In a very old tradition, probably dating before the Chaldean and Vedic traditions, which are its two branches, the history of creation is narrated not from the metaphysical or psychological point of view, but from an objective point of view, and this history is as real as our history of historical epochs. Of course, this is not the only way of looking at the thing, but it is quite as legitimate as any other; and in any case it recognises the concrete reality of these divine beings.

These are beings who belong to the progressive creation of the universe and have themselves presided over its formation, from the most ethereal or subtle to the most material regions; it is a descent of the divine creative Spirit. And they descended progressively, through realities more and more—one cannot say dense, because it is not dense, one cannot even say material, because matter as we know it does not exist on those planes—through realities more and more concrete.

According to traditions and occult schools, all these zones of

realities, these planes of realities have got different names; they have been classified in a different way, but there is an essential analogy, and if you go back far enough into the traditions, you see only the words changing according to the country and the language. Even now, the experiences of Western occultists and those of Eastern occultists offer great similarities. All who set out on the discovery of these invisible worlds and make a report of what they saw, give a very similar description, whether they be from here or there; they use different words, but the experience is very similar and the handling of forces is the same.

This knowledge of the occult worlds is based on the existence of subtle bodies and of subtle worlds corresponding to those bodies. They are what the psychological method calls “states of consciousness”, but these states of consciousness really correspond to worlds. The occult procedure consists then in being aware of these various inner states of being or subtle bodies and in becoming sufficiently a master of them so as to be able to go out of them successively, one after another. There is indeed a whole scale of subtleties, increasing or decreasing according to the direction in which you go, and the occult procedure consists in going out of a denser body into a subtler body and so on again, up to the most ethereal regions. You go, by successive exteriorisations, into bodies or worlds more and more subtle. It is somewhat as if every time you passed into another dimension. The fourth dimension of the physicists is nothing but the scientific transcription of an occult knowledge. To give another image, one can say that the physical body is at the centre—it is the most material, the densest and also the smallest—and the inner bodies, more subtle, overflow more and more the central physical body; they pass through it, extending themselves farther and farther, like water evaporating from a porous vase and forming a kind of steam all around. And the greater the subtlety, the more the extension tends to unite with that of the universe: one ends by universalising oneself. And it is altogether a concrete process which gives an objective experience of invisible worlds and even enables one to act in these worlds.

There are, then, only a very small number of people in the West who know that these gods are not merely subjective and imaginary—more or less wildly imaginary—but that they correspond to a universal truth.

All these regions, all these domains are filled with beings who exist, each in its own domain, and if you are awake and conscious on



a particular plane—for instance, if on going out of a more material body you awake on some higher plane, you have the same relation with the things and people of that plane as you had with the things and people of the material world. That is to say, there exists an entirely objective relation that has nothing to do with the idea you may have of these things. Naturally, the resemblance is greater and greater as you approach the physical world, the material world, and there even comes a time when the one region has a direct action upon the other. In any case, in what Sri Aurobindo calls the overmental worlds, you will find a concrete reality absolutely independent of your personal experience; you go back there and again find the same things, with the differences that have occurred during your absence. And you have relations with those beings that are identical with the relations you have with physical beings, with this difference that the relation is more plastic, supple and direct—for example, there is the capacity to change the external form, the visible form, according to the inner state you are in. But you can make an appointment with someone and be at the appointed place and find the same being again, with certain differences that have come about during your absence; it is entirely concrete with results entirely concrete.

*4 November 1958, 15, 355-7*

Naturally, this occult knowledge or this experience is not very frequent in the world, because in those who do not have a developed inner life, there are veritable gaps between the external consciousness and the inmost consciousness; the linking states of being are missing and they have to be constructed. So when people enter there for the first time, they are bewildered, they have the impression they have fallen into the night, into nothingness, into non-being!

*4 November 1958, 15, 359*

The occult world is not one single region where everything is mixed, which only becomes occult because we can't see it. The occult world is a gradation of regions, one could perhaps say, of more and more ethereal or subtle regions, anyway, those farther and farther removed in their nature from the physical materiality we ordinarily see. And each one of these domains is a world in itself, having its forms and inhabited by beings with a density, one might say, analogous to that of the domain in which they live. Just as in the physical world we are of

the same materiality as the physical world, so in the vital world, in the mental world, in the overmind world and in the supramental world—and in many others, infinite others—there are beings which have a form whose substance is similar to the one of that world. This means that if you are able to enter consciously into that world with the part of your being which corresponds to that domain, you can move there quite objectively, as in the material world.

And there, there are as many, and even many more things to see and observe than in our poor little material world, which belongs to only *one* zone of this infinite gradation. You meet all sorts of things in these domains, and you need to make a study as profound, perhaps still more profound than in the physical world, to be able to know what is happening there, to have relations with the beings who live there.

It is obvious that as one goes farther, as it were, from the material world, the forms and consciousness of those beings are of a purity, beauty and perfection much higher than our ordinary physical forms. It is only in the nearest vital world, the one which is, so to say, mixed with our material life—though it lies beyond it and there is a zone where the vital is no longer mixed with the material world—of that material vital one can say that in some of its aspects it is even uglier than things here, for it is filled with a bad will which is not counterbalanced by the presence of the psychic being which, in the physical world, amends, corrects, puts right, directs this bad will. But it is rather a limited zone and, as soon as one goes beyond it, one can find and meet things that are not favourable to human life, beings not on the same scale as human existence, but having their own beauty and grandeur, with whom one may establish relations which may become quite pleasant and even useful.

Only, as I have already told you, it is not very prudent to venture into these domains without a previous initiation and, above all, a purification of nature which prevents you from entering there all weighed down and deformed by your desires, your passions, egoisms, fears and weaknesses. Before undertaking these activities one needs a complete preparation of self-purification and widening of the consciousness which is absolutely indispensable.

In these invisible worlds there are also regions which are the result of human mental formations. One can find there all one wants. In fact, one very often finds there exactly what one expects to find. There are hells, there are paradises, there are purgatories. There are all sorts of things in accordance with the different religions and their conceptions.

These things have only a very relative existence, but with a relativity similar to that of material things here; that is to say, for someone who finds himself there, they are entirely real and their effects quite tangible. One needs an inner liberation, a wideness of the consciousness and a contact with a deeper and higher truth to be able to escape from the illusion of their reality. But this is something almost similar to what happens here: human beings here are mostly convinced that the only reality is the physical reality—the reality of what one can touch, can see—and for them, all that cannot be seen, cannot be touched, cannot be felt, is after all, problematical; well, what happens there is an identical phenomenon. People who at the moment of death are convinced, for one reason or another, that they are going to paradise or maybe to hell, *do find* themselves there after their death; and for them it is truly a paradise or a hell. And it is extremely difficult to make them come out of it and go to a place which is more true, more real.

So it is difficult to speak of all these worlds, these innumerable worlds, in a few minutes. It is a knowledge which needs a lived experience of many years, thoroughly systematic, and which requires, as I said, an inner preparation absolutely indispensable, to make it harmless.

We all get the chance to have a little contact—very partial, very superficial—with these worlds in our dreams. And the study of dreams itself already demands much time and care, and in itself may constitute a preparation for a deeper study of the invisible worlds.

*11 July 1956, 8, 216-8*

There are so many children who return every night to the same place and continue to live the life they have begun there. When these faculties are not spoilt with age, you can keep them with you. At a time when I was especially interested in dreams, I could return exactly to a place and continue a work that I had begun: supervise something, for example, set something in order, a work of organisation or of discovery, of exploration. You go until you reach a certain spot, as you would go in life, then you take a rest, then you return and begin again—you begin the work at the place where you left off and you continue it. And you perceive that there are things which are quite independent of you, in the sense that changes of which you are not at all the author, have taken place automatically during your absence.

*4 November 1958, 15, 358*

*[This talk is based on Chapter 3 of The Mother by Sri Aurobindo.]*

*What are the “invisible worlds”?*

That is a formidable question!

You have heard and read that we are made up of various states of being: physical, vital, mental, psychic, spiritual, etc. Well, all these inner states of being correspond to invisible worlds. There is a physical world, a vital world, a mental world, a psychic world, and many spiritual worlds, a whole range of more and more subtle worlds approaching nearer and nearer to the Supreme. So, since you carry within yourself a corresponding range, by studying and becoming aware of your inner being you gradually make yourself capable of becoming aware also of these invisible worlds. For example, the mind: if the mind is conscious, coordinated, well controlled, it can move about it in the mental world just as the body does in the physical world and see what this mental world is like, what is going on there, what are its characteristics and so on. These things are not invisible in themselves—they are invisible to the physical consciousness and the physical senses, but not to the corresponding inner states of consciousness or the corresponding inner senses. For, by a systematic development one can acquire senses in these worlds and one can then live a similar life with different characteristics. I mean that one can live an objective life in these worlds if one is sufficiently developed oneself. Otherwise, they wouldn't exist for us. If we did not carry in ourselves something corresponding to all that exists in the universe, this universe wouldn't exist for us. And it is only a matter of systematic and methodical development. Some people have it spontaneously for various reasons, usually as a result of a long preparation in previous lives, sometimes because of specially favourable circumstances—they are born in a certain environment, of parents who had developed these faculties, and they were helped to develop them from childhood. Other people have to acquire them systematically by inner discipline; it takes time, a long time, but after all it doesn't take much longer than for the brain of a child to grasp abstract mathematics. That takes years.

*Do these invisible worlds exist in a fixed place in the universe?*

They form part of the universe, of course. Yes, one can say that they exist in a fixed place. But to understand that, to understand these things requires a mind capable of understanding that there are other dimensions than the purely material dimensions. For when you are told that your psychic being is in your body, that doesn't mean that if you open up

your body you will find your psychic being inside. You will find your heart, your stomach and the rest, but not your psychic being. And yet it is correct to say that it is within you. It extends beyond you too, but it is in another dimension. And one can say that there are as many dimensions as there are different worlds. Certainly all these invisible worlds—so-called invisible worlds—are contained, so to say, in the material universe. But they don't occupy the place of other things. To make an imperfect comparison—it is valid only as a comparison—you can hold countless ideas in your brain and you certainly don't have the feeling that you have to drive one out so that another one can come in, do you? They don't occupy any space in that sense.

30 January 1951, 15, 317-8

*Is there a limited number of dimensions?*

Limited? Or unlimited? What are you asking? How many dimensions? Ah, should we ask the mathematicians or the occultists? The occultist!

Well, in a certain way the number is limited, but since in each dimension there is another limited number of subdivisions and since in these subdivisions there is again a considerable number of subdivisions, we can say that it is unlimited—and yet limited. So, if you understand anything, you are lucky!

*If the number is limited, how many are there?*

Twelve.

30 January 1951, 15, 319

*In the invisible worlds, are things seen as in the physical world or as in dreams?*

We have to agree on what dreams are! There are dreams where you see things so precisely, so concretely that the material world seems rather unreal in comparison. There are dreams like that where things are so intense, so precise, so concrete, so objective and leave you with such a vivid impression that the material world seems rather misty, not very clear, not very distinct. So, if it is a dream like that, yes. But if it is a dream where things clash incoherently, inconsistently with one another, no.

The first step: you must be able to discern the various inner states of being and know for sure: this belongs to the vital, this belongs to the mind, this belongs to the psychic, this belongs to matter. And as I said earlier, there are sub-degrees in all that. There is a material vital, a vital vital, a mental vital, a vital under the psychic influence. You must

be able to classify things very clearly and not allow any mixtures, any vague confusions in yourself: “Oh, where does this movement come from? What is it?”—indistinct impressions. That is the first step.

Second step: you learn to concentrate in one of these inner states. You choose the one which you feel to be the most alive, the most developed in yourself and you learn to concentrate there. And then you do the same exercises... I wonder whether you remember the exercises you used to do when you were very young in order to walk, to drink, to talk, to hear, to feel. You used to do many exercises. All children do exercises without knowing it, but they do them. So you have to do something on the same lines. You must build up senses and develop them, make them conscious, independent and precise in their perceptions. That is the second stage. It may take time, it may come quickly, it depends on the degree of development of your inner being.

After that—this is only a beginning—after that, you must learn to isolate yourself from all the other parts of the being, to concentrate on the one where you want to have the experience and concentrate in such a way that you come into contact with the corresponding outer world. I don't mean that it is an exteriorisation that leaves your body in a state of coma. No, a very intense concentration is enough, a power to isolate yourself from everything except the place where you are concentrating. And then you come into contact with the corresponding world. You must want that and little by little you learn how to do it. And there you have the exercise required to improve the senses you have gradually developed and give them a field of action. At first, you may be rather lost in this outer world, you won't feel quite at ease. But little by little you will get used to it and start moving about there in the way that is appropriate to each of these worlds.

But if you know beforehand what they are like—the mind is such a magnificent instrument of formation that it can build up a whole experience for you, and unfortunately, it will never be the genuine experience—it will be merely a mental construction. So, normally, when you want to instruct someone about these occult matters, you never tell him what is going to happen, in the beginning. The only thing is that if something happens to him, if he says, “This is what happened to me,” you tell him, “Yes, this is correct” or “No, that is not correct.” You can help him. But you don't tell him beforehand, “You will go to such and such a place. It will be like that. You will have such and such an experience,” etc., for then all these things may happen only because

of a well-built mental construction in which you move about with ease. In that case it is really a dream!

*If one is not aware of the divine presence, can one enjoy the divine protection?*

There too it depends on the case. It may occur; it is not always like that, but it may occur. It may happen that the divine grace is given to someone without his knowing anything about it. This even happens more often than one thinks.

30 January 1951, 15, 320-22

### **Beings from the vital world: no psychic**

*“The beings of the vital world are powerful by their very nature; when to their power they add knowledge, they become doubly dangerous. There is nothing to be done with these creatures; you should avoid having any dealings with them unless you have the power to crush and destroy them. If you are forced into contact with them, beware of the spell they can cast. These vital beings, when they manifest on the physical plane, have always a great hypnotic power; for the centre of their consciousness is in the vital world and not in the material and they are not veiled or dwarfed by the material consciousness as human beings are.”*

*Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931 (12 May 1929)*

*Mother, you say: “These beings are very powerful”; what kind of power have they?*

The power that the vital has over Matter. And, in fact, you can do nothing without the vital power. If there were no vital power, Matter would be inert and unconscious. The vital power is what men usually call “power” in short.

*Cannot the vital power be replaced by some other higher power?*

No. The vital must be transformed. I have always said that nothing can be done without the vital, but the vital must be converted; that is, instead of being an instrument of those beings, it should become an instrument of the divine will. One can do nothing in the physical world without the vital. It is exactly here that the error of the ascetics lies; as they know it is a power full of desires and indeed full of the need of realizing itself, they abolish it, so deaden it that it exists no longer. All ascetic methods are invented for abolishing and deadening the vital. For that evidently

is the most convenient way of cutting off all connection with material life: one becomes worse than a vegetative kind of being.

What is needed is that the vital, instead of serving its own ends or being an instrument of anti-divine forces, should become an instrument of the Divine and put all its force at the service of the Divine. This is quite possible.

*When we are afraid, is that due to the mischief of these beings?*

Yes, my child. Fear is the prettiest gift these beings have given to the world. It is their first present, and the most powerful. It is through fear that they hold human beings. First of all, they create a movement of fear; the movement of fear weakens you, then hands you over little by little into their power. And it is not even a reasonable fear; it is a kind of fear which seizes you, you don't know why, something that makes you tremble, gives you anxiety. You do not know why, it has no apparent reason. It is their action.

24 June 1953, 5, 116-7

*Can one meet the beings of the vital in their own domain?*

Vital beings move in a supraphysical world where human beings, if they chance to enter, feel at sea, helpless and defenceless. The human being is at home and safe in the material body; the body is his protection. There are some who are full of contempt for their bodies and think that things will be much better and easier after death without them. But in fact the body is your fortress and your shelter. While you are lodged in it the forces of the hostile world find a difficulty in getting any direct hold upon you. What are nightmares? These are your sorties into the vital world. And what is the first thing you try to do when you are in the grip of a nightmare? You rush back into your body and shake yourself into your normal physical consciousness. But in the world of the vital forces you are a stranger; it is an uncharted sea in which you have neither compass nor rudder. You do not know how to go, you do not know where to go and at each step you do just the opposite of what should be done. Directly you enter any realm of this world, its beings gather round you and want to encompass and get out of you all you have, to draw what they can and make it a food and a prey. If you have no strong light and force radiating from within you, you move there without your body as if you had no coat to protect you against a chill and bleak atmosphere, no house to shield you, even no skin covering you, your nerves exposed and bare. There are men who say,



“How unhappy I am in this body”, and think of death as an escape! But after death you have the same vital surroundings and are in danger from the same forces that are the cause of your misery in this life. The dissolution of the body forces you out into the open spaces of the vital world. And you have no longer a defence; there is not the physical body any longer to rush back to for safety.

It is here upon earth, in the body itself, that you must acquire a complete knowledge and learn to use a full and complete power. Only when you have done that will you be free to move about with entire security in all the worlds. Only when you are incapable of having the slightest fear, when you remain unmoved, for example, in the midst of the worst nightmare, can you say, “Now I am ready to go into the vital world.” But this means the acquisition of a power and a knowledge that can come only when you are a perfect master of the impulses and desires of the vital nature. You must be absolutely free from everything that can bring in the beings of the darkness or allow them to rule over you; if you are not free, beware!

No attachments, no desires, no impulses, no preferences; perfect equanimity, unchanging peace and absolute faith in the Divine protection: with that you are safe, without it you are in peril. And as long as you are not safe, it is better to do like little chickens that take shelter under the mother’s wings.

*How does the physical body act as a protection?*

The physical body acts as a protection by its grossness, by the very thing we charge against it. It is dull and insensitive, thick, rigid and hard; it is like a fortress with strong dense walls. The vital world is fluidic, there things move and mix and interpenetrate freely; it is like the waves of the sea that ceaselessly flow into each other and change and mingle. Against this fluidity of the vital world you are defenceless unless you can oppose to it a very powerful light and force from inside; otherwise it penetrates you and there is nothing to hamper its invading influence. But the body intervenes, cuts you off from the vital world and is a dam against the flood of its forces.

*But is there any individuality in the forms of the vital world, if it is so fluid?*

Individuality there is; only its forms are not so fixed and hard as the forms of embodied beings. Individuality does not mean an unplastic rigidity. A stone has a very rigid form, perhaps the most rigid we know, but there is very little individuality in it. Take ten or twenty stones

together and you will have to be very careful if you want to discern between them. But the beings of the vital world can be recognised at the very first sight one from another; you distinguish them by something in the way in which the form is built, by the atmosphere which it carries with it, by the manner in which each moves and speaks and acts. As human beings change their expression according as they are happy or angry; these beings also undergo change in the stress of their moods, but the alteration is more intense in the vital world. Not only the mere expression but the very forms of the features change.

*12 May 1929, 3, 46-9*

*There are some human beings who are like vampires. What are they and why are they like that?*

They are not human; there is only a human form or appearance. They are incarnations of beings from the world that is just next to the physical, beings who live on the plane which we call the vital world. It is a world of all the desires and impulses and passions and of movements of violence and greed and cunning and every kind of ignorance; but all the dynamisms too are there, all the life-energies and all the powers. The beings of this world have by their nature a strange grip over the material world and can exercise upon it a sinister influence. Some of them are formed out of the remains of the human being that persist after death in the vital atmosphere near to the earth-plane. His desires and hungers still float there and remain in form even after the dissolution of the body; often they are moved to go on manifesting and satisfying themselves and the birth of these creatures of the vital world is the consequence. But these are minor beings and, if they can be very troublesome, it is yet not impossible to deal with them. There are others, far more dangerous, who have never been in human form; never were they born into a human body upon earth, for most often they refuse to accept this way of birth because it is slavery to matter and they prefer to remain in their own world, powerful and mischievous, and to control earthly beings from there. For, if they do not want to be born on earth, they do want to be in contact with the physical nature, but without being bound by it. Their method is to try first to cast their influence upon a man; then they enter slowly into his atmosphere and in the end may get complete possession of him, driving out entirely the real human soul and personality. These creatures, when in possession of an earthly body, may have the human appearance but they have not a human nature. Their habit is to draw

upon the life-force of human beings; they attack and capture vital power wherever they can and feed upon it. If they come into your atmosphere, you suddenly feel depressed and exhausted; if you are near them for some time you fall sick; if you live with one of them, it may kill you.

*But how is one to get such creatures out of one's environment when they are once there?*

The vital power incarnated in these beings is of a very material kind and it is effective only within a short distance. Ordinarily, if you do not live in the same house or if you are not in the same company with them, you do not come within their influence. But if you open some channel of connection or communication, through letters, for example, then you make possible an interchange of forces and are liable to be influenced by them even from a far distance. The wisest way with these beings is to cut off all connection and have nothing to do with them—unless indeed you have great occult knowledge and power and have learned how to cover and protect yourself—but even then it is always a dangerous thing to move about with them. To hope to transform them, as some people do, is a vain illusion; for they do not want to be transformed. They have no intention of allowing any transformation and all effort in that direction is useless.

These beings, when in the human body, are not often conscious of what they really are. Sometimes they have a vague feeling that they are not quite human in the ordinary way. But still there are cases where they are conscious and very conscious; not only do they know that they do not belong to humanity but they know what they are, act in that knowledge and deliberately pursue their ends. The beings of the vital world are powerful by their very nature; when to their power they add knowledge, they become doubly dangerous. There is nothing to be done with these creatures; you should avoid having any dealings with them unless you have the power to crush and destroy them. If you are forced into contact with them, beware of the spell they can cast. These vital beings, when they manifest on the physical plane, have always a great hypnotic power; for the centre of their consciousness is in the vital world and not in the material and they are not veiled and dwarfed by the material consciousness as human beings are.

*Is it not a fact that these creatures are drawn by some peculiar fascination towards the spiritual life?*

Yes, because they feel they do not belong to this earth but come from somewhere else; and they feel too that they have powers they have

half lost and they are eager to win them back. So whenever they meet anyone who can give them some knowledge of the invisible world, they rush to him. But they mistake the vital for the spiritual world and in their seeking follow vital and not spiritual ends. Or perhaps they deliberately seek to corrupt spirituality and build up an imitation of it in the mould of their own nature. Even then it is a kind of homage they pay, or a sort of amends they make, in their own way, to the spiritual life. And there is too some kind of attraction that compels them; they have revolted against the Divine rule, but in spite of their revolt or perhaps because of it, they feel somehow bound and are powerfully attracted by its presence.

This is how it happens that you see them sometimes used as instruments to bring into connection with each other those who are to realise the spiritual life upon earth. They do not purposely serve this use, but are compelled to it. It is a kind of compensation that they pay. For they feel the pressure of the descending Light, they sense that the time has come or is soon coming when they must choose between conversion or dissolution, choose either to surrender to the Divine Will and take their part in the Great Plan or to sink into unconsciousness and cease to be. The contact with a seeker of Truth gives such a being his chance to change. All depends upon how he utilises his chance. Taken rightly, it may open his way to liberation from falsehood and obscurity and misery, which is the stuff out of which these vital creatures are made, and bring him to Regeneration and to Life.

*Have not these beings a great control over money power?*

Yes. The power of money is at present under the influence or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world. It is because of this influence that you never see money going in any considerable amount to the cause of Truth. Always it goes astray, because it is in the clutch of the hostile forces and is one of the principal means by which they keep their grip upon the earth. The hold of the hostile forces upon money-power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task. Each time that you try to draw a little of this money away from its present custodians, you have to undertake a fierce battle.

And yet one signal victory somewhere over the adverse forces that have the hold upon money would make victory possible simultaneously and automatically at all other points also. (...) In those who are slaves of vital beings, the desire for truth and light and spiritual achievement,

even if it at all touches them, cannot balance the desire for money. To win money from their hands for the Divine means to fight the devil out of them; you have first to conquer or convert the vital being whom they serve, and it is not an easy task. Men who are under the sway of vital creatures can change from a life of ease, cast away enjoyment and become intensely ascetic and yet remain just as wicked as ever and even by the change turn worse than before.

12 May 1929, 3, 42-6

### **Possession by vital beings and adverse forces**

*Before cutting one's relations with beings who are linked with a vital entity, one must be sure of their connection. How can one be sure?*

Evidently it is difficult to know, unless one has direct vision of the vital, that is to say, unless one is able to see directly into the vital world. I have seen many, many times... that two things may happen, and generally do happen. When, for some reason or other, you do not agree with someone—if there is a conflict of interests, if there has been a quarrel—there is a tendency to say of him, “He is a vital being.” One ought to mistrust oneself first, and afterwards what the other says. ... Only those who possess a perfected vital being and are completely disinterested can tell you, “This person or that one is a dangerous being.”

10 March 1951, 190

*But when we throw it out [the adverse force], it does not die.  
Then it can go elsewhere once more, for it remains in the world.*

Exactly. It remains in the world and it will surely go elsewhere — until it meets someone who has sufficient spiritual and occult power to dissolve it, and that is very difficult.... One must be very strong, possess a very great knowledge and power to dissolve a movement that has (this can be said at least) its reason for existence in the world—I do not say it is legitimate, but still it has its reason for existence. There are things which can be dissolved; but if somewhere in the world it exists in someone, he can reconstitute it. It is the same thing when people are attacked by small beings of the vital world, hostile beings who attack them, install themselves in their atmosphere, trying to possess them, that is, enter into them and use their body and all the rest. These

beings—it is very difficult for the individual to get rid of them: that needs a very, very hard yoga. But one who has the knowledge and the power and who sees them can very well get them out of the atmosphere and destroy them. But if one who is attacked keeps within himself this little affinity which allowed the thing to enter, then he will recall it. I have had several examples of the kind, several.

I had the example of a person who was three-fourths possessed and at the moment manifested a kind of power, a force that was not very good, but all the same it gave the impression of a force, a power, a capacity. Only he recognised that it was bad and was for evil, and prayed to be relieved of it. The opportunity comes: the being shows itself separately from the person it possesses, it can be seized, pulled out and dissolved. Then the one who had been possessed suddenly feels that he is becoming as commonplace as anybody else. That feeling of power he had is now lost and he feels he is becoming quite ordinary and says: “I have no special faculties, I have no special value, I have no special capacity, I am quite an ordinary person and less than ordinary, of a sickening commonness!” Now what does he do? He prays to have his possession back again. And so a few days later, I find him as possessed as ever.

Well, here it is truly not worth the trouble. One has only to leave them to their fate. This has happened many a time. In such people, you know, it is a kind of vanity which generally opens the door to those forces; they wished to be big, powerful, to play an important role, to be somebody; that attracts the force and so they become like that, possessed. The thing is taken away from them: all their remarkable capacity disappears at the same time and their self-satisfied vanity as well. They have the feeling they have become something quite ordinary and a tiny little thing within them says: “Oh! it was better before....” For one that is destroyed, there are always ten ready to come in. That’s how it is, it is a strange task!

10 June 1953, 5, 95-6

*Are mentally deranged people possessed?*

Yes, unless there is a physical lesion, a defect in the formation or an accident, a congestion. In all other cases it is always a possession. The proof of it is that if a person is brought to you who is altogether mentally deranged, if he has a lesion, he cannot be cured, while if there is no physical lesion, if it is a possession, then one can cure him.

Unfortunately these things happen only to people who like them; there must be in the being much ambition, vanity, combined with much stupidity and a terrible pride—it is on such things that those beings play. I have known cases like that, of persons who were partially possessed, and I succeeded in freeing them from the beings who possessed them. Naturally they felt some relief, a kind of ease for a time, but it did not last long; almost immediately it wore off and they thought: “Now I have become quite an ordinary creature, whereas before I was an exceptional being!” They used to feel within them an exceptional power, even if it was a power to do evil, and they were satisfied with it. So what did they do? They called back with all their force the power they had lost! Of course, the being that had been destroyed could not come back, but as these beings exist in thousands it was replaced by another. I have seen this happen three times consecutively in a case, so much so that in the end I had to tell the person: “I am tired, get rid of it yourself, I am no longer interested!”

*In these cases what happens to the psychic being?*

Generally, it goes away.

8 March 1951, 4, 186

*When a being is possessed by a hostile force, what becomes of his psychic?*

It depends on the degree of the possession. Usually it is something progressive. First there is an influence under which one comes, and comes in a fragmentary way, not even totally in his being, but in certain parts and for a time. This is the first stage. The second: the influence becomes permanent and there is one part of the being which deteriorates, which is constantly under this influence and expresses it. After this, the being which has cast this influence tries to enter that part. Then, usually, this produces a conflict, a kind of inner battle. People have fits, sometimes even nervous morbid fits. In trying to resist, the two parts of the being come constantly into conflict, and this produces great imbalance, even physical imbalance. But if one doesn't know how to resist and doesn't succeed in shaking off the hold, then gradually the being that has seized upon a part of the person acts like an octopus and spreads its tentacles like that, slowly and everywhere; and finally it is a total possession. At the moment of the total possession, either the possessed person becomes completely unbalanced or he becomes a kind of monster and his psychic being leaves him.

These cases are extremely rare, fortunately. Usually, in the human being the psychic is strong enough to be able to resist, and the most frequent case is that of constant conflict between the two parts, until the psychic being, if it is strong enough and knows how to lean on a greater strength than its own, is capable of rejecting this influence and freeing itself. It is only in an extreme case of a total possession that the psychic being goes away. But these are extremely rare cases, extremely rare. It sometimes happens that a child is still-born, that is, just at the moment of birth it dies or a few minutes later, or an hour or two later, you see, just at that time. In these cases it happens that it is the psychic being which has decided not to use this body. But if, for example, the doctor who is looking after the case is a clever man or the nurse a clever person and they can bring back life into the body by artificial respiration or such means, most often it is a hostile being which gets hold of this body. There have been cases like that, children who seemed to be dead, that is, the psychic being had left the body, and before it had died completely, a vital being had entered and taken its place. Such cases have been known. And these beings are demons. In life they become veritable demons. There are not many of them.

There are beings of the vital, but of a higher kind, emanations of Asuras, for example, who have decided for one reason or another that they would try to be converted, not to be antidivine, and manage to enter into relation with the Divine. They know that the best way is to identify themselves with a human body in order to be under the control of a psychic being. And they incarnate in human bodies, but not with the intention of driving out the psychic being, on the contrary, to try to submit to the influence of the psychic being and be converted by it. These cases also are not frequent, but still they have been known, and in these cases these human beings are gifted with very exceptional capacities, but usually they also have very exceptional difficulties, because the power which has incarnated in them is one which was, at least, if it is not still so, a hostile power; and, you see, it is difficult to get rid of all these movements of revolt immediately; sometimes it takes a whole lifetime to succeed in doing it.

Some of these asuric beings have tried to convert themselves and not succeeded. They ought to have left the body they had chosen, because they could not convert themselves. It was too difficult a task for them, it demanded too great an effort.

But all these cases about which I have just spoken to you are very



rare ones, you see. We can't say that such things happen and are met with at every turn: a gentleman who is the incarnation of an adverse force or another who is possessed. Such cases are very rare, very rare.

But the case of an influence—being under an influence and expressing it—this, unfortunately, is very frequent, especially with people who undertake yoga without being sufficiently purified beforehand, or otherwise with egoistic intentions; to people who begin to do yoga for reasons of ambition or vanity it happens very often that they put themselves under the influence of certain adverse forces.

And there are also many people who are under certain influences in a way... how to put it?... one can't call it accidental, but... for example, there are psychic beings who choose a certain environment to incarnate in because they think that there they will have the experiences they want, and owing to some circumstances in this environment there is a hostile influence at work; so the body they put on is to a certain extent under this hostile influence and they have to fight against that terribly all their life. They can at a particular moment, as I said—if they know how to rely on greater forces than their own—they can conquer and gain a great victory. It is a great victory to get rid of the influence of an adverse force. It is truly a victory which goes beyond the individual's own person and has a repercussion on the whole terrestrial state. Each victory gained like this by an individual over a hostile force influencing him, is a long step forward to the day when the earth will be completely free of the presence of hostile forces. It represents a great progress for the earth.

*Sweet Mother, how can the hostile forces be converted?*

Well, if they want to, why can't they? There is nothing in the universe which doesn't have one single origin—that is, a supreme origin—the hostile forces like everything else; and if they give up their revolt and separation and aspire to return to their source, they can very well be converted. It may require much more effort from them than is necessary for a human being to change his defects, that of course is obvious. It is a much greater effort and, above all, much deeper, because the origin of their revolt is very deep; it is not superficial. But still, they can manage it. They have the power also; these are very powerful beings who, if they resolve to be converted, can do it; and then they become some of the most wonderful instruments for the divine work. The very ones who were some of the greatest adversaries.

*Is mental imbalance due to the same cause?*

Very often, but not always. Mental imbalance can be due to many

different causes. One of them may be simply a physical structure which is defective, a cerebral insufficiency. Now, one may say that this cerebral insufficiency is probably the expression of an inner vital imbalance. But in the case of cerebral insufficiency it is usually hereditary or organic, still... that is, something produced at the time of conception. So one can't say that it is due to an additional influence: it was an influence which acted before birth, and the one who suffers from this mental imbalance is not necessarily under a direct adverse influence. It can be a consequence of malformation.

Now, when people are divided in their mind, and in one part of their mind aspire for the truth and transformation and in another don't want them, and not only resist but revolt—which happens often—this indeed creates a terrible inner cerebral struggle, first mental and then cerebral, and this may bring about a serious mental imbalance.

There are cases in which it is precisely the opening to a suggestion, an adverse influence, an opening which is the result of a wrong movement—a movement of revolt or of hatred or of violent desire. One can, in a wrong movement, open oneself—in a rage, for example—one can open to an adverse force and bring in an influence which could end up by a possession. At the beginning these things are relatively easy to cure if there is a conscious part of the being and a very strong will to get rid of this bad movement and this influence. One succeeds easily enough, relatively speaking, if the aspiration is sincere; but if one looks on the thing with complacency and tells oneself, “Ah, it is like that, it can't be otherwise”, then this becomes dangerous. One must not tolerate the enemy in the place. As soon as one notices his presence, one must throw him out very far, as far as one can, pitilessly.

*22 December 1954, 6, 434-8*

*There were people here who had a great aspiration, but who for some reason or other revolted and went away. And these are the ones who are specially against the Ashram. But then, could we say that one day they will come back?*

Come back? (*Mother makes a movement.*) That is... I shall tell you this personally.

It depends on something.... We could put it like this: first—the very same question is in the Gita—there are two kinds of Asuric beings. There are those who can be converted and will be converted—after all, perhaps it would be enough if only at one moment, were it just

in a passing flash, these beings have conceived the possibility of conversion, for this to happen one day. And there are those who have absolutely consciously and wilfully decided that they would prefer to be dissolved and to disappear. So those who want to be dissolved will be dissolved and those who want to be converted will be converted. That's how it is in life!

There are those who die, those who return. Usually it is something known, almost decided. One could say with certainty, *these will die*. They will die, they will die, that is to say, they cut themselves off from their soul. They may have—as I said a while ago—a life that is quite... that seems to be altogether successful. They are not necessarily unhappy physically, far from it; sometimes, on the contrary, everything turns out successfully for them. And then, on the other hand, there are perhaps others under a special grace, who, in their adventure meet the worst rebuffs, and after some time they realise that they have been foolish, idiotic, stupid. And then... they come back. It depends on people. In fact, when they are successful it means that they are condemned; when they do not succeed, well, it is that the Grace has not left them.

But mostly it will be after their death that there will be a difference, because those human beings who have allowed adverse forces to take hold of them and govern their lives, as soon as they leave their body, they are just swallowed up, that's all! They have already cut off the connection with their psychic being, so their psychic being often has gone somewhere far off already in other worlds... and so, their vital being, which is the receptacle for these forces, as soon as it leaves the body will be quite simply swallowed, and that's all. And so they will really die for good. That won't make much difference in the world. It won't change things much.

*Sweet Mother, what will swallow them up?*

A still greater vital being! (*Laughter*) You see, they have in them an emanation of adverse vital forces, and the being or power which has emanated this force has done so in order to make use of the body, to make it do in the material life exactly the things it wanted to do. But now, when there is no longer a body left, it is no longer interesting.... You see, it was this body which was meant to do a certain number of things to act against the divine action. Once the body has disappeared, the emanation is withdrawn and all the force that was with it, and it is swallowed up again for another opportunity.

They spend their time doing this. They emanate and then reabsorb

when it pleases them, at times before death... that is, this hastens death a bit. It leaves the being like a kind of rag, powerless, lifeless, without anything.... This happens; it makes them absolutely mad. Or else, when they die in some sort of catastrophe, as it happened during the war, suddenly... hup! It acts like a cupping-glass, it absorbs everything, swallows up everything again for another occasion. It looks for this, for what is ready to receive it, and it makes it... There is always someone who is open to receive it, and who immediately believes himself a very superior being; because it gives this, it gives people the feeling that they are truly, exceptionally remarkable... they are capable of seeing the faults of things which others don't see; their judgment is more sane than that of hundreds of other individuals. Besides, they have decided, they are among those who have decided what the creation ought to be like and who try to make it so, to put things in their place as they ought to be.

I had these... people who, in a moment of lucidity or sincerity, a second of sincerity, had asked to be freed from the hostile emanation which made them act. And then, in that moment of sincerity this emanation went out of them, and without hurting the body it could be caught and destroyed. That has happened several times.

Then for some days the being is so happy... and it feels free, feels good, feels luminous.... And then suddenly, it tells itself, "But I no longer have any power! I don't know any longer, can't do anything any longer, I am altogether an ordinary being!" And then, "But this is not at all good, it was much better before!" And so, as these adverse forces are countless—these entities exist in thousands and thousands, you see, they are there swarming around people, only waiting for an opportunity to be able to rush into someone—immediately one reabsorbs one's dose and becomes once again what one was before, sometimes worse. And so the comedy begins all over again.

*But as for me, nothing doing, once is enough!* You are far too attached to it! Keep your little hostile being with you! It is useless, in this case. But it is this, it's the feeling, all of a sudden, of having lost one's power. But note, this happens to ambitious people, above all to ambitious people who want to have power, want to dominate others, want to be great masters, great instructors, want to perform miracles, have extraordinary powers... it is to these that this happens most often... those who have a kind of ambition, here, turning in their mind. This is dangerous.

It is so good to be simple, simply good-willed, to do the best

one can, and in the best way possible; not to build anything very considerable but only to aspire for progress, for light, a peace full of goodwill, and let That which knows in the world decide for you what you will become, and what you will have to do. One no longer has any cares, and one is *perfectly happy!*

21 July 1954, 6, 245-8

## **Mental forms and beings, little vital entities**

*In the vital world, forces exist: do mental forms exist in the mental world?*

Yes, there is a concrete mental world and there are mental forms which do not resemble vital forces but have their own law. There are many, innumerable mental forms. They are almost indestructible; one can only say that they change forms and relations, it is something very fluid, and moving all the time.

12 March 1951, 4, 198

*“Mind is one movement, but there are many varieties of the movement, many strata, that touch and even press into each other. At the same time the movement we call mind penetrates into other planes.... Now, there are mental planes that stand high above the vital world and escape its influence; there are no hostile forces or beings there. But there are others—and they are many—that can be touched or penetrated by the vital forces.”*

*Questions and Answers 1929 (26 May)*

*Which mental plane are you speaking of?*

Of the physical mind. Certainly not of the higher mind, for there are no adverse forces there. The reference is to the mind that deals with material things.

*Are there beings in the mental worlds?*

Yes, many. They are completely independent; they have their own life, their own relations among themselves, as in other worlds. But for a physical consciousness, time and space are not the same in the vital or the mental worlds as in the physical world. For example, those who are in the physical consciousness have the impression that movements in the mind are instantaneous—compared with the higher consciousness they are not instantaneous, but compared with the physical consciousness,

they are instantaneous, of an extreme rapidity.

The beings of the mental world also have an individuality of their own, even a form that can be permanent if they choose to keep one. Their form is the expression of their thought and is sufficiently plastic to be able to change with their thought, yet has a sufficient continuity to enable one to recognise them. If you go out of your body and enter the mental world, you can meet these beings, speak to them, even make an appointment with them for the next time!

*Can they exercise their influence on a human being, as the beings of the vital worlds do?*

Many mental formations try to realise themselves upon earth, but these are generally created by human beings; they then continue to work in the mental world with the intention of influencing the mind of human beings. But the beings of the mental plane proper are generally creators, and because they are creators of form, they are not much concerned with influencing other forms—they are satisfied with expressing themselves through the forms they have made.

19 March 1951, 4, 225-6

*What is meant by “the substance of the mental being”?*

My child, the substance means... how shall I put it?... it means the stuff of which the mental being is made. It could be said, for instance, that the cells are the substance of your body. It is not exactly matter, the mind is not quite material, but it is the very thing of which the mind is made. If there were no mental substance, there would be no mental being. It would be only a vibration; and even a vibration needs a medium to manifest itself.

But if your body were not made of material substance, you wouldn't have a body. This is what is called substance. It is the thing of which something is made. And precisely, what is important is that people usually think that mind is just a mode of activity, whereas there is a mental substance as there is a vital substance and physical substance. And as there is a substance, there is a corresponding world with an autonomous existence, that is to say, there can be a mind without any physical support. The physical body may disappear and the mind can continue to exist. It is here that it is important to understand that there is a mental substance which, obviously, is much more... (*silence*) how to put it?... immaterial than physical matter.

Some people use a rather unclassical word, “rarefied”, but I don't

think it has exactly this sense. Well, you see, we say that substance has different densities, and the more material it becomes, the denser it is, the farther it moves away from matter, the less dense it is. But it is a substance all the same. There is even an etheric substance. I don't say that this conforms with scientific theories; I don't guarantee that I am not talking scientific heresies! But this is a *cosmic fact*. (*Mother laughs.*) It is exactly—I think I said this when I spoke about occultism—I said the first thing one must know before being able to practise occultism is that the different states of being have a different density, and they have an individual independent existence of their own, that they are existing realities, that they are truly real substances, that it is not just a way of being. There can be a mental being and mental activity and, for instance, a thought that is completely independent of the brain, whereas the materialistic theories say that it is the brain which creates mental activity. But this is not correct. The brain is the material transcription of the mental activity, and mental activity has its own domain; the mental domain has its reality, its own substance. One can think outside one's brain, think, act, make formations outside one's brain. One can even live, move, go from one place to another, have a direct knowledge of mental things in the mental world, in a word, absolutely independent of a body which, indeed, can be in a state of complete inertia, not only asleep but also in a cataleptic state. And moreover, it is quite certain that so long as one has not understood that one is made up of different states of being which have their own independent life, one can't have a complete control over one's being. There will always be something that escapes you.

8 September 1954, 6, 306-8

Naturally, there are people who can't even think clearly. So they form nothing at all except faint eddies. But people who think clearly are surrounded by a heap of little forms which, sometimes, go out to do some work in others; and when one thinks of them again, they return.

And we have instances of people who are troubled by their own formations, which return constantly as though to take possession of them, and which they can't get rid of because they don't know how to undo the formations they have made. There are more cases of this kind than one would think. When they have made a particularly strong formation—for themselves, you see, relatively—this formation is always tied up with the one who makes it and returns to knock at the brain to receive forces and ends up by truly acting as a necessity. It is a

whole world to know; one truly lives in ignorance, one has powers one doesn't know about, so naturally one uses them very badly. One uses them somewhat unconsciously and very badly.

I don't know if you have ever heard of Madame David-Neel who went to Tibet and has written books on Tibet, and who was a Buddhist; and Buddhists—Buddhists of the strictest tradition—do not believe in the Divine, do not believe in his Eternity and do not believe in gods who are truly divine, but they know admirably how to use the mental domain; and Buddhist discipline makes you a good master of the mental instrument and mental domain.

We used to discuss many things and once she told me: "Listen, I made an experiment." (She had studied a bit of theosophy also.) She said: "I formed a *mahatma*; with my thought I formed a *mahatma*." And she knew (this has been proved) that at a given moment mental formations acquire a personal life independent of the fashioner—though they are linked with him—but independent, in the sense that they can have their own will. And so she told me: "Just imagine, I had made my *mahatma* so well that he became a personality independent of me and constantly came to trouble me! He used to come, scold me for one thing, give me advice for another, and he wanted to direct my life; and I could not succeed in getting rid of him. It was extremely difficult, and I didn't know what to do!"

So I asked her how she had tried. She told me how. She said, "He troubles me a lot, my *mahatma* is very troublesome. He does not leave me in peace. He disturbs my meditations, he hinders me from working; and yet I know quite well that it is I who created him, and I can't get rid of him!" Then I said, "That's because you don't have the 'trick' ...." (*Mother laughs*) And I explained to her what she should do. And the next day—I used to see her almost every day in those days, you see—the next day she came and told me, "Ah, I am freed from my *mahatma*!" (*Laughter*) She had not *cut* the connection because that's of no use. One must know how to *reabsorb* one's creation, that is the only way. To swallow up again one's formations. But, you see, in a smaller measure and less perfectly one is making formations all the time.

11 August 1954, 6, 277-8

When, for instance, one thinks of somebody quite powerfully, there is a small emanation of mental substance which, instantaneously, goes to this person, you understand, a vibration of your thought which goes and



touches his; and if he is receptive, he sees you. He sees you and tells you, "You came last night to see me!" That's because you made a small formation and this formation went and did its work, which was to put you into contact with this person or else to carry a message if you had something special to tell him; and that was done. This happens constantly, but as it is quite a constant and spontaneous phenomenon and done in ignorance, one is not even aware that one does this, one does it automatically.

People who have desires add to the mental formation a kind of small envelope, a vital shell which gives it a still greater reality. These people are usually surrounded by a number of tiny entities which are their own formations, their own mental formations clothed with vital force, which come all the time to strike them to try to make them realize materially the formations they have made.

You have perhaps read the books of Maurice Magre; there are some in the library. He describes this; he had come here, Maurice Magre, and we spoke and he told me that he had always noticed—he was highly sensitive—he had always noticed that people who have sexual desires are surrounded by a kind of small swarm of entities who are somewhat viscous and rather ugly and which torment them constantly, awakening desire in them. He said he had seen this around certain people. It was like being surrounded by a swarm of mosquitoes, yes! But it is more gross, and much uglier still, and it is viscous, it is horrible, and it turns round and round the person and gives him no peace, and it awakens in him the desire that has formed these entities and they batten on it. It is their food. This is absolutely true. His observation was quite correct. His vision was very true. It *is* like that.

But everyone carries around himself the atmosphere of his own desires. So you don't at all require that people should tell you anything; you have only to look and you see around them exactly the state they are in. They may want to give themselves the airs of angels or saints but they can't deceive you, because that thing is there, turning around them. So, just imagine! (*Mother points to all those seated in front of her.*) You see what you are like, how many of you there, all of you here, and each one has his own little world in this way, of mental formations of which some are clothed in vital substance, and all these crawl together, mix with each other, knock against each other. There is a struggle to see which is the strongest, which tries to realize itself, and all this creates an atmosphere indeed!...

*When we come before you what do these things do?*

When you come to me, it is all this I see. It is exactly this I see, and that is why your coming is useful. Because, to give you a flower is of course very nice, but that's not anything much... there are things more important than that. But every time I see you, in a second—a flash is enough, a second—each one who comes appears with all his formations, and then I do just... I do just this... (*gesture*). The flower is an excuse, through the flower I give something.

And then, when sometimes, you know, I seem to go deep within, my eyes close, and then very slowly either I give something or I don't move for a moment—that's when the work to be done is urgent. Sometimes it is necessary to intervene for one reason or another, to help or to demolish something, or to push you towards some progress which is beginning, or other things like that... So I just catch hold of your hand sometimes, you see: "Don't move!" So the person thinks: "Mother has gone into a trance." I feel quite amused... (*Laughter*) I am busy working, putting things in order; sometimes I am obliged to perform a surgical operation, I take away certain things which are there and should not be there. A second is enough, you see, I don't need any time for this; sometimes the work takes a little longer, a few more seconds, a minute... Otherwise, usually—in a general way—when things are as we would say "normal", it is enough just to see, you understand, and... the response? I give the flower... even without the flower, like this... simply I put just the little flash or sometimes the little red-hot iron, or a light, anything, and just at the right moment and the right place where it is needed... and "*Au revoir*"!

*Mother, aren't these entities afraid of you?*

Ah, my child, terribly afraid! (*Laughter*) All those which are ill willed try to hide, and usually do you know what they do? They gather together behind the head of the one who comes (*laughter*) in order not to be seen. But this is useless, because, just think, I have the capacity to see through. (*Laughter*) Otherwise—they always do this, instinctively. When they can manage to get in, they try to get in. But then... I intervene with greater force, because that is nasty. These are people who have the instinct to hide, you see. So I pursue them, there inside. With others very little is needed, very little; but there are some—there are such people, you know, they themselves have told me—when they are about to come to me, it is as though there were something which pulled them back, which told them: "No, no, no, it's not worthwhile, why go there? There are so many people for Mother to see, why add

one more?" And they draw back, like that, so that they don't come. So I always tell them what it is: "It would be better not to listen to that, for it's not something with a very good conscience." Some people cannot bear it. There have been instances like this, of people who were obliged to run away, because they themselves were too attached to their own formations and did not want to get rid of them. Naturally there is only one way, to run away!

*11 August 1954, 6, 278-81*

But you know, in the clouds, the wind, there are little entities. These entities belong to the vital domain; they are not all wicked, they are often very mischievous. Most of the time they obey the laws of Nature of a much vaster and more general order, but some of these entities are half independent and bring about local rain, etc. Perhaps (we said that they like prayers, these small entities), perhaps if we tell them, "I beg of you, be a little kind, tomorrow we have our opening, don't be up to mischief, wait till the evening to send rain if you want to do so, don't come and disturb our little session", perhaps this will have some effect!

Do you remember how when there was no rain, people told us that if we prayed, we would bring rain? And what a good time we had one day trying that out—calling the rain—and it rained? It really rained afterwards. Well, that's how it happens. This domain is that of the vital.

*30 June 1954, 6, 201*

If you use power to show that you possess it, it becomes so full of falsehood and untruth that finally it disappears. But it is not always thus, because, as I said at the beginning, when it concerns a power like the power of healing or the power of changing an altogether external thing—of making an unfavourable circumstance favourable, of finding lost objects, all these countless little "miracles" which are found in all religions—it is much more easy and even more effective to do these "miracles" with the help of the entities of the vital world which are not always recommendable, far from it; and then these beings make fun of you. This begins very well, very brilliantly, and usually finishes very badly.

*8 February 1951, 4, 86-7*

Space and time do not begin and end with the mental consciousness: even the Overmind has them. They are the forms of all cosmic existence: only, they vary on each level. Each world has its own space and time.

Thus the mental space and time do not tally with what we observe here in the material universe. In the mind-world we can move forward and backward at our own will and pleasure. The moment you think of a person you are with him; and no matter how near you may be to somebody, you can still be far away if your thoughts are occupied with someone else. The movement is immediate, so very free are the spatio-temporal conditions there. In the vital world, however, you have to use your will; there, too, distance is less rigid, but the movement is not immediate: the will has to be exercised.

The knowledge of different space-times can be of great practical value in Yoga. For, so many blunders are due to the inability to act in the right way when you are in your vital and mental bodies. In dreams, for instance, you must remember that you are in the space and time of the vital world and not try to act as if you were still in your physical body. If you have the necessary knowledge of the state of things there, you can deal much more effectively with those vital beings who terrify you and give you such unpleasant nightmares. One of the characteristics of activity in the vital space and time is that these beings are able to assume huge shapes at will and create the vibration of fear in you which is their most powerful means of invading and possessing you. You must bear in mind their power of terrifying illusion, and cast out all fear. Once you face them boldly, unflinchingly, and look them straight in the eyes, they lose three-quarters of their power. And if you call upon us for help, then even the last quarter is gone and they either take to their heels or dissolve. A friend of mine who used to go out in his vital body once complained that he was always being confronted with a gigantic tiger which made the night very wretched for him. I told him to banish all fear and walk straight up to the beast and stare it in the face, calling of course for assistance if necessary. He did so and lo! the tiger suddenly dwindled into an insignificant cat!

1930-1, 3, 167-8

## Occultism

*[This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's Elements of Yoga, Chapter 14, "Some Explanations".]*

*"Q: What is the place of occult power in Yoga?"*

*"A: To know and use the subtle forces of the supra-physical planes is part of the Yoga."*

*“Q: What is the meaning of occult endeavour and power?”*

*“A: It depends on the context. Usually it would mean power to use the secret forces of Nature and an endeavour by means of these forces. But ‘occult’ may mean something else in another context.*

*“Q: Has every Yogi to pass through occult endeavour?”*

*“A: No, everyone has not the capacity. Those who do not have it, must wait till it is given to them.”*

That’s the end of the book!

*Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo is speaking about occult endeavour here and says that those who don’t have the capacity must wait till it is given to them. Can’t they get it through practice?*

No. That is, if it is latent in someone, it can be developed by practice. But if one doesn’t have occult power, he may try for fifty years, he won’t get anywhere. Everybody cannot have occult power. It is as though you were asking whether everybody could be a musician, everybody could be a painter, everybody could... Some can, some can’t. It is a question of temperament.

*What is the difference between occultism and mysticism?*

They are not at all the same thing.

Mysticism is a more or less emotive relation with what one senses to be a divine power—that kind of highly emotional, affective, very intense relation with something invisible which is or is taken for the Divine. That is mysticism.

Occultism is exactly what he has said: it is the knowledge of invisible forces and the power to handle them. It is a science. It is altogether a science. I always compare occultism with chemistry, for it is the same kind of knowledge as the knowledge of chemistry for material things. It is a knowledge of invisible forces, their different vibrations, their interrelations, the combinations which can be made by bringing them together and the power one can exercise over them. It is absolutely scientific; and it ought to be learnt like a science; that is, one cannot practise occultism as something emotional or something vague and imprecise. You must work at it as you would do at chemistry, and learn all the rules or find them if there is nobody to teach you. But it is at some risk to yourself that you can find them. There are combinations here as explosive as certain chemical combinations.

*Is occultism necessary in this life?*

In this life? That depends upon what one wants to do. You mean in the life of yoga? Not at all necessary. And besides, as he says, there are

many who are not gifted, who don't have the faculty. Lots of people, as soon as they have the least experience, the least experience, for instance when they just begin to come out of their body, are panic-stricken, and this indeed is something very difficult to cure. It can be cured if one has a strong will and a great self-mastery. But many people are not able to dissociate their states of being. If they dissociate them, something goes wrong, their body suffers; while there are others who go out, take a walk, return. For them this is quite natural. Usually, those who are interested in this—unless it is only a kind of mental curiosity—are also gifted. They may not know it but they can be taught. But these things have to be practised with precaution. For instance—I am going to give you an example: as soon as one goes out of the body, no matter how slightly, and even just mentally, well, that part of the mind which controls the functioning goes out; and the automatic side of the mind which makes or produces movements or glandular secretions, that whole automatic side, you see, remains without the protection and control of the conscious, thinking part. Well, in the atmosphere there are always numerous little entities, very tiny, usually originating from human disintegrations, which are like physical microbes, some kind of microbes of the vital. They are more visible and have a will of their own. One can't say they are wicked but they are full of mischief. They like to have a good time and enjoy themselves at people's expense. So, as soon as they see that you are not sufficiently protected, they get hold of the automatic mind and bring upon you all sorts of quite unpleasant things—as, for example, some people swallow their tongue when in a trance; this suffocates them if they don't take care. Others bite their tongue; sometimes this hurts very badly. All sorts of things like this may happen to you—which means that normally you should never enter into a trance without having somebody nearby to watch over you, and not only watch just physically but... watch with the conscious power of preventing these little entities from getting hold of your nervous centres which are not protected by the conscious Presence. This is a general rule. There are greater dangers than that. When one goes out of the body materially—and nothing but the contact of a link remains, you understand, it is a kind of link like a thread of light joining the being that has gone out with the one that remains behind—if this link is protected, nothing happens. But if it is not protected, there may be adverse forces, not only full of mischief but with much ill-will also, which could come and cut it. And then, once it is cut, you may try as

hard as you like, but you cannot get back into the body.

*One dies?*

Yes, after a while. Which means that all this is not at all a joke, you understand, or just a matter of having fun or something one can do simply to amuse oneself. It must be done in the right way and in the required conditions, and with great care. And then, one thing is *absolutely* essential, absolutely: you must not touch this occult science if you have the least fear in you. For instance, if in your dreams you meet terrible things and get frightened, you should not practise occultism. If, on the other hand, the most frightful dreams you have leave you absolutely calm, and even at times amused and very much interested, if you can handle all that and know how to get out of the difficulty in every circumstance, then that means you have the ability and can do it. Some people are very brave warriors in their dreams. When they meet enemies, they know how to fight; they know not only how to defend themselves, but also to conquer; they are full of ardour, energy, courage; these indeed are the true candidates for occultism. But those who rush back into their body as fast as a rat into its hole, they should surely not touch it. And then, you must also have an infinite patience; because just as it takes many years to learn how to handle the different chemical substances, just as you have to work for long periods without getting any visible results when you want to discover the least thing that's new, so in occultism you may try for years together and not have the least experience. And that becomes very monotonous and hardly interesting; and there is always in man that kind of physical mind, practical and positive, which keeps on telling you, "Why are you trying? You see quite well there is nothing in it, these are all stories people tell you; why are you working for nothing? You are wasting your time. There is nothing at all in it, it is all imagination." It is very difficult to keep one's conviction and faith when there is nothing upon which to found them.

30 June 1954, 6, 189-193

When I began studying occultism, I became aware that—just when I began to work upon my nights in order to make them conscious—I became aware that there was between the subtle-physical and the most material vital a small region, very small, which was not sufficiently developed to serve as a conscious link between the two activities. So what took place in the consciousness of the most material vital did not get translated exactly in the consciousness of the most subtle physical.

Some of it got lost on the way because it was like a—not positively a void but something only half-conscious, not sufficiently developed. I knew there was only one way, that was to work to develop it. I began working. This happened sometime about the month of February, I believe. One month, two months, three, four, no result. We go on. Five months, six months... it was at the end of July or the beginning of August. I left Paris, the house I was staying in, and went to the countryside, quite a small place on the seashore, to stay with some friends who had a garden. Now, in that garden there was a lawn—you know what a lawn is, don't you? grass—where there were flowers and around it some trees. It was a fine place, very quiet, very silent. I lay on the grass, like this, flat on my stomach, my elbows in the grass, and then suddenly all the life of that Nature, all the life of that region between the subtle-physical and the most material vital, which is very living in plants and in Nature, all that region became all at once, suddenly, without any transition, absolutely living, intense, conscious, marvellous; and this was the result, wasn't it?, of six months of work which had given nothing. I had not noticed anything; but just a little shift like that and the result was there! It is like the chick in the egg, yes! It is there for a very long time and yet one sees nothing at all. And one wonders whether there is indeed a chick in the egg; and then, suddenly "Tick!", there is a tiny hole, you know, and then everything bursts and out comes the chick! It is quite ready, but it took all that time to be formed; that's how it is. When you want to prepare something within you, that is how it is, it is like the chick in the egg. You need a very long time, and this without having the least result, never getting discouraged, and continuing your effort, absolutely regularly, as though you had eternity before you and, moreover, as though you were quite disinterested about the result. You do the work because you do it. And then, suddenly, one day, it bursts and you see before you the full result of your work.

But you understand, don't you? One speaks like this, very easily, of becoming conscious of one's nights, having control over one's sleep-activities and all sorts of things of this kind, but you need to do many such little works like the one I have just described to you. Many of these are needed to obtain this result. When one is accomplished, you realise that there is another missing, and when this is done, you realise there is still another, and so on, until one fine day you can do what I said, and you go from one plane to another, like that, putting all to rest, until you come out of all activity



and enter the supreme rest, consciously. It is worth the trouble.

23 June 1954, 6, 186-8

## Going out of the body

*You said that when one thinks of someone or something, one part of this thought goes there at once.*

Yes.

*For example, I think of someone who is in Calcutta, then if my thought goes there, I ought to have the knowledge of...*

Thought is only conscious of thought in the mental world. So you can become very conscious of the mental atmosphere of Calcutta, of the thought of the person to whom you go, but of nothing else, absolutely nothing that has to do with the vital and physical.

To be conscious of the vital you must go there in the vital, and this is already an exteriorisation which leaves the body at least more than three-fourths in trance. And if you want to see things physically, you must go out in your most material subtle physical and then here you leave your body in a cataleptic state; and these things are not to be done without someone being with you who understands them and can guard you.

But the mental exteriorisation occurs constantly. It puts you in contact only with the mental world. Perhaps if you are very conscious and the person you go to see is very conscious, and if at that moment he has formed opinions or ideas about something happening in Calcutta, then you can become conscious of the ideas of this person on what is happening—indirectly—but you are not directly conscious of the thing.

6 July 1955, 7, 226-7

*“And as for those who have the will of running away, even they, when they go over to the other side, may find that the flight was not of much use after all.”*

*Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931 (28 April 1929)*

*What do you call “the other side”?*

We speak of the other side of the veil, the other side of existence.

It is being no longer in the physical: being in the vital, for example, or in the conscious part of the vital. One becomes conscious of two sides and so knows what is happening. There are people who go out of their body methodically to have the experience of the separation

between the two. But as for that, one must know how to do it, and one must not do it all alone. Someone should be there to look after and watch the body.

20 May 1953, 5, 52

The vital world is a world of extremes. If, for example, you eat a bunch of grapes in the vital world, you can go for thirty six hours without feeling hungry—fully nourished. But you can meet with certain things, enter certain places that drain all your energy in a trice, and sometimes leave you with illnesses and after-effects that belong to the vital world.

I used to know a woman who was absolutely wonderful from the occult point of view. She was absolutely conscious of herself, of all the regions of her being; she could go from one region to another—in short, she was marvellous. Well, she had an accident in the vital world. She was fighting some beings from the vital world in order to save someone whom she was very fond of, and she got a blow on the eye. And when I met her, she had lost an eye. Many people have these accidents in the vital world, and they keep traces of these accidents for hours after they wake up. That is why you can't tell just anyone, "Learn to go out of your body", for there are many requirements before you can do it safely. If you have any affinities with the forces of falsehood and violence, it is better to stay in your physical body.

1 February 1951, 15, 332-3

Who among you has had the experience of going out of the body—going out and knowing about it? I do not even speak of doing it at will, for that is another stage.

*Once I went out of my body but got back into it immediately!*

You did not take the opportunity of going for a little walk, did you? Well, you are not inquisitive!

*How can one know that one has gone out of the body?*

You see it immobile on your bed. There are other means of knowing also.

*I went out of my body under the effect of chloroform. I saw my body on the table and I witnessed the operation.*

So too, I knew quite a remarkable clairvoyant. One day she had to undergo an operation and she was chloroformed; she went out of her body. Suddenly she began to see what was going on in the minds of the people who were there. She had the habit of talking, even while asleep, and she began to speak out quite aloud: she said that so-and-so had

worries, that another had a problem to solve, and that its solution was such and such a thing.

This was an exceptional case—that happens only to gifted persons and there are not many of these. But the number of persons who remain conscious under chloroform is greater than one thinks; but generally, when one wakes up from chloroform one feels pretty uneasy and remembers but vaguely his experiences outside the body. Is there anyone here who has fainted suddenly, as if by accident? You see your body, don't you? And you ask yourself, "But what is it doing there in that ridiculous position?" And you rush back into it! That happened to me once in Paris. I had been treated to a good dinner, and then I went to a conference hall, I believe. There were many people, it was very hot, I was standing there with the good dinner in my stomach, and suddenly I felt ill at ease. I told the person who was with me, "I must go out immediately." Once outside (it was in Trocadero Square) I fainted away completely. I saw my body there, stretched out, and I found it so ridiculous that I rushed into it and I gave it a good scolding, saying, "You must not play such tricks with me!"

Many people faint like this and see themselves. There is one condition for this: the organ of sight in the subtle physical body or in the most material vital must be developed.

I must tell you that this kind of capacity may come spontaneously, without effort—one may be a born clairvoyant. They are not necessarily very intelligent people, their vital consciousness may be mediocre, but they are born clairvoyant. It is not a sign of a great development—it comes from something else, from a capacity of the parents, of past lives, etc. But if you are not born clairvoyant, and if you do not carry in you the other extreme, I mean a psychic being wholly conscious and fully developed which leads its own independent life in the body, and you want to learn to see and have visions, then it is a very long, very slow discipline and there are very few people who have the necessary patience and endurance to go to the end of the training.

It is interesting but it is not essential, one can do without it. It is the same as with dreams. But if you can develop this capacity, it can make your life more rich, it can make your consciousness progress more quickly.

*19 February 1951, 4, 124-5*

*You know that for many years I have been in the habit of leaving my physical body and making exploratory tours in my subtle*

*body. [Here the sadhak describes various experiences.] I wonder whether I should keep up my practice of getting out of the body. It is extremely fascinating, but is it a necessary part of Yogic development for keeping the consciousness open to inner spiritual things?*

It is much better to stop the experiences altogether. They seem to take you into levels which are undesirable and most unsafe; they are not at all necessary for any opening in the yoga.

*28 March 1944, 14, 56*

*When one goes out of the body, one must try to rush towards you—I think everybody does that, don't they?*

Not one in a hundred!

If you did that, very interesting things would happen to you. I knew someone in France who used to come to me every evening in order that I might show him some unknown region and take him for a ramble in the vital or mental world, and actually I used to take him there. At times there were others also, at times this person was alone. I showed him how to go out of the body, how to get back into it, how to keep the consciousness, etc., I showed him many places telling him “There you must take this precaution, here you must do such and such a thing.” And this continued for a long time.

I do not mean that no one among you comes to me in the night, but there are very few who do it consciously. Generally (you will tell me if I am wrong, but that is my impression), when you go to sleep and have decided to remember me before going to sleep, it is rather a call than a will to “rush” to me, as you say. You are there on your bed, you want to rest, to have a good sleep, remain in a good consciousness; then you call me rather than have the idea of going out of the body and coming to see me.

*19 February 1951, 4, 130-1*

When you leave a *part* of your being—for example, when you enter quite consciously the vital world—your body can enter into a trance, but this is not samadhi. It is rather what might be called a lethargic or cataleptic state. When extreme, it is a cataleptic state because the part of the being which animates the body has gone out of it, so the body is half dead; that is, its life is so far diminished and its functions almost suspended: the heart slows down and can hardly be felt and the breathing is hardly perceptible. This is the real trance. But you, during

all this time, you are fully conscious in the vital world. And even, with a certain discipline which, moreover, is neither easy nor without danger, you may so contrive that the minimum of force you leave in your body allows it to be *independently* conscious. With training—as I said, it is not easy—quite a methodical training, one can manage to make the body keep its autonomy of movement, even when one is almost totally exteriorised. And this is how in an almost complete state of trance, one can speak and relate what the exteriorised part of the being is seeing and doing.... For that, one must be fairly advanced on the path.

There are spontaneous and involuntary instances of a state which is not quite the same as this [cataleptic trance], but very similar: they are states of somnambulism, that is to say, when you are fast asleep and the vital has gone out of your body, the body automatically obeys the will and action of the part which has gone out, the vital part. Only, as this is not the effect of a willed action and a regulated, progressive education, this state is not desirable, for it may produce disorders in the being. But it is an illustration of what I have just said, of a body which while three quarters asleep can obey the part of the being which has gone out and is itself fully awake and quite conscious. This is the real trance.

I have already told you several times, I think, that when one undergoes this occult discipline, one is able to leave one's physical body, go out in the vital and move about quite consciously, acting quite consciously in this vital world; then to leave one's vital being asleep and go out mentally, acting and living in the mental world quite consciously and with similar relations—for the mental world is in relation with the mental being, as the physical world is in relation with the physical being—and so on, progressively and by a regular discipline. I knew a woman who had been trained in this way, who had quite remarkable personal faculties, who was conscious in all her states of being, and she used to be able to go out twelve times from her body, that is to say, from twelve consecutive bodies, until she reached the summit of the individual consciousness, which could be called the threshold of the Formless. She remembered everything and recounted everything in detail. She was an Englishwoman; I even translated from English a book in which there was a description of all she saw and did in these domains.

It is obviously the sign of a great mastery of one's being, and the sign of having reached a high degree of conscious development. But it is almost the opposite of the other experience of going out of one's consciousness to enter a state in which one is no longer conscious; it is,

so to say, the opposite.

22 August 1956, 8, 276-7

I don't see why you should deprive the supramental world particularly of occult activity more than of any other.

How do you conceive of the supramental life? As a paradise in which everyone will do the same thing in the same way?... The old conception of paradise where everybody became an angel playing the harp? It is not quite like that! All the differences will be there, all differentiations and different activities, but instead of acting in the ordinary human ignorance, one will act with knowledge, that's all; that is what will make the difference.

*And the capacities will also increase, won't they?*

Capacities?... You take occultism in the sense of the power to act on life and things, as a process; but that is not occultism, that is magic.

Occultism is a special use of the consciousness, that's all. That is, at the moment, as it is practised by human beings, it is a direct and conscious perception of the forces behind appearances and the play of these forces, and because one has the direct perception of them, one has the power to act on them, and one makes some higher will intervene in the play of these forces in order to obtain a required result.

*In the supramental world one will have these powers spontaneously.*

Spontaneously!... But everybody practises occultism without knowing that he does. Everybody has this power spontaneously but doesn't know he has it. It may be a very slight one, like a pin-head; it may be as vast as the Earth or even the universe. But you cannot live without practising occultism, only you don't know it. So the only difference you can make is that when one has the supramental consciousness one will know it. That is all. So, your question automatically vanishes.

When you think—I have explained this to you I don't know how many times—when you think, you are practising occultism. Only, you don't know it. When you are thinking of someone, some part of you is automatically in contact with this person, and if to your thought is added a will that this person may be like this or like that or do this or that or understand this or that—whatever it may be—well, you are practising occultism, only you don't know it.... There are people who do this with power, and when they have a strong thought it manifests and is realised. There are people in whom it is very feeble and they

do not obtain many results. It depends on the power of your thought and also on your power of concentration. But this kind of occultism everybody practises without even knowing it. So the difference from someone who really practises occultism is that he knows he is doing it and perhaps how he does it.

*But as you have spoken to us so often of Mr. X who was a great occultist, I thought that in the supramental world it would be something natural. All would be as capable as he.*

But why this in particular? That is what I don't understand! Why particularly occultism?

*Because I thought that all knowledge of the invisible world entered the sphere of occultism.*

Yes.

*So, now, in ordinary life man is unconscious, half conscious; but in the full consciousness he would also have the full consciousness of occultism.*

No, this is all very well, but do you believe that in the supramental life there will no longer be any classification of activities, or what? That everything will be mixed up in a general spontaneous capacity?

*No, there will also be a hierarchy.*

There will always be different ways of dealing with things. Perhaps the occult *power* will be more common, but if you imagine a world where everyone has equally the same occult power, there will no longer be any difference. You understand? There are people who have the occult power and act on those who haven't, but if everyone has it equally it will no longer be occultism!... Is that what you meant?

*Yes.*

Ah!... Well, I am convinced that even in the most perfect supramental realisation there will *always* be a differentiation between the capacities and functions of each one; but instead of being or not being in one's right place, of doing or not doing what one ought to do, unconsciously, one will be in one's right place—I hope always in one's place—and will always do what one ought to do, consciously. That is, instead of always trying to know and groping in the dark, one will know what one ought to do and do it well. But that is the whole difference. Differentiations will be there, each one will have his own role, his own place, each one will have his own activity. Don't think that everybody will begin to look alike and do the same thing in the same way! That would be a terrible world.

*18 September 1957, 9, 186-9*

## HIGHER MENTAL REGIONS, OVERMIND, MIND OF LIGHT, KNOWLEDGE BY IDENTITY

### **Beyond the illusion of ‘knowing’ and ‘willing’**

The human mind is linear in its action. It sees ideas one after another. Naturally when one speaks it is even ten times worse. One is obliged to say one word after another and this becomes frightful. But most people, almost all human beings think linearly. They think one thing after another. They can't think of many things at once. Only very few individuals are capable of thinking of, say, about twenty things at the same time. You can try, you will see. You think things one after another, one after another... The succession may be very fast, but it is a succession. It is a very different kind of vision and a very different functioning, not of the mind but of intellectual powers, which can see things in their totality and all at the same time. But even when you see them like that, if you want to try to describe them, either by writing or speaking, you can't put down everything at the same time nor say everything at the same time; you are obliged to use one word after another, and so it necessarily becomes... it destroys the truth of the thing, it becomes linear, which means that the truest things cannot be said. Everything one says is always a diminution of the truth.

*31 December 1954, 6, 463*

The Truth is not linear but global; it is not successive but simultaneous. Therefore it cannot be expressed in words: it has to be lived.

*April 1954, 15, 279*

All intelligence below is like that; it sees all kinds of things, and as it sees all kinds of things, it cannot choose in order to act. But in order to see the whole target, to see the Truth in its entirety, you must cross over to the other side. And when you cross over to the other side, you do not see a sum of multiple truths nor a countless number of truths added one to another, which you see one after another so that you cannot grasp the whole all at once. When you rise above, it is the whole that you see first; the whole presents itself all at once, in its entirety, in its wholeness, without division. And then you no longer have to make a



choice, you have a vision: *this* is what has to be done. It is not a choice between this and that, or this or that, because it is no longer like that. You no longer see things successively, one after another; you have the simultaneous vision of a whole that exists as a unity. Then the choice is simply a vision.

But as long as you are in the state of the archer, you cannot see the whole—you cannot see the whole successively, you cannot see the whole by adding one truth to another. That is precisely the incapacity of the mind. The mind cannot do it. It will always see successively, it will always see a sum of things and it is not that—something will escape, the very meaning of the truth will elude it.

It is only when one has a global, simultaneous perception of the whole in its oneness that one can possess the truth in its entirety.

And then action is no longer a choice subject to error, rectification and discussion, but the clear vision of what is to be done—which is infallible.

*3 February 1962, 10, 122-3*

*What is the first step to take to have knowledge?*

The first step?... To get rid of the illusion of the absolute value of “knowings”, that is, of human knowledge and mental activity. First, to come out of the illusion that they really have a concrete and absolute value.

And you will notice that this is perhaps the most difficult thing to do; it is the most difficult step, for, when you study general subjects like science, the different branches of science or philosophy and all such activities, when you study them a little seriously and deeply, you very easily come to the sense of the relativity of this knowledge. But when you come down a step again, just to the next level of mental activity and look at the different problems of life—for example, what should be done in this or that case, the conditions for realising something, a skill one wants to learn, or even the different necessities of life, the conditions of living, of health—you will find that generally a rational being, or somebody about to become one, forms a set of ideas for himself, which are really knowings: such a thing will produce such an effect, or in order to obtain this thing, that other must be done, etc. And you have a whole mental construction in yourself, made of observations, studies, experiments; and the more you advance in age, the greater becomes the number of experiments and results of study and observation. You make

for yourself a sort of mental structure in which you live. And unless you are powerfully intelligent, with an opening to the higher worlds, you have an innate, spontaneous, unshakable conviction of the absolute worth of your observations, and even without your having to think, it acts automatically in your being: by a sort of habit this thing inevitably brings that particular result. So for you, when this has happened quite often, the habit of associating the two movements naturally gives rise within you to the feeling of the absolute value of your ideas or your knowings about yourself and your life. And there it is *infinitely* more difficult to come to an understanding of the relativity—the uncertainty bordering on illusion—of that knowledge. You find this out only if, with a will for spiritual discipline and progress, you look at these things with a deep critical sense and see the kind of bondage into which you have put yourself, which acts without any need of intervention from you, automatically, with the support of the subconscious and that kind of automatism of reflexes which makes causes and effects follow each other in a habitual order without your being in the least aware of it.

Well, if you want to attain knowledge, the first thing, the first indispensable step is not to believe in the validity of those things. And if you observe yourself, you will realise that this belief in the validity of these observations and deductions is almost absolute in you. It expresses itself through all sorts of ideas which reasonably enough appear evident to you, yet are exactly the limitations which prevent you from reaching knowledge by identity. For instance, if a man plunges into the water without knowing how to swim, he will be drowned; if there is a fairly powerful wind, it will upset things; when it rains, you get wet, etc.—you see, there are instances like this at every second, it is like that. And this seems so obvious to you that when you are told, “Well, but no, this is a relative knowledge, it is like that but it could be different”, the one who tells you this seems to you *a priori* half-mad. And you say, “But still, these things are concrete! These are things we can see, touch, feel, these are proofs our senses give to us every minute, and if we do not take our stand on them, we are sure to go astray and enter the irrational.”

So, if you remember what Sri Aurobindo has said, you will understand that the first condition for having knowledge is to go beyond reason. That is why he says, “Reason was the helper”—yes, during the whole childhood of humanity and the whole period of growth of the individual being—but if you want to go beyond the human being, the ordinary human state, well, you must go beyond reason; and these

things which seem to you *so* obvious that they are indisputable, you should be able to understand, to feel from within yourself that they are *absolutely* relative and that what seems completely similar, identical in everyone's experiences, these very things, if seen from above with a higher consciousness, become absolutely subjective and relative and are only individual formations adapted to the individual need and consciousness, and that instead of having an absolute reality, they have only an altogether relative reality which completely disappears as soon as you rise to a higher level.

So now, if you look at the state of your thought in this light, you will see that it is not so easy to take even this first step.

*21 November 1956, 8, 361-3*

Sri Aurobindo puts reason at the summit of man's mental activity; he tells us that in the development of the mind, reason is the surest guide, the master, so to speak, who prevents you from deviating from the path or taking the wrong one, from straying away and losing your common sense. He makes reason the arbiter of man's mental activity, which guides and controls; and so long as you have to deal with mental activities, even the most speculative, it is reason which must guide you and prevent you from going astray from the right path and entering more or less fantastic and unhealthy imaginations.

But if you want to attain true knowledge, that is, spiritual knowledge, which can be obtained only through identification, you must go beyond this reason and enter a domain higher than the mind, where one is in direct contact with the Light either of the Overmind or the Supermind. And Sri Aurobindo says this, that so long as you are in the mental field, reason helps you, it is your helper, your guide; but if you want to have true knowledge by identity, reason becomes a limitation and a bar. That is not to say that you should lose it! But it must be subordinated to your movement of ascent. Sri Aurobindo does not tell you to become unreasonable, he says you must pass beyond reason into a higher Truth and Light.

And what is interesting in the structure of this section is that the reflection Sri Aurobindo makes about the mental being, the intellectual activity of man, he also makes for the vital activity, the power of action and realisation. He takes mental activity as the basis of human life, for it belongs to man in his own right, exclusively; and in the process of life, that is, of human existence, human realisation, thought normally

comes first. Man, because he is a thinking being, first gets an idea, then he invests this idea with a force, a vital power, a power for action, and changes it, transforms it into will. This will is then concentrated on the object to be realised, and with the vital force and effort added to the thought, the conception, it becomes the lever of action.

But here Sri Aurobindo uses a word which is not “will”, he speaks of “willings”:

*“When we have passed beyond willings, then we shall have Power. Effort was the helper, Effort is the bar.”*

*Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 377*

And he contrasts these “willings”—that is, all these superficial wills, often opposite and contradictory and without any lasting basis because they are founded on what he calls a “knowing” and not on knowledge—with the true will. These willings are necessarily fragmentary, passing, and often in opposition to one another, and this is what gives to the individual life and even to the collective its nature of incoherence, inconsistency and confusion.... The word “will” is normally reserved to indicate what comes from the deeper being or the higher reality and what expresses in action the true knowledge which Sri Aurobindo has contrasted with knowings. So, when this will which expresses the true knowledge manifests in action, it manifests through the intervention of a deep and *direct* power which no longer requires any effort. And that is why Sri Aurobindo says here that the true power for action cannot come until one has gone beyond the stage of willings, that is, until the motive of action is the result not of a mere mental activity but of true knowledge.

True knowledge acting in the outer being gives true power.

This seems to be an explanation, the real explanation of that very familiar saying which is not understood in its essence but expresses a truth: “Where there’s a will, there’s a way”, to will is to have the power. It is quite obvious that this does not refer to “willings”, that is, to the more or less incoherent expression of desires but to the true will expressing a true knowledge; for this true will carries in itself the force of truth which gives power—an invincible power. And so, when one expresses “willings”, to be able to apply them in life and make them effective, some effort must come in—it is through personal effort that one progresses, and it is through effort that one imposes one’s willings upon life to make it yield to their demands—but when they are no longer willings, when it is the true will expressing the true knowledge,

effort is no longer required, for the power is omnipotent.

*21 November 1956, 8, 359-61*

To acquire a perfect and total consciousness of the world as it is in all its details, one must have, at the outset, no personal reaction to any of these details, no spiritual preference even as to what they ought to be. In other words, a total acceptance with a perfect indifference and neutrality is the indispensable condition for a knowledge by integral identity. If there be a single detail, however small, which escapes the neutrality, that detail escapes also the identification. Therefore, the absence of all personal reaction, for whatever end it may be, even the most exalted, is a primary necessity for a total knowledge.

One can thus say, paradoxically, that we can know a thing only when we are not interested in it, or rather, more exactly, when we are not personally concerned with it.

*April 1954, 15, 279*

*When one passes into the region of knowledge, is it necessary to pass through the intermediary regions?*

Intermediary? But you see, if one does it by a methodical discipline, generally one is obliged to pass from one plane to another: one wakes up in a particular plane, and then there one enters a sort of sleep and wakes up in another plane, and so on. And if one does it this way, then one remembers, for one does it with one's conscious will and witnesses the working—these movements for quietening the being, precisely, in order to enter somewhere and see what is happening there, and the movement of taking notes of what is happening and preparing oneself for another higher opening, all this establishes conscious contact between the different parts of the being, and then one can have experiences without forgetting anything, and even at will.

*23 December 1953, 5, 399-400*

*If the mind "is incapable of finding knowledge"<sup>1</sup> what part of the being finds knowledge?*

One must enter the knowledge which belongs to the supramental region.

*But in order to bring it down?*

Every time something attracts this knowledge (something which is

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<sup>1</sup> *On Education*, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 5.

evidently ready to receive it), it comes.

*It does not come down into the mind, Sweet Mother?*

Yes, it descends into the mind. Into a higher part of the mind or rather into the psychic. One may have knowledge from the psychic—though it is of another kind and is not formulated as in the mind. It is a sort of inner certitude which makes you do the right thing at the right moment and in the right way, without necessarily passing through the reason or mental formation.

For instance, one may act with a perfect knowledge of what should be done, and without intervention—the least intervention—of the reasoning mind. The mind is silent: it simply looks on and listens in order to register things, it does not act.

23 December 1953, 5, 397

## **States of consciousness and earth-memory**

There is a state of consciousness which may be called “gnostic”, in which you are able to see *at the same time* all the theories, all the beliefs, all the ideas men have expressed in their highest consciousness—the most contradictory notions, like the Buddhistic, the Vedantic, the Christian theories, all the philosophical theories, all the expressions of the human mind when it has managed to catch a little corner of the Truth—and in that state, not only do you put each thing in its place, but everything appears to you marvellously true and quite indispensable in order to be able to understand anything at all about anything whatsoever. (...) Naturally, if you take only two aspects, it is difficult to see clearly; one must be able to see all the aspects of the truth glimpsed by the human intelligence and... something more. And then, in that state, nothing is absolutely false, nothing is absolutely bad. In that state one is free from all problems, all difficulties, all battles and everything appears to you wonderfully harmonious.

But if you try to imitate this condition mentally—do you understand? To make a mental imitation of it—you may be sure of doing stupid things; you will be one of those who have a chaos in their head and can say the most contradictory things without even being aware of it.

In that condition there is no contradiction—it is a totality and a totality in which one has the full knowledge of all the truths expressed

(which are not sufficient to express the total Truth), in which one knows the respective places of all things, why and of what the universe is formed. Only—I hasten to tell you this—it is not by a personal effort that one reaches this condition; it is not because one tries to obtain it that one obtains it. You *become* that, spontaneously. It is, if you like, the crowning of an absolute mental sincerity, when you no longer have any partiality, any preference, any attachment to an idea, when you do not even try any longer to know the truth.

26 February 1951, 4, 157-8

*What does "vital mind" mean?*

Well, you see, naturally these words are used for classification in order to make oneself understood; but truly, each part of the being is itself divided into four. There is a physical mind, a physical vital and a physical physical, and there is even a physical psychic which is behind. Well, there is a vital mind, a vital vital, a vital physical and also a vital psychic which is behind, hidden. And there is a mental mind, a mental vital, and a mental physical and a mental psychic which is hidden behind. And each one corresponds to a particular kind of activity, and also to a particular region, a zone of consciousness and being. And these zones or inner dimensions correspond to outer zones and dimensions, universal, or terrestrial if you like, to simplify the problem. There is a mental mind within you, there is a mental mind in the terrestrial atmosphere; and—how shall I put it?—the density of these inner and outer regions is the same, the vibratory mode is identical.

If you enter consciously into your mental mind, you can enter consciously the mental mind of the earth.

15 September 1954, 6, 316-7

*Why do we forget things?*

Ah! I suppose there are several reasons. First, because one makes use of the memory to remember. Memory is a mental instrument and depends on the formation of the brain. Your brain is constantly growing, unless it begins to degenerate, but still its growth can continue for a very, very long time, much longer than that of the body. And in this growth, necessarily some things will take the place of others. And as the mental instrument develops, things which have served their term or the transitory moment in the development may be wiped out to give place to the result. So the result of all that you knew is there, living in itself,

but the road traversed to reach it may be completely blurred. That is, a good functioning of the memory means remembering only the results so as to be able to have the elements for moving forward and a new construction. That is more important than just retaining things rigidly in the mind.

Now, there is another aspect also. Apart from the mental memory, which is something defective, there are states of consciousness. Each state of consciousness in which one happens to be registers the phenomena of a particular moment, whatever they may be. If your consciousness remains limpid, wide and strong, you can at any moment whatsoever, by concentrating, call into the active consciousness what you did, thought, saw, observed at any time before; all this you can remember by bringing up in yourself the same state of consciousness. And that, that is never forgotten. You could live a thousand years and you would still remember it. Consequently, if you don't want to forget, it must be your consciousness which remembers and not your mental memory. Your mental memory will be wiped out inevitably, get blurred, and new things will take the place of the old ones. But things of which you are conscious you do not forget. You have only to bring up the same state of consciousness again. And thus one can remember circumstances one has lived thousands of years ago, if one knows how to bring up the same state of consciousness. It is in this way that one can remember one's past lives. This never gets blotted out, while you don't have any more the memory of what you have done physically when you were very young. You would be told many things you no longer remember. That gets wiped off immediately. For the brain is constantly changing and certain weaker cells are replaced by others which are much stronger, and by other combinations, other cerebral organisations. And so, what was there before is effaced or deformed.

*One can remember things which happened thousands of years ago!*

Yes, if you go to a certain place, if you succeed in entering into contact with the place which existed thousands of years ago. And, moreover (I believe I have written this somewhere), there is the record of the earth's consciousness, and if you know how to go to that place, you can not only remember your own life but everything that happened upon earth. It is recorded there, and it is a phenomenon of consciousness.

*But how does one remember, Sweet Mother, for when one changes the body, the mind...*



I have just told you how, my child, you did not listen to what I said. I said that if it is a mental remembrance it will be effaced; even in your present life you cannot recall incidents which took place twenty or thirty or forty years ago. But a state of consciousness is not a mental state. It has nothing to do with the mind. Indeed, most minds are dissolved with the body, except when there is a very well-made special formation, very “cohesive”, very well organised, which can last. But that is fairly rare. These are only exceptional cases. But consciousness is something quite different. Consciousness is an eternal state. The state of consciousness is an eternal state. Creation is born through consciousness and if consciousness were withdrawn, there would be no creation any longer. And if you enter into contact with consciousness, you can discover the whole history of creation, for creation comes from consciousness. Consciousness is eternal.

*10 February 1954, 5, 20-2*

Behind the common idea that a Yogi can know all things and answer all questions is the actual fact that there is a plane in the mind where the memory of everything is stored and remains always in existence. All mental movements that belong to the life of the earth are memorised and registered in this plane. Those who are capable of going there and care to take the trouble, can read in it and learn anything they choose. But this region must not be mistaken for the supramental levels. And yet to reach even there you must be able to silence the movements of the material or physical mind; you must be able to leave aside all your sensations and put a stop to your ordinary mental movements, whatever they are; you must get out of the vital; you must become free from the slavery of the body. Then only you can enter into that region and see. But if you are sufficiently interested to make this effort, you can arrive there and read what is written in the earth’s memory.

*23 June 1929, 3, 94*

*To be able to enter the “earth-memory” consciously, a discipline is needed.<sup>1</sup> What discipline?*

A discipline much more difficult than the discipline of yoga! It is an occult discipline.

First of all, one must learn to go out of one’s body consciously

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<sup>1</sup> See the talk of 15 February 1951.

and to enter into another more subtle body; to use one's will to go where one wants to go, never to fear and sometimes to face unexpected and even terrible things; to remain calm, to develop the mind's visual sense, to accustom one's mind to be altogether peaceful and quiet.... You know, the list is long and I could continue like this for hours!

19 February 1951, 4, 124

*You have said that in order to go to the place where all mental movements belonging to earthly life are recorded and preserved, one must silence the movements of the material and physical mind... and put a stop to ordinary mental movements. If the movements are stopped, what is going to happen? We have to do something or other the whole day long.*

No, just for that moment. Not permanently.

*Mother, but if one forgets? There is some work to do: at two o'clock one must do this, and at half past ten one must do that, if one forgets...*

No, you don't understand. To go to that place, at the time of going you must be able to completely silence the mind (and all the other things I have mentioned), but just for going there. For example, you decide: "Now, I am going to read such and such a chapter of earth's history", then you lounge comfortably in an easy-chair, you tell people not to disturb you, you go within yourself and completely stop your mind, and you send your mental messenger to that place.... It is preferable to have someone who can guide you there, because otherwise you can lose your way and go elsewhere! And then you go. It is like a very big library with many many small compartments. So you find the compartment corresponding to the information you wish to have. You press a button and it opens. And inside it you find a scroll as it were, a mental formation which unrolls before you like a parchment, and you read. And then you make a note of what you have read and afterwards return quietly into your body with the new knowledge, and you may transcribe physically, if you can, what you have found, and then you get up and start your life as before.... This may take you ten minutes, it may take one hour, it may take half an hour, it depends upon your capacity, but it is important to know the way, as I said, in order not to make a mistake. (...) All that has happened upon earth—from the beginning of the earth till now, all the movements of the mind have been exactly inscribed, all of them. So when you need any accurate

information about something, you have only to go there, you find your way. It is a very strange place; it is made as though of small cells, they are like small pigeon-holes; and so, following the shelves and some kind of... how to put it? There are libraries of that kind. Why, I saw a picture shown to us at the cinema, the picture of a library in New York. Well, it is arranged somewhat like that. It is a similar arrangement. It interested me because of that. But instead of being books, these are like small squares. They are all closed. You put your finger, press a button and the thing opens. And then something like a scroll comes out and you unroll it and can read it—all that is written about a subject. There are millions and millions and millions of these. And happily, in the mind, one can go down, one can go up, one can go right on the top. You do not need a ladder!

*How does one read? As one reads a book?*

Yes, it is a kind of mental perception. It corresponds to that. You see quite, quite well all the description or the information (that depends on what it is). Sometimes they are pictures: it is as though a picture had been preserved. Sometimes it is a story. Sometimes it is simply an answer to a question. All possible and imaginable things recorded mentally are there. You can find many corrections too (exactly of those facts that have been put in books and are not correct). And you need not walk on or climb up: you send along quite simply something like a concentrated mental consciousness and that goes forward and touches the thing. Only, if you do this without completely detaching yourself from your own mental activity, I am afraid you will see only what is in your own head! Instead of seeing the thing as it is, perhaps you take a walk in your own brain and see only what is there—it is a danger. You must be able to silence your head absolutely and be completely detached, not to have (for example, when you are looking for the solution of a problem), not to have already in your head the solution that seems to you right or the best or most profitable. That must not be there. You must become absolutely like a blank paper, with nothing on it. And you proceed in that way, with a very sincere aspiration to know the truth, without assuming beforehand that it will be like this or like that; because otherwise you will see only your own formation. The very first condition is that the head must keep completely silent during the time one is observing.

And in order to be more sure (but here one must be fully trained, one must have a very good education), in order to be altogether sure of

reporting clearly the knowledge received without deforming it in any way, it is better to say what one sees and what one reads (we say “reads”, but rather it is what one perceives), to say it as one perceives it, and it should be someone else who notes it down.... I repeat: You lie quietly stretched in your easy-chair, without moving and altogether quiet, and you send a messenger from your head. Now, someone should be sitting by your side and when you reach the place and open the door and pull out the manuscript (or whatever you like to call it), you begin, instead of reading only with your eyes that are absent, to describe what you see. You acquire the habit of speaking aloud and as you go on observing up there, you speak here. You narrate precisely your journey through those vast halls and how you reached that place and how it had a small mark that was the sign of what you wanted to see. Then you open that little place and pull out the scroll and start reading. And you read it out aloud. And the person who is there, sitting by your side, goes on noting down what you are reading. In this way there is no danger of the thing getting changed when you return. For, the experience is very clear and precise to that part of your being which is there at the moment, but when you come back into the material world as it is, almost always something escapes and this does not escape when you speak directly at the time you are at work. So all that means very many conditions to fulfil: it is not so easy as taking a book in the library and reading it! This is within the reach of everybody. That is a little more difficult to accomplish.

*30 September 1953, 5, 277-281*

## **Inspiration**

Inspirations come from very many different places. There are inspirations that may be very material, there are inspirations that may be vital, there are inspirations that come from all kinds of mental planes, and there are very, very rare inspirations that come from the higher mind or from a still higher region. All inspirations do not come from the same place. Hence, to be inspired does not necessarily mean that one is a higher being.... One may be inspired also to do and say many stupid things!

*What does “inspired” mean?*

It means receiving something which is beyond you, which was not within you; to open yourself to an influence which is outside your individual conscious being.

Indeed, one can have also an inspiration to commit a murder! In

countries where they decapitate murderers, cut off their heads, this causes a very brutal death which throws out the vital being, not allowing it the time to decompose for coming out of the body; the vital being is violently thrown out of the body, with all its impulses; and generally it goes and lodges itself in one of those present there, men half horrified, half with a kind of unhealthy curiosity. That makes the opening and it enters within. Statistics have proved that most young murderers admit that the impulse came to them when they were present at the death of another murderer. It was an “inspiration”, but of a detestable kind.

Fundamentally it is a moment of openness to something which was not within your personal consciousness, which comes from outside and rushes into you and makes you do something. This is the widest formula that can be given.

Now, generally, when people say: “Oh! he is an inspired poet”, it means he has received something from high above and expressed it in a remarkable manner. But one should rather say that his inspiration is of a high quality.

*Does it not come, Mother, whenever one wants it?*

Whenever one wants it? Generally not, for one does not know the mechanism of one’s being and cannot open the doors at will.

It is a thing that can be done. It is one of the earliest things that you are taught to do in Yoga: to open the door whenever one wants. It is the result of meditation or concentration or aspiration: all these processes are followed to open the door somewhere.

And generally you try to open it precisely towards the highest thing, not towards anything whatever. For the other kind of receptivity people unfortunately always have.... It is impossible to be altogether shut up in an ivory tower—besides, I believe it would not be very favourable, it would be impossible to progress if one were completely shut up in oneself. One would be able only to rearrange whatever was in oneself. Just imagine you were like a closed globe, altogether closed, that there was no communication with outside—you put out nothing, you receive nothing, you are shut up—you have a few elements of consciousness, movements, vibrations (call them what you like), all that is contained as within a ball, along with your consciousness also. You have no relation with things outside, you are conscious only of yourself. What can you do?... Change the organization within; that you can do, you can do many things by changing this organisation. But it is confined to that. It is a kind of inner progress, but there is no true progress in relation to

the forces outside oneself. You would find yourself extremely limited after a time, you would be tired of yourself: turning and turning again, turning and turning again the elements inside—not very pleasant.

*5 August 1953, 5, 206-7*

I have also been asked if the psychic being or psychic consciousness is the medium through which the inspiration is perceived.

Generally, yes. The first contact you have with higher regions is a psychic one. Certainly, before an inner psychic opening is achieved, it is difficult to have these inspirations. It can happen as an exception and under exceptional conditions as a grace, but the true contact comes through the psychic; because the psychic consciousness is certainly the medium with the greatest affinity with the divine Truth.

Later, when one has emerged from the mental consciousness into a higher consciousness beyond the mind, beyond even the higher mind, and when one opens oneself to the Overmind regions, and through the Overmind to the Supermind, one can receive inspirations directly. And naturally at that point they become more frequent, richer, if one may say so, more complete. There comes a time when inspiration can be obtained at will, but this obviously demands considerable inner development.

As we have just said, this inspiration from regions far above the mind surpasses in value and quality the highest achievements of the mind, such as reason. Reason is certainly at the apex of human mental activity. It can review and control the knowledge acquired with the help of the senses. It has often been said that the senses are altogether defective instruments of knowledge, that they are incapable of perceiving things as they are, that the information they supply is superficial and very often faulty. When it is fully developed, the human reason knows this and does not trust the knowledge of the senses. It is only if one is infrarational, if I may say so, that one believes that all one sees, hears, or touches is absolutely true. As soon as one is developed in the region of higher reason, one knows that all these notions are almost essentially false, and that one can in no way rely on them. But the knowledge one receives from this supramental or divine region surpasses all that can be conceived or understood by reason, at least to the same extent that reason surpasses the knowledge of the senses.

Several questions concern a practical point: “How to develop the capacity for inspiration?”; “What are the conditions needed to receive inspiration and is it possible to have it constantly?”

I have already replied to this. When one opens oneself to the supramental regions, one puts oneself in the right state for receiving constant inspirations. Until then, the best method is to silence the mind as much as possible, to turn it upwards and to remain in a state of silent and attentive receptivity. The more one is able to establish a silent, perfect calm in the mind, the more one becomes capable of receiving inspirations.

It was also asked whether inspirations are of different qualities.

In their origin, no. They always come down from the regions of pure Knowledge and penetrate whatever part of the human being is most receptive, best adapted to receive them—but these inspirations may apply to different domains of action. They can be inspirations of pure knowledge, they can also be inspirations that contribute to one's effort to progress, and they can also be inspirations for action which help in the practical and outer realisation. But the question here is the use one makes of the inspiration, rather than of the quality of the inspiration—the inspiration is always like a drop of light and truth which succeeds in penetrating the human consciousness.

What the human consciousness does with this drop depends on the attitude, the need, the occasion, the circumstances; it does not alter the essential nature of the inspiration but it does alter the use one makes of it, its practical application.

19 September 1958, 10, 5-6

*Do not scientists go sometimes beyond the mental plane? It is said that Einstein found his theory of relativity not through any process of reasoning, but through some kind of sudden inspiration. Has that inspiration anything to do with the Supermind?*

The scientist who gets an inspiration revealing to him a new truth, receives it from the intuitive mind. The knowledge comes as a direct perception in the higher mental plane illumined by some other light still farther above. But all that has nothing to do with the action of Supermind and this higher mental level is far removed from the supramental plane. Men are too easily inclined to believe that they have climbed into regions quite divine when they have only gone above the average level. There are many stages between the ordinary human mind and the Supermind, many grades and many intervening planes. If an ordinary man were to get into direct contact even with one of

these intermediate planes, he would be dazzled and blinded, would be crushed under the weight of the sense of immensity or would lose his balance; and yet it is not the Supermind.

23 June 1929, 3, 93-4

## **Imagination**

You cannot imagine anything which doesn't exist in the universe! It is impossible to imagine something that doesn't exist somewhere. The only possibility is that one may not put one's image in its place: either one gives it virtues and qualities it doesn't have, or explains it with some other than the right explanation. But whatever one imagines exists somewhere; the main thing is to know where and to put it in its proper place.

Of course, if after having imagined that you are in front of a door which is opening, you thought that it was really a physical door inside your body, that would be a mistake! But if you realise that it is the mental form taken by your effort of concentration, this is quite correct. If you go wandering in the mental world, you will see plenty of forms like that, all kinds of forms, which have no material reality but truly exist in the mental world.

You cannot think powerfully of something without your thought taking a form. But if you were to believe that this form was physical, that would obviously be an error, yet it really does exist in the mental world.

Imagination is a power of formation. In fact, people who have no imagination are not formative from the mental point of view, they cannot give a concrete power to their thought. Imagination is a very powerful means of action. For instance, if you have a pain somewhere and if you imagine that you are making the pain disappear or are removing it or destroying it—all kinds of images like that—well, you succeed perfectly.

27 August 1958, 9, 379-80

### *What is the function, the use of the imagination?*

If one knows how to use it, as I said, one can create for oneself his own inner and outer life; one can build his own existence with his imagination, if one knows how to use it and has a power. In fact it is



an elementary way of creating, of forming things in the world. I have always felt that if one didn't have the capacity of imagination he would not make any progress. Your imagination always goes ahead of your life. When you think of yourself, usually you imagine what you want to be, don't you, and this goes ahead, then you follow, then it continues to go ahead and you follow. Imagination opens for you the path of realisation. People who are not imaginative—it is very difficult to make them move; they see just what is there before their nose, they feel just what they are moment by moment and they cannot go forward because they are clamped by the immediate thing. It depends a good deal on what one calls imagination.

*6 July 1955, 7, 228*

Imagination is something very complex and manifold—what is vaguely called “imagination”.

It can be the capacity for seeing and recording, noting the forms in some mental or other domain. There are artistic, literary, poetic domains, domains of action, scientific domains, all belonging to the mind—not a very high and abstract mind, a mind above the physical mind which, without our knowing it, pours out constantly through the individual and collective mind to manifest in action.

Some people, through a special faculty, are in contact with these domains, take up one formation or other that is there, draw them to themselves and give them an expression. This power of expression is different in different people, but those who can open themselves to these domains, to *see* things there, to draw these forms towards themselves and express them—either in literature or in painting or music or in action or science—are, according to the degree of their power of expression either very highly talented beings or else geniuses.

There are higher geniuses still. They are people who can open to a higher region, a higher force which, passing through the mental layers, comes and takes a form in a human mind and reveals itself in the world as new truths, new philosophical systems, new spiritual teachings, which are the works and at the same time the actions of the great beings who come to take birth on earth. That is an imagination which can be called “Truth-imagination”.

These higher forces, when they come down into the earth-atmosphere, take living, active, powerful forms, spread throughout the world and prepare a new age.

These two kinds of imagination are what could be called higher imaginations.

3 September 1958, 9, 38

Man's imagination is so creative, such a form-maker, that there really are in the world places like these heavens. There are places also like these hells and there are places like these purgatories. Man creates out of nothing the things he imagines. If your consciousness is enlightened, then you can be pulled out of these places; otherwise you are shut up, imprisoned there by the very belief you had when alive. You will tell me that it is equal to a life, but it is an altogether illusory and extremely limited existence. It is real only for those who think like that. As soon as you think differently, it does not exist for you any longer; you can come out of it. You can pull a person out of these places, and immediately he perceives that he was imprisoned in his own formation.

Man has an extraordinary power of creation. He has created a whole set of godheads in his own image, having the same faults as himself, doing on a bigger scale, with greater power whatever he does. These beings have a relative existence, but still it is an independent existence, just like your thought.

1 July 1953, 5, 131-2

*When one imagines something, does it not exist?*

When you imagine something, it means that you make a mental formation which may be close to the truth or far from the truth—it also depends upon the quality of your formation. You make a mental formation and there are people who have such a power of formation that they succeed in making what they imagine real. There are not many of these but there are some. They imagine something and their formation is so well made and so powerful that it succeeds in being realised. These are creators; there are not many of them but there are some.

*If one thinks of someone who doesn't exist or who is dead?*

Ah! What do you mean? What have you just said? Someone who doesn't exist or someone who is dead? These are two absolutely different things.

*I mean someone who is dead.*

Someone who is dead!

If this person has remained in the mental domain, you can find

him immediately. Naturally if he is no longer in the mental domain, if he is in the psychic domain, to think of him is not enough. You must know how to go into the psychic domain to find him. But if he has remained in the mental domain and you think of him, you can find him immediately, and not only that, but you can have a mental contact with him and a kind of mental vision of his existence.

The mind has a capacity of vision of its own and it is not the same vision as with these eyes, but it is a vision, it is a perception in forms. But this is not imagination. It has nothing to do with imagination.

*6 July 1955, 7, 227-8*

The imagination is really the power of mental formation. When this power is put at the service of the Divine, it is not only formative but also creative. There is, however, no such thing as an unreal formation, because every image is a reality on the mental plane. The plot of a novel, for instance, is all there on the mental plane existing independently of the physical. Each of us is a novelist to a certain extent and possesses the capacity to make forms on that plane; and, in fact, a good deal of our life embodies the products of our imagination. Every time you indulge your imagination in an unhealthy way, giving a form to your fears and anticipating accidents and misfortunes, you are undermining your own future. On the other hand, the more optimistic your imagination, the greater the chance of your realizing your aim. Monsieur Coué got hold of this potent truth and cured hundreds of people by simply teaching them to imagine themselves out of misery. He once related the case of a lady whose hair was falling off. She began to suggest to herself that she was improving every day and that her hair was surely growing. By constantly imagining it her hair really began to grow and even reached an enviable length owing to still further autosuggestion. The power of mental formation is most useful in Yoga also; when the mind is put in communication with the Divine Will, the supramental Truth begins to descend through the layers intervening between the mind and the highest Light and if, on reaching the mind, it finds there the power of making forms it easily becomes embodied and stays as a creative force in you. Therefore I say to you never be dejected and disappointed but let your imagination be always hopeful and joyously plastic to the stress of the higher Truth, so that the latter may find you full of the necessary formations to hold its creative light.

The imagination is like a knife which may be used for good or evil

purposes. If you always dwell in the idea and feeling that you are going to be transformed, then you will help the process of the Yoga. If, on the contrary, you give in to dejection and bewail that you are not fit or that you are incapable of realisation, you poison your own being. It is just on account of this very important truth that I am so tirelessly insistent in telling you to let anything happen but, for heaven's sake, not to get depressed. Live rather in the constant hope and conviction that what we are doing will prove a success. In other words, let your imagination be moulded by your faith in Sri Aurobindo; for, is not such faith the very hope and conviction that the will of Sri Aurobindo is bound to be done, that his work of transformation cannot but end in a supreme victory and that what he calls the supramental world will be brought down on earth and realised by us here and now?

1930-1, 3,156-7

## **Intuition**

*To what plane does intuition belong?*

It is one of those planes, one of those regions we were speaking about last time, which are intermediary between the higher mind and the Overmind.

*How does it manifest, Sweet Mother?—intuition.*

Um! How does it manifest? It is something which takes place without any reasoning, any analysis, any deduction. Suddenly one knows a thing, without having reasoned, without having analysed, without deducing, without having reflected, without having made use of one's brain, without having put together the elements of the problem and tried to resolve them—it is not like that. All of a sudden it comes like a light in the consciousness; it can be in the head, it can be lower down, elsewhere; it is a light in the consciousness which brings a precise knowledge on a particular point and it is not at all a result of analyses and deductions. In fact, it is the first manifestation of the knowledge by identity. Knowledge by identity—you understand clearly what that means?

If one succeeds in identifying oneself with something, well, one becomes this thing for a time, and becoming this thing one knows all that is in it, without needing either to guess or to construct. (*Long silence*) That's all.

Of course, there is also a form of foresight, but this does not

have altogether the same nature. Foresight usually comes from the faculty of knowing by identity. If one can project one's consciousness into something—a circumstance or an event or a person—if one can project one's consciousness, well, one receives, afterwards, the precise indication of the thing with which the consciousness was mingled. And this leads gradually to a total and absolute knowledge. In fact it is the only way of knowing, and if one pushes this far enough and succeeds in identifying oneself with the Divine, one has the divine knowledge, and this is not impossible. It is something possible because the universe is made like that, for that. Only, it has gone off the right track; for what reasons, one doesn't know. Ah, what strange things we see!... To be sure that one knows, and then, at the same time to wonder how it happens.

8 December 1954, 6, 423-4

*What does "ordered intuition" mean? ("Transform reason into ordered intuition.")*

Ordered intuition.... For at the beginning, when one enters into contact with the realm of intuition, it is a sort of spasmodic contact; that is, from time to time, for more or less explicable or conscious reasons, one suddenly has an intuition or is possessed by the spirit of intuition; but it is not methodical, not a phenomenon which occurs at will, organised and obeying a central will. But Sri Aurobindo says that if the entire reason is transformed—he speaks of transformation, you know—if the reason is transformed into the very essence, the substance of intuition, then the whole inner movement of the inner mind becomes a movement of intuition, organised as the reason is organised, that is, it becomes active at will, answers all needs and comes into the being in accordance with a methodical system. It is not something which appears and disappears one doesn't know how or why; it is the result of the transformation of the reason, which is the higher part of the human mind, into a light higher than the mental light, a light of intuition. So it becomes ordered, organised, instead of being spasmodic and uncoordinated.

5 December 1956, 8, 382

Some men have reached higher mental regions and do not need to follow step by step all the gradations of thought; they can jump from one idea to a far distant conclusion without the intermediary links; this is usually called intuition (it is not altogether an "intuition"; it is that the idea, to begin with, is at a great height and from there these people

can see while descending the whole totality of things and consequences without passing through all the gradations as ordinary human thought is obliged to do). It is an experience I have had; when I used to speak with Sri Aurobindo, we never had the need to go through intermediary ideas; he said one thing and I saw the far off result; we used to talk always like that, and if a person had happened to be present at our conversations he would have said, “What are they talking about!” But for us, you know, it was as clear as a continuous sentence. You could call that a mental miracle—it was not a miracle, it was simply that Sri Aurobindo had the vision of the totality of mental phenomena and hence we had no need to waste a good deal of time in going through all the gradations. For any person capable of following the line, the thing would have been quite natural and logical; for ignorant people it was a “miracle”.

8 February 1951, 4, 85

*How can the faculty of intuition be developed?*

There are different kinds of intuition, and we carry these capacities within us. They are always active to some extent but we don't notice them because we don't pay enough attention to what is going on in us.

Behind the emotions, deep within the being, in a consciousness seated somewhere near the level of the solar plexus, there is a sort of prescience, a kind of capacity for foresight, but not in the form of ideas: rather in the form of feelings, almost a perception of sensations. For instance, when one is going to decide to do something, there is sometimes a kind of uneasiness or inner refusal, and usually, if one listens to this deeper indication, one realises that it was justified.

In other cases there is something that urges, indicates, insists—I am not speaking of impulses, you understand, of all the movements which come from the vital and much lower still—indications which are behind the feelings, which come from the affective part of the being; there too one can receive a fairly sure indication of the thing to be done. These are forms of intuition or of a higher instinct which can be cultivated by observation and also by studying the results. Naturally, it must be done very sincerely, objectively, without prejudice. If one wants to see things in a particular way and at the same time practice this observation, it is all useless. One must do it as if one were looking at what is happening from outside oneself, in someone else.

It is one form of intuition and perhaps the first one that usually manifests.

There is also another form but that one is much more difficult to observe because for those who are accustomed to think, to act by reason—not by impulse but by reason—to reflect before doing anything, there is an extremely swift process from cause to effect in the half-conscious thought which prevents you from seeing the line, the whole line of reasoning and so you don't think that it is a chain of reasoning, and that is quite deceptive. You have the impression of an intuition but it is not an intuition, it is an extremely rapid subconscious reasoning, which takes up a problem and goes straight to the conclusions. This must not be mistaken for intuition.

In the ordinary functioning of the brain, intuition is something which suddenly falls like a drop of light. If one has the faculty, the beginning of a faculty of mental vision, it gives the impression of something coming from outside or above, like a little impact of a drop of light in the brain, absolutely independent of all reasoning.

This is perceived more easily when one is able to silence one's mind, hold it still and attentive, arresting its usual functioning, as if the mind were changed into a kind of mirror turned towards a higher faculty in a sustained and silent attention. That too one can learn to do. One *must* learn to do it, it is a necessary discipline.

When you have a question to solve, whatever it may be, usually you concentrate your attention here (*pointing between the eyebrows*), at the centre just above the eyes, the centre of the conscious will. But then if you do that, you cannot be in contact with intuition. You can be in contact with the source of the will, of effort, even of a certain kind of knowledge, but in the outer, almost material field; whereas, if you want to contact the intuition, you must keep this (*Mother indicates the forehead*) completely immobile. Active thought must be stopped as far as possible and the entire mental faculty must form—at the top of the head and a little further above if possible—a kind of mirror, very quiet, very still, turned upwards, in silent, very concentrated attention. If you succeed, you can—perhaps not immediately—but you can have the perception of the drops of light falling upon the mirror from a still unknown region and expressing themselves as a conscious thought which has no connection with all the rest of your thought since you have been able to keep it silent. That is the real beginning of the intellectual intuition.

It is a discipline to be followed. For a long time one may try and not succeed, but as soon as one succeeds in making a “mirror”, still and attentive, one always obtains a result, not necessarily with a precise

form of thought but always with the sensations of a light coming from above. And then, if one can receive this light coming from above without entering immediately into a whirl of activity, receive it in calm and silence and let it penetrate deep into the being, then after a while it expresses itself either as a luminous thought or as a very precise indication here (*Mother indicates the heart*), in this other centre.

Naturally, first these two faculties must be developed; then, as soon as there is any result, one must observe the result, as I said, and see the connection with what is happening, the consequences: see, observe very attentively what has come in, what may have caused a distortion, what one has added by way of more or less conscious reasoning or the intervention of a lower will, also more or less conscious; and it is by a very deep study—indeed, almost of every moment, in any case daily and very frequent—that one succeeds in developing one’s intuition. It takes a long time. It takes a long time and there are ambushes: one can deceive oneself, take for intuitions subconscious wills which try to manifest, indications given by impulses one has refused to receive openly, indeed all sorts of difficulties. One must be prepared for that. But if one persists, one is sure to succeed.

23 July 1958, 9, 357-9

*Here Sri Aurobindo writes: “And yet there is in the heart or behind it a profounder mystic light...”*

Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 140

*What is this mystic light?*

It is love.

*But after that, Sri Aurobindo continues: “which, if not what we call intuition—for that, though not of the mind, yet descends through the mind—has yet a direct touch upon Truth and is nearer to the Divine than the human intellect in its pride of knowledge.” Is there a relation between this mystic light and intuition?*

It is not intuition. It is knowledge through love, light through love, understanding through love. Sri Aurobindo says that it is not intuition, for intuition belongs to the intellect—at least in its expression, the expression of intuition is intellectual. While this is a kind of direct knowledge almost by identity, which comes from love.

*And “the inner oracle”?*

The oracle? That is the power of divination, of foresight, of understanding



symbols, and that is in the psychic being. Prophets, for example, do not prophesy with the mind, it is through a *direct* contact, beyond emotions and sentiments. Sri Aurobindo even says that the Vedas, particularly, were not written with the mind and through the head. The form of the hymn welled up spontaneously from the psychic being, along with the words.

*Mother, if someone has the psychic contact, does that mean that he has this power?*

More or less, yes.

The more perfect the contact, the greater the power.

It also depends on the outer possibilities of the being. But I have already explained that to you several times, I have already told you that when one enters into contact with one's psychic, certain faculties develop spontaneously. For instance, there are people with no intellectual education who suddenly get quite a remarkable power of expression, which comes in this way, spontaneously, through the inner contact with the psychic being.

20 June 1956, 8, 187-8

## **Overmind**

In fact it could be said that all preaching, all exhortations, even all prayers and invocations come from what Sri Aurobindo calls the lower hemisphere, that is to say, one is still down below. It may be the summit, may be the frontier, it may be just the edge of this lower hemisphere, but one is still in the lower hemisphere. And as soon as one passes to the other side, all this seems, to say the least, useless and almost childish in the bad sense of the word—ignorant, still ignorant. And it is very interesting to be still in this state where one is at times on one side, at times just on the border of the other. Well, this border of the other, which for the human consciousness is an almost inaccessible summit, for one who can live consciously and freely in the higher hemisphere, is in spite of everything a descent. (...) He [Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine*] describes so precisely and marvellously the difference between these two states of consciousness, how all that seems to man almost the ultimate of perfection, at least of realisation, how all that still belongs to the lower hemisphere, including all the relations with the gods as men have known them and still know them—how all these things are still far below—and what is the true state, the one which he describes

as the supramental state, when one passes beyond.

9 January 1957, 9, 13-14

*To reach the Supermind, Sri Aurobindo says there are stages: first, the mind, then the purified mind, the illumined mind and all that...Is it necessary for everyone to go through all these stages?*  
(After a silence) It is likely that a sequence of this kind always occurs. But the duration of the stages and their importance vary considerably according to individuals.... For some the passage may be rapid enough to be hardly perceptible, while for others it may take a very long time; and according to the nature of the resistance in each one, the stress on one or another of these stages varies enormously.

For some, it may be so rapid that it seems almost instantaneous, as though it didn't exist. For others it may take years.

6 June 1956, 8, 170-1

*You have said<sup>1</sup> there are many intermediary planes between the mental and the supramental, and that if an ordinary man came in contact with one of these intermediate planes, he would be dazzled. Why then, since man is in such an undeveloped condition, do we speak of the descent of the supramental plane, instead of the descent of the intermediate planes?*

For a very simple reason, because till now the whole physical, material world, the whole earth (let us take the earth) has been ruled by forces and the consciousness that come from what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind. Even what men call God is a force, a power coming from the Overmind and the whole universe was under the rule of the Overmind. To get there one has to pass through many intermediate planes and very few people can reach there without getting dazzled. But what Sri Aurobindo said is that now the time for the "rule" of the Overmind is coming to its end and is going to be replaced by the rule of the Supermind. All who have had spiritual experiences and have discovered the Divine and become united with Him, know what it is, the Overmind. But what

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<sup>1</sup> "Men are too easily inclined to believe that they have climbed into regions quite divine when they have only gone above the average level. There are many stages between the ordinary human mind and the Supermind, many grades and many intervening planes. If an ordinary man were to get into direct contact even with one of these intermediate planes, he would be dazzled and blinded, would be crushed under the weight of the sense of immensity or would lose his balance; and yet it is not the Supermind."

*Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931 (23 June 1929)*

Sri Aurobindo says is that beyond the Overmind there is something and that it is now the turn of this something to come and rule the earth, to manifest upon earth and rule the earth. Therefore, there is no need to speak of the Overmind, for many people have spoken about it already and have had the experience of it; whereas this is something new that is going to manifest itself in a new way and nobody has been aware of it before. That is why. The old accounts—there's no lack of people who have experienced these things or described them, or of books written on the subject. There is no need to repeat once more what others have said. Sri Aurobindo came to say something new. And it is precisely because people are unable to come out of the experiences they have known and heard being spoken of, that they try to identify this Force which Sri Aurobindo called supramental with their experience of the intermediary worlds including the Overmind. For they cannot conceive that there could be something else.... Sri Aurobindo always said that his Yoga began where the former Yogas ended, that to be able to realise his Yoga it was necessary first of all to have reached the extreme limit of what the older Yogas had realised, that is to say, the perception of the Divine, the union, the identification with the Divine. But that Divine, Sri Aurobindo says, is the Divine of the Overmind which is already something quite unthinkable, in comparison with the human consciousness, because even to reach there one must pass through several planes and in these planes one feels dazzled.

There are beings of the vital, if they appeared to men, or to say things more exactly, whenever they have appeared to men, men have taken them for the supreme God—these vital entities! If you like, we shall call that a disguise but it is a very successful disguise, because those who saw it were thoroughly convinced that they had seen the supreme Godhead. And yet, they were but beings of the vital. And these entities of the Overmind, these overmental gods are mighty entities in comparison with our humanity. When human beings come in relation with them, they become truly bewildered.

30 September 1953, 5, 282-4

*Mother, you said that between the supermind and the mind there are many stages, didn't you? And it is written that the next logical stage in the evolution of Nature is the superman. Why not a race which is...*

Intermediary? We shall see that later.

*Does this mean that from the mind we can go to the supermind without passing through the intermediary stages?*

I did not say that they were between the mind and the supermind. I said it is in the mind itself, without coming out of the mind, that there are all these regions which are almost inaccessible for most human beings. I did not say *between* the mind and supermind. You mean this evening or at some other time? What are you speaking of, of something I said this evening or something I said on another day?

*This very evening, you were saying...*

No, you did not hear. I said in the mind itself. Before reaching the extreme limit of the mind, there are so many regions and mental activities which are not at all accessible to most human beings. And even for those who can reach them, they are not regions where they constantly live. They must make an effort of concentration to get there and they don't always arrive. There are regions which Sri Aurobindo has described which only very rare individuals can reach, and still he speaks of them as mental regions. He does not use for them the word supramental.

*24 November 1954, 6, 416-7*

*What is the work of the Overmind?<sup>1</sup>*

The overmind is the region of the gods, the beings of divine origin who have been charged with supervising, directing and organising the evolution of the universe; and more specifically, since the formation of the earth they have served as messengers and intermediaries to bring to the earth the aid of the higher regions and to preside over the formation of the mind and its progressive ascension. It is usually to the gods of the overmind that the prayers of the various religions are addressed. These religions most often choose, for various reasons, one of these gods and transform him for their personal use into the supreme God.

In the individual evolution, one must develop in oneself a zone corresponding to the overmind and an overmind consciousness, before one can rise above it, to the Supermind, or open oneself to it.

Almost all the occult systems and disciplines aim at the development and mastery of the overmind.

*27 November 1959, 16, 233-4*

*What is meant by "a zone corresponding to the overmind" and how can one develop it in oneself? What is meant by the*

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<sup>1</sup> This question and the following one is based on terms used by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine*, especially in its final chapters.

*“mastery of the overmind”?*

The individual being is made up of states of being corresponding to cosmic zones or planes, and it is as these inner states of being are developed that one becomes conscious of those domains. This consciousness is double, at first psychological and subjective, within oneself, expressing itself through thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations; then objective and concrete when one is able to go beyond the limits of the body in order to move about in the various cosmic regions, grow conscious of them and act freely in them—it is this that is called “mastery”; it is this that I spoke of when I mentioned the mastery of the overmind.

28 November 1959, 16, 234

Sri Aurobindo’s work is a unique earth-transformation.

Above the mind there are several levels of conscious being, among which the really divine world is what Sri Aurobindo has called the Supermind, the world of the Truth. But in between is what he has distinguished as the Overmind, the world of the cosmic Gods. Now it is this Overmind that has up to the present governed our world: it is the highest that man has been able to attain in illumined consciousness. It has been taken for the Supreme Divine and all those who have reached it have never for a moment doubted that they have touched the true Spirit. For, its splendours are so great to the ordinary human consciousness that it is absolutely dazzled into believing that here at last is the crowning reality. And yet the fact is that the Overmind is far below the true Divine. It is not the authentic home of the Truth. It is only the domain of the *formateurs*, all those creative powers and deities to whom men have bowed down since the beginning of history. And the reason why the true Divine has not manifested and transformed the earth-nature is precisely that the Overmind has been mistaken for the Supermind. The cosmic Gods do not wholly live in the Truth-Consciousness: they are only in touch with it and represent, each of them, an aspect of its glories.

No doubt, the Supermind has also acted in the history of the world but always through the Overmind. It is the direct descent of the Supramental Consciousness and Power that alone can utterly re-create life in terms of the Spirit. For, in the Overmind there is already the play of possibilities which marks the beginning of this lower triple world of Mind, Life and Matter in which we have our existence. And whenever

there is this play and not the spontaneous and infallible working of the innate Truth of the Spirit, there is the seed of distortion and ignorance. Not that the Overmind is a field of ignorance; but it is the borderline between the Higher and the Lower, for, the play of possibilities, of separate even if not yet divided choice, is likely to lead to deviation from the Truth of things.

The Overmind, therefore, does not and cannot possess the power to transform humanity into divine nature. For that, the Supramental is the sole effective agent. And what exactly differentiates our Yoga from attempts in the past to spiritualise life is that we know that the splendours of the Overmind are not the highest reality but only an intermediate step between the mind and the true Divine.

3, 173-4

## Mind of Light

*“The essential character of Supermind is a Truth-Consciousness which knows by its own inherent right of nature, by its own light: it has not to arrive at knowledge but possesses it. It may indeed, especially in its evolutionary action, keep knowledge behind its apparent consciousness and bring it forward as if from behind the veil; but even then this veil is only an appearance and does not really exist: the knowledge was always there, the consciousness its possessor and present revealer.... In the Mind of Light when it becomes full-orbed this character of the Truth reveals itself though in a garb that is transparent even when it seems to cover: for this too is a truth-consciousness and a self-power of knowledge. This too proceeds from the Supermind and depends upon it even though it is limited and subordinate. What we have called specifically the Mind of Light is indeed the last of a series of descending planes of consciousness in which the Supermind veils itself by a self-chosen limitation or modification of its self-manifesting activities, but its essential character remains the same: there is in it an action of light, of truth, of knowledge in which inconscience, ignorance and error claim no place. It proceeds from knowledge to knowledge; we have not yet crossed over the borders of the truth-conscious into ignorance.”*

*Sweet Mother, I did not understand this passage: “In the Mind of Light when it becomes full-orbed this character of the Truth reveals itself though in a garb that is transparent even when it seems to cover...”*

And so? What is it you don't understand?

*This garb that is transparent and...*

This is an image.

It is somewhat like this. In the supramental vision one has a direct and total and immediate knowledge of things, in the sense that one sees everything at the same time, complete in itself, total. The truth of a thing in all its aspects at the same time and... simultaneous, complete. And as soon as one wants to explain that or to describe it, one is obliged to come down, so to say, to a plane which he calls here “the Mind of Light”, where things have to be said or even thought or expressed one after another, in a certain order and a certain relation with one another; the simultaneity disappears, for in the present state of our mode of expression, to say everything at the same time, all at once, is impossible, and we are compelled to veil one part of what we see or know in order to bring it out one thing after another; and this is what he calls the “veil”, which is transparent, for one sees everything, knows everything at the same time; one has the total knowledge of a thing, but one cannot express it fully all at once. There are no words or any possibility of expression, so long as we are what we are. We must necessarily make use of an inferior process to express ourselves, and yet, at the same time we have the full knowledge; it is only the necessity of transmitting his knowledge in words which compels us to veil, so to say, a part of what we know and to let it come out only successively. But it is a transparent veil, for we know the thing—we know it, see it, understand it in its totality—but we cannot express it all at the same time. We have to say it, one thing after another, successively. It is the veil of the expression adapted to our needs both of utterance and understanding. The knowledge is there, it is there in reality—not that one is searching for it and expressing it as one goes on finding it—it is there in its totality but the expression demands that one says it one thing after another; and so this naturally diminishes the omnipotence of which he speaks, for omnipotence is the total vision of the thing expressed in its totality. Omniscience is there in principle, it is there, perceptible, but the total power of this omniscience cannot act since it

needs to come down one plane to be able to express itself.

Do you catch what I mean? Yes?

To be able to live fully in the supramental knowledge requires other means of expression than the ones we have now. New means of expression must be worked out to make it possible to express the supramental knowledge in a supramental way.... Now, we are obliged to raise our mental capacity to its utmost so that there is only, so to say, a sort of hardly perceptible borderline, but one that still exists, for all our means of expression still belong to this mental world, do not have the supramental capacity. We do not have the necessary organs for that. We would have to become beings of the supermind, with a supramental substance, a supramental inner organisation, in order to be able to express the supramental knowledge in a supramental way. So far we are... half way; we can, somewhere in our consciousness, rise entirely into the supramental vision and knowledge, but we cannot express it. We have to come down again one plane in order to express ourselves.

So, this veil which is transparent even when it seems to cover, is transparent for the consciousness, you see, for the consciousness sees and knows things in a supramental way, but one part is veiled and it only comes out progressively, for there is no other way of doing it. But for the consciousness it is transparent, though apparently it seems to hide. That's it.

*2 October 1957, 9, 193-5*

## **True knowledge is by identity and revelation**

If you go deep into silence, you can reach a level of consciousness on which it is not impossible for you to receive answers to all your questions. And if there is one who is consciously open to the plenary truth of the supermind, in constant contact with it, he can certainly answer any question that is worth an answer from the supramental Light. The queries put must come from some sense of the truth and reality behind things. There are many questions and much debated problems that are cobwebs woven of mere mental abstractions or move on the illusory surface of things. These do not pertain to real knowledge; they are a deformation of knowledge, their very substance is of the ignorance. Certainly the supramental knowledge may give an answer, its own answer, to the problems set by the mind's ignorance;



but it is likely that it would not be at all satisfactory or perhaps even intelligible to those who ask from the mental level. You must not expect the supramental to work in the way of the mind or demand that the knowledge in truth should be capable of being pieced together with the half-knowledge in ignorance. The scheme of the mind is one thing, but Supermind is quite another and it would no longer be supramental if it adapted itself to the exigencies of the mental scheme. The two are incommensurable and cannot be put together.

*23 June 1929, 3, 96-7*

Everything that happens to us in the spiritual world we always have a tendency to translate mentally; we want to explain it to ourselves, draw conclusions from it, change the experience into a rule of action, profit mentally by what has happened in order to transform the experience into something practically useful. That is what Sri Aurobindo calls “the mind’s possession of it”. This is done automatically, so to say. Unfortunately, the best part of the experience always escapes; and besides, if one wants to keep it intact, one would have to remain in a state in which the experience is not mentalised, and if one lives in the outer world this is practically impossible. That is why those who wished to enjoy their spiritual experience without intervention from the mind used to remain in states of trance and to carefully avoid coming down to the level of action. But if one wants to transform life, if one wants the spiritual experience to have an effect on the mind, the vital and the body, on the daily activities, it is indispensable to try to express it mentally and accept the inevitable diminution, until the mind itself is transformed and capable of participating in the experience without deforming it.

What we want to do is still more difficult, for we want the vital also to be transformed and capable of participating in the experience without deforming it, and finally the physical itself, the body, to be transformed by the spiritual action and no longer be an obstacle to the experience.

This transformation is precisely the point that ordinary thought finds most difficult to accept, for it is almost the faculty of thought itself which must be changed. Its whole functioning has to be changed for this transformation to be possible, and we are so used to identifying the faculty with its functioning that we wonder if it is possible to think otherwise than in the way we ordinarily do.

It is possible only when one has had the experience of complete silence in the mental region and when the spiritual force with its light

and power descends through the mind and makes it act directly without its following its usual method of analysis, deduction, reasoning. All these faculties which are usually considered the normal activities of the mind, must be stopped, and yet the spiritual Light, Knowledge and Power must be able to transform them into a channel of direct expression, without using these means to express themselves.

The mind, in its outermost form, is a means of action, an instrument for organisation and execution. It puts concepts in order, relates them to one another, draws conclusions for action from them and gives impulse to this action. This power of organisation and impulse to action can be produced directly by the spiritual force which takes hold of the mental consciousness without these processes of analysis, deduction, reasoning being necessary. In intuition things already happen somewhat in this way; but spiritual intervention is, as it were, a super-intuition, a direct expression of the vision, of the experience, of knowledge by identity.

*17 September 1958, 9, 398-9*

Sri Aurobindo is speaking here<sup>1</sup> of knowledge by inspiration or revelation, when something suddenly descends and illumines the understanding. You suddenly have the impression that you know something for the first time, because it comes directly from the domain of Light, of true Knowledge, and it comes with all its innate power of truth—it illumines you. And when you have just received it, it seems indeed that nothing can resist that Light. And if you take care to allow it to act within you, it accomplishes all the transformation it can achieve in its own domain.

This is an experience one may often have. When it comes, for some time—not very long—everything seems to organise itself quite naturally around that Light. And then, little by little, it mingles with the rest; the intellectual knowledge remains—it is formulated in one way or another—it remains, but it is just as if it were empty. It no longer has that driving power which transforms all the movements of the being into the image of this Light. That is what Sri Aurobindo means: the world moves quickly, the Lord is always moving onward and all this is the trail He leaves behind Him, but it no longer has the same immediate and almighty power as when He projected it into the world.

It feels like a rain of truth falling; everyone who can catch even a

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1 *On Thoughts and Aphorisms*, 78. [Comp.]

drop of it receives a revelation. But unless they themselves are moving forward at a fantastic speed, the Lord with His rain of truth is already very far ahead and they must run very fast to catch up with it! This is what he means.

*Yes, but for this knowledge to have a real power of transformation...*

Yes, it is the higher Knowledge, the Truth expressing itself, what Sri Aurobindo calls the true Knowledge, and it is this Knowledge that transforms all creation. But it is as if He were pouring it down all the time and you have to make great haste so as not to be too late!

But haven't you ever had the feeling of a dazzling light in your head? And then it is translated by, "Oh, but of course!" Sometimes it is something you knew intellectually, but it was dull, lifeless, and it suddenly comes like a tremendous power that arranges everything within the consciousness around that Light. It does not last very long. Sometimes it lasts only a few hours, sometimes a few days, but never more than that, unless you are very slow in your movement. And in the meanwhile the source of the truth is moving, moving, moving....

*6 October 1962, 10, 141-2*

For Sri Aurobindo, true knowledge is precisely Knowledge by identity, and wisdom is the state one achieves when one is in this true knowledge. He says it here: Wisdom looks behind the veil of false appearances and sees the reality behind it. And Sri Aurobindo emphasises that when one defines something with the superficial, outer knowledge, it is always in opposition to something else; it is always by means of a contrast that one explains what one sees, feels, touches—and does not understand.

Reason always sets one thing against another and compels you to make a choice. People whose thought and reason are clear see all the differences between things. It is rather remarkable that reason can only work through differences; it is because one perceives the difference between this and that, one act and another, one object and another, that one makes decisions and that reason works.

But it is precisely true Knowledge, Knowledge by identity and the wisdom which results from it that always see the point where all apparently contradictory things harmonise, complement each other, form a perfectly coherent, coordinated whole. And naturally that changes entirely the point of view, the perception, and the consequences in action.

The first absolutely indispensable step is not to repeat, more or less mechanically and without quite knowing what you are saying,

that “appearances are false”. You say it because Sri Aurobindo has told us so—but without really understanding it. And yet, when you want to understand something, you continue to look, to observe, to touch, to taste and to feel, because you believe there are no other means of observation. It is only when you have had the experience of the “reversal of consciousness”, when you have gone behind these things, when you can feel, experience, in the most concrete manner, their illusory appearance, that you are able to understand. But, unless you have had the experience, you can read all the aphorisms, repeat and learn them, have faith in them and still not perceive: they have no reality for you. All these appearances remain the only way of coming into contact with the outer world and of becoming aware of what it is. And sometimes you can spend a whole lifetime learning how things are in their appearances and be considered very cultured, very intelligent, highly knowledgeable, when you have observed all this in detail and remembered all that you have observed or learnt...

24 October 1958, 10, 17-8

The Truth cannot be formulated, it cannot be defined—it is to be *lived*.

And one who is wholly consecrated to the Truth, who wants to live the Truth, serve the Truth, will know at each moment what must be done: it will be a kind of intuition or revelation (most often without words, but sometimes also expressed in words) which will make you know at every minute what is the truth of that minute. And it is this that is so interesting. You want to know “the Truth” as a thing well defined, well classified, well established, and after that you are at rest: there is no need to seek any more! You take it up, you say: “Here, this is the Truth” and then it is fixed. This is what all the religions have done. They have established their truth as a dogma. But it is not the Truth any more.

The Truth is something living, moving, expressing itself at each second, and it is *one* way of approaching the Supreme. Each one has his way of approaching the Supreme. There are perhaps some who are able to approach him from all sides at the same time, but there are those who approach through Love, those who approach through Power, those who approach through Consciousness and those who approach through Truth. But each of these aspects is as absolute, imperative and undefinable as the supreme Lord himself is. The supreme Lord is absolute, imperative and undefinable, unseizable in his action, and his

attributes have this same quality.

Once one knows this, he who puts himself at the service of one of these aspects will know (it is expressed in life, in time, in the movement of time), will know at each moment what Truth is, and will know at each moment what Consciousness is, and will know at each minute what Power is, and he will know at each minute what Love is. And it is a multiform Power, Love, Consciousness, Truth that expresses itself innumerable in the manifestation, even as the Lord expresses himself innumerable in the manifestation.

*24 December 1966, 15, 396-7*

## THE INCONSCIENT, ASURAS AND GODS, INVOLUTION-EVOLUTION, SUPERMAN

### The Inconscient: origin of all Avatars

*[This talk begins with Mother's comments about her Darshan Message of February 21st].*

*"It is only immutable peace that can make possible eternity of existence."*

I remember I wrote this after having had the experience that the immobility of the Inconscient, the beginning of creation, is, one cannot say a "projection", but a kind of inanimate or inconscient symbol of the Eternity, of the Immobility—it is not "immobility", words are worth nothing, it is between immobility and stability. I have written here "peace", but "peace" is a poor word, it is not that, it is infinitely more than peace, it is the "something" (even the word "eternal" gives a limited sense, all words are impossible), the "Something" which is the Origin of all things and the beginning of the evolution of the manifestation to rejoin the Origin (Mother draws a curve joining the one to the other).

I have the impression that it was at the Playground, and it was as though the inconscient immobility—the immobility of the Inconscient, the inert immobility of the Inconscient—were the starting-point of the evolution and it was like the translation of this... how to say it? (this is also another kind of immobility! but an immobility containing all movements) of this immobility of the Origin, this stability, and that the whole evolution is so that this may find back That, with the whole passage (same gesture of a great curve). It was a very clear vision. I remember having written this, and when I read it the experience came back. Well, we speak always of a "fall"—but it is not that! It is not at all that. If there is a fall, it is at the moment when the vital turned into a will for independence: it is not at the beginning, it occurs altogether on the way.... In the ancient tradition, they say it is the "Conscient" that became the Inconscient because it was "cut off from the Origin"—this gives me the impression of stories told to children.

*22 February 1969, 11, 161-2*

I could speak to you of a very old tradition, more ancient than the two known lines of spiritual and occult tradition, that is, the Vedic and

Chaldean lines; a tradition which seems to have been at the origin of these two known traditions, in which it is said that when, as a result of the action of the adverse forces—known in the Hindu tradition as the Asuras—the world, instead of developing according to its law of Light and inherent consciousness, was plunged into the darkness, inconscience and ignorance that we know, the Creative Power implored the Supreme Origin, asking him for a special intervention which could save this corrupted universe; and in reply to this prayer there was emanated from the Supreme Origin a special Entity, of Love and Consciousness, who cast himself directly into the most inconscient matter to begin there the work of awakening it to the original Consciousness and Love.

In the old narratives this Being is described as stretched out in a deep sleep at the bottom of a very dark cave, and in his sleep there emanated from him prismatic rays of light which gradually spread into the Inconscience and embedded themselves in all the elements of this Inconscience to begin there the work of Awakening.

If one consciously enters into this Inconscient, one can still see there this same marvellous Being, still in deep sleep, continuing his work of emanation, spreading his Light; and he will continue to do it until the Inconscience is no longer inconscient, until Darkness disappears from the world—and the whole creation awakens to the Supramental Consciousness.

And it is remarkable that this wonderful Being strangely resembles the one whom I saw in vision one day, the Being who is at the other extremity, at the confines of form and the Formless. But that one was in a golden, crimson glory, whereas in his sleep the other Being was of a shining diamond whiteness emanating opalescent rays.

In fact, this is the origin of all Avatars. He is, so to say, the first universal Avatar who, gradually, has assumed more and more conscious bodies and finally manifested in a kind of recognised line of Beings who have descended *directly* from the Supreme to perfect this work of preparing the universe so that, through a continuous progression, it may become ready to receive and manifest the supramental Light in its entirety.

In every country, every tradition, the event has been presented in a special way, with different limitations, different details, particular features, but truly speaking, the origin of all these stories is the same, and that is what we could call a direct, conscious intervention of the Supreme in the darkest matter, without going through all the

intermediaries, in order to awaken this Matter to the receptivity of the Divine Forces.

The intervals separating these various incarnations seem to become shorter and shorter, as if, to the extent that Matter became more and more ready, the action could accelerate and become more and more rapid in its movement, more and more conscious too, more and more effective and decisive.

And it will go on multiplying and intensifying until the entire universe becomes the total Avatar of the Supreme.

28 May 1958, 9, 332-4

## Asuras and gods

*Q. "If the Divine that is all love is the source of the creation, whence have come all the evils abounding upon earth?"*

*"All is from the Divine; but the One Consciousness, the Supreme has not created the world directly out of itself; a Power has gone out of it and has descended through many gradations of its workings and passed through many agents. There are many creators or rather 'formateurs', form-makers, who have presided over the creation of the world. They are intermediary agents and I prefer to call them 'Formateurs' and not 'Creators'; for what they have done is to give the form and turn and nature to matter. There have been many, and some have formed things harmonious and benignant and some have shaped things mischievous and evil. And some too have been distorters rather than builders, for they have interfered and spoiled what was begun well by others."*

*Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931 (30 June 1929)*

*You say, "Many creators or rather 'formateurs', form-makers, have presided over the creation of the world." Who are these 'formateurs'?*

That depends. They have been given many names. All has been done by gradations and through individual beings of all kinds. Each state of being is inhabited by entities, individualities and personalities and each one has created a world around him or has contributed to the formation of certain beings upon earth. The last creators are those of the vital world, but there are beings of the Overmind (Sri Aurobindo calls this plane the Overmind), who have created, given forms, sent out emanations, and



these emanations again had their emanations and so on. What I meant is that it is not the Divine Will that acted directly on Matter to give to the world the required form, it is by passing through layers, so to say, planes of the world, as for example, the mental plane—there are so many beings on the mental plane who are form-makers, who have taken part in the formation of some beings who have incarnated upon earth. On the vital plane also the same thing happens. (...)

*Did these intermediaries also come out of the Divine Power?*

Through intermediaries, yes, not directly. These beings are not in direct contact with the Divine (there are exceptions, I mean as a general rule), they are beings who are in relation with other beings, who are again in relation with others, and these with still others, and so on, in a hierarchy, up to the Supreme.

*If they came out of the Divine, why are they evil?*

Evil? I think I have explained that to you once: just by not remaining under the direct influence of the Divine and not following the movement of creation or expansion as willed by the Divine; this rupture of contact is enough to produce the greatest of disorders, that of division. Well, even the most luminous, the most powerful beings may choose to follow their own movement instead of obeying the divine movement. And though in themselves they may be quite wonderful and if human beings saw them they would take them for the very Godhead, they can, because they follow their own will instead of working in harmony with the universe, be the source of very great evils, very great disorders, very great massive obstructions.

*14 October 1953, 5, 307-9*

*From where do the gods come?*

That means?... “From where” means what? What is their origin? Who has formed them?... But everything, everything comes from the one Origin, from the Supreme, the gods also.

There is a very old tradition which narrates this. I am going to tell you the story as one does to children, for in this way you will understand:

One day “God” decided to exteriorise himself, objectivise himself, in order to have the joy of knowing himself in detail. So, first of all, he emanated his consciousness (that is to say, he manifested his consciousness) by ordering this consciousness to realise a universe. This consciousness began by emanating four beings, four

individualities which were indeed altogether very high beings, of the highest Reality. They were the being of consciousness, the being of love (of Ananda rather), the being of life and the being of light and knowledge—but consciousness and light are the same thing. There we are then: consciousness, love and Ananda, life and truth—truth, that's the exact word. And naturally, they were supremely powerful beings, you understand. They were what are called in that tradition the first emanations, that is, the first formations. And each one became very conscious of its qualities, its power, its capacities, its possibilities, and, suddenly forgot each in its own way that it was only an emanation and an incarnation of the Supreme. And so this is what happened: when light or Consciousness separated from the divine Consciousness, that is, when it began to think it was the divine Consciousness and that there was nothing other than itself, it suddenly became obscurity and inconscience. And when Life thought that all life was in itself and that there was nothing else but its life and that it did not depend at all upon the Supreme, then its life became death. And when Truth thought that it contained all truth, and that there was no other truth than itself, this Truth became falsehood. And when love or Ananda was convinced that it was the supreme Ananda and that there was no other than itself and its felicity, it became suffering. And that is how the world, which was to have been so beautiful, became so ugly. Now, that consciousness (if you like to call it the Divine Mother, the Supreme Consciousness), when she saw this she was very disturbed, you may be sure, she said to herself: "This has really not succeeded." So she turned back to the Divine, to God, the Supreme, and she asked him to come to her aid. She said to him: "This is what has happened. Now what is to be done?" He said: "Begin again, but try to manage in such a way that the beings do not become so independent!... They must remain in contact with you, and through you with me." And it was thus that she created the gods, who were quite docile and not so proud, and who began the creation of the world. But as the others had come before them, at every step the gods met the others. And it was in this way that the world changed into a battlefield, a place of war, strife, suffering, darkness and all the rest, and for each new creation the gods had to fight with the others who had gone ahead: they had preceded them, they had plunged headlong into matter; and they had created all this disorder and the gods had to put straight all this confusion. That is where the gods came from. They are the second emanations.

*Mother, the first four who changed, was it by chance or was it deliberately?*

No. What is chance?

It is said also—that is the continuation of the story or rather its beginning—that the Divine wanted his creation to be a free creation. He wanted all that went forth from him to be absolutely independent and free in order to be able to unite with him in freedom, not through compulsion. He did not want that they should be compelled to be faithful, compelled to be conscious, compelled to be obedient. They had to do it spontaneously, through the knowledge and conviction that that was much better. So this world was created as a world of total freedom, freedom of choice. And it is in this way that at every moment everyone has the freedom of choice—but with all the consequences. If one chooses well, it is good, but if one chooses ill, ah well, what's to happen happens—that is what has happened! (...) There are traditions which say that it is an “accident”, in the sense that it could have been otherwise. But it happened like that. It is true, it came about like that. Only, it was quite understandable that, every one of these elements having its origin in the Supreme, being quite close to the Emanation at that moment, quite close to the Origin, carried in itself the consciousness of its divinity and superiority, necessarily, since this is not a creation made with something foreign to the Divine: it is simply the Divine who has emanated himself, as though he were looking at himself—he objectivises himself in order to become aware of all that he is; instead of being in an inner static state of concentration in which all is unmanifested, he projects that outside himself “in order to see”, as though he wanted to see all that is within him, that is, all the infinity of possibilities. So, all was possible. It happened like that—it could have happened otherwise. Besides, nothing tells you that alongside our universe such as it is, there do not exist others which are so different that there cannot be any relation between one universe and another. It can very well be that our universe is not the only exteriorisation of the Divine. Ours is such as we know it; there may be others which are in much less sorry a state than this one! Besides, it is lamentable only in its appearance. If you go behind the appearance, you become aware that it is not lamentable at all. It is only one way of seeing.

*25 November 1953, 5, 371-4*

## **The Asura of Falsehood and Lord of the Nations**

*“Each time that we have made a decisive step in our spiritual progress, the invisible enemies of the Divine always try to take their revenge, and when they cannot injure the soul they strike the body. But all their efforts are in vain and will finally be defeated, for the Divine Grace is with us.”*

*Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol. 15, p. 22*

*What are these “invisible enemies of the Divine”?*

They are precisely those four persons who have naturally put forth innumerable emanations, which have again put forth others, which have made formations. And so there are millions and millions and millions of them, and it is these who have formed between themselves a certain habit and have the logic to preserve it and persist in not wanting any other rule than theirs to govern. These are what are called in India the Asuras, the beings of darkness. It is through a sort of logic that they are like that. They began by going wrong, they continue. Now, I must say, there are some among them who change their mind. But this is mentioned in the Gita also; I believe they speak of those who will be converted, and then of those who absolutely refuse any conversion, who prefer to disappear, to be destroyed rather than be converted. And that’s how it is. Some are of one kind, others of another.

*Which are “the others” who have been converted?*

Ah, you know that? You have a good memory. There is one of them who has been converted, and who even collaborates, he is the one of Consciousness and Light.

*If he is converted, the difficulty must go of itself.*

Naturally, but his power remains. This becomes a formidable being.

*You said that consciousness had changed into inconscience. But when consciousness is converted, inconscience must go?*

It becomes once again consciousness and light—it becomes once more what it was.

*Hasn’t it become that again?*

But I have just said a minute ago that when it became inconscience or darkness, it produced innumerable formations—emanations, formations, creations. And its conversion does not mean that all the rest follow. They obey that same law of freedom, freedom of choice. They may be converted or not. There are those who are converted, there are those who refuse. And I believe that in fact there are many more

who refuse.

But the one who does the greatest harm is the “Lord of Falsehood”. He it is indeed who is the biggest obstacle in the universe, this constant negation of the truth. And he has a very strong hold on the terrestrial world, on the material world. Besides, here (on the earth), those who see him, see him as an absolutely marvellous, splendid being. He entitles himself the “Lord of the Nations”, and he appears formidable, luminous, powerful, very impressive.... Historically, he was the inspirer of certain heads of State, and he proclaims himself the Lord of the Nations because it is he who governs the peoples. He is evidently, at the source, the supreme organiser of these last two wars. It was on that occasion that he manifested himself as the Lord of the Nations. And he declared, besides, that he would never be converted. And he knows that his end will come—naturally, he will try to make it as late as possible. And he declared that he would destroy all he could before being destroyed.... We may expect all possible catastrophes.

*25 November 1953, 5, 374-6*

Some of those beings [the Asuras] prefer to be just completely dissolved and to disappear totally like that, into the infinite, the oneness (that is, they lose their personal consciousness, they have no longer any personal consciousness, they exist no longer as a personal consciousness), they prefer that, rather than having a personal consciousness which gives itself to the Divine and becomes by this very fact consciously and personally immortal. They like dissolution and personal disappearance better than conversion, that is, self-giving.

*Why?*

Through pride, I suppose. It is always pride. Fundamentally, from the very beginning it is pride—but almost all the religions have said it. It is pride, that is, a sort of consciousness of one’s power and one’s importance.

*You said that these four emanations were parts of the Supreme.*

*Then how can they have another consciousness than His?*

Another consciousness? But there is no other consciousness! The very principle of emanation is an objectivisation of a part of himself, which potentially keeps the qualities of the emanator. But if this emanation is made (as they were made) with a will to give freedom of choice, as I said, these emanations can either follow that freedom and independence or continue to keep the connection with the emanator, for

there is a freedom of choice. That strength and force which they hold in themselves is quite sufficient to give them the impression of their importance and power. If they themselves, of their own will, choose not to remain in contact, in a relation of surrender to the Supreme, if they choose to use the amount of power and consciousness and force they contain in themselves to do what they must do independently, by that very fact they cut themselves off from their source—but in spite of that the constituent elements of their being are those which belonged to the Source. And it is because of this that, even if they cut themselves off voluntarily, there is in the very depth of the consciousness a link which is indestructible. It is the link of identity. But in the outer manifestation, as they were emanated with this essential quality of freedom of choice, well, they are free to choose to do this or that. That is why, even in the worst criminal, there is somewhere in the depths, somewhere, the divine light. I believe you have read that passage of Vivekananda where he says (I don't know the exact words), that the criminal must be told: "Awake, awake, being of light, and shine forth!"

*25 November 1953, 5, 379-80*

## **Involuntary and evolutionary beings**

*What do you mean by the involuntary and evolutionary being?*

The evolutionary being is the one that's the continuation of the animals, and the other is a being from higher worlds who, when the earth was formed, materialised itself upon earth—it does not come from below, it has come from above. But in the evolutionary being there is that central light which is the origin of the psychic being, which will develop into the psychic being, and when the psychic being is fully formed, there is a moment when it can unite with a being from above which can incarnate in it. So this being from above which descends into a psychic being is an involuntary being—a being of the Overmind plane or from elsewhere.

*21 October 1953, 5, 323-4*

With regard to the evolution upwards, it is more correct to speak of the psychic presence than the psychic being. For it is the psychic presence which little by little becomes the psychic being. In each evolving form there is this presence, but it is not individualised. It is something which

is capable of growth and follows the movement of the evolution. It is not a descent of the involution from above. It is formed progressively round the spark of Divine Consciousness which is meant to be the centre of a growing being which becomes the psychic being when it is at last individualised. It is this spark that is permanent and gathers round itself all sorts of elements for the formation of that individuality; the true psychic being is formed only when the psychic personality is fully grown, fully built up, round the eternal divine spark; it attains its culmination, its total fulfillment if and when it unites with a being or personality from above. Below the human level there is, ordinarily, hardly any individual formation—there is only this presence, more or less. But when, by the growth of the body round the spark of Divine Consciousness, humanity began upon the earth, certain human organisms became in the course of this progressive growth sufficiently perfected, and by their opening and receptivity allowed a junction with certain beings descending from above. This gave rise to a kind of divine humanity, what may be called a race of the elite. If only they had remained by themselves, these people would have continued as a race unique and superhuman. Indeed many races have made claims to be that: the Aryan, the Semitic and the Japanese have all in turn considered themselves the chosen race. But in fact there has been a general leveling of humanity, a lot of intermixture. For there arose the necessity of prolongation of the superior race, which drove it to intermix with the rest of humanity—with animal humanity, that is to say. Thus its value was degraded and led to that great Fall which is spoken of in the world's scriptures, the coming out of Paradise, the end of the Golden Age. Indeed it was a loss from the point of view of consciousness, but not from that of material strength, since it was a tremendous gain to ordinary humanity. There were, certainly, some beings who had a very strong will not to mix, who resented losing their superiority; and it is just this that is the real origin of race-pride, race-exclusiveness, and a special caste distinction like that cherished by the Brahmins in India. But at present it cannot be said that there is any portion of mankind which is purely animal: all the races have been touched by the descent from above, and owing to the extensive intermixture the result of the Involution was more widely spread.

Of course one cannot say that every man has got a psychic being, just as one cannot refuse to grant it to every animal. Many animals that have lived near man have some beginnings of it, while so often one

comes across people who do not seem to be anything else than brutes. But on the whole, the psychic in the true sense starts at the human stage: that is also why the Catholic religion declares that only man has a soul. In man alone there is the possibility of the psychic being growing to its full stature even so far as to be able in the end to join and unite with a descending being, a godhead from above.

1930-1, 3, 150-1

There were several ages in the earth's history in which there was given a kind of example, as a promise, of what would be there one day. These were called the golden ages. But certainly there were times in which a more or less complete representation of what had to be was as though lived out. Only it was just a demonstration, an example, which the world was completely unfit to take up as a realisation.

It was only to say: you see, this is how it will be, but not like this in all its details, like this in essence. And I think it did not last very long. In any case the memory of the thing is very limited, very localised and extremely short. There was an intensity, there was a great beauty in the expression, but it was something as though altogether independent of the whole of terrestrial life: an example... almost an example which is not to be followed, which cannot be followed, and which was always accompanied by a promise: "It will be like this"... a promise which has been repeated in very different words, of the New Earth or the Divine World or a New Creation, etc.

And I think it was perhaps at the beginning... not exactly the beginning of humanity but the beginning of the conscious evolution of humanity towards a realisation. We said last time that for a very long time humanity was very static and as though undergoing a preparation so slow, so invisible that it has taken perhaps millions of years. But these promises and examples were like starting-points, like the first push given to begin the evolution of the consciousness towards a higher realisation.

I think the Vedic age was the latest. There were others before it, but of a very short duration.

2 November 1955, 7, 352-3

*Mother, were the Vedic Rishis men who had evolved to that state or were they special manifestations?*

What do you mean? Whether they were evolutionary beings or



involutionary beings?

They were probably... no... they were surely involutionary beings. But the body was the result of evolution.

But it is absolutely certain that they were involutionary beings, that is, beings who had come down from higher regions and used these bodies, who had identified themselves with these bodies.

This is it, what I said the other day, you know, that what has changed the course of terrestrial and human development totally is bodies becoming perfected enough to be able to serve as instruments for beings of higher regions who have come to incarnate in them in order to use them. And it seems obvious that the Rishis were of these—if not all at least those who were the leaders, those who were at the head. But very probably they formed a group which must have had its own realisation, very independent of the surroundings. They lived, besides, quite isolated, if what is reported is correct.

*(Silence)*

That's all?... Nothing more? No?

*Mother, will the evolution continue or will it be replaced by involution? That is...*

Yes, I understand... But what I don't understand is the point of your question—whether the process of terrestrial development will continue by an evolution...

*... or whether it will be replaced by an involution.*

Yes... but there is one thing you forget. That Sri Aurobindo has said that each new species which appeared upon earth was the result of an involution. So there has always been the combination of the two. A double work: a work that goes from below upward, and an answer which comes from above downward.

*Mother, isn't the evolution the inherent Divine manifesting himself? Then why is it necessary?*

Involution or evolution?

*Evolution. That is, for example, there was first the evolution of the animal mind. So it was said that the mind was already...*

In principle...

*Hidden, in principle.*

In principle, yes. And what prepares it is this: you see, it has been called by all kinds of names: a divine spark, a Presence, etc., which is infused in the darkness of matter in order to start the evolution. But there is something else: there is a descent and identification of beings,

of conscious beings, individualities, in the forms produced by the evolution—and so there is a union which takes place between beings of higher regions and the forms evolved by this divine Presence. And the identification takes place between this immanent godhead and this being which comes down. You see, it is when the psychic being, for instance, identifies itself with a personality of a higher order, a divine emanation, a *vibhuti* who comes to get identified with a psychic being—that is it, this is the thing. But it is not just this one or the other. One does a work of this kind, as I say, a work of development from within outwards; and the other is something which comes down and takes possession of what the first has prepared.

Usually these are individual phenomena. These identifications are individual phenomena. Usually. I don't say that it is impossible for it to be a collective phenomenon; but still, usually they are individual phenomena.

2 November 1955, 7, 355-7

### **Intermediary states between man and superman**

You felt nothing special on Darshan day?

*No.*

Sri Aurobindo was there from the morning till the evening.

For, yes, for more than an hour he made me live, as in a concrete and living vision of the condition of humanity and of the different strata of humanity in relation to the new or supramental creation. And it was wonderfully clear and concrete and living... There was all the humanity which is no longer altogether animal, which has benefited by mental development and created a kind of harmony in its life—a harmony vital and artistic, literary—in which the large majority are content to live. They have caught a kind of harmony, and within it they live life as it exists in a civilised surrounding, that is to say, somewhat cultured, with refined tastes and refined habits. And all this life has a certain beauty where they are at ease, and unless something catastrophic happens to them, they live happy and contented, satisfied with life. These people can be drawn (because they have a taste, they are intellectually developed), they can be attracted by the new forces, the new things, the future life; for example, they can become disciples of Sri Aurobindo mentally, intellectually. But they do not feel at all

the need to change materially; and if they were compelled to do so, it would be first of all premature, unjust, and would simply create a great disorder and disturb their life altogether uselessly.

This was very clear.

Then there were some—rare individuals—who were ready to make the necessary effort to prepare for the transformation and to draw the new forces, to try to adapt Matter, to seek means of expression, etc. These are ready for the yoga of Sri Aurobindo. They are very few in number. There are even those who have the sense of sacrifice and are ready for a hard, painful life, if that would lead or help towards this future transformation. But they should not, they should not in any way try to influence the others and make them share in their own effort; it would be altogether unfair—not only unfair, but extremely maladroit, for it would change the universal rhythm and movement, or at least the terrestrial movement, and instead of helping, it would create conflicts and end in a chaos.

But it was so living, so real that my whole attitude (how to say it?—a passive attitude which is not the result of an active will), the whole position taken in the work has changed. And that has brought a peace—a peace and a calmness and a confidence altogether decisive. And even what seemed in the earlier position to be obstinacy, clumsiness, inconstancy, all kinds of deplorable things, all that has disappeared. It was like the vision of a great universal Rhythm in which each thing takes its place and... everything is all right. And the effort for transformation, reduced to a small number, becomes a thing much more precious and much more powerful for the realisation. It is as though a choice has been made for those who will be the pioneers of the new creation. And all these ideas of “spreading”, of “preparing”, or of “churning Matter”... are a childishness. It is human restlessness.

The vision was of a beauty so majestic, so calm, so smiling, oh!... it was full, truly full of the divine Love. And not a divine Love that “pardons”—it is not at all that, not at all! Each thing in its place, realising its inner rhythm as perfectly as it can.

It was a very beautiful gift.

Well, all these things people know in some part, intellectually, like that, in idea; they know all that, but it is quite useless. In everyday practice you live in another way, with a truer understanding. And there, it is as though you touched the things—you saw them, you touched them—in their higher disposition.

It came after a vision of plants and the spontaneous beauty of plants (it is something so wonderful), then of the animal with so harmonious a life (so long as men do not intervene), and all that was in its right place; then of the true humanity as humanity, that is to say, the maximum of what a mental poise could create of beauty, harmony, charm, elegance of life, taste of living—a taste of living in beauty, and, naturally, suppressing all that is ugly and low and vulgar. It was a fine humanity—humanity at its maximum, but nice. And perfectly satisfied with its being humanity, because it lives harmoniously. And it is perhaps also like a promise of what almost the whole of humanity will become under the influence of the new creation. It appeared to me that it was what the supramental consciousness could make of humanity. There was even a comparison with what humanity has made of the animal species. It is extremely mixed, naturally, but things have been perfected, bettered, utilised more completely. Animality, under the mind's influence, has become another thing, which is, naturally, something mixed, because the mind was incomplete. In the same way there are examples of a harmonious humanity among well-balanced people, and this seemed to be what humanity could become under the supramental influence.

Only, it is very far ahead. You must not expect that it will be immediately—it is very far ahead.

It is clearly, even now, a period of transition which may last quite long and which is rather painful. Only, the effort, sometimes painful (often painful) is compensated by a clear vision of the goal to attain, of the goal that *will* be attained: an assurance, yes, a certainty. But it would be something that would have the power to eliminate all error, all deformation, all the ugliness of the mental life—and then a humanity very happy, very satisfied with being human, not at all feeling the need of being anything other than human, but with a human beauty, a human harmony.

It was very charming, it was as though I lived in it. The contradictions had disappeared. It was as though I lived in this perfection. And it was almost like the ideal conceived by the supramental consciousness, of a humanity become as perfect as it can be. And it was very good.

And this brings a great repose. The tension, the friction, all that disappeared, and the impatience. All that had completely disappeared.

*That is to say, you concentrate the work instead of diffusing it a little everywhere?*

No, it may be diffused materially, because the individuals are not necessarily collected together. But they are few in number.

This idea of a pressing need to “prepare” humanity for the new creation, this impatience has disappeared.

*It must be first of all be realised in some.*

Quite so.

I was seeing, I saw that in such a concrete way. Apart from those who are fit to prepare the transformation and the supramental realisation, and whose number is necessarily very restricted, there must develop more and more, in the midst of the ordinary human mass, a superior humanity which has towards the supramental being of the future or in the making the same attitude as animality, for example, has towards man. There must be, besides those who work for the transformation and who are ready for it, a superior humanity, intermediary, which has found in itself or in life this harmony with Life—this harmony *human*—and which has the same feeling of adoration, devotion, faithful consecration to “something” which seems to it so high that it does not even try to realise it, but worships it and feels the need of its influence, its protection, and the need to live under this influence, to have the delight of being under this protection. It was so clear. But not this anguish, these torments of wanting something that escapes you because—because it is not your destiny yet to have it, and because the amount of transformation needed is premature for your life and it is that then which creates a disorder and suffering.

*27 November 1965, II, 24-7*

At this critical period of the world’s life it is no longer sufficient to give birth to a being in whom our highest personal ideal is manifested; we must strive to find out what is the future type, whose advent Nature is planning. It is no longer sufficient to form a man similar to the greatest men we have heard of or known, or even greater, more accomplished and gifted than they; we must strive to come in touch mentally by the constant aspiration of our thought and will, with the supreme possibility which, exceeding all human measures and features, will give birth to the superman.

Once again Nature feels one of her great impulses towards the creation of something utterly new, something unexpected. And it is to this impulse that we must answer and obey.

Let us try first to discover where this impulse of Nature will lead

us. And the best way for that is to look back on the lessons given to us by the Past.

We see that each progress of Nature, each manifestation of a new capacity and principle upon earth is marked by the appearance of a new species. In the same way, the progressive forms of the life of races, of peoples, of individuals, follow each other through the human cycles, ceaselessly inspired, fecundated, renewed by the efforts of the guides of humanity. And all these forms aim at the same goal, the mysterious, the glorious goal of Nature.

It is to this call of Nature that we must answer, to this magnificent, to this grandiose work that we must devote ourselves. Let us try to make as clear as we can the steps of our advance on this difficult and as yet unexplored path.

First of all we must be careful, in our attempt to conceive the future man or superman, not to adopt an actual type of man, perfecting or aggrandising him. To avoid as much as possible this mistake we should study the teachings of life's evolution.

We have already seen that the appearance of a new species always announces the manifestation on earth of a new principle, a new plane of consciousness, a new force or power. But, at the same time, while the new species acquires this formerly unmanifested power or consciousness, it may lose one or many of the perfections which were the characteristics of the immediately preceding species. For instance, to speak only of the last step of Nature's development, what are the greatest differences between man and his immediate predecessor, the ape? In the monkey we see vitality and physical ability reaching the utmost perfection, a perfection that the new species had to abandon. For man, there has been no more of that marvellous climbing up trees, somersaults over abysses, jumps from summit to summit, but in exchange he acquired intelligence, the power of reasoning, combining, constructing. Indeed with man it is the life of mind, of intellect which appeared on earth. Man is essentially a mental being; and if his possibilities do not stop there, if he feels in himself other worlds, other faculties, other planes of consciousness beyond his mental life, they are only as promises for the future, in the same way as the mental possibilities are latent in the monkey.

It is true that some men, very few, have lived in that world beyond, which we may call the spiritual; some have been, indeed,

the living incarnations of that world on earth, but they are the exceptions, the forerunners showing the way to the race, leading it towards its future realisation, not the average man. But that which was the privilege of a few beings scattered through time and space, shall become the central characteristic of the new type which is to appear.

At present, man governs his life through reason; all the activities of the mind are of common use for him; his means of knowledge are observation and deduction; it is by and through reasoning that he takes his decision and chooses his way—or believes he does—in life.

The new race shall be governed by intuition, that is to say, direct perception of the divine law within. Some human beings actually know and experience intuition—as, undoubtedly, certain big gorillas of the forests have glimpses of reasoning.

In mankind, the very few who have cultivated their inner self, who have concentrated their energies on the discovery of the true law of their being, possess more or less the faculty of intuition. When the mind is perfectly silent, pure like a well-polished mirror, immobile as a pond on a breezeless day, then, from above, as the light of the stars drops in the motionless waters, so the light of the supermind, of the Truth within, shines in the quieted mind and gives birth to intuition. Those who are accustomed to listen to this voice out of the Silence, take it more and more as the instigating motive of their actions; and where others, the average men, wander along the intricate paths of reasoning, they go straight their way, guided through the windings of life by intuition, this superior instinct, as by a strong and unfailing hand.

This faculty which is exceptional, almost abnormal now, will certainly be quite common and natural for the new race, the man of tomorrow. But probably the constant exercise of it will be detrimental to the reasoning faculties. As man possesses no more the extreme physical ability of the monkey, so also will the superman lose the extreme mental ability of man,<sup>1</sup> this ability to deceive himself and others.

Thus, man's road to supermanhood will be open when he

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<sup>1</sup> Alternative ending (from earlier draft): perhaps all of the power of reasoning; and, even, the organ itself may become useless, disappear little by little as the monkey's tail, which was of no use for man, disappeared from his physical body.

declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, is now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater power within, shall be henceforward his great preoccupation. Then will his philosophy, art, science, ethics, social existence, vital pursuits be no longer an exercise of mind and life for themselves, in a circle, but a means for the discovery of a greater Truth behind mind and life and the bringing of its power into our human existence. And this discovery is that of our real, because our highest self and nature.

*2, 160-4*

We have now reached a certitude since there is already a beginning of realisation. We have the proof that in certain conditions the ordinary state of humanity can be exceeded and a new state of consciousness worked out which enables at least a conscious relation between mental and supramental man.

It can be asserted with certainty that there will be an intermediate specimen between the mental and the supramental being, a kind of superman who will still have the qualities and in part the nature of man, that is, who will still belong in his most external form to the human being with its animal origin, but will transform his consciousness sufficiently to belong in his realisation and activity to a new race, a race of supermen.

This species may be considered a transitional species, one can foresee that it will discover the means of producing new beings without going through the old animal method, and these beings—who will have a truly spiritual birth—will constitute the elements of the new race, the supramental race.

So we could call supermen those who, in their origin, still belong to the old method of generation but in their achievement are in conscious and active contact with the new world of supramental realisation.

It seems—it is even certain—that the very substance which will constitute this intermediate world that is already being built up, is richer, more powerful, more luminous, more resistant, with certain subtler, more penetrating new qualities, and a kind of innate capacity of universality, as if its degree of subtlety and refinement allowed the perception of vibrations in a much wider, if not altogether total way, and it removes the sensation of division one has with the old substance,



the ordinary mental substance. There is a subtlety of vibration which makes global, universal perception a spontaneous and natural thing. The sense of division, of separation, disappears quite naturally and spontaneously with that substance. And that substance is at present almost universally diffused in the earth atmosphere. It is perceptible in the waking state, simply with a little concentration and a kind of absorption of consciousness, if this is retracted, withdrawn from the ordinary externalisation which seems more and more artificial and false. This externalisation, this perception which formerly was natural, now seems false, unreal and completely artificial; it does not at all answer to things as they are, it belongs to a movement which does not correspond to anything really true.

This new perception is asserting itself more and more, becoming more and more natural, and it is even sometimes difficult to recapture the old way of being, as though it were vanishing into a misty past—something which is on the point of ceasing to exist.

One may conclude from this that the moment a body, which was of course formed by the old animal method, is capable of living this consciousness naturally and spontaneously, without effort, without going out of itself, it proves that this is not one single exceptional case but simply the forerunner of a realisation which, even if it is not altogether general, can at least be shared by a certain number of individuals who, besides, as soon as they share it, will lose the perception of being separate individuals and become a living collectivity.

*16 April 1958, 9, 313-5*

It can very well happen—besides, when he [Sri Aurobindo] spoke of the supermind he said that there are many regions in the supermind itself and that it would naturally be the first ones, the lowest regions, which would manifest to begin with—it can very well happen that there are still a number of intermediary states of being, this is possible—intermediary stages.

Certainly the perfect race will not come spontaneously. Very probably not. But already, even the first attempts... in comparison with the present human being, it will make a great difference, great enough for one to feel that this is something miraculous.

It can very well happen that the first supramental manifestations will be altogether incomplete. But even to these, man as he is at present will seem something absolutely gross. There is no halt in the universal

development and even the thing which would seem at a certain time absolutely perfect and finished, will still be only a stage for future manifestations. But men very much like to sit down and say, “Now I have done what I had to do.”

But the universe is not like that; it does not sit down, it does not rest, it always goes on. One can never say, “Now it is over, I close the door and that’s all.” One may shut the door but then one cuts himself off from the universal movement. Expressions are always relative, and the first being which is no longer a human animal but begins to be a divine human, a divine man, will seem something absolutely marvellous, even if he is still very incomplete as the perfect type of this new race. One must get accustomed to living in a perpetual movement. There is something which likes very much—perhaps it is necessary for facilitating the action—to fix a goal and say, “This indeed is the end”, but not at all. “This is perfection”—there is no absolute perfection. All things are always relative and constantly they are changing.

24 November 1954, 6, 417-8

*“A new humanity means for us the appearance, the development of a type or race of mental beings whose principle of mentality would be no longer a mind in the Ignorance seeking for knowledge but even in its knowledge bound to the Ignorance, a seeker after Light but not its natural possessor, open to the Light but not an inhabitant of the Light, not yet a perfected instrument, truth-conscious and delivered out of the Ignorance. Instead, it would be possessed already of what could be called a mind of Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature.”*

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 67*

This was certainly what he expected of us, what he conceived of as the superman who must be the intermediate being between humanity as it is and the supramental being *created* in the supramental way, that is, no longer belonging to animality at all and delivered from all animal needs.

As we are, we have been created in the ordinary animal way, and

therefore, even if we transform ourselves, there will remain something of this animal origin. The supramental being as he conceived of it, is not formed in the ordinary animal way *at all* but directly, through a process that for the moment still seems occult to us, but is a direct handling of forces and substance in such a way that the body can be a “materialisation” and not a formation according to the ordinary animal principle.

It is quite obvious that intermediate beings are necessary, that it is these intermediate beings who must find the means of creating beings of the supermind, and, undoubtedly, when Sri Aurobindo wrote this he was convinced that this is what we must do.

I think—I know—that it is now certain that we shall realise what he expects of us. It has become no longer a hope but a certainty. Only the time necessary for this realisation will be longer or shorter according to our individual effort, our concentration, our goodwill... and the *importance* we give to this fact. For the inattentive observer things may appear very much what they were before, but for one who knows how to see and is not deceived by appearances things are going well.

Let each one do his best and perhaps not many years will have to elapse before the first visible results become apparent to all.

It is for you to know whether this interests you more than everything else in the world... There comes a moment when the body itself finds that there is *nothing in the world* which is so worth living for as this transformation; that there is nothing which can have as great an interest as this passionate interest of transformation. It is as though all the cells of the body were a thirst for that Light which wants to manifest; they cry out for it, they find an intense joy in it and are *sure* of the Victory.

This is the aspiration that I am trying to communicate to you, and you will understand that everything else in life is dull, insipid, futile, worthless in comparison with that: the transformation in the Light.

25 September 1957, 9, 191-2

*Will there not be any intermediary states between man and superman?*

There will probably be many.

Man and superman? You are not speaking of the new supramental race, are you? Are you really speaking of what *we* call the superman, that is, man born in the human way and trying to transform the physical being he has received by his ordinary human birth? Are there any stages?—

There will certainly be countless *partial* realisations. According to each one's capacity, the degree of transformation will differ, and it is certain that there will be a considerable number of attempts, more or less fruitful or unfruitful, before we come to something like the superman, and even those will be more or less successful attempts.

All those who strive to overcome their ordinary nature, all those who try to realise materially the deeper experience which has brought them into contact with the divine Truth, all those who, instead of turning to the Beyond or the Highest, try to realise physically, externally, the change of consciousness they have realised within themselves—all are apprentice-supermen.

And there, there are countless differences in the success of their efforts. Each time we try not to be an ordinary man, not to live the ordinary life, to express in our movements, our actions and reactions the divine Truth, when we are governed by that Truth instead of being governed by the general ignorance, we are apprentice-supermen, and according to the success of our efforts, well, we are more or less able apprentices, more or less advanced on the way.

All these are stages, so... In reality, in this race to the Transformation, the question is to know which of the two will arrive first: the one who wants to transform his body in the image of the divine Truth, or the old habit of the body to go on disintegrating until it is so deformed that it can no longer continue to live in its outer integrality. It is a race between transformation and decay. For there are only two stopping-places, two things which can indicate to what extent one has succeeded: either success, that is to say, becoming a superman—then of course one can say, "Now I have reached the goal"... or else death. Till then, normally, one is "on the way".

It is one of these two things—either attaining the goal or a sudden rupture of life—which temporarily puts an end to the advance. And on the road each one has gone more or less far, but until one reaches the end one cannot say what stage one is at. It is the final step that will count. So only the one who comes a few hundred or thousand years later and looks back, will be able to say, "There was this stage and that stage, this realisation and that realisation...." That is history, it will be a historical perception of the event. Till then all of us are in the movement and the work.

8 October 1958, 9, 410-1

## The way to supermanhood

Nietzsche made the mistake we said we ought to avoid: his superman is but a man aggrandised, magnified, in whom Force has become super-dominant, crushing under its weight all the other attributes of man. Such cannot be our ideal. We see too well at present whither leads the exclusive worshipping of Force—to the crimes of the strong and the ruin of continents.

No, the way to supermanhood lies in the unfolding of the ever-perfect Spirit. All would change, all would become easy if man could once consent to be spiritualised. The higher perfection of the spiritual life will come by a spontaneous obedience of spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, when he has become himself, found his own real nature; but this spontaneity will not be instinctive and subconscious as in the animal, but intuitive and fully, integrally conscient.

Therefore, the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age, will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being, an evolution or conversion of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity, even as the animal man has been largely converted into a highly mentalised humanity.

They will be comparatively indifferent to particular belief and form of religion, and leave men to resort to the beliefs and forms to which they are naturally drawn. They will only hold as essential the faith in the spiritual conversion. They will especially not make the mistake of thinking that this change can be effected by machinery and outward institutions; they will know and never forget that it has to be lived out by each man inwardly or it can never be made a reality.

And among these individuals, woman must be the first to realise this great change, as it is her special task to give birth in this world to the first specimens of the new race. And to be able to do this she must, more or less, conceive what will be the practical results of this spiritual conversion. For if it cannot be effected simply by exterior transformations, it can neither be realised without bringing forth such transformations.

These will certainly not be less in the moral and social domains than in the intellectual.

As religious beliefs and cults will become secondary, so also the ethical restrictions or prescriptions, rules of conduct or conventions

will lose their importance.<sup>1</sup>

Actually, in human life, the whole moral problem is concentrated in the conflict between the vital will with its impulses and the mental power with its decrees. When the vital will is submitted to the mental power, then the life of the individual or of the society becomes moral. But it is only when both, vital will and mental power, are equally submissive to something higher, to the supermind, that human life is exceeded, that true spiritual life begins, the life of the superman; for his law will come from within, it will be the divine law shining in the centre of each being and governing life from therein, the divine law multiple in its manifestation but one in its origin. And because of its unity this law is the law of supreme order and harmony.

Thus the individual, no more guided by egoistical motives, laws or customs, shall abandon all selfish aims. His rule will be perfect disinterestedness. To act in view of a personal profit, either in this world or in another beyond, will become an unthinkable impossibility. For each act will be done in complete, simple, joyful obedience to the divine law which inspires it, without any seeking for reward or results, as the supreme reward will be in the very delight of acting under such inspiration, of being identified in conscience and will with the divine principle within oneself.

And in this identification the superman will find also his social standard. For in discovering the divine law in himself he will recognise the same divine law in every being, and by being identified with it in himself he will be identified with it in all, thus becoming aware of the unity of all, not only in essence and substance but also in the most exterior planes of life and form. He will not be a mind, a life or a body, but the informing and sustaining Soul or Self, silent, peaceful, eternal,

*1 This paragraph and the two which precede it replace the following passage of an earlier draft: But among these individuals woman, as we have already said, will have one special task to accomplish, that of giving birth in this world to the first specimens of the new race. And to be able to do this we must, more or less, conceive first in our thought the ideal of what the superman can be.*

Of course, nothing is more difficult than to draw a picture of what will be the new race; it is an almost unrealisable attempt, and we shall certainly not try to enter into details; for we cannot ask of our mind to grasp with any certainty or accuracy this creation of the supermind, of the spirit.

But as we have already seen that the replacing of mental reason by intuitive knowledge will be one of the characteristic features of the future being, in the same way, morally and socially what can be the standard of the new race's life?

From the ethical point of view, for the individual of the new race there will certainly be no more restrictions or prescriptions, rules of conduct or conventions.

that possesses them; and this Soul or Self he will find everywhere sustaining and informing and possessing all lives and minds and bodies. He will be conscious of this Self as the divine creator and doer of all works, one in all existences; for the many souls of the universal manifestation are only faces of the one Divine. He will perceive each being to be the universal Divinity presenting to him many faces; he will merge himself in That and perceive his own mind, life and body as only one presentation of the Self, and all whom we, at present, conceive of as others will be to his consciousness his own self in other minds, lives and bodies. He will be able to feel his body one with all bodies, as he will be aware constantly of the unity of all matter; he will unite himself in mind and heart with all existences; in short, he will see and feel his own person in all others and all others in himself, realising thus true solidarity in the perfection of unity.

But we must limit to these indispensable hints our description of the superman, and push no further our attempt to picture him, as we are convinced that any endeavour to be more precise would prove not only vain but useless. For it is not a number of imaginings, more or less exact, which can help us in the formation of the future type. It is by holding firm in our heart and mind the dynamism, the irresistible impetus given by a sincere and ardent aspiration, by maintaining in ourselves a certain state of enlightened receptivity towards the supreme Idea of the new race which wills to be manifested on earth, that we can take a decisive step in the formation of the sons of the future, and make ourselves fit to serve as intermediaries for the creation of those who shall save Humanity.<sup>1</sup>

2, 165-8

## **Descent of the superman's consciousness**

*[About the descent of what Mother later identified as the superman consciousness, la conscience du surhomme.]*

In the night it came slowly and on waking up this morning, there was as though a golden dawn, and the atmosphere was so light. The body

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<sup>1</sup> *Alternate ending (from an earlier draft): of the saviours of the world. The earlier draft closes with the following additional paragraph:*

For, in truth, saviours they will be, as each being of this new type will not live either for himself or for State or society, for the individual ego or the collective ego, but for something much greater, for God in himself and for God in the world.

felt: “Well, it is truly, truly new.” A golden light, transparent and... benevolent. “Benevolent” in the sense of a certainty—a harmonious certainty. It was new.

1 January 1969, 11, 148

On the first [of January], something truly strange happened.... And I was not the only one to feel it, some others also have felt it. (...) It was something very material, I mean it was very external—very external—and it was luminous, with a golden light. It was very strong, very powerful; but even so, its character was a smiling benevolence, a peaceful delight and a kind of opening out into delight and light. And it was like a “*Bonne année*”, like a greeting. It took me by surprise. It lasted, for at least three hours I felt it. (...) They all had felt it, like this, a kind of joy, but a joy friendly, powerful and... oh! very, very gentle, very smiling, *very benevolent*.... I do not know what it is. I do not know what it is, but it is a kind of benevolence, therefore it was something very close to the human. And it was so concrete, so concrete! as though it had a savour, so concrete it was. Afterwards I did not occupy myself with it any more, except that I spoke to two or three persons about it: all had felt it. Now, I do not know if it is mixed or if... It has not departed; one does not feel as though the thing came in order to go back.

It was much more external than anything I feel usually, much more external.... Very little mental, that is to say, there was no feeling of a “promise” or... No, it would be rather... my own impression was that of an immense personality—immense, that is to say, for it the earth was small, small like this (*gesture, as though holding a small ball in her palm*), like a ball—an immense personality, very, very benevolent, which came for... (*Mother seems to lift this ball gently from the hollow of her hands*). It gave the impression of a personal divinity (and yet it was... I do not know) who comes to help, and so strong, so strong and at the same time so gentle, so all-embracing.

And it was very external: the body felt it everywhere, everywhere (*Mother touches her face, her hands*), everywhere.

What has become of it? I do not know.

It was the beginning of the year. As if someone having the dimensions of a god (that is to say, someone) came to say “*Bonne année*”, with all the power to make it a *Bonne année*. It was like this.

But what was it?...

So concrete...



I do not know.

Is it... is it the personality—because it had no form, I did not see any form, there was only what it had brought (*Mother feels the atmosphere*), the sensation, the feeling: these two, sensation and feeling—and I asked myself if it was not the supramental personality... who will then manifest himself later in material forms.

The body, this body, feels since that moment (the thing has entered into it everywhere, deeply), it feels much more joyous, less concentrated, more lively, in a happy, smiling expansiveness. For example, it is speaking more easily. There is a note—a constant note of benevolence. A smile, yes, a benevolent smile, and all that with a *great force*.... I do not know.

You felt nothing?

*I had a feeling of contentment that day.*

Ah! It is that. Yes, it is that.

Is it the supramental personality?... that will incarnate itself in all those who have a supramental body...

It was luminous, smiling, and so benevolent *through powerfulness*; that is to say, generally in the human being benevolence is something a little weak, in this sense that it does not like battle, it does not like fight; but this is nothing of the kind! A benevolence that imposes itself (*Mother brings her fists down upon the arms of her chair*).

It has interested me because it is altogether new. And so concrete! Concrete like this (*Mother touches the arms of her chair*), like what the physical consciousness usually considers as “others”, concrete like that. That is to say, it did not pass through an inner being, through the psychic being, it came *directly* upon the body.

What is it?... Yes, perhaps it is this... Since it came, the feeling of the body is a kind of certitude, a certitude as though now it was no longer in anxiety or uncertainty to know: “What will it be? What will the Supramental be like? *Physically*, what will it be physically?” The body used to ask itself. Now it does not think of it any more, it is contented.

*Is it something that will suffuse the bodies that are ready?*

Yes, I believe so, yes. I have the feeling that it is the formation which is going to enter, going to express itself—to enter and express itself—in the bodies... that will be the bodies of the supramental.

Or perhaps... perhaps the superman, I do not know. The intermediary between the two. Perhaps the superman: it was very human, but a human in divine proportions, I must say.

A human without weaknesses and without shadows: it was all light—all light and smiling and... sweetness at the same time.

Yes, perhaps the superman.

4 January 1969, 11, 149-151

Did I tell you that I have identified this consciousness?

*When you spoke last time, you had identified it.*

Yes, but I had said “the supramental consciousness”.

*Afterwards you had said “perhaps the superman”.*

Yes, it is that. It is the descent of the superman consciousness. I had the assurance later on.

It was the first of January after midnight. I woke up at two in the morning, surrounded by a consciousness, so concrete, and *new* in the sense that I never felt it before. And it lasted, absolutely concrete, present, for two or three hours, and afterwards it spread out and went about to find people who could receive it. And I knew that it was the consciousness of the superman, that is to say, the intermediary between man and the supramental being.

That has given to the body a kind of assurance and confidence. That experience has, as it were, stabilised the body and if it keeps the true attitude, every support is there to help it.

8 January 1969, 11, 153

The other day when X came, as soon as he entered (he was standing there), this atmosphere came, from here up to there (*Mother makes a semi-circular gesture in front of herself*), surrounded me like a wall. It was thick, it was luminous, and then, it was forceful! To me it was visible, it was very material, as though a rampart, nearly of this thickness (*gesture indicating about forty centimetres*), and it remained there all the time he was there.

So, it is very consciously active.

It is as though a projection of power. And it has now become a habitual thing.

There is within it a consciousness—a *very* precious thing—which gives lessons to the body, teaching it what it must do, that is to say, the attitude it must have, the reaction it must have.... I have already told you many a time that it is very difficult to find the process of transformation when there is no one to give you any indications; well, it was as though the reply; it came to tell the body: “Take this attitude, do this in this

way, do that in that way”, and so the body is satisfied, it is completely reassured, it can no longer be mistaken.

It is very interesting.

It came as a “mentor”, it was practical, quite practical: “This thing must be rejected, that must be accepted; this must be made general, that...”; all the inner movements. And it even becomes very material in the sense that it says with regard to some vibrations: “This you must encourage”, to others: “That must be canalised”, to others again: “This must be removed.” Little indications like that.

*(Silence)*

In one of the old talks I had said (when I was speaking there in the Playground), I had said: Surely the superman will be at first a being of power, so that he may defend himself.<sup>1</sup> It is that, it is that experience, it came back as an experience; and it is because it came back as an experience that I remembered that I had said it.

*Yes, you had said: It is Power that will come first...*

Yes, first Power.

*Because those beings will have to be protected.*

Yes, exactly so. Well, I have first had the experience for this body: it came like a rampart, and it was mighty! It was a mighty power! Altogether out of proportion to the apparent action.

It is very interesting.

And also this is why, now that I see the experience, I see that the result is much more precise, concrete, because the mind and the vital are not there. Because that takes their place—and with all this quiet assurance of knowing, which comes at the same time. It is interesting.

*(Silence)*

You have something to say?

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<sup>1</sup> “... It would seem that the most conclusive and obvious aspect [of the supramental] and the one which will probably be the first to manifest—probably—will be the aspect of Power, rather than the aspect of Joy or of Truth. For a new race to be founded on earth, it would necessarily have to be protected from other earthly elements in order to be able to survive; and power is protection—not an artificial power, external and false, but the true strength, the triumphant Will. It is therefore not impossible to think that the supramental action, even before being an action of harmonisation, illumination, joy and beauty, might be an action of power, to serve as a protection. Naturally, for this action of power to be truly effective, it would have to be founded on Knowledge and Truth and Love and Harmony; but these things could manifest, visibly, little by little, when the ground, so to say, has been prepared by the action of a sovereign Will and Power.” (18 December 1957)

*I was wondering how this consciousness will act individually, outside of you, for example.*

In the same way. Only, those who are not accustomed to observing themselves objectively will notice it less, that is all. It will pass as though through cotton, as it always does so. But otherwise it is the same.

*I mean to say: this consciousness will not act so much on the mind as on the body?*

I do hope that it will make one think correctly.

*Fundamentally it is a guide.*

Yes, it is a guide.

Well, it is a consciousness.

For me, *the* Consciousness limits itself to special activities, for special cases, but it is always *the* Consciousness; just as in the human consciousness it limits itself almost to nothing, so also in certain states of being, in certain activities, it limits itself to a certain way of being in order to fulfil Its action: and I have very much asked It: “If I could be guided at every minute”, because that gains time enormously, does it not?—instead of having to study, to observe, to... Well, now I find that it has happened like that.

*(Silence)*

There is a very marked change in those who have been touched on the first of January: it is particularly... indeed a precision and a certitude that has entered into their way of thinking.

It was there (*Mother looks at the region of the heart*). It is curious, as though I was given the charge of putting it into contact with all those who come near me.

*18 January 1969, 11, 154-6*

The superman is now in the making and a new consciousness has very recently manifested on earth to bring this process to perfection.

But it is unlikely that any human being has yet arrived at this fulfilment, especially since it must be accompanied by a transformation of the physical body, and this has not yet been accomplished.

*30 August 1969, 10, 246*

## THE LINK TO THE SUPRAMENTAL WORLD

### The Great Adventure

It is quite difficult to free oneself from old habits of being and to be able to freely conceive of a new life, a new world. And naturally, the liberation begins on the highest planes of consciousness: it is easier for the mind or the higher intelligence to conceive of new things than for the vital being, for instance, to feel things in a new way. And it is still more difficult for the body to have a purely material perception of what a new world will be. Yet this perception must *precede* the material transformation; first one must *feel* very concretely the strangeness of the old things, their lack of relevance, if I may say so. One must have the feeling, even a material impression, that they are outdated, that they belong to a past which no longer has any purpose. For the old impressions one had of past things which have become historic—which have their interest from that point of view and support the advance of the present and the future—this is still a movement that belongs to the old world: it is the old world that is unfolding with a past, a present, a future. But for the creation of a new world, there is, so to speak, only a continuity of transition which gives an appearance—an impression rather—the impression of two things still intermingled but almost disconnected, and that the things of the past no longer have the power or the strength to endure, with whatever modifications, in the new things. That other world is necessarily an *absolutely* new experience. One would have to go back to the time when there was a transition from the animal to the human creation to find a similar period, and at that time the consciousness was not sufficiently mentalised to be able to observe, understand, feel intelligently—the passage must have been made in a completely obscure way. So, what I am speaking about is absolutely new, *unique* in the terrestrial creation, it is something unprecedented, truly a perception or a sensation or an impression... that is quite strange and new. (*After a silence*) A disconnection: something which has overstayed its time and has only quite a subordinate force of existence, from something totally new, but still so young, so imperceptible, almost weak, so to say; it hasn't yet the power to impose and assert itself and to predominate, to take the place of the other. So

there is a concomitance but, as I said, with a disconnection, that is, the connection between the two is missing. (...) Well, I announced to you all that this new world was born. But it has been so engulfed, as it were, in the old world that so far the difference has not been very perceptible to many people. Still, the action of the new forces has continued very regularly, very persistently, very steadily, and to a certain extent, very effectively. And one of the manifestations of this action was my experience—truly so very new—of yesterday evening. And the result of all this I have noted step by step in almost daily experiences. It could be expressed succinctly, in a rather linear way:

First, it is not only a “new conception” of spiritual life and the divine Reality. This conception was expressed by Sri Aurobindo, I have expressed it myself many a time, and it could be formulated somewhat like this: the old spirituality was an escape from life into the divine Reality, leaving the world just where it was, as it was; whereas our new vision, on the contrary, is a divinisation of life, a transformation of the material world into a divine world. This has been said, repeated, more or less understood, indeed it is the basic idea of what we want to do. But this could be a continuation with an improvement, a widening of the old world as it was—and so long as this is a conception up there in the field of thought, in fact it is hardly more than that—but what has happened, the really new thing, is that a new world is *born, born, born*. It is not the old one transforming itself, it is a *new* world which is *born*. And we are right in the midst of this period of transition where the two are entangled—where the other still persists all-powerful and entirely dominating the ordinary consciousness, but where the new one is quietly slipping in, still very modest, unnoticed—unnoticed to the extent that outwardly it doesn’t disturb anything very much, for the time being, and that in the consciousness of most people it is even altogether imperceptible. And yet it is working, growing—until it is strong enough to assert itself visibly.

In any case, to simplify things, it could be said that characteristically the old world, the creation of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, was an age of the gods, and consequently the age of religions. As I said, the flower of human effort towards what is above it gave rise to innumerable religious forms, to a religious relationship between the best souls and the invisible world. And at the very summit of all that, as an effort towards a higher realisation there has arisen the idea of the unity of religions, of this “one single thing” which is behind all these

manifestations; and this idea has truly been, so to speak, the extreme limit of human aspiration. Well, that is at the frontier it is something that still belongs *completely* to the Overmind world, the Overmind creation and which from there seems to be looking towards this “other thing” which is a new creation it cannot grasp—which it tries to reach, feels coming, but cannot grasp. To grasp it, a reversal is needed. It is necessary to leave the Overmind creation. It was necessary that the new creation, the supramental creation should take place.

And now, all these old things seem so old, so out-of-date, so arbitrary—such a travesty of the real truth.

In the supramental creation there will *no longer be any religions*. The whole life will be the expression, the flowering into forms of the divine Unity manifesting in the world. And there will no longer be what men now call gods.

These great divine beings themselves will be able to participate in the new creation; but to do so, they will have to put on what we could call the “supramental substance” on earth. And if some of them choose to remain in their world as they are, if they decide not to manifest physically, their relation with the beings of a supramental earth will be a relation of friends, collaborators, equals, for the highest divine essence will be manifested in the beings of the new supramental world on earth.

When the physical substance is supramentalised, to incarnate on earth will no longer be a cause of inferiority, quite the contrary. It will give a plenitude which cannot be obtained otherwise.

But all this is in the future; it is a future... which has *begun*, but which will take some time to be realised integrally.

Meanwhile we are in a very special situation, extremely special, without precedent. We are now witnessing the birth of a new world; it is very young, very weak—not in its essence but in its outer manifestation—not yet recognised, not even felt, denied by the majority. But it is here. It is here, making an effort to grow, absolutely *sure* of the result. But the road to it is a completely new road which has never before been traced out—nobody has gone there, nobody has done that! It is a beginning, a *universal beginning*. So, it is an absolutely unexpected and unpredictable adventure.

There are people who love adventure. It is these I call, and I tell them this: “I invite you to the great adventure.”

It is not a question of repeating spiritually what others have done before us, for our adventure begins beyond that. It is a question of a

new creation, entirely new, with all the unforeseen events, the risks, the hazards it entails—a *real adventure*, whose goal is certain victory, but the road to which is unknown and must be traced out step by step in the unexplored. Something that has never been in this present universe and that will *never* be again in the same way. If that interests you... well, let us embark. What will happen to you tomorrow—I have no idea.

One must put aside all that has been foreseen, all that has been devised, all that has been constructed, and then... set off walking into the unknown. And—come what may! There.

10 July 1957, 9, 146-52

## The involved Supermind

*What is the involved supermind?*

It is the same as the uninvolved one! It is the same thing when Sri Aurobindo says that if the Divine were not at the centre of everything, He could never manifest in the world; it is the same thing when he says that essentially, in its origin and deepest structure, the creation is divine, the world is divine; and that is why this divinity will be able to manifest one day, become tangible, express itself fully in place of all that veils and deforms it at present. Up to now, all that has manifested of this divinity is the world as we know it; but the manifestation is boundless, and after this mental world as we know it, of which the apex and prototype is man, another reality will manifest, which Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind, for it is in fact the next step after the mind; so, seen from the world as it is, it will naturally be “supramental”, that is, something above the mind. And he also says that it will truly be the changing of one world into another, for so far the whole creation belonged to what he calls “the lower hemisphere” as we know it, which is governed by Ignorance and based upon the Inconscient, whereas the other one will be a complete reversal, the sudden appearance of something which will belong to quite a different world, and which instead of being based on Ignorance will be based upon Truth. That is why it will truly be a new world. But if the *essence*, the principle of this world were not included in the world as we knew it, there would be no hope of the one being transformed into the other; they would be two worlds so totally different and opposed that there would be no contact between them and that necessarily, as soon as one came out of this world and emerged



into the world of Truth, Light and Knowledge, one would become, so to speak, imperceptible, non-existent for a world belonging exclusively to the Ignorance and the Inconscience.

How is it that even when this change has taken place, there will be a connection and this new world will be able to act upon the old one? It is that in its essence and principle the new is already enclosed, involved in the old world. So, in fact, it is there, inside, in its very depths, hidden, invisible, imperceptible, unexpressed, but it is there, in its essence. Still, unless from the supreme heights the supramental consciousness and force and light manifest directly in the world, as it happened a year and a half ago, this Supermind which in *principle* is at the very bedrock of the material world as it is, would never have any possibility of manifesting itself. Its awakening and appearance below will be the response to a touch from above which will bring out the corresponding element hidden in the depths of matter as it is now.... And this is precisely what is happening at present. But as I told you two weeks ago, this material world as it actually, visibly is, is so powerful, so absolutely real for the ordinary consciousness, that it has engulfed, as it were, this supramental force and consciousness when it manifested, and a long preparation is necessary before its presence can be even glimpsed, felt, perceived in some way or other. And this is the work it is doing now.

How long it will take is difficult to foresee. It will depend a great deal on the goodwill and the receptivity of a certain number of people, for the individual always advances faster than the collectivity, and by its very nature, humanity is destined to manifest the Supermind before the rest of creation.

At the basis of this collaboration there is necessarily the will to change, no longer to be what one is, for things to be no longer what they are. There are several ways of reaching it, and all the methods are good when they succeed! One may be deeply disgusted with what exists and wish ardently to come out of all this and attain something else; one may—and this is a more positive way—one may feel within oneself the touch, the approach of something positively beautiful and true, and willingly drop all the rest so that nothing may burden the journey to this new beauty and truth.

What is indispensable in every case is the *ardent* will for progress, the willing and joyful renunciation of all that hampers the advance: to throw far away from oneself all that prevents one from going forward,

and to set out into the unknown with the ardent faith that this is the truth of tomorrow, *inevitable*, which must necessarily come, which nothing, nobody, no bad will, even that of Nature, can prevent from becoming a reality—perhaps of a not too distant future—a reality which is being worked out now and which those who know how to change, how not to be weighed down by old habits, will *surely* have the good fortune not only to see but to realise.

People sleep, they forget, they take life easy—they forget, forget all the time.... But if we could remember... that we are at an exceptional hour, a *unique* time, that we have this immense good fortune, this invaluable privilege of being present at the birth of a new world, we could easily get rid of everything that impedes and hinders our progress.

So, the most important thing, it seems, is to remember this fact; even when one doesn't have the tangible experience, to have the certainty of it and faith in it; to remember always, to recall it constantly, to go to sleep with this idea, to wake up with this perception; to do all that one does with this great truth as the background, as a constant support, this great truth that we are witnessing the birth of a new world.

We can participate in it, we can become this new world. And truly, when one has such a marvellous opportunity, one should be ready to give up everything for its sake.

*24 July 1957, 9, 157-60*

Two irrefutable signs prove that one is in relation with the supramental:

1. a perfect and constant equality,
2. an absolute certainty in the knowledge.

To be perfect, the equality must be invariable and spontaneous, effortless, towards all circumstances, all happenings, all contacts, material or psychological, irrespective of their character and impact.

The absolute and indisputable certainty of an infallible knowledge through identity.

*February 1961, 15, 102*

A perfect equality towards all circumstances, material or psychological, and an absoluteness in the knowledge—a knowledge that comes not through the mind but through identity. The person who is in contact with the supramental possesses these two qualities.

*23 February 1961, 15, 103*

We could say that the difference between the supramental world and our present world will be this: what you don't know, you will know, what you can't do, you will be able to do, and what you don't understand, you will understand, and of what you are unconscious, you will become conscious. But fundamentally this is the basis of the new creation: to replace ignorance by knowledge and unconsciousness by consciousness, and weakness by strength. But this does not necessarily mean that everything is going to be so mixed up that it is scarcely recognisable!

*(Long silence)*

Sri Aurobindo has told us that in the Supermind itself there are different planes of realisation and that these planes will manifest successively, with the same progressive movement that has always presided over the universal development. And simply because, till today, it is a world that is closed to the greater part of mankind or hardly half-open to some, it is difficult to conceive of this progress in the supramental life, but it will exist; and the moment there is progress, there is ascension, and there is a perfection which develops according to a law of its own, which is gradually unveiled to the consciousness—even to a fully illumined consciousness—and works in the truth instead of working in ignorance.... This something<sup>1</sup> which is not there completely, totally, all at once—it could almost be said massively—in the Manifestation but is progressive, will follow the same law of development as that of the world we live in now, but instead of not knowing where we are going, well, we shall know the way and follow it consciously. Instead of standing there imagining or guessing or speculating about what ought to be, we shall see where we are going and know how to go there. That will be the essential difference. Certainly it will not be a dull existence in which everything goes on indefinitely without changing.

I believe there is always a tendency in the human consciousness to want to get somewhere, to sit down and feel it is at last all over: “We have arrived, we settle down and don't move any more!” That would be a poor type of Supermind.

But this ascending, progressive movement towards a growing perfection will be still more prominent, certainly, and instead of unfolding itself in the darkness where everybody is blind and gropes along, it will unfold in the light and one will have the joy of knowing

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<sup>1</sup> When this talk was first published, Mother defined this ‘something’: “The unmanifest which will use the supramental world to manifest itself.”

where one is going and what one is doing. That's all.

So one must not come and ask, "Will this be there?" or "Won't that be there?" There will be many more things still than we have now. Every possible thing will be there.

*18 September 1957, 9, 189-90*

## **The supramental boat**

I was on a huge boat which was a symbolic representation of the place where this work is going on. This boat, as large as a city, is fully organised, and it had certainly already been functioning for some time, for its organisation was complete. It is the place where people who are destined for the supramental life are trained. These people—or at least a part of their being—had already undergone a supramental transformation, for the boat itself and everything on board was neither material nor subtle-physical nor vital nor mental—it was a supramental substance. This substance was of the most material supramental, the supramental substance which is closest to the physical world, the first to manifest. The light was a mixture of gold and red, forming a uniform substance of a luminous orange. Everything was like that—the light was like that, the people were like that—everything had that colour, although with various shades which made it possible to distinguish things from each other. The general impression was of a world without shadows; there were shades but no shadows. The atmosphere was full of joy, calm, order; everything went on regularly and in silence. And at the same time one could see all the details of an education, a training in all fields, by which the people on board were being prepared.

This immense ship had just reached the shore of the supramental world and a first group of people who were destined to become the future inhabitants of this supramental world were to disembark. Everything had been arranged for this first landing. At the wharf several very tall beings were posted. They were not human beings, they had never been men before. Nor were they the permanent inhabitants of the supramental world. They had been delegated from above and posted there to control and supervise the landing. I was in charge of the whole thing from the beginning and all the time. I had prepared all the groups myself. I stood on the boat at the head of the gangway, calling the groups one by one and sending them down to the shore. The tall beings who were posted

there were inspecting, so to say, those who were landing, authorising those who were ready and sending back those who were not and who had to continue their training on board the ship. While I was there looking at everybody, the part of my consciousness which came from here became extremely interested; it wanted to see and recognise all the people, see how they had changed and check which ones were taken immediately and which ones had to remain to continue their training. After a while, as I stood there observing, I began to feel that I was being pulled back so that my body might wake up—a consciousness or a person here—and in my consciousness I protested, “No, no, not yet, not yet! I want to see the people!” I was seeing and noting everything with intense interest.... Things continued in this way until suddenly the clock here began to strike three, and this brought me back violently. There was a sensation of suddenly falling into my body. I came back with a shock because I had been called back very suddenly, but with all my memory. I remained quiet, without moving, until I could recollect the whole experience and keep it.

On the boat the nature of objects was not the one we know on earth; for instance, clothes were not made of cloth and what looked like cloth was not manufactured: it formed a part of the body, it was made of the same substance which took different forms. It had a kind of plasticity. When a change had to be made, it took place, not by any artificial and external means but by an inner operation, an operation of consciousness which gave form or appearance to the substance. Life created its own forms. There was *one single* substance in everything; it changed the quality of its vibration according to need and use.

Those who were sent back for fresh training were not of a uniform colour, it was as if their body had greyish, opaque patches of a substance resembling earthly substance; they were dull, as if they had not been entirely permeated with light, not transformed. They were not like that everywhere, only in places.

The tall beings on the shore were not of the same colour, at least they did not have that orange tint; they were paler, more transparent. Except for one part of their body, one could only see the outline of their form. They were very tall, they seemed not to have any bones and could take any form according to their need. Only from the waist down had they a permanent density, which was not perceptible in the rest of their body. Their colour was much lighter, with very little red, it was more golden or even white. The parts of whitish light were translucent; they

were not positively transparent but less dense, more subtle than the orange substance.

When I was called back and while I was saying “Not yet”, each time I had a brief glimpse of myself, that is, of my form in the supramental world. I was a mixture of the tall beings and the beings aboard the ship. My upper part, particularly the head, was only a silhouette whose contents were white with an orange fringe. Going down towards the feet, the colour became more like that of the people on the boat, that is, orange; going upwards, it was more translucent and white and the red grew less. The head was only a silhouette with a sun shining within it; rays of light came from it which were the action of the will.

As for the people I saw on board the ship, I recognised them all. Some were from here, from the Ashram, some came from elsewhere, but I know them too. I saw everybody but as I knew that I would not remember them all when I returned, I decided not to give any names. Besides, it is not necessary. Three or four faces were very clearly visible, and when I saw them, I understood the feeling I had here on earth when looking into their eyes: there was such an extraordinary joy.... People were mostly young, there were very few children and they were about fourteen or fifteen, certainly not below ten or twelve—I did not remain long enough to see all the details. There weren’t any very old people, apart from a few exceptions. Most of the people who went ashore were middle-aged, except a few. Already, before this experience, some individual cases had been examined several times at a place where people capable of being supramentalised were examined; I had a few surprises and noted them; I even told some people about it. But the ones whom I put ashore today, I saw very distinctly; they were middle-aged, neither young children nor old people, apart from a few rare exceptions, and that corresponded fairly well with what I expected. I decided not to say anything, not to give any names. As I did not remain until the end, it was not possible for me to get an exact picture; the picture was not absolutely clear or complete. I do not want to say things to some and not to others.

What I can say is that the point of view, the judgment, was based *exclusively* on the substance of which the people were made, that is, whether they belonged completely to the supramental world, whether they were made of that very special substance. The standpoint taken is neither moral nor psychological. It is probable that the substance their bodies were made of was the result of an inner law or inner movement

which at that time was not in question. At least it is quite clear that the values are different.

19 February 1958, 9, 272-5

*[Excerpts from Mother's comments upon the experience she had on February 3, 1958. - Comp.]*

Between the beings of the supramental world and men, almost the same separation exists as between men and animals. Some time ago I had the experience of identification with animal life, and it is a fact that animals do not understand us; their consciousness is so constructed that we elude them almost entirely. And yet I have known pet animals—cats and dogs, but especially cats—that used to make an almost yogic effort of consciousness to reach us. But usually, when they see us as we live and act, they do not understand, they do not see us as we are and they suffer because of us. We are a constant enigma to them. Only a very tiny part of their consciousness has a link with us. And it is the same thing for us when we try to look at the supramental world. Only when the link of consciousness is established shall we see it—and even then only the part of our being which has undergone transformation in this way will be able to see it as it is—otherwise the two worlds would remain apart like the animal and human worlds. (...)

The supramental world exists permanently and I am permanently in a supramental body. I had the proof of this even today when my earth-consciousness went there and remained there consciously between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. Now, I know that what is lacking for the two worlds to unite in a constant and conscious relation, is an intermediate zone between the physical world as it is and the supramental world as it is. This zone remains to be built, both in the individual consciousness and the objective world, and it is being built. When I used to speak of the new world which is being created, it was of this intermediary zone that I was speaking. And similarly, when I am on this side, that is, in the field of the physical consciousness, and I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly penetrating matter, it is the construction of this zone which I see and in which I participate. (...)

When I came back, simultaneously with the recollection of the experience I knew that the supramental world is permanent, that my presence there is permanent, and that only a missing link was necessary for the connection to be made in the consciousness and the substance,

and it is this link which is now being forged. I had the impression—an impression which remained for quite a long time, almost a whole day—of an extreme relativity—no, not exactly that: the impression that the relation between this world and the other completely changed the standpoint from which things should be evaluated or appraised. This standpoint had nothing mental about it and it gave a strange inner feeling that lots of things we consider good or bad are not really so. It was very clear that everything depended on the capacity of things, on their aptitude in expressing the supramental world or being in relation with it. It was so completely different, sometimes even altogether contrary to our ordinary appraisal. I recollect one little thing which we usually consider to be bad; how strange it was to see that in truth it was something excellent! And other things we consider to be important have in fact absolutely no importance at all: whether a thing is like this or like that is not at all important. What is very obvious is that our appraisal of what is divine or undivine is not right. I even laughed to see certain things.... Our usual feeling of what is antidivine seems artificial, seems based on something that's not true, not living—besides, what we call life here did not seem living to me compared with that world—anyway, this feeling should be founded on our relation between the two worlds and on how things make the relation between them easier or more difficult. This would make a great difference in our appraisal of what brings us nearer to the Divine or what separates us from Him. In people too I saw that what helps them to become supramental or hinders them from it, is very different from what our usual moral notions imagine. I felt how... ridiculous we are. (...)

One thing—I must insist on this—seems to me at the moment to be the most essential difference between our world and the supramental world—and it is only after having gone there consciously, with the consciousness which normally operates here, that this difference has become apparent to me in all its enormity, so to say—everything here, except what goes on within, very deep within, seemed to me absolutely artificial. None of the values of the ordinary physical life are based on truth. And just as to clothe ourselves we have to obtain some cloth and sew clothes to put on when we want to wear them, so too to feed ourselves we need to take things from outside and put them inside our bodies in order to be nourished. In everything our life is artificial.

A true, sincere, spontaneous life like the one in the supramental world, is a springing forth of things from the action of the conscious



will, a power over substance which makes it harmonise with what we decide should be. And one who has the power and the knowledge can obtain what he wants, whereas one who does not have them has no artificial means of getting what he desires.

In ordinary life, *everything* is artificial. According to the chance of birth or circumstance, you have a higher or lower position or a more or less comfortable life, not because it is the spontaneous, natural, sincere expression of your way of being and your inner need, but because chance circumstances in life have brought you in contact with these things. An absolutely worthless man may be in a very high position and a man with a marvellous ability to create and organise may find himself toiling in an absolutely limited and inferior situation, whereas he would be a completely useful person if the world were sincere.

This artificiality, this insincerity, this complete lack of truth became so shockingly apparent to me that... one wonders how, in so false a world, we can have any true evaluations.

But instead of making you sad, morose, rebellious, dissatisfied, there is rather the feeling of what I was saying at the end, of something so laughably ridiculous that for several days I was seized with uncontrollable laughter when I saw things and people!—an uncontrollable laughter, absolutely inexplicable except to myself, at the ridiculousness of things.

*19 February 1958, 9, 271-8 passim*

*[A few days after the experience of February 3, Mother had other experiences which were a kind of continuation of the first one.*

*Excerpts:]*

And all the time the experience lasted, one hour—one hour of that time is long—I was in a state of extraordinary joyfulness, almost in an intoxicated state.... The difference between the two states of consciousness is so great that when you are in one, the other seems unreal, like a dream. When I came back what struck me first of all was the futility of life here; our little conceptions down here seem so laughable, so comical.... We say that some people are mad, but their madness is perhaps a great wisdom, from the supramental point of view, and their behaviour is perhaps nearer to the truth of things—I am not speaking of the obscure madmen whose brains have been damaged, but of many other incomprehensible mad men, the luminous mad: they have wanted to cross the border too quickly and the rest has not followed.

When one looks at the world of men from the supramental consciousness, the predominant feature is a feeling of strangeness, of artificiality—of a world that is absurd because it is artificial. This world is false because its material appearance does not at all express the deeper truth of things. There is a kind of disconnection between the appearance and what is within. In this way, a man with a divine power in the depths of his being may find himself in the position of a slave on the external plane. It is absurd! (...)

The absurd thing here is all the artificial means one must use. Any idiot at all has more power if he has more means to acquire the necessary artifices; whereas in the supramental world, the more conscious one is and the more in touch with the truth of things, the more authority does the will have over substance. The authority is a true authority. If you want a garment you must have the power to make it, a real power. If you do not have this power, well, you remain naked. No device is there to make up for the lack of power. Here, not once in a million times is authority an expression of something true. Everything is formidably stupid.

When I came down again—“came down”, it’s a way of speaking, for it is neither above nor below, neither inside nor outside; it is... somewhere—it took me some time to readjust myself. I even remember saying to someone, “Now we are going to fall back into our usual stupidity.” But I have understood many things and come back from there with a definitive force. Now I know that our way of evaluating things down here, our petty morality, has no relation with the values of the supramental world. (...)

The only thing in the world which still seems intolerable to me now, is all the physical deterioration, the physical suffering, the ugliness, the inability to express that capacity for beauty which is in every being. But that too will be conquered one day. There too the power will come one day to shift the needle a little. Only, we must rise higher in consciousness: the deeper one wants to go down into matter, the higher is it necessary to rise in consciousness. That will take time. Sri Aurobindo was surely right when he spoke of a few centuries.

*19 February 1958, 9, 280-3*

The link between the two worlds has not yet been built—it is in the course of being built. That was the meaning of the experience of

February third,<sup>1</sup> namely, to establish a link between the two worlds. For the two worlds are there in fact—not one above the other: one within the other, in two different dimensions—but there is no communication between the two. They overlap each other without being joined together. In the experience of February third, I saw some of those from here and elsewhere who already belong to the supramental world in one part of their being; but there is no connection, no junction. The moment has come just now in the history of the universe when that link must be established.

The experience of November fifth was a new step in the construction of the link between the two worlds. I was indeed projected into the very origin of the supramental creation: all that warm gold, that living tremendous power, that sovereign peace. I saw once again that the values which govern in this supramental world have nothing to do with our values here below, even the values of the wisest, even those values which we consider most divine at the time we live constantly in the divine Presence. It is altogether different.

Not only in our state of worship and surrender to the Lord, but even in our state of identification, the quality of the identification is different depending on whether we are on this side, progressing in this hemisphere below, or have passed over to the other and emerged into the other world, the other hemisphere, the higher hemisphere.

The quality or the kind of relation that I had with the Supreme at that moment was quite different from that which we have here, and even the identification had a different quality. With regard to the lower movements one understands very well that they are different, but that was the summit of our experience here, that identification by which it is the Supreme who rules and lives. Well! He rules and lives quite differently when we are in this lower hemisphere and when we are in the supramental life. And at that moment<sup>2</sup> what gave intensity to the experience was that I came to perceive, vaguely, these two states of consciousness at the same time. It is almost as if the Supreme himself is different, that is to say, the experience we have of him. And yet in both cases there was contact with the Supreme. Well, probably what differs is what we perceive of him or the way in which we translate it; but the quality of the experience is different.

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1 The Mother commented on this experience in her talk of 19 February 1958, *Questions and Answers 1957 – 58*, CWM, Vol. 9, pp. 271–283.

2 The experience of November 13.

There is in the other hemisphere an intensity and a plenitude which expresses itself through a power different from the one here. How to explain it? You cannot. The quality of the consciousness itself seems to change. It is not something higher than the summit to which we can rise here, it is not one step *more*: here, we are at the end, at the summit. It is the quality that is different, the quality, in the sense that there is a plenitude, a richness, a power. This is a translation, in our manner, but there is something that escapes us—it is truly a new reversal of consciousness.

When we begin to live the spiritual life, a reversal of consciousness takes place which is for us the proof that we have entered the spiritual life; well, another reversal of consciousness occurs when one enters the supramental world.

Besides, perhaps each time that a new world opens up, there will again be a new reversal of this kind. Thus even our spiritual life—which is such a total reversal in relation to ordinary life—is and appears to be, in relation to the supramental consciousness, the supramental realisation, something so totally different that the values of the two are almost opposite.

One can put it in this way (but this is very imprecise, more than diminished—deformed): it is as if our entire spiritual life were made of silver whereas the supramental is made of gold, as if the whole spiritual life here below were a vibration of silver, not lustreless, but merely a light, a light that goes up to the summit, a light quite pure, pure and intense; but in the other life, the supramental life, there is a richness and a power that makes all the difference. This whole spiritual life of our psychic being and our present consciousness, which appears so warm, so full, so wonderful, so sparkling to the ordinary consciousness, well, all this splendour appears poor in relation to the splendour of the new world.

The phenomenon can be very well explained in this way: a series of reversals bringing about, step by step, an ever new richness of creation so that whatever has preceded it appears poor in comparison. What for us, in relation to our ordinary life, is a supreme richness, appears a poverty in relation to this new reversal of consciousness. This was my experience.

Last night when I tried to understand what was lacking so that I might be able to bring you completely, truly out of your difficulties, the effort reminded me of what I told you the other day about the Power, the power of transformation, the true power of realisation, the supramental power. Once you enter there, rise into that state, then you see that it

is truly the All-Power in relation to what we are here. So once more I perceived, I felt the two states at the same time.

But as long as this realisation is not an accomplished fact, it will still be a progression—a progression, an ascension: you gain, you gain ground, you climb up and up; as long as it is not the new reversal, it is as if everything needed to be done over again. It is the repetition of the experience here below—it is reproduced up there.

And each time, you have the impression that you have lived on the surface of things. It is an impression that is repeated and repeated. At each new conquest you have the impression: “Until now I had lived only on the surface of things—on the surface of things—on the surface of realisation, the surface of surrender, the surface of power—it was merely the surface of things, the surface of experience.” Behind the surface there is a depth, and it is only when you enter into the depth that you touch the true thing. And each time it is the same experience: what appeared as a depth becomes a surface, a surface with all that it means, something inaccurate, artificial, an artificial transcription, something that gives one the impression that it is not truly living: it is a copy, an imitation—it is an image, a reflection, not the thing itself. You pass into another zone and you have the impression that you have discovered the Source and the Power, the Truth of things; and then, this source, this power and this truth become in their turn an appearance, an imitation, a transcription in relation to the new realisation.

Meanwhile, we must indeed recognise that we have not got the key yet; it is not within our hands. Or rather we know quite well where it is, and we have only one thing to do: the perfect surrender of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, the total self-giving to the Divine Will, whatever happens, even in the midst of the night.

There is the night and there is the sun, the night and the sun, again the night, many nights; but one must cling to this will to surrender, cling to it as in a tempest, and give up everything into the hands of the Supreme Lord, until the day when the Sun will come for ever, the total victory.

*15 November 1958, 15, 366-70*

## THE SUPRAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

### **There is nothing impossible**

*It has been said that in order to progress in Yoga one must offer up everything to the Divine, even every little thing that one has or does in life. What is precisely the meaning of that?*

Yoga means union with the Divine, and the union is effected through offering—it is founded on the offering of yourself to the Divine. In the beginning you start by making this offering in a general way, as though once for all; you say, “I am the servant of the Divine; my life is given absolutely to the Divine; all my efforts are for the realisation of the Divine Life.” But that is only the first step; for this is not sufficient. When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to the Divine, you have still at every moment to remember it and carry it out in all the details of your existence. You must feel at every step that you belong to the Divine; you must have the constant experience that, in whatever you think or do, it is always the Divine Consciousness that is acting through you. You have no longer anything that you can call your own; you feel everything as coming from the Divine, and you have to offer it back to its source. When you can realise that, then even the smallest thing to which you do not usually pay much attention or care, ceases to be trivial and insignificant; it becomes full of meaning and it opens up a vast horizon beyond.

This is what you have to do to carry out your general offering in detailed offerings. Live constantly in the presence of the Divine; live in the feeling that it is this presence which moves you and is doing everything you do. Offer all your movements to it, not only every mental action, every thought and feeling but even the most ordinary and external actions such as eating; when you eat, you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you. When you can thus gather all your movements into the One Life, then you have in you unity instead of division. No longer is one part of your nature given to the Divine, while the rest remains in its ordinary ways, engrossed in ordinary things; your entire life is taken up, an integral transformation is gradually realised in you.

*28 April 1929, 3, 23-4*

There is a state in which one realises that the effect of things, circumstances, all the movements and actions of life on the consciousness depends almost exclusively upon one's attitude to these things. There is a moment when one becomes sufficiently conscious to realise that things in themselves are truly neither good nor bad: they are such only in relation to us; their effect on us depends absolutely upon the attitude we have towards them. The same thing, identically the same, if we take it as a gift of God, as a divine grace, as the result of the full Harmony, helps us to become more conscious, stronger, more true, while if we take it—exactly the very same circumstance—as a blow from fate, as a bad force wanting to affect us, this constricts us, weighs us down and takes away from us all consciousness and strength and harmony. And the circumstance in itself is *exactly* the same—of this, I wish all of you had this experience, for when you have it, you become master of yourself. Not only master of yourself but, in what concerns you, master of the circumstances of your life. And this depends exclusively upon the attitude you take; it is not an experience that occurs in the head, though it begins there, but an experience which can occur in the body itself. So much so, that—well, it is a realisation which naturally asks for a lot of work, concentration, self-mastery, consciousness pushed into Matter, but as a result, in accordance with the way the body receives shocks from outside, the effect may be different. And if you attain perfection in that field, you become master of accidents. I hope this will happen. It is possible. It is not only possible, it is *certain*. Only it is just one step forward. That is, this power you have—already fully and formidably realised in the mind—to act upon circumstances to the extent of changing them totally in their action upon you, that power can descend into Matter, into the physical substance itself, the cells of the body, and give the same power to the body in relation to the things around it.

This is not a faith, it is a certitude that comes from experience.

The experience is not total, but it is there.

This opens new horizons to you; it is the path, it is one step on the path leading to transformation.

And the logical conclusion is that there is nothing impossible. It is *we* who put limitations. All the time we say, “That thing is possible, that other, impossible; this, yes, this can be done, that can't be done; oh yes, this is true, it is feasible, it is even done, but that, that is impossible.” It is *we* who all the time put ourselves like slaves into the prison of our

limits, of our stupid, narrow, ignorant sense which knows nothing of the laws of life. The laws of life are not *at all* what you think they are nor what the most intelligent people think. They are quite different. Taking a step, especially the first step on the path—one begins to find out.

5 May 1954, 6, 123-5

You must never forget that the outer person is only the form and the symbol of an eternal Reality, and that, passing through the physical appearance, it is to this higher Reality that you must turn. The physical being cannot become truly expressive of the Eternal Reality until it is completely transformed by the supramental manifestation. And until then, it is by passing through it that you must find the Truth.

15, 110

*Is this not the first time that the Supramental has come down upon earth?*

It is certainly the first time that the Supramental has come down as a general force of transformation for the whole earth. It is a new starting-point in the terrestrial creation.

But it may be that once before the supramental force has manifested partially and momentarily in an individual as a promise and an example.

26 October 1964, 15, 103

This problem of transformation, I see more and more clearly that there are three approaches to it, three ways of proceeding, and to be complete the three must be combined.

One, naturally the most important one, is the way that may be called “spiritual”, which is that of contact with the Consciousness—Love-Consciousness-Power, yes, it is that; it is these three aspects: the supreme Love-Consciousness-Power, and the contact, the identification: to render all the material cells capable of receiving That and expressing That—to *be* That.

Of all the means, this is the most powerful, and the most indispensable.

There is the occult way, which makes all the intermediary worlds intervene. There is a very detailed knowledge of all the powers and personalities, all the intermediary regions, and it uses all that. It is there that one makes use of the divinities of the Overmind. This is in the second way. Shiva, Krishna, all the aspects of the Mother form part of



this second way.

And then there is the higher intellectual approach, which is the projection of a spirit transcending the scientific, which seizes the problem from below, and which has its importance also. From the viewpoint of detailed handling, this approach diminishes the approximations, brings a more direct and precise action.

If the three can be combined, then evidently the thing will go faster.

Without the first nothing is possible, without it the others are even illusory: they lead nowhere, you turn round and round indefinitely. But if you clothe the first with the other two, then I think the action becomes much more precise and direct and rapid.

4 March 1967, 11, 60

*“Reject too the false and indolent expectation that the divine Power will do even the surrender for you. The Supreme demands your surrender to her; but does not impose it: you are free at every moment, till the irrevocable transformation comes, to deny and to reject the Divine or to recall your self-giving, if you are willing to suffer the spiritual consequence.”*

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 4

*What does an “irrevocable transformation” mean?*

The transformation is irrevocable when your consciousness is transformed in such a way that you can no longer go back to your old condition. There is a moment when the change is so complete that it is impossible to become once again what one was before.

*Doesn't transformation itself imply that it is irrevocable?*

The transformation may be partial. The transformation Sri Aurobindo speaks about here is a reversal of consciousness: instead of being egoistical and turned towards personal satisfactions, the consciousness is turned towards the Divine in surrender. And he has explained clearly that the surrender could be partial at first—there are parts which surrender and parts which don't. So it is only when the entire being, integrally, in all its movements, has made its surrender, that it is irrevocable. It is an irrevocable transformation of attitude.

26 April 1951, 4, 356

*When you speak of the suprarational domain, is it a domain higher than the reason or is it a special domain?*

It is rather a state than a domain. In the physical it is possible to have a

suprarational domain, in the vital it is possible to have a suprarational domain, in the mind too it is possible to have a suprarational domain, and there are suprarational regions which lie beyond all these domains. In a certain part of the consciousness and of life it is rather a state than a region. It is a mode of being. It is something which goes beyond the state of ordinary consciousness. But even physically it can be experienced, vitally also. Suddenly one may feel that one is in contact with something surpassing all rational regions and it is there, in the vital itself, it is an influence acting from above. Otherwise it would be absolutely impossible to hope for the transformation of the lower parts of the being—either mental or vital or physical; they could never be transformed if they were incapable of receiving into themselves the suprarational influence; and it is here, it is to be found, to be discovered.

25 May 1955, 7, 170

*“For our entire nature and its environment, all our personal and all our universal self, are full of habits and of influences that are opposed to our spiritual rebirth...”*

Our universal self is our relation with all others and all the movements of Nature.

And I have often told you, haven't I?, that the first state of your being is a state of an almost total mixture with all things from outside, and that there is almost no individualisation, that is, specialisation which makes you a different being. You are moved—a kind of form which is your physical being is moved—by all the common universal forces, vital forces or mental forces, which go through your form and put it in motion.

So that is the universal being.

And all that you have wrested from this general semi-consciousness, and have crystallised into a more or less independent being, conscious of itself and having its own qualities, all this is your individual being. And this individual being is full of all the movements of obscurity, unconsciousness, and of the limitations of ordinary life, and that's... and that's what you must gradually open to the divine influence and bring to the consciousness and understanding of things. That's what Sri Aurobindo says.

In fact, the first victory is to create an individuality. And then later, the second victory is to give this individuality to the Divine. And the third victory is that the Divine changes your individuality into a divine being.

There are three stages: the first is to become an individual; the second is to consecrate the individual, that he may surrender entirely to the Divine and be identified with Him; and the third is that the Divine takes possession of this individual and changes him into a being in His own image, that is, he too becomes divine.

Generally, all the yogas stopped at the second. When one had succeeded in surrendering the individual and giving him without reserve to the Divine to be identified with Him, one considered that his work was finished, that all was accomplished.

But *we* begin there, and we say, “No, this is only a beginning. We want this Divine with whom we are identified to enter our individuality and make it into a divine personality acting in a divine world.” And this is what we call transformation. But the other precedes it, must precede it. If that is not done, there is no possibility of doing the third. One can’t go from the first to the third; one must pass through the second.

*Mother, the third depends entirely on the Divine, whether He wills to take possession or not.*

In fact everything depends entirely on the Divine. It is only the consciousness you have of it which is different. So in the third stage, obviously, one becomes conscious that it is the Divine who does everything; so it depends entirely on the Divine.

When you say this, the part of your consciousness which is still convinced of its separation and its own existence is looking at the other and saying, “Ah, good! Now I shall no longer have to do anything.” But if it no longer exists, if it becomes conscious that it is the Divine, then it can’t have this impression. It does the work, continues to do it, but with the true consciousness, instead of having the distorted consciousness.

*14 December 1955, 7, 402-3*

## **Reversal of consciousness**

So long as one is in the mental consciousness, even the highest, and sees the spiritual life from outside, one judges with one’s mental faculties, with the habit of seeking, erring, correcting, progressing, and seeking once again; and one thinks that those who are in the spiritual life suffer from the same incapacity, but that is a very gross mistake!

When the reversal of the being has taken place, all that is finished. One no longer seeks, one sees. One no longer deduces, one knows.

One no longer gropes, one walks straight to the goal. And when one has gone farther—only a little farther—one knows, feels, lives the supreme truth that the Supreme Truth alone acts, the Supreme Lord alone wills, knows and does through human beings. How could there be any possibility of error there? What He does, He does because He wills to do it.

For our mistaken vision these are perhaps incomprehensible actions, but they have a meaning and an aim and lead where they ought to lead.

*(Silence)*

If one sincerely wants to help others and the world, the best thing one can do is to be oneself what one wants others to be—not only as an example, but because one becomes a centre of radiating power which, by the very fact that it exists, compels the rest of the world to transform itself.

22 October 1958, 9, 415-6

*[Mother reads out her article “Transformation” (On Education), then comments on it.]*

We want an integral transformation, the transformation of the body and all its activities.

Formerly, when one spoke of transformation one meant solely the transformation of the inner consciousness. One tried to discover in oneself this deep consciousness and rejected the body and its activities like an encumbrance and a useless thing, in order to attend only to the inner movement. Sri Aurobindo declared that this was not enough; the Truth demanded that the material world should also participate in this transformation and become an expression of the deeper Truth. But when people heard this, many thought that it was possible to transform the body and its activities without bothering in the least about what was happening within—naturally this is not quite true. Before you can undertake this work of physical transformation, which of all things is the most difficult, your inner consciousness must be firmly established, solidly established in the Truth, so that this transformation may be the final expression of the Truth—“final” for the moment at least.

The starting-point of this transformation is receptivity, we have already spoken about it. That is the indispensable condition for obtaining the transformation. Then comes the change of consciousness. This change of consciousness and its preparation have often been

compared with the formation of the chicken in the egg: till the very last second the egg remains the same, there is no change, and it is only when the chicken is completely formed, absolutely alive, that it itself makes with its little beak a hole in the shell and comes out. Something similar takes place at the moment of the change of consciousness. For a long time you have the impression that nothing is happening, that your consciousness is the same as usual, and, if you have an intense aspiration, you even feel a resistance, as though you were knocking against a wall which does not yield. But when you are ready within, a last effort—the pecking in the shell of the being—and everything opens and you are projected into another consciousness.

I said that it was a revolution of the basic equilibrium, that is, a total reversal of consciousness comparable with what happens to light when it passes through a prism. Or it is as though you were turning a ball inside out, which cannot be done except in the fourth dimension. One comes out of the ordinary three-dimensional consciousness to enter the higher four-dimensional consciousness, and into an infinite number of dimensions. This is the indispensable starting-point. Unless your consciousness changes its dimension, it will remain just what it is with the superficial vision of things, and all the profundities will escape you.

4 January 1951, 4, 18-9

*[This talk is based upon the Mother's essays "Transformation" and "What a Child Should Always Remember" (On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, pp. 80 – 81, 149).]*

*"We want an integral transformation, the transformation of the body and all its activities. But there is an absolutely indispensable first step that must be accomplished before anything else can be undertaken: the transformation of the consciousness.... However, this is only a beginning; for the outer consciousness, the various planes and parts of the outer active being are transformed only slowly and gradually as a result of the inner transformation."*

Why do I make a distinction between the integral transformation and the transformation of consciousness which I mentioned earlier? What is the connection between consciousness and the other parts of the being? What are these other parts?

This transformation of consciousness is something that comes to all who have practised a yogic discipline and become aware of the divine Presence or the Truth of their being. I don't say that "many"

people have realised this, but at least quite a few. What is the difference between this experience and the integral transformation?

*In the integral transformation both the outer nature and the inner consciousness are transformed. The character, the habits, etc. are completely changed, as well as the thoughts and the mental outlook on things.*

Yes, but there is something which remains unchanged unless you take care and persist in your effort. What is it? The body consciousness. What is the body consciousness? The vital consciousness, of course—the physical consciousness as a whole. But then, in this physical consciousness as a whole, there is the physical mind—a mind that is occupied with all the ordinary things and responds to everything around you. There is also the vital consciousness, which is the awareness of sensations, impulses, enthusiasms and desires. Finally, there is the physical consciousness itself, the material consciousness, the body consciousness, and that is the one which has so far never been entirely transformed. The global, overall consciousness of the body has been transformed, that is, one can throw off the bondage of thought, of habits that one no longer considers inevitable. That can change, it has been changed. But what remains to be changed is the consciousness of the cells.

There is a consciousness in the cells: it is what we call the “body consciousness” and it is wholly bound up with the body. This consciousness has much difficulty in changing, because it is under the influence of the collective suggestion which is absolutely opposed to the transformation. So one has to struggle with this collective suggestion, not only with the collective suggestion of the present, but with the collective suggestion which belongs to the earth-consciousness as a whole, the terrestrial human consciousness which goes back to the earliest formation of man. That has to be overcome before the cells can be spontaneously aware of the Truth, of the Eternity of matter.

Of course, until now, those who have achieved this conscious transformation, who are aware of the eternal and infinite life within themselves, in the depths of their being, must, in order to preserve this consciousness, constantly refer back to their inner experience, return to their inner contemplation, live in a sort of more or less constant meditation. And when they come out of meditation, their outer nature is pretty much what it was before, and their way of thinking and reacting is not very different—unless they give up action altogether. But in that case the inner realisation, this transformation of the consciousness, is

helpful only for the person who has achieved it, but it doesn't change the condition of matter or earthly life in the least.

For this transformation to succeed, all human beings—even all living beings as well as their material environment—must be transformed. Otherwise things will remain as they are: an individual experience cannot change terrestrial life. This is the essential difference between the old idea of transformation—that is, the becoming conscious with the psychic being and the inner life—and transformation as we conceive it and speak of it. Not only an individual or a group of individuals or even all individuals, but life, the overall consciousness of this more or less developed material life, have to be transformed. Without such a transformation we shall have the same misery, the same calamities and the same atrocities in the world. A few individuals will escape from it by their psychic development, but the general mass will remain in the same state of misery.

6 January 1951, 15, 292-4

*What is the exact way of feeling that we belong to the Divine and that the Divine is acting in us?*

You must not feel with your head (because you may think so, but that's something vague); you must feel with your sense-feeling. Naturally one begins by wanting it with the mind, because that is the first thing that understands. And then one has an aspiration here (*pointing to the heart*), with a flame which pushes you to organize it. But if you want it to be truly *the* thing, well, you must feel it.

You are doing something, suppose, for example, you are doing exercises, weight-lifting. Now suddenly without your knowing how it happened, suddenly you have the feeling that there is a force infinitely greater than you, greater, more powerful, a force that does the lifting for you. Your body becomes something almost non-existent and there is this Something that lifts. And then you will see; when that happens to you, you will no longer ask how it should be done, you will know. That does happen.

It depends upon people, depends upon what dominates in their being. Those who think have suddenly the feeling that it is no longer they who think, that there is something which knows much better, sees much more clearly, which is infinitely more luminous, more conscious in them, which organizes the thoughts and words; and then they write. But if the experience is complete, it is even no longer they who write,

it is that same Thing that takes hold of their hand and makes it write. Well, one knows at that moment that the little physical person is just a tiny insignificant tool trying to remain as quiet as possible in order not to disturb the experience.

Yes, at no cost must the experience be disturbed. If suddenly you say: “Oh, look, how strange it is!”...

*How can we reach that state?*

Aspire for it, want it. Try to be less and less selfish, but not in the sense of becoming nice to other people or forgetting yourself, not that: have less and less the feeling that you are a person, a separate entity, something existing in itself, isolated from the rest.

And then, above all, above all, it is that inner flame, that aspiration, that need for the light. It is a kind of—how to put it?—luminous enthusiasm that seizes you. It is an irresistible need to melt away, to give oneself, to exist only in the Divine.

At that moment you have the experience of your aspiration.

But that moment should be absolutely sincere and as integral as possible; and all this must occur not only in the head, not only here, but must take place everywhere, in all the cells of the body. The consciousness integrally must have this irresistible need.... The thing lasts for some time, then diminishes, gets extinguished. You cannot keep these things for very long. But then it so happens that a moment later or the next day or some time later, suddenly you have the opposite experience. Instead of feeling this ascent, and all that, this is no longer there and you have the feeling of the Descent, the Answer. And nothing but the Answer exists. Nothing but the divine thought, the divine will, the divine energy, the divine action exists any longer. And you too, you are no longer there.

That is to say, it is the answer to our aspiration. It may happen immediately afterwards—that is very rare but may happen. If you have both simultaneously, then the state is perfect; usually they alternate; they alternate more and more closely until the moment there is a total fusion. Then there is no more distinction. I heard a Sufi Mystic, who was besides a great musician, an Indian, saying that for the Sufis there was a state higher than that of adoration and surrender to the Divine, than that of devotion, that this was not the last stage; the last stage of the progress is when there is no longer any distinction; you have no longer this kind of adoration or surrender or consecration; it is a very simple state in which one makes no distinction between the



Divine and oneself. They know this. It is even written in their books. It is a commonly known condition in which everything becomes quite simple. There is no longer any difference. There is no longer that kind of ecstatic surrender to “Something” which is beyond you in every way, which you do not understand, which is merely the result of your aspiration, your devotion. There is no difference any longer. When the union is perfect, there is no longer any difference.

*Is this the end of self-progress?*

There is never any end to progress—never any end, you can never put a full stop there.

*Can that happen before the transformation of the body?*

Before the transformation of the body?... This is a phenomenon of consciousness. For instance, the physical consciousness may have this experience even for years before the cells change. There is a great difference between the physical consciousness (the body consciousness) and the material body. This takes a long time, because it is a thing that has never been done. That state, as I have already told you, is a commonly known state which has been realised by some people, the most advanced, the highest among the mystics; but the transformation of the body has never been done by anyone.

And it takes a terribly long time. Sri Aurobindo said—one day I asked him: “How long will it take to transform the body?” He did not hesitate, he said: “Oh! something like three hundred years.”

*Three hundred years from when?*

Three hundred years from the time one has the consciousness I was just speaking about. (*Laughter*)

20 May 1953, 5, 55-8

## **Transformation of the subconscious**

*If only the inner consciousness is changed, won't some impurities still remain in the outer being?*

Yes, of course. That is the essential difference between our yoga and the old yogic disciplines which dealt only with the inner consciousness. The old beliefs used to say—and some people interpret the Bhagavat Gita in this way—that there is no fire without smoke, no life without ignorance in life. That is the common experience, but it is not our idea, is it?

We know by experience that if we go down into the subconscious, lower than the physical consciousness, into the subconscious and even lower still into the inconscient, we can find in ourselves the origin of atavism, of what comes from our early education and the environment in which we lived. And this gives a kind of special characteristic to the individual, to his outer nature, and it is generally believed that we are born like that and we will stay like that. But by going down into the subconscious, into the inconscient, one can trace the origin of this formation and undo what has been done, change the movements and reactions of the ordinary nature by a conscious and deliberate action and thus really transform one's character. This is not a common achievement, but it has been done. So one may assert not only that it can be done, but that it has been done. It is the first step towards the integral transformation, but after that, there remains the transformation of the cells which I mentioned earlier.

There is an article by Sri Aurobindo in one of the *Bulletins* which describes the various stages through which the entire physical being can be changed. And this is what so far has never been done.

*Does the inconscient in oneself belong to the individual being or to the earth?*

The inconscient is not individualised and when you go down into the inconscient in yourself, it is the inconscient of matter. One can't say that each individual has his own inconscient, for that would already be a beginning of individualisation, and when you go down into the inconscient, it is perhaps not the universal but at least the terrestrial inconscient.

The light, the consciousness that comes down into this inconscient in order to transform it must necessarily be a consciousness that is close enough to be able to touch it. It is not possible to conceive of a light—the supramental light, for example—that would have the power to individualise the inconscient. But, through a conscious, individualised being, this light can be brought down into the inconscient and gradually make it conscious.

6 January 1951, 15, 294-5

*[Mother hands the disciple a card on which is printed her photo and the following text:]*

*"No human will can finally prevail against the Divine's will.*

*"Let us put ourselves deliberately and exclusively on the side of*

*the Divine and the victory is ultimately certain.”*

*The Mother*

It is strange how human nature resists that. Ordinary human nature is such that it prefers defeat through its own will to victory gained otherwise. I am discovering things... incredible—incredible.

The depth of human stupidity is incredible. Incredible.

It is as though this Force of which I have spoken was going down like that (gesture of an imperturbable descent), deeper and deeper, towards the subconscious.

In the subconscious, there are things... incredible—incredible. I am passing night after night seeing that. And the Force goes down and down, imperatively.

And then the human subconscious cries out, “Oh! Not yet, not yet—not so soon!” And it is against that that one must struggle. It is the general subconscious.

And naturally, the resistance brings about catastrophes, but then one says, “Just see, see how beneficial is your action! It brings catastrophes.” Incredible, incredible stupidity.

One must remain... remain clinging to the Divine. (...) If you can have the experience that it is the Divine who is doing everything, then with an unshakable faith you say, “All your arguments have no value; the delight of being with the Divine, conscious of the Divine, surpasses everything—surpasses the creation, surpasses life, surpasses happiness, surpasses success, surpasses everything.” (*Mother raises a finger*) That!

Then everything is all right, there is an end of the thing.

It is as though That was pushing into the light, was forcing into the light, into contact with this Force all the worst that there is in the nature... so that it may be ended.

And then That clings to what in us was of goodwill.

A moment does come when it is absolutely wonderful, but you pass through hours that are not pleasant. (...) In the subconscious there is the memory of bygone pralayas, so it is this memory that always gives the feeling that everything will be dissolved, everything will collapse.

But if one looks with the true light, it can only be one manifestation that will dissolve and there will be a more beautiful manifestation. Theon had told me that this was the seventh and the last. I told Sri Aurobindo what Theon had said and Sri Aurobindo agreed, because he said: This one will see the transformation towards the Supramental.

But for that, for the Supramental, the mind must fall silent: and that gives me always the feeling (Mother laughs) that a child is sitting on the head of the mind and playing (*gesture, of a child beating with his legs*) on the head of the mind!... If I could still draw a picture, it would be truly amusing. The mind—this fat earthly mind (Mother puffs out her cheeks) which considers itself so important and indispensable, and then the child sitting on its head and playing! (...) For me, the best remedy (that is to say, the easiest) is: “What Thou willest. What Thou willest”, in all sincerity. And then—then comes understanding. Then you understand. But you do not understand mentally, it is not there (*Mother touches her head*).

“What Thou willest.”

12 April 1972, 11, 309-12 *passim*

In the subconscious all the contradictions are accumulated.

Yes.

And it rises thus (*gesture of gushing up*), all the time, all the time. And then... you have the feeling that you are absolutely imbecile, inconscient, of bad will. And all this (*same gesture of a rising up from below*).

And the consciousness is there (*gesture around the head*), peaceful, extraordinarily peaceful... (*Mother opens out her hands*) “May Thy Will be done, O Lord.” And then that puts a pressure upon what is coming from below.

It is as though the battle of the world was being fought within my consciousness.

It has come to such a point that to forget, to forget the Divine even for a minute spells a catastrophe.

And with you, how is it?

*Well, it seems to be interminable, this cleansing of the subconscious.*

Yes. It is not merely that of one person, it is the subconscious of the earth. It is interminable. And yet one must...

So, to stop that means to stop the work. To continue that means it would take time.... I do not know... it is interminable.

Clearly, yes, clearly, to stop that means to stop the work. It is as though in the consciousness there (*Mother makes a gesture around her head*) lay the centre of junction and action.

So I have but one means, to keep quiet, quiet, quiet (*Mother opens out her hands upward*)... to have the feeling that individuality is

nothing, nothing, nothing—it allows the divine rays to pass. This is the only solution. It is the Divine who... who must do the battling.

(Silence)

*Last time you said: Oh! Hundreds of years will be needed, perhaps thousands, before men turn consciously towards the Divine. But...*

Perhaps not.

25 October 1972, 11, 323-4

*I asked myself a question about Sri Aurobindo. I wanted to know at what point he had arrived when he passed away—at what point of transformation. What difference in the work, for example, is there between what you are doing now and what he was doing at that time?*

He had gathered in his body a great amount of supramental force and as soon as he left... You see, he was lying on his bed, I stood by his side, and in a way altogether concrete—concrete with such a strong sensation as to make one think that it could be seen—all this supramental force which was in him passed from his body into mine. And I felt the friction of the passage. It was extraordinary—extraordinary. It was an extraordinary experience. For a long time, a long time like that (Mother indicates the passing of the Force into her body), I was standing beside his bed, and that continued.

Almost a sensation—it was a material sensation.

For a long time.

That is all I know.

*But what I wanted to understand is at what point of the inner work was, for example, the cleaning of the subconscious and all that? What difference is there, say, between the work he had done at that time and the work to which you have come now? I mean to say, is the subconscious less subconscious or...*

Oh! Yes, that, surely. Surely.

Well, this is the mental way of looking at things—I do not have it any more.

Yes, Mother.

(Silence)

*The difference is perhaps a difference in the general or collective intensity of this Power, of this Force, is it not so?*

There is a difference in the power for action. He himself possesses more

action, more power for action, now than when in his body. Besides, it is for that that he left, because it was necessary to act in that way.

It is very concrete. His action has become very concrete.

Evidently it is something which is not at all mental. It is from another region. But it is not ethereal nor... it is concrete. One could almost say that it is material.

*But this other region, I have often asked myself what is the true movement one must make to get there. There are two possible movements: the movement inward towards the soul, and another in which the individuality is annulled and one is rather in a wideness without the individual....*

Both must be there.

20 December 1972, 11, 328-9

## **Transformation of the physical consciousness**

*“This harmony will be progressive, for the truth of the being is never static, it is a continual unfolding of a growing, a more and more global and comprehensive perfection. As soon as the body learns to follow the movement of progressive harmony, it will be possible for it, through a continuous process of transformation, to escape the necessity of disintegration and destruction. Thus the irrevocable law of death will have no reason for existing any more.*

*“...These four attributes of the Truth will spontaneously express themselves in our being. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and a perfect harmony.”*

*“The Science of Living”, On Education*

This is a thing very little known among mystics and religious people: in each part of the being the Divine manifests Himself differently. In the higher parts He manifests as Power, Love, etc., but in the physical He manifests as Harmony and Beauty.

Hence, the problem of the expression of physical beauty is a spiritual problem.

25 January 1951, 4, 56-7

For most aspirants the way of meditation, concentration, withdrawal

from physical life, rejection of physical activities is certainly easier than the way of action. But they leave the physical consciousness just as it is, without ever changing it, and unless one becomes like a sadhu or an ascetic who leaves behind all active life and remains in constant concentration or meditation, one achieves nothing at all. That is to say, an entire part of the being is never transformed. And for them the solution is not at all to transform it, it is simply to reject it, to get out of their body as quickly as possible. That is how yoga was conceived of formerly, for, obviously, it is much easier. But this is not what we want.

What we want is the transformation of the physical consciousness, not its rejection.

And so, in this case, what Sri Aurobindo has recommended as the most direct and most total way is surrender to the Divine—a surrender made more and more integral, progressively, comprising the physical consciousness and physical activities. And if one succeeds in this, then the physical, instead of being an obstacle, becomes a help.

*19 September 1956, 8, 299-300*

*What is “dynamic realisation”?*

It is the realisation which is expressed in action. There is a realisation in inaction like that of those who enter into contemplations from which they don't come out, and who don't move; and then there is a dynamic realisation which transforms all your action, all your movements, all your way of being, your character. In the first case one's outer being remains the same, nothing changes, and usually it destroys all possibility of action, one can no longer do anything, one remains seated... In the second case, it changes everything, your character, your way of being, your way of acting, all your actions and even your surroundings, and finally all your existence, your total being: this is dynamic realisation, with the transformation of the body as its culmination.

Some people try to transform their body before even having transformed their intelligence, and this produces a complete displacement, it unbalances them totally. One must first transform his thought, all his mind, all his mental activity, organise it with higher knowledge; and at the same time one must transform his character, all the movements of the vital, all impulses, all reactions. And finally, when these two things are done, in any case up to a certain point, one can begin to think of transforming the cells of his body, but not begin at the end; one must begin at the beginning.

One can do... Sri Aurobindo says, doesn't he, that one can do everything at the same time, but the centre, the most important part, must first be transformed sufficiently before one can think of transforming his body... like some people who, for example, immediately want to change their food or even to stop eating, because, they say, finally when the Supermind comes one will no longer need to eat. So before the Supermind has come they want to begin by what will happen; they stop eating, stop sleeping, and the result is that they fall very ill.

It is preferable at first to begin by receiving the Supermind in one's mind with a sufficient knowledge, and gradually come to transforming all the rest.

*15 June 1955, 7, 201-2*

In truth, we shall only be able to speak of what transforms Matter when Matter is at least a little transformed, when there is a beginning of transformation. Then we shall be able to speak of the process. But for the moment...

But any transformation in the being, on any plane, always has some repercussion on the lower planes. There is always an effect; even things which seem to be purely intellectual certainly have some repercussion on the structure of the brain.

This kind of revelation can only occur in a silent mind—at least in a mind that is at rest, completely quiet and still, otherwise they do not come. Or if they come, you do not notice them, because of all the noise you are making. And of course, they help this quiet, this silence, this receptivity to become better and better established. This feeling of something so still—but not closed, still but open, still but receptive—is something which becomes established through repeated experiences. There is a great difference between a silence that is dead, dull, unresponsive and the receptive silence of a quietened mind. That makes a great difference. But that is the result of these experiences. All the progress we make always results, quite naturally, from truths coming from above.

They have an effect, all these things have an effect on the functioning of the body—the functioning of the organs, of the brain, of the nerves, etc. That will surely happen before—long before—there is any effect on the external form.

*6 October 1962, 10, 143*



*Is it possible to know God, even with one's physical mind, once one has experienced identification?*

After consciously identifying itself with the Divine, the entire being even in its external parts—mental, vital and physical—undergoes the consequences of this identification, and a change occurs which is sometimes even perceptible in the physical appearance. An influence is at work on the thoughts, the feelings, the sensations and even the actions. Sometimes, in all its movements, the being has a concrete and constant impression of the Divine Presence and its action through the outer instrument. But one cannot say that the physical mind *knows* God, for the very way of knowing that is characteristic of the mind is foreign to the Divine; one could even say that it is contrary to it. The physical mind itself can receive the divine influence and be transformed by it, but so long as it remains the physical mind, it can neither understand nor explain God, much less know Him; for to know God one must be identified with Him and for that the physical mind must cease to be what it is now, and consequently cease to be the physical mind.

The capacity to know God can be achieved in the lower triplicity—the mind, the vital and the physical—only with the supramental transformation, and this comes only just before the ultimate realisation which consists in becoming divine.

*3 February 1960, 10, 43-44*

## **The mind of Matter and the cellular mind**

*How do you define this physical mind which was made the object of the transfer of power?*

It is not the physical mind. It is long since the physical mind has changed.... It is the material mind—not even the material mind: it is the mind of Matter. It is the mental substance which belongs to Matter itself, to the cells. That is what was once called the “spirit of the form”, when it was said that mummies kept their body intact as long as the spirit of the form persisted.<sup>1</sup> It is that mind, this wholly material mind.

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<sup>1</sup> In her talk of 10 March 1951, Mother said in connection with the violation of tombs in Egypt: “In the physical form is found the ‘spirit of the form’ and this spirit of the form persists for a certain time even when outwardly the person is pronounced dead. And as long as the spirit of the form persists, the body is not destroyed. In ancient Egypt they had this knowledge; they knew that if they prepared the body in a certain way, the spirit of the form would not leave it and the body would not disintegrate.”

The other, the physical mind, was organised long ago.

*Then what is the difference between this material mind and the physical mind?*

The physical mind is the mind of the physical personality formed by the body. It grows with the body, but it is not the mind of Matter: it is the mind of the physical being. For example, it is this physical mind which gives the character—the bodily character, the physical character—and which is in a large measure formed by atavism and by education. All this is called the “physical mind”. Yes, it is the result of atavism, of education and of the formation of the body; it is what forms the physical character. For example, there are people who are patient, people who are strong, etc.—physically I mean, not for vital or mental reasons, but purely physically; you have a character. It is the physical mind. And this is part of all integral yoga; you go through the discipline of this physical mind. More than sixty years ago I did it.

*But then, for example, this mind which is spontaneously defeatist, having all sorts of fears, apprehensions, always seeing the worst, repeating always the same things, is it the physical mind or the material mind?*

That is the most unconscious part of the physical mind and that is the link joining the physical mind and this material substance. But it is already an organised mind, you must understand. It is the most material part touching the mind.... How can one call this “mind”? You cannot even call it the bodily mind—it is the mind of the cells, it is a cellular mind.

This cellular mind exists in animals, and even a little (very little, as a promise) beginning in the plants—they respond to a mental action. They do respond. As soon as Life manifests, there is already a promise of mind, of mental movement. And in animals it is clear. Whereas this physical mind truly begins to exist only in man. It is this which very little children already have; they already have a physical mind; that is to say, two babies are not the same, their reactions are not the same, there is already a difference. And it is this, above all, which is given to you with the special *form* of your body, by atavism, and then fully developed by education.

No, the physical mind, as soon as you take up an integral yoga, must be dealt with; but this material mind, the cellular one, I assure you, is altogether new, yes, altogether new.

It is the mind which was like an uncoordinated substance, which

was constantly active, but not organised (*Mother makes a gesture of continuous trepidation*). It is this which is now being organised. It is that which is important—for Sri Aurobindo had said that it was unorganisable and it had only to be thrown out of existence. And I too had the same impression. But when the action for transformation upon the cells is constant, this material mind begins to be organised. It is this that is wonderful—it begins to be organised. And as it is being organised, it learns to *keep silent*—that is most remarkable! It learns to keep quiet, keep silent and allow the supreme Force to act without interfering.

The greatest difficulty is in the nerves, because they are so accustomed to the ordinary conscious will that when it stops and the direct Action from the highest is asked for, they go mad, as it were. The other day I had this experience, which lasted more than an hour, and it was difficult; but this taught me many things—many. And all this is what can be called the “transfer of power”; the former power withdraws; and then before the body adapts itself to the new power, there is a period which is critical. As all the cells are in a state of constant aspiration, it goes relatively quickly, but all the same... the minutes are long.

But more and more there is a kind of certitude in the cells that whatever happens is in view of this transformation and his transfer of directing power. And even at the time when it is materially painful (not even physically: materially painful), the cells keep this certitude. And then they resist, they bear the suffering without depression, without being affected in any way, with this certitude that it is to prepare for the transformation, the process of transformation and of the transfer of directing power. As I said, it is in the nerves that the experience is the most painful—naturally, because they are the most sensitive cells, those that have the most acute sensation. But they have a very considerable, very spontaneous, spontaneously strong receptivity—without any effort—to the harmonious physical vibration (which is very rare, but still it exists in some individuals). And this physical vibration, what might be called a physical *force*, a harmonious physical vibration (spontaneously harmonious, without the necessity of a mental vibration, like the vibrations of a flower, for example; there are physical vibrations like that, which carry in themselves a harmonious force)—the nerves are extremely sensitive and receptive to this vibration, which puts them right immediately.

21 August 1965, 11, 18-21

The big difficulty in Matter is that the material consciousness (that is to say, the mind in Matter) has been formed under the pressure of difficulties—difficulties, obstacles, sufferings, struggles. It has been, so to say, “worked out” by these things and that has left upon it a stamp, almost of pessimism, defeatism, which is certainly the greatest obstacle. It is of this that I am conscious in my own work. The most material consciousness, the most material mind is accustomed to act, to make an effort, to advance through whippings; otherwise, it is *tamas*. And then, so far as it imagines, it imagines always difficulty, always the obstacle or always the opposition, and that slows down the movement terribly. Very concrete, very tangible and *often repeated* experiences are needed to convince it that behind all its difficulties there is a Grace, behind all its failures there is the Victory, behind all its pains, its sufferings, its contradictions, there is Ananda. Of all efforts it is this one which has to be repeated most often; all the while you are obliged to stop or to remove, to convert a pessimism, a doubt or an imagination altogether defeatist.

I am speaking exclusively of the material consciousness.

Naturally, when something comes down from above, that makes, well... a crash, like that (*Mother makes a gesture of flattening*), then all is silent, all stops and waits. But... I understand well why the Truth, the Truth-Consciousness does not express itself more constantly, because the difference between its Power and the power of Matter is so great that the power of Matter is, as it were, annulled—but then that does not mean transformation, that means crushing. That is what they used to do in ancient times—they crushed all this material consciousness under the weight of a Power against which nothing can struggle, which nothing can oppose. And then one had the impression: “There you are! It has been done.” But it has not been done, not at all!—for the rest, down below, remained as before, without changing.

Now it is being given the full possibility to change; well, for that you must allow it full play and not interpose a Power that crushes it—this I understand very well. But this consciousness has the obstinacy of the imbecile. How many times during a suffering, for example, when a suffering is there, acute, and one has the impression that it is going to become unbearable, there is the little inner movement (within the cells) of Call—the cells send their S.O.S.—everything stops, the suffering disappears, and often (now more and more) it is replaced by a feeling of blissful well-being; but the very first reaction of this imbecile material consciousness is: “Ah! We shall see how long that is going to last”, and

naturally, by this movement it demolishes everything—one must begin all over again.

I believe that for the effect to be lasting—not a miraculous effect that comes, dazzles and goes away—it must really be the effect of a *transformation*. One must be very, very patient—we have to deal with a consciousness very slow, very heavy, very obstinate, which is not able to advance rapidly, which clings to what it has, to what has appeared to it as truth; even if it is quite a tiny truth, it clings to that and does not want to move. Then to cure that, one must have very much patience—much patience.

The whole thing is to hold on, to endure, to endure.

Sri Aurobindo has said this many times in many forms: Endure and you'll conquer... bear—bear and you'll vanquish.

Triumph comes to the most enduring.

So then, that seems to be the lesson for these conglomerates here (*Mother points to her body*)—bodies appear to me simply as conglomerates and so long as there is a will behind to keep them together for some reason or other, they remain together.... In the last few days, yesterday or the day before, there was this experience: a kind of consciousness wholly decentralised (I am speaking *always* of the physical consciousness, not of the higher consciousness at all), a decentralised consciousness which happened to be here, there, there, in this body, in that body (in what people call “this person” and “that person”, but this notion does not exist very much any more), then there was a kind of intervention of a universal consciousness with regard to the cells, as though it asked those cells for what reason they wanted to keep this combination, if one can call it so, or that conglomerate. Indeed, they were made to understand or feel the difficulties coming from the number of years, the wear and tear, the external difficulties, in sum, all the deterioration caused by friction and usage—but that seemed to them quite unimportant. The answer was rather interesting in the sense that they did not seem to attach importance to anything other than *the capacity to remain in conscious contact with the higher Force*. It was like an aspiration (not formulated in words, naturally), what is called in English “a yearning”, “a longing” for this contact with the divine Force, the Force of Harmony, the Force of Truth, the Force of Love. And it is because of that that they appreciate the present combination.

It is altogether another point of view.

I express it with the words of the mind, for there is no other way,

but it was in the domain of sensation rather than any other thing. And it was very clear—it was very clear and very continuous, there were no fluctuations. At that moment, this universal consciousness intervened, saying, “There!—the obstacles”, and these obstacles were clearly seen (this kind of pessimism of the mind—a formless mind which is about to be born and organise itself in the cells), but the cells themselves cared nothing for it; it appeared to them as a kind of disease (the word deforms, but they had the impression as of an accident or an inevitable disease or something which did *not* form a normal part of their development and which was imposed upon them). Then, *at that moment*, there was born a kind of *lower* power to act upon these things (this physical mind); that has given a *material* power to separate itself from that and reject it. And it is after that that there was this turning of which I spoke just now, the turning in the circumstances as a whole, as if truly something decisive had happened. There was as though a confident joy: “Ah! We are free from this nightmare.”

And at the same time, a relief—a physical relief, as though the air was easier to breathe—yes, a little as though one was closed in a shell—a suffocating shell—and that... in any case an opening has been made within. And you breathe. I do not know if it is more than that, but it is as though a fissure was made, an opening, and you breathe.

And it was an altogether material, cellular action.

But as you descend into that domain, the domain of the cells, even of the very constitution of the cells, how it seems less heavy! This sort of heaviness of Matter disappears—it begins again to be fluid, vibrant. This would tend to prove that the heaviness, thickness, inertia, immobility, is something *added*, it is not a quality essential to... it is the false Matter, that which we think and feel, but not Matter itself, as it is. This was clearly felt.

7 October 1964, II, 2-5

### **Psychic being materializing into the supramental being, Mother's new body**

X was there just in front of me, and I saw her psychic being, dominating over her by so much (*gesture indicating about twenty centimetres*), taller. It was the first time. Her physical being was small and her psychic being was so much bigger. And it was an unsexed being, neither man

nor woman. Then I said to myself (possibly it is always so, I do not know, but here I noticed it very clearly), I said to myself, “But it is the psychic being, it is that which will materialise itself and become the supramental being!”

I saw it, it was so. There were particularities, but these were not well-marked, and it was clearly a being that was neither man nor woman, having the combined characteristics of both. And it was bigger than the person and in every way overtopped her by about so much (*gesture surpassing the physical body by about twenty centimetres*); she was there and it was like this (*same gesture*). And it had this colour... this colour... which if it became quite material would be the colour of Auroville.<sup>1</sup> It was fainter, as though behind a veil, it was not absolutely precise, but it was that colour. There was hair on the head, but... it was somewhat different. I shall see better perhaps another time. But it interested me very much, because it was as though that being were telling me, “But you are busy looking to see what kind of being the supramental will be—there it is! There, it is that.” And it was there. It was the psychic being of the person.

So, one understands. One understands: the psychic being materialises itself... and that gives continuity to evolution. This creation gives altogether the feeling that there is nothing arbitrary, there is a kind of divine logic behind and it is not like our human logic, it is very much superior to ours—but there is one, and that was fully satisfied when I saw this.

It is really interesting. I was very interested. It was there, calm and quiet, and it said to me, “You were looking, well, there it is, yes, it is that!”

And then I understood why the mind and the vital were sent out of this body, leaving the psychic being—naturally it was that which had been always governing all the movements, so it was nothing new, but there are no difficulties any more: all the complications that were coming from the vital and the mental, adding their impressions and tendencies, all gone. And I understood: “Ah! It is that, it is this psychic being which has to become the supramental being.”

But I never sought to know what its appearance was like. And when I saw X, I understood. And I see it, I am seeing it still, I have kept the memory. It was as though the hair on the head was red (but it was not like that). And its expression! An expression so fine, and sweetly ironical... oh! extraordinary, extraordinary.

<sup>1</sup> Orange

And you understand, I had my eyes open, it was almost a material vision.

So one understands. All of a sudden all the questions have vanished, it has become very clear, very simple.

*(Silence)*

And it is precisely the psychic that survives. So, if it materialises itself, it means the abolition of death. But “abolition” ... nothing is abolished except what is not in accordance with the Truth, which goes away... whatever is not capable of transforming itself in the image of the psychic and becoming an integral part of the psychic.

*1 July 1970, 11, 238-9*

For the first time, early in the morning, I saw myself, my body—I do not know whether it is the supramental body or... (how to say it?) a body in transition, but I had a body altogether new, in the sense that it was sexless—it was not a woman nor was it a man.

It was very white. But it is because my skin is white, I believe, I do not know.

It was very slim (*gesture indicating slenderness*)—it was pretty. Truly a harmonious form.

So it was the first time. I did not know at all, I had no idea of what it would be like, none at all, and I saw—I *was* like that, I had become like that.

*24 March 1972, 11, 301*

*The other day you spoke of the vision of your body, this body in transition...*

Yes, but I *was* like that. It was myself. I did not see myself in a mirror: I saw myself like that (*Mother bends her head to look at her body*). I was... I was like that.

It was for the first time. It was at four o'clock in the morning, I believe. It was quite natural—I did not look in a mirror, I was quite natural. I remember only what I saw (*gesture from the chest to the waist*). I had only a veil on me, so I saw only... it was the trunk that was quite different from the chest down to the waist: neither man nor woman.

And it was pretty. I had a form very very slim, very slender—very slender but not thin. And the skin was very white; the skin was like my skin. A very pretty form. But no sex, you could not say—neither man



nor woman; sex had disappeared.

Also there (*Mother points to the chest*), all that: nothing. I do not know how to say it. It was like a semblance, but had no form at all (*Mother touches her chest*), not even as much as men have. A very white skin, all very even. No belly, so to say. The stomach—no stomach. All that was slim.

Well, I did not pay any special attention because I was like that and I found it quite natural. It was the first time and it was in the night, the day before yesterday. And last night I saw nothing—that was the first and only time till now.

*But it was so in the subtle physical?*

It must have been so in the subtle physical.

*But how will that pass into the physical?*

There! I do not know... I do not know. I do not know.

Also, it was clear that there should not be any complicated process of digestion nor of elimination as now. It was not like that.

But how?... Evidently the food is already very different and becoming more and more different (as for example glucose, things that do not need a complicated digestion). But how is the body itself going to change? I do not know. I do not know.

I did not look to see how it was, because it was quite natural, so I cannot give a detailed description. Simply, it was neither the body of a woman nor the body of a man—that is clear. And the “outline”, the silhouette, was almost the same as that of a very very young person. There was a sort of semblance to human forms (*Mother sketches it in the air*), there was a shoulder and a figure. As though the semblance of a form.

I see it, but... I saw it as one sees oneself. And there was a kind of veil that I had put on just to cover myself. It was a mode of being, not surprising to me, it was a natural mode of being.

It must be like that in the subtle physical.

*No, what seems mysterious is the transit from one to the other.*

Yes, how?

But it is the same mystery as the passage from the chimpanzee to a man.

*Oh no! It is much more tremendous than that, Mother; much more tremendous because, after all, between a chimpanzee and a man there is not much difference.*

But there was not much difference in appearance here (*Mother sketches*

a silhouette in the air): there were the shoulders, the arms, a body, a figure like that, legs. All that was the same, only it was...

*Yes, but I mean to say that the bodily function of a chimpanzee and that of a man are similar.*

They are similar.

*Well, yes, they digest, breathe, they... Whereas here...*

No, there must have been respiration—on the contrary, the shoulders were broad (*gesture*). That is important. Only the chest was neither feminine nor masculine, but just a semblance. And then all that—stomach, belly, etc.—they were just an outline, a very slim and harmonious form, but it certainly had not the use to which we put our body.

The two things very very different: first, procreation, of which there was no possibility there; secondly, the food. But it is quite clear that the food now is not that of chimpanzees nor that of the first men. It is very different. And now the question is to find a food which needs no complicated digestion.... Here it seems to me that the food should not be positively liquid, but not solid either. And then there is the question of the mouth—I do not know. The teeth? Evidently there is no more need of chewing and so the teeth have no more... But there must be something in their place.... That I do not know at all, at all, how the face was, but it did not seem to have a very different look from what it is now.

Evidently, what will change very much, which had become very important, was breathing. It is upon this that this being greatly depended.

*Yes, probably it absorbs the energies directly.*

Yes. But probably there will be intermediary beings that will not last very long, like the intermediary beings that were between the chimpanzee and man.

But I do not know, something must happen that has not happened till now.

Yes.

*(Silence)*

*Sometimes I have a sort of feeling that the time of realisation is near.*

Yes, but how?

*Yes, how, one does not know.*

Is that (*Mother points to her body*), is that going to change? It must change or it has to follow the old ordinary process of undoing itself and remaking itself.... I do not know.... Evidently life can be much

prolonged, there are examples but... I do not know.

I do not know.

*Many a time I have had the feeling that, rather than a transformation, it will be a concretisation of the other body.*

Ah!... But how?

*That also, the transition, one does not know. But instead of this one becoming the other, it is rather the other that will take the place of this one.*

Yes, but how?

*Yes, how, I do not know.*

(*After a silence*) Yes, the person that I was the night before yesterday, evidently if it materialised itself... But how?

*(Mother goes into contemplation.)*

One knows nothing!

25 March 1972, 11, 302-6

## **Transformation of the body and the organs**

One of the greatest victories of this ineffable humility of God will be the transformation of Matter which is apparently the most undivine. Supramental plasticity is an attribute of finally transformed Matter. The supramental body which has to be brought into being here has four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it were always walking in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in whatever conditions it is placed it will immediately be equal to the demands made upon it because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually make Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but will be, on the contrary, so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequences and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly, it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a permanent proof of the transformation which will convince even

the most sceptical.

The bodily transformation will be the supreme spiritual rebirth—an utter casting away of all the ordinary past.

1930-1, 3, 175-6

*Mother, how can the functioning of the body “attain to a supreme capacity”?*

Precisely by transformation. This implies a total transformation. Sri Aurobindo speaks about it later in what follows.

For the moment, our body is simply a doubtful improvement on the animal body, for if we have gained from a certain point of view, we have lost from another. It is certain that from the point of view of purely physical capacities many animals are superior to us. (...) Therefore, I don't want to anticipate what we are going to read, but all this purely animal functioning of our body, all this part which is exactly the same as in animal life—that we depend for life on the circulation of the blood and to have blood we need to eat, and so on, and all that this implies—these are terrible limitations and bondages! As long as material life depends on that, it is obvious that we won't be able to divinise our life.

So, we must assume that animality in the human being should be replaced by another source of life, and this is quite conceivable—not only conceivable but partially realisable; and this is obviously the aim we ought to set before ourselves if we want to transform matter and make it capable of expressing divine qualities.

In the very, very old traditions—there was a tradition more ancient than the Vedic and the Chaldean which must have been the source of both—in that ancient tradition there is already mention of a “glorious body” which would be plastic enough to be transformed at every moment by the deeper consciousness: it would express that consciousness, it would have no fixity of form. It mentioned luminosity: the constituent matter could become luminous at will. It mentioned a sort of possibility of weightlessness which would allow the body to move about in the air only by the action of will-power and by certain processes of control of the inner energy, and so on. Much has been said about these things.

I don't know if there ever were beings on earth who had partially realised this, but in a very small way there have been partial instances of one thing or another, examples which go to prove that it is possible. And following up this idea, one could go so far as to conceive of the replacement of material organs and their functioning as it now is, by

centres of concentration of force and energy which would be receptive to the higher forces and which, by a kind of alchemy, would use them for the necessities of life and the body. We already speak of the different “centres” in the body—this knowledge is very widespread among people who have practised yoga—but these centres could be perfected to the point where they replace the different organs by a direct action of the higher energy and vibrations on matter. Those who have practised occultism well enough, in its most integral form, it could be said, know the process of materialisation of subtle energies and can put them in contact with physical vibrations. Not only is it something that can be done, but it is something which *is* done. And all that is a science, a science which must itself be perfected, completed, and which will obviously be used for the creation and setting in action of new bodies which will be able to manifest the supramental life in the material world.

But, as Sri Aurobindo says, before this can be done, it is good to utilise all that we have in order to increase and make more exact the control of physical activities. It is very obvious that those who practise physical culture scientifically and with coordination acquire a control over their bodies that’s unimaginable for ordinary people. When the Russian gymnasts came here, we saw with what ease they did exercises which for an ordinary man are impossible, and they did them as if it was the simplest thing in the world; there was not even the least sign of effort! Well, that mastery is already a great step towards the transformation of the body.

*17 April 1957, 9, 85-7*

The conclusion, what you must succeed in doing, is to be able to prolong life at will: not to leave the body until one wants to.

So, if one has resolved to transform the body, well, one must wait with all the necessary patience—three hundred years, five hundred years, a thousand years, it does not matter—the time needed for the change. As for me, I see that three hundred years is a minimum. To tell you the truth, with the experience I have of things, I think it is truly a minimum.

Just imagine. You have never thought about what it means, have you? How is your body built? In a purely animal way, with all the organs and all the functions. You are absolutely dependent: if your heart stops for even the thousandth part of a second, you are gone and that’s the end. The whole thing works and works automatically without your conscious will (happily for you, for if you had to supervise the

functioning, it would have gone the wrong way long ago). All that is there. Everything is necessary, because it was organised in that manner. You cannot do without an organ, at least totally; there must be something in you representing it.

Transformation implies that all this purely material arrangement is replaced by an arrangement of concentrations of force having certain types of different vibrations substituting each organ by a centre of conscious energy moved by a conscious will and directed by a movement coming from above, from higher regions. No stomach, no heart any longer, no circulation, no lungs, no... All this disappears. But it is replaced by a whole set of vibrations representing what those organs are symbolically. For the organs are only the material symbols of centres of energy; they are not the essential reality; they simply give it a form or a support in certain given circumstances. The transformed body will then function through its *real* centres of energy and not any longer through their symbolic representatives such as were developed in the animal body. Therefore, first of all you must know what your heart represents in the cosmic energy and what the circulation represents and what the stomach and the brain represent. To begin with, you must first be conscious of all that. And then, you must have at your disposal the original vibrations of that which is symbolised by these organs. And you must slowly gather together all these energies in your body and change each organ into a centre of conscious energy which will replace the symbolic movement by the real one.... You believe it will take only three hundred years to do that? I believe it will take much more time to have a form with qualities which will not be exactly those we know, but will be much superior; a form that one naturally dreams to see plastic: as the expression of your face changes with your feelings, so the body will change (not the form but within the same form) in accordance with what you want to express with your body. It can become very concentrated, very developed, very luminous, very quiet, with a perfect plasticity, with a perfect elasticity and then a lightness at will... Have you never dreamt of giving a kick to the ground and then soaring into the air, flying away? You move about. You push a little with your shoulder, you go this way; you push again, you go that way; and you go wherever you like, quite easily; and finally when you have finished you come back, enter your body. Well, you must be able to do that with your body, and also certain things related to respiration—but there will no longer be lungs; there's a true movement behind a symbolic movement which

gives you this capacity of lightness; you do not belong any longer to the system of gravitation, you escape it.<sup>1</sup> And so for each organ.

There is no end to imagination: to be luminous whenever one wants it, to be transparent whenever one wants it. Naturally there is no longer any need of any bones also in the system; it is not a skeleton with skin and viscera, it is another thing. It is concentrated energy obeying the will. This does not mean that there will no longer be any definite and recognisable forms; the form will be built by qualities rather than by solid particles. It will be, if one may say so, a practical or pragmatic form; it will be supple, mobile, light at will, in contrast to the fixity of the gross material form.

So, to change this into what I have just described, I believe three hundred years are truly very little. It seems many more than that are needed. Perhaps with a very, very, very concentrated work...

*Three hundred years with the same body?*

Well, there is change, it is no longer the same body.

But, you see, when our little humanity says three hundred years with the same body, you say: “Why! when I am fifty it already begins to decompose, so at three hundred it will be a horrible thing!” But it is not like that. If it is three hundred years with a body that goes on perfecting itself from year to year, perhaps when the three hundredth year is reached one will say: “Oh! I still need three or four hundred more to be what I want to be.” If each year that passes represents a progress, a transformation, one would like to have more and more years in order to be able to transform oneself more and more. When something is not exactly as you want it to be—take, for example, simply one of the things I have just described, say, plasticity or lightness or elasticity or luminosity, and none of them is exactly as you want it, then you will still need at least two hundred years more so that it may be accomplished, but you never think: “How is it? It is still going to last two hundred years more!” On the contrary, you say: “Two hundred years more are *absolutely* necessary so that it may be truly done.” And then, when all is

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<sup>1</sup> According to Sri Aurobindo, this true movement behind respiration is the same as the one governing electrical and magnetic fields; it is what the ancient yogis used to call Vayu, the Life-Energy. The breathing exercises (*prānāyāma*) are simply one system (among others) for acquiring mastery over Vayu which eventually enables you to be free from gravitation and gives certain powers known to the ancients: the power to be extremely light or extremely heavy, very big or very tiny (*garimā, laghimā, mahimā, animā*). As an appendix to this talk we publish an extract from a conversation of Sri Aurobindo with a French scientist-disciple, dealing with some of these “true movements” behind the external movements of Matter.

done, when all is perfect, then there is no longer any question of years, for you are immortal.

But there are many objections that may be raised. It may be said that it would be impossible for the body to change unless something changes in the surroundings also. What would be your relation with other objects if you have changed so much? With other beings also? It seems necessary that a whole set of things changes, at least in relative proportions, so that one can exist, continue to exist. This then brings much complication, for it is no longer one individual consciousness that has to do the work, it becomes a collective consciousness. And so it is much more difficult still.

20 May 1953, 5, 58-61

## **Total identification with the Supreme**

*[The Mother replies to “What is this capacity or this aptitude to express the supramental world or to be in relation with it?” – Comp.]*

I have observed since 1956, for years, that no supramental vibration can be transmitted except in this perfect equality. If there is the least opposition to this equality—in fact the least movement of ego, any preference of the ego, it does not come through, it is not transmitted. This is already difficult enough.

Added to this, there are two conditions for the realisation to become total and they are not easily fulfilled. It is not very difficult on the intellectual plane—I am not speaking here of just anyone at all but of people who have already practiced yoga and followed a discipline—it is relatively easy; on the psychological plane too, if you bring in this equality, it is not very difficult. But as soon as you come to the material plane, that is, the physical and then the body, it is not easy. The two conditions are: first, a power of expansion, of widening, that is unlimited, so to say, so that you can widen yourself to the dimension of the supramental consciousness, which is total. The supramental consciousness is the consciousness of the Supreme in His totality—when I say “His totality”, I mean the Supreme in His aspect of Manifestation. Naturally, from the higher point of view, the point of view of the essence—the essence of what becomes the Supermind in the Manifestation—there must be a capacity for total identification with the Supreme, not only in His aspect of Manifestation, but also in his



static or nirvanic aspect, beyond the Manifestation—Non-Being. But in addition to this, one must be able to identify oneself with the Supreme in the Becoming. This implies two things: first a widening that is at least unlimited, as I have said, and at the same time a total plasticity in order to be able to follow the Supreme in His Becoming. It is not at one particular moment that one must be as wide as the universe, but indefinitely, in the Becoming. These are the two conditions; they must be there potentially.

So long as there is no question of physical transformation, the psychological and, in a large measure, subjective point of view is sufficient. And that is relatively easy. But when it comes to including Matter in the work, Matter as it is in this world, where the very starting-point itself is wrong—we start from Inconscience and Ignorance—then it is very difficult. Because, in fact, so that this Matter could reach the individualization needed to recover the lost Consciousness, it was made with a certain fixity indispensable to make forms last and precisely to maintain this possibility of individuality. And that is the chief obstacle to the widening, the plasticity, the suppleness needed to be able to receive the supermind. I am constantly faced with this problem, which is a very concrete, absolutely material one, when one is dealing with these cells which must remain cells and not evaporate into a reality which is no longer physical. And at the same time, they must have this suppleness, this lack of fixity which enables them to widen indefinitely.

Usually, when we do something, we perceive within us the will to do this thing—when we are conscious and observe ourselves doing it, we can see that; there is always—it may be very fleeting—the will to do it. It is the intervention of the mind, the habitual intervention, the order in which things happen. Whereas the supramental action is decided by overleaping the mind. It is not necessary to pass through the mind, it is direct. Something enters into direct contact with the vital centres and makes them act—without passing through the thought, but with full consciousness. The consciousness does not work in the usual order, it goes directly from the centre of spiritual will to Matter.

As long as one can keep this absolute immobility of the mind, the inspiration is absolutely pure, it comes pure. If one can catch it and keep it while speaking, what comes through is also unmixed, it remains pure.

It is an extremely delicate working, probably because it is unfamiliar—the least movement, the smallest mental vibration disturbs everything. But as long as it lasts it is perfectly pure. And that must be

the *constant* state of a supramentalised life. The mentalised spiritual will should no longer intervene; because one may very well have a spiritual will, one can live constantly expressing the spiritual will—that is what happens to all those who feel that they are guided by the Divine within—but that comes through a mental transcription. And so long as it is like that, it is not the supramental life. The supramental life *no longer* passes through the mind. The mind is an immobile zone of transmission. The slightest twitch is enough to disturb it.

(*Silence*)

One could say that the constant state that is needed for the Supermind to be able to express itself through a terrestrial consciousness is the perfect equality that comes from spiritual identification with the Supreme. Everything becomes the Supreme in a perfect equality. And it is automatic—not the equality achieved by the conscious will, by intellectual effort or an understanding prior to the state; it is not that. It must be spontaneous and automatic; one should no longer respond to everything that comes from outside as if one were responding to something coming from outside. This kind of reflection and response should be replaced by a state of constant perception—which I cannot call identical because each thing necessarily calls for a special response—but free from any rebound, if one may say so. It is the difference that exists between something coming from outside, that strikes you and that you respond to, and something which is circulating and which quite naturally brings with it the vibrations needed for the general action. I do not know whether I am making myself clearly understood.... It is the difference between a vibratory movement circulating in a *unitary* field of action and a movement coming from something outside, striking from outside and obtaining a response—that is the usual state of human consciousness. On the other hand, when the consciousness is identified with the Supreme, the movements are internal, so to say, in the sense that nothing comes from outside; there are only things that circulate and naturally bring about certain vibrations in the course of their circulation, by similarity and necessity—or that change the vibrations in the medium of circulation.

It is something very familiar to me, because it is my constant state at present—I never have the impression of things coming from outside and striking, but of inner, multiple and sometimes contradictory movements, and of a constant circulation bringing about the inner changes needed for the movement.

That is the indispensable basis.

The widening follows almost automatically, demanding adjustments in the body itself which are difficult to resolve. This is a problem in which I am still completely immersed.

And then the suppleness needed to follow the movement of Becoming; suppleness, that is, the capacity for decrystallisation—the whole period of life spent in individualisation is a period of conscious and deliberate crystallisation, which later has to be undone. Becoming a conscious and individual being is a constant crystallisation—constant and deliberate—of all things; and afterwards one must make the opposite movement, constantly, and also, even more so, deliberately. At the same time, one must not lose the benefit, in the consciousness, of what one has acquired by individualisation.

I must say that it is difficult.

From the point of view of thought it is elementary, very easy. And even from the point of view of feelings, it is not difficult; for the heart, that is, the emotional being, to widen itself to the dimension of the Supreme is relatively easy. But the body! It is very difficult, very difficult without the body losing—how to put it?—its centre of coagulation; without it dissolving into the surrounding mass. And even then, if one were in the midst of Nature with mountains, forests and rivers, and great natural beauty, plenty of space, it would be rather pleasant! But one cannot take a single step materially, out of one's body, without coming across things that are painful. It occasionally happens that one comes in contact with a substance that is pleasing, harmonious, warm, that vibrates with a higher light. But this is rare. Yes, flowers, sometimes flowers—sometimes, not always. But this material world, oh!... You get knocked everywhere—scratched, scratched, scraped, knocked by all kinds of things that *won't unfold*. Oh, how difficult it is! How little human life has blossomed! It is shrivelled up, hardened, without light, without warmth—to say nothing of joy.

But sometimes, when one sees flowing water or a ray of sunlight in the trees—oh, everything sings, the cells sing, they are happy.

12 January 1962, 10, 112-7

*“In our Yoga our aim is to be united [with the Divine] in the physical consciousness and on the supramental plane”<sup>1</sup>; then,*

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Elements of Yoga* – answers to elementary questions asked during the years 1933 to 1936. Chapter 1, “The Call and Fitness”; and Chapter 2, “The Foundation”.

*when the physical consciousness is united with the Divine, does transformation follow?*

Yes, “follow”, but not instantaneously. It takes time. Only if the Divine descends into the physical consciousness—or rather, to put it more precisely, if the physical consciousness is totally receptive to the Divine—the transformation follows naturally. But transformation does not come about by waving a magic wand. It takes time and is done progressively.

*But it is sure to come once the physical consciousness is united, isn't that so?*

I shall tell you this a little later!

*For, if so, it is not the final aim<sup>1</sup>—if transformation does not follow!*

No. It is not what we call the final aim. But transformation *must* follow, it must follow automatically. But what I mean is the degree of totality, so to speak, of integrality, which is not assured, in the sense that probably there are many stages in this transformation. We speak of transformation vaguely, in this way; it gives us the impression of something that is going to happen which will see to it that all is well—I think it comes to that approximately. If we have difficulties, the difficulties will disappear; those who are ill—their illness will vanish; and again, if there are physical shortcomings, these will disappear, and so on. But it is all very hazy, it's just an impression.

There is something quite remarkable: the physical consciousness, the body-consciousness, cannot know a thing with precision, in all its details, except when it is *on the point* of being realised. And this will be a sure indication when, for instance, one can understand the process: through what sequence of movements and transformations will the total transformation come about, in what order, in what way, to put it thus? What will happen first? What will happen later?—all that, in all its details. Each time you see a detail with exactitude, it means that it is on the point of being realised.

One can have the vision of the whole. For instance, it is quite certain that the transformation of the body-consciousness will take place first, that a progress in the mastery and control of all the movements of the body will come next, that this mastery will gradually change (here it becomes more vague), gradually, into a sort of transformation of the movement itself: alteration and transformation—all that is certain. But

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1 “To be in full union with the Divine is the final aim.”

what must happen in the end, what Sri Aurobindo has spoken about in one of his last articles<sup>1</sup> in which he says that even the organs will be transformed, in the sense that they will be replaced by centres of concentration of forces (of concentration and action of forces) of different qualities and kinds which will replace all the organs of the body—that, my children, is much more distant, that is, it is something which... one cannot yet grasp the means of doing it. Take, for instance, the heart: by what means is this function of the heart which makes the blood flow through the whole body going to be replaced by a concentration of forces? By what means will the blood be replaced by a certain kind of force, and all the rest? By what means will the lungs be replaced by another concentration of forces, and what forces, and with what vibrations, and in what way?... All that will come much later. It cannot yet be realised. One can have an inkling of it, foresee it, but...

For the body, to know is to have the power to do. I shall give you an example that's just at hand. You do not know a gymnastic movement except when you do it. When you have done it well, you know it, understand it. But not before that, don't you? Physical knowledge is the power of doing. Well, that applies to everything, including transformation.

A certain number of years must pass before we can speak with knowledge of how this is going to happen, but all that I can tell you is that it has begun.

*21 April 1954, 6, 109-1*

For all those who live on the physical plane, in the physical consciousness, it is physical means and processes which have to be used in dealing with the body. And as the vast majority of human beings, even in the Ashram, live in a consciousness which, if not exclusively physical, is at least predominantly physical, it is quite natural for them to follow and obey all the principles laid down by physical science for the care of the body.

Now, according to what Sri Aurobindo teaches us, this is not a final realisation, nor is it the ideal to which we want to rise. There is a higher state than this, in which the consciousness, though it still remains principally mental or partially mental in its functioning, is already open to higher regions in an aspiration for the spiritual life, and open to the supramental influence.

<sup>1</sup> "The Divine Body", *The Supramental Manifestation*, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 20 – 40.

As soon as this opening occurs, one passes beyond the state in which life is purely physical—when I say “physical” I include the whole mental and intellectual life and all human achievements, even the most remarkable; I am speaking of a physical which is the summit of human capacities, of an earthly and material life in which man can express values of a higher order from the mental and intellectual point of view—one can go beyond that state, open oneself to the supramental force which is now acting on earth and enter a transitional zone where the two influences meet and interpenetrate, where the consciousness is still mental and intellectual in its functioning, but sufficiently imbued with the supramental strength and force to become the instrument of a higher truth.

At present this state can be realised on earth by those who have prepared themselves to receive the supramental force which is manifesting. And in that state, in that state of consciousness, the body can benefit from a much better condition than the one it was in before. It can be put into direct contact with the essential truth of its being, to the extent that, spontaneously, at every moment it knows instinctively, or intuitively, what is to be done and that it can do it.

As I say, this state can now be realised by all those who take the trouble of preparing themselves to receive the supramental force, to assimilate it and obey it.

Of course, there is a higher state than this, the state Sri Aurobindo speaks of as the ideal to be fulfilled: the divine life in a divine body. But he himself tells us that this will take time; it is an integral transformation which cannot be achieved in a moment. It will even take quite a long time. But when it is accomplished, when the consciousness has become a supramental consciousness, then action will no longer be determined at every moment by a mental choice or be dependent on the physical capacity: the entire body will spontaneously, integrally, be the perfect expression of the inner truth.

This is the ideal we must keep before us, for the realisation of which we must strive; but we must not delude ourselves and think that it can be a rapid transformation, miraculous, immediate, marvellous, without effort and without labour.

However, it is no longer only a possibility, it is no longer even only a promise for a far-off future: it is something which is in the making. And already one can not only foresee but feel the moment when the body will be able to repeat integrally the experience of the most spiritual

part of the being, as the inner spirit has already done, and will itself be able to stand in its bodily consciousness before the supreme Reality, turn to it integrally and say in all sincerity, in a total self-giving of all its cells: “To be Thyself—exclusively, perfectly—Thyself, infinitely, eternally... very simply.”

29 May 1957, 9, 110-2

### **The new world will be because it has never been**

I have had for a moment—just a few seconds—the supramental consciousness. It was so wonderful, my child!... I have understood that if we were made to taste of that now, we would not wish to live otherwise. And we are in the course of (gesture of kneading) changing laboriously. And the change, the process of the change, seems... One can have it through a sort of indifference (I do not know how to say it). But it does not last for long. And generally it is laborious.

But that consciousness, it is so wonderful, you know!

And it is a very interesting thing, for it is, as it were, an utmost activity in a complete peace. But that lasted only a few seconds.

*(Silence)*

And you?

*It is a total consciousness?*

It is extraordinary. It is like the harmonisation of contraries. An activity, yes, total, tremendous, and a perfect peace.

But all these are words.

*(Silence)*

*It is a material consciousness?*

The action is a material action—but not in the same manner.

*(Silence)*

*How can one come into contact with that more easily? How can one reach there or be there?*

I do not know, because for me the whole consciousness, including that of the body, is always (*gesture of offering*) turned constantly towards the... what it feels as the Divine.

And that without “trying”, you understand?

8 November 1972, 11, 327-8

There is as though a golden Force which is pressing down (*gesture*

*of pressing*) that has no material consistence and yet seems to be tremendously heavy...

*Yes, yes.*

... and which is pressing upon Matter, thus, to compel it to turn towards the Divine *inwardly*—not an outward escape (*gesture upward*), but inwardly to turn to the Divine. And so the apparent result is as though catastrophes were inevitable. And yet along with this perception of inevitable catastrophe, there are at the same time solutions to the situation, events which come about that are by themselves altogether miraculous. It is as though the two extremes were becoming more extreme, as though what is good was becoming better and what is bad becoming worse. It is like that. With the formidable Power that is *pressing* upon the world—that was my impression.

*Yes, it is perceptible.*

Yes, it is felt like that (*Mother fingers the air*). And then in the circumstances, many things that happen generally in an indifferent way become acute; situations, differences become acute; bad wills become acute; *and*, at the same time, extraordinary miracles—extraordinary! People are saved who were about to die, things that were inextricable all of a sudden get sorted out.

And then, for individuals also, it is the same thing.

They who know how to turn towards... (how to say it?) who sincerely call the Divine, who feel that it is the only salvation, the only way out, and who sincerely give themselves, then (*gesture of breaking through*) in a few minutes it becomes wonderful. For the smallest things—there is nothing small or big, important or unimportant—it is all the same.

The values change.

It is as though the vision of the world changes.

*(Silence)*

It is, as it were, to give an idea of the change in the world by the descent of the Supramental. Truly things that were neutral become absolute: a little error becomes categorical in its consequences, and a little sincerity, a little true aspiration becomes miraculous in its result. The values have intensified in people, and even from the material point of view the smallest fault, the very smallest, has big consequences, and the least sincerity in the aspiration has wonderful results. The values have intensified, become precise.

*Mother, you speak of fault, error—I do not know if it is an aberration, but I am having a more and more precise impression*



*that fault, error, all that is not true. It is not like that. It is a means... how to say? Yes, it is a means for widening the field of aspiration.*

Yes, yes, perfectly so.

The perception of the whole is that everything is... everything is willed with a view to the conscious ascent of the world. The consciousness is preparing to become divine. And it is perfectly true: what we consider as faults are altogether part of the ordinary human conception, altogether, altogether.

*The only fault—if there is any—is not to want the other thing.*

*But from the time one wants the other thing...*

But it is not a fault, it is an imbecility!

Well, it is very simple. The whole creation must want nothing but the Divine, nothing but to manifest the Divine. And all that it does, even all its so-called errors, are only means towards making it inevitable for the whole creation to manifest the Divine—but not the “Divine” as man conceives him to be, “this and not that”, with all kinds of restrictions: a *Totality* of tremendous power and light. It is truly the Power in the world, a new and tremendous Power that has come into the world and must manifest itself and must make “manifestable” (if one may so put it) this Divine All-Power.

I have come to this conclusion. I have looked, I have observed and I have seen that what we call “supramental”, lacking a better word, this Supramental makes the creation more sensitive to the higher Power; we call that “divine” because we... It is divine in relation to what we are, but... It is something (*gesture of descent and pressure*) which must make Matter more sensitive and more... “responsive” to the Force. How to say it? At present whatever is invisible or insensible is unreal for us (I mean to say for the human being in general). We say that there are “concrete” things and things that are not so; yet this Puissance, this Power that is *not material*, becomes more concretely powerful upon earth than earthly material things. Yes, it is that.

This is the protection and the means of defence for supramental beings. It will be a thing which is not material in appearance but which has a greater power *over Matter* than material things. This is becoming more and more true from day to day, from hour to hour—the feeling that this Force, when it is directed by what we call “the Divine”, it *can*, truly it can—you understand—it has the power to move Matter, it can produce a *material* accident; and it can efface the consequences of an

absolutely material thing—it is stronger than... Matter. This is what is altogether new and incomprehensible; and therefore it produces a kind of panic in the ordinary consciousness of people. Yes, it is that. It seems... it is *no more* what it was. And truly there is something new—it is *no more* as it was.

All our common sense, all our logic, all our practical sense is dashed to the ground! Useless! It has no force any more, no reality any more; it no longer corresponds to what is. It is truly a new world.

*(Silence)*

It is this in the body which finds it difficult to adapt itself to this new Power and creates the disorder and difficulties, the illnesses. But all of a sudden one feels that if one were wholly receptive, one would become formidable. That is the impression—the impression I am having more and more, that if the whole consciousness (the whole of the most material consciousness—the most material) were receptive to this new Power... one would become for-mi-da-ble.

*(Mother closes her eyes.)*

But one essential condition: the reign of the ego must be ended. The ego is now the obstacle. The ego must be replaced by the divine consciousness—Sri Aurobindo himself called it “supramental”; we can call it supramental so that there might not be any misunderstanding, because when one speaks of “the Divine”, immediately people think of a “God”, and that spoils everything. It is not that. No, it is not that. *(Mother slowly brings down her closed fists)* It is the descent of the supramental world, which is not a purely imaginative thing (*gesture upward*), it is an *absolutely* material Power. But *(Mother smiles)* it has no need of material means.

A world which wants to take a body in the world.

*(Silence)*

Several times there have been moments when my body felt a kind of new unease and anxiety; and there was as though something which was not a voice, but which translated itself in words in my consciousness: “Why are you afraid? It is the new consciousness.” It came several times. And then I understood.

*(Silence)*

You understand; it is this which in the human common sense says: “It is impossible, that has never been”; it is this which has come to an end. It is finished, it is foolish. It has become a stupidity. One might say: it is possible *because* it has never been. It is the new world and it is the

new consciousness and it is the new Power, it is possible, and this is and will be more and more manifested *because* it is the new world, because it has never been.

It will be because it has never been.

*(Silence)*

It is beautiful: it will be because it has never been—*because* it has never been.

*(Mother enters into a long contemplation.)*

It is not material and it is more concrete than Matter!

*Yes. It is crushing almost.*

Crushing, yes, it is that.... Oh! It is...

All that is not receptive feels the crushing, but whatever is receptive feels on the contrary something like a... powerful widening.

*Yes, but it is very strange, it is both!*

Both at the same time.

*Yes, one feels something like a swelling, as though the whole thing is going to explode, and at the same time there is something that is crushed.*

Yes, but that which is crushed is the thing that resists, that is not receptive. It has only to open itself. And then the thing becomes as though... a formidable thing... It is extraordinary. It is our habit of centuries, is it not, which resists and gives this impression; but whatever opens out... one feels as though one became large, large, large... It is magnificent. Oh! It is...

*6 May 1972, 11, 313-8*

Things have taken an extreme form. So there is, as it were, an uplift of the atmosphere towards a splendour... almost inconceivable, and at the same time the feeling that at any moment one may... one may die—not “die”, but the body may be dissolved. And so the two at the same time form a consciousness (Mother shakes her head)... all the old things seem puerile, childish, unconscious—within there... it is tremendous and wonderful.

So, the body, the body has one prayer—and it is always the same:

Make me worthy of knowing Thee,

Make me worthy of serving Thee,

Make me worthy of being Thee.

I feel in myself a growing force... but it is of a new quality... in silence and in contemplation.

Nothing is impossible (*Mother opens her hands upward*).

30 December 1972, 11, 330

*Is it enough to let oneself be filled with That, is there nothing else to do?*

I think, I think that it is the only thing. I am repeating always: “What Thou willest, what Thou willest, what Thou willest... let it be what Thou willest, may I do what Thou willest, may I be conscious of what Thou willest.”

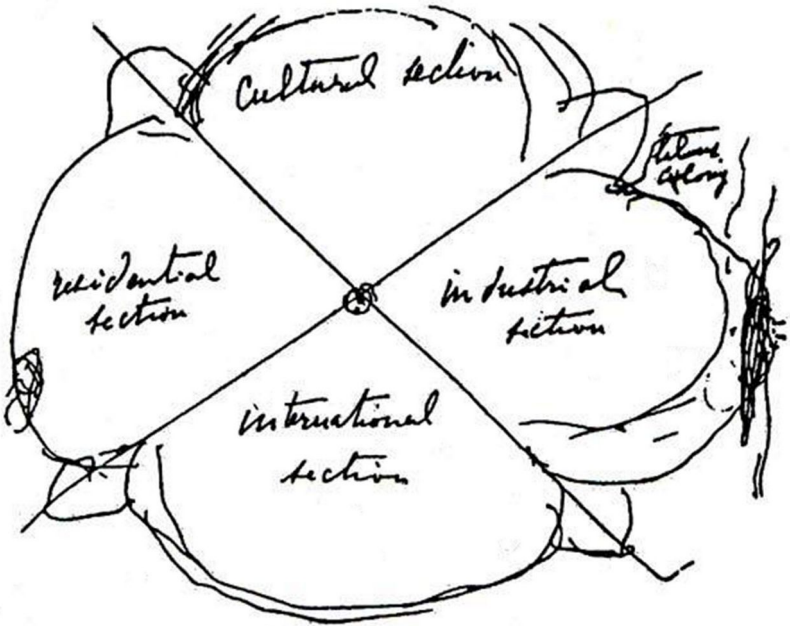
And also: “Without Thee it is death; with Thee it is life.” By “death” I do not mean physical death—it may be so; it may be that now if I lost the contact, that would be the end, but it is impossible! I have the feeling that it is that I *am That*—with all the obstructions that the present consciousness may still have, that’s all. And then, when I see someone (*Mother opens her hands as though to offer the person to the Light*), whoever he may be: like that (*same gesture*).

(*Silence*)

All the while (it is amusing), all the while I have the feeling that I am a little baby who nestles—nestles within... (what to call it?) a Divine Consciousness... *all-embracing*.

10 March 1973, 11, 332

MOTHER'S SKETCH  
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TOWNSHIP OF AUROVILLE  
1965



Four Sections:  
Residential, Cultural, Industrial, International

## *EPILOGUE*

### THE SUPRAMENTAL REALISATION

In order to know what the supramental realisation will be like, the first step, the first condition is to know what the supramental consciousness is. All those who have been, in one way or another, in contact with it have had some glimpse of the realisation to be. But those who have not, can yet aspire for that realisation, just as they can aspire to get the supramental knowledge. True knowledge means awareness by identity: once you get in touch with the supramental world, you can say something about its descent, but not before. What you can say before is that there will be a new creation upon earth; this you say through faith, since the exact character of it escapes you. And if you are called upon to define realisation, you may declare that, individually speaking, it means the transformation of your ordinary human consciousness into the divine and supramental.

The consciousness is like a ladder: at each great epoch there has been one great being capable of adding one more step to the ladder and reaching a place where the ordinary consciousness had never been. It is possible to attain a high level and get completely out of the material consciousness; but then one does not retain the ladder, whereas the great achievement of the great epochs of the universe has been the capacity to add one more step to the ladder without losing contact with the material, the capacity to reach the Highest and at the same time connect the top with the bottom instead of letting a kind of emptiness cut off all connection between the different planes. To go up and down and join the top to the bottom is the whole secret of realisation, and that is the work of the Avatar. Each time he adds one more step to the ladder there is a new creation upon earth... The step which is being added now Sri Aurobindo has called the Supramental; as a result of it, the consciousness will be able to enter the supramental world and yet retain its personal form, its individualisation and then come down to establish here a new creation. Certainly this is not the last, for there are farther ranges of being; but now we are at work to bring down the supramental, to effect a reorganisation of the world, to bring the world back to the true divine order. It is essentially a creation of order, a putting of

everything in its true place; and the chief spirit or force, the Shakti active at present is Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of perfect organization.

The work of achieving a continuity which permits one to go up and down and bring into the material what is above, is done inside the consciousness. He who is meant to do it, the Avatar, even if he were shut up in a prison and saw nobody and never moved out, still would he do the work, because it is a work in the consciousness, a work of connection between the Supermind and the material being. He does not need to be recognised, he needs have no outward power in order to be able to establish this conscious connection. Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world.

*The Mother, 1930-1931, 3, 178-9*

We would like to make Auroville the cradle of the Superman.

*The Mother, 1966, 13, 191*

The task of giving a concrete form to Sri Aurobindo's vision was entrusted to the Mother. The creation of a new world, a new humanity, a new society expressing and embodying the new consciousness is the work she has undertaken. By the very nature of things, it is a collective ideal that calls for a collective effort so that it may be realised in the terms of an integral human perfection.

The Ashram founded and built by the Mother was the first step towards the accomplishment of this goal. The project of Auroville is the next step, more exterior, which seeks to widen the base of this attempt to establish harmony between soul and body, spirit and nature, heaven and earth, in the collective life of mankind.

*The Mother, 1969, 13, 204*

Auroville is meant to hasten the advent of the supramental Reality upon earth.

The help of all those who find the world is not as it ought to be is welcome.

Each one must know if he wants to associate with an old world ready for death, or to work for a new and better world preparing to be born.

*The Mother, 1 February 1972, 13, 215*







## INTEGRAL YOGA AND THE TRIPLE TRANSFORMATION

### **Psychic being, waking consciousness, subconscious, subliminal – and the superconscious**

Homo sapiens is not the final rung on the evolutionary scale. Humans, born of the inconscience inherent in matter from which they emerge, are limited creatures experiencing life through conflict and division. Life, mind and the ranges above it lie concealed as inactive powers within the operations of material energy; but we do not know the nature, source and purpose of Reality – nor do we know our own nature and its multiple layers, how to integrate them and harmonize the apparent opposites.

Evolution cannot end with mind, an ignorance seeking for knowledge. A spiritual evolution is the cardinal fact of our terrestrial existence, manifesting Supermind and Spirit as the leading powers in the integral consciousness of the liberated being. A gnostic species living a divinised life upon earth, the advent of the all-transforming supramental Truth-Consciousness entirely releasing the inherent divinity in things: this is the next stage of evolution.

“Evolution is nothing but the progressive unfolding of Spirit out of the density of material consciousness and the gradual self-revelation of God out of this apparent animal being”<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo writes. But before there is an evolution there must be an involution of Spirit in the whole of Matter, creation is a movement between two involutions: “Spirit, in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of Matter, Matter in which also all is involved and out of which all evolves upwards to the other pole of Spirit”.<sup>2</sup>

We are made of several planes of existence and, whether conscious or unconscious, all life is Yoga. The psychic being, our evolving soul, is the soul-personality put forward by the psychic entity – the divine spark and essence in the individual – to represent it in the course of evolution. Located behind the heart-centre, *anahata*, it is our innermost being, in the fourth dimension. At first veiled, it grows by its own experiences

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<sup>1</sup> *The Supramental Manifestation*, SABCL, 41.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life Divine*, SABCL, 129.

into a fully conscious being, birth after birth, and gradually manifests itself as our inner guide.

The central being or Jivatman, our true being, unborn, refers to the Spirit, transcendent and eternal, above manifestation and over which it presides. Conversely, the psychic being – our incarnate soul – stands behind manifestation and supports it.

However, ordinarily we relate to the waking consciousness (the outer mental, vital and physical layers of being), which in fact is only a portion of our larger outer being. Along with the corresponding layers of mind, vital and body in the subconscious, the outer consciousness reaches down to the material Inconscient – the lowest level of involution, where Spirit is also present.

The subconscious, located below the feet, is that submerged layer without conscious thought, feeling or reaction, storing up obstinate *samskaras*, obscure impressions, fixed notions, mechanical repetitions, involuntary reactions – triggering persistent habitual movements that appear inconscient. Conversely, the subliminal (our subtle mental, vital and physical parts) is our inner being, and it is conscient; it includes the inner realms, subtler and freer, of our physical, vital and mental existence. The largest part of our nature, its realisation is preliminary to any spiritual realisation.

In relation to the ordinary waking consciousness the subconscious is below it, while the subliminal is behind and supports it. Above there is “a range of being superconscient ... which humanity speaks of vaguely as Spirit, God, the Oversoul ... This Spirit or Oversoul is our own highest, deepest, vastest Self.” In Sri Aurobindo’s words:

“We might say then that there are three elements in the totality of our being: there is the submental and the subconscious which appears to us as if it were inconscient, comprising the material basis and a good part of our life and body; there is the subliminal, which comprises the inner being, taken in its entirety of inner mind, inner life, inner physical with the soul or psychic entity supporting them; there is this waking consciousness which the subliminal and the subconscious throw up on the surface, a wave of their secret surge. But even this is not an adequate account of what we are; for there is not only something deep within behind our normal self-awareness, but something also high above it: that too is ourselves, other than our surface mental personality,

but not outside our true self; that too is a country of our spirit. For the subliminal proper is no more than the inner being on the level of the Knowledge-Ignorance luminous, powerful and extended indeed beyond the poor conception of our waking mind, but still not the supreme or the whole sense of our being, not its ultimate mystery. We become aware, in a certain experience, of a range of being superconscient to all these three, aware too of something, a supreme highest Reality sustaining and exceeding them all, which humanity speaks of vaguely as Spirit, God, the Oversoul: from these superconscient ranges we have visitations and in our highest being we tend towards them and to that supreme Spirit. There is then in our total range of existence a superconscience as well as a subconscious and inconscience, overarching and perhaps enveloping our subliminal and our waking selves, but unknown to us, seemingly unattainable and incommunicable.

But with the extension of our knowledge we discover what this Spirit or Oversoul is: it is ultimately our own highest deepest vastest Self, it is apparent on its summits or by reflection in ourselves as Sachchidananda creating us and the world by the power of His divine Knowledge-Will, spiritual, supramental, truth-conscious, infinite.”

*The Life Divine, SABCL, 560-1*

The superconscient includes the planes above the ordinary mind ranging from the Higher Mind through the Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind, and Mind of Light. At the summit lies the Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness or Divine Gnosis, whose fundamental character is knowledge by identity. The Supermind exists and proceeds in the fundamental truth and unity of things and is an inherent power of Sachchidananda – infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss –, the Pure Spiritual Being. All of these constitute the superconscient, but usually by this term we intend what is superconscious to our limited mentality. It is “those higher parts of Mind” that Sri Aurobindo means, pointing at the “first indispensable” evolutionary step:

“In the superconscience beyond our present level of awareness are included the higher planes of mental being as well as the native heights of supramental and pure spiritual being. The first indispensable step in an upward evolution would be to elevate our

force of consciousness into those higher parts of Mind from which we already receive, but without knowing the source, much of our larger mental movements, those especially that come with a greater power and light, the revelatory, the inspirational, the intuitive.”

*The Life Divine, SABCL, 278*

### **The two preliminary transformations of the Integral Yoga: psychicisation is a beginning, spiritualisation a middle term**

The advent of a divinized humanity living by the supramental consciousness is the object of this yoga. To that end there are three statuses of transformation, preceded by three fundamental realizations in which the individual is established and which lead to irreversible changes of consciousness. The Triple Transformation, bringing about a new order of existence, refers to the three-fold movement of psychicisation, spiritualisation, and supramentalisation.

Ideally, first there must be “the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation”. Secondly follows “the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness”. Lastly, “there must supervene the supramental transmutation, there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the Supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature.”<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo highlights:

“There are different statuses (*avastha*) of the Divine Consciousness. There are also different statuses of transformation. First is the psychic transformation, in which all is in contact with the Divine through the psychic consciousness. Next is the spiritual transformation in which all is merged in the Divine in the cosmic consciousness. Third is the supramental transformation in which all becomes supramentalised in the divine gnostic consciousness. It is only with the last that there can begin the complete transformation of mind, life and body—in my sense of completeness.”

*Letters on Yoga II, CWSA, 414*

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1 *The Life Divine, SABCL, 891.*

Psychicisation and spiritualisation are not necessarily in sequence and at times can proceed simultaneously, but both are indispensable to commence the third and final transformation, supramentalisation. The medium is the psychic being, “the spark of the Divine involved here in the individual existence”, grown into a psychic individuality.

The psychic being, the harbinger of the unity of creation and the harmony of all opposites, is the principle of divine spirit in the individual. A movement within, to the depths, away from the noise and emptiness of superficial life, triggers its emergence. When the psychic being comes forward it reunifies by its influence the jarring elements of the mental, vital and physical parts of the being that it supports; turned into one’s inner guide, psychic discernment substitutes the right movements for the wrong ones and there is an automatic perception of the true and the untrue. Opening the whole lower being to the spiritual truth, glimpsing one’s true purpose of life, by spontaneous self-giving joyously surrendering to the divine will and intent, the sadhana proceeds swiftly by the psycho-spiritual change. This is the first transformation, psychicisation.

However, with psychicisation the ego only recedes; it is thus kept under control but not abolished. Abolition of the ego occurs only with Self Realisation, with the descent of the Higher Consciousness (the Mother’s) into all layers of being, encompassing the subliminal and the inconscient.

Sri Aurobindo further explains:

“In this yoga, one can realise the psychic being as a portion of the Divine seated in the heart with the Divine supporting it there — this psychic being takes charge of the sadhana and turns the whole being to the Truth, the Divine, with results in the mind, the vital and the physical consciousness which I need not go into here — that is the first transformation. We realise next the one Self, Brahman, Divine, first *above* the body, life, mind and not only within the heart supporting them — above and free and unattached as the static Self in all and dynamic too as the active Divine Being and Power, Ishwara-Shakti, containing the world and pervading it as well as transcending it, manifesting all cosmic aspects. But what is most important for us is that it manifests as a transcending Light, Knowledge, Power, Purity, Peace, Ananda of which we become aware and which descends into the being

and progressively replaces the ordinary consciousness itself by its own movements — that is the second transformation. We realise also the consciousness itself as moving upward, ascending through many planes, physical, vital, mental, overmental to the supramental and Ananda planes. This is nothing new; it is stated in the Taittiriya Upanishad that there are five Purushas, the physical, the vital, the mental, the Truth Purusha (supramental) and the Bliss Purusha; it says that one has to draw the physical self into the vital self, the vital into the mental, the mental into the Truth self, the Truth self into the Bliss self and so attain perfection. But in this yoga we become aware not only of this taking up but of a pouring down of the power of the higher Self, so that there comes in the possibility of a descent of the supramental Self and Nature to dominate and change our present nature and turn it from nature of Ignorance into nature of Truth-Knowledge (and through the supramental into nature of Ananda) — this is the third or supramental transformation. It does not always go in this order, for with many the spiritual descent begins first in an imperfect way before the psychic is in front and in charge, but the psychic development has to be attained before a perfect and unhampered spiritual descent can take place, and the last or supramental change is impossible so long as the two first have not become full and complete. That's the whole matter put as briefly as possible.”

*Letters on Yoga, SABCL, 114-5*

Following the psychic change the sadhak starts experiencing revelation of knowledge through the higher planes. Bringing down the Divine Consciousness into all the layers of the lower being is the second transformation, spiritualisation. This momentous turning point is followed by the established descent of the Light, Knowledge, Power, Peace, Bliss of the higher planes – from the Higher Mind up to the Mind of Light, the Self can be realized in any of these –, filling with the awareness of the Divine and of the higher cosmic consciousness all the parts of the being, down to the lowest recesses of the physical and the subconscious, thus transmuting the whole consciousness.

“The cosmic consciousness is that in which the limits of ego, personal mind and body disappear and one becomes aware of a

cosmic vastness which is or filled by a cosmic spirit and aware also of the direct play of cosmic forces, universal mind forces, universal life forces, universal energies of Matter, universal overmind forces. But one does not become aware of all these together; the opening of the cosmic consciousness is usually progressive. It is not that the ego, the body, the personal mind disappear, but one feels them as only a small part of oneself.

One begins to feel others too as part of oneself or varied repetitions of oneself, the same self modified by Nature in other bodies. Or, at the least, as living in the larger universal self which is henceforth one's own greater reality."<sup>1</sup>

As the psychic transformation is completed by the spiritual one, likewise the spiritual transformation is completed by the supramental transformation; for, not unlike the evolutionary changes preceding them, these changes too are transitional. Only the Truth-Consciousness, liberating the supramental principle within Nature and acting directly on the earth-existence, can bring about the third and final transformation – having as crowning movement the ascent into the supermind, to be followed by the transforming descent of the supramental Truth-Consciousness into our whole being and nature – changing evolution from a basis of Ignorance into a basis of Knowledge.

“A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demand I make on life and yoga” Sri Aurobindo points out, highlighting that “the ultimate achievement needs the action of the supramental Consciousness and Force. Something less than that may very well be considered enough by the individual, but it is not enough for the earth-consciousness to take the definitive stride forward it must take at one time or another.”

He writes:

“By transformation I do not mean some change of the nature – I do not mean, for instance, sainthood or ethical perfection or yogic siddhis (like the Tantrik's) or a transcendental (*cinmaya*) body. I use transformation in a special sense, a change of consciousness radical and complete and of a certain specific kind which is so conceived as to bring about a strong and assured step forward in the spiritual evolution of the being of a greater and higher kind

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<sup>1</sup> *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, 316.



and of a larger sweep and completeness than what took place when a mentalised being first appeared in a vital and material animal world. If anything short of that takes place or at least if a real beginning is not made on that basis, a fundamental progress towards this fulfilment, then my object is not accomplished. A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demand I make on life and yoga.

Light of realisation is not the same thing as Descent. Realisation by itself does not necessarily transform the being as a whole; it may bring only an opening or heightening or widening of the consciousness at the top so as to realise something in the Purusha part without any radical change in the parts of Prakriti. One may have some light of realisation at the spiritual summit of the consciousness but the parts below remain what they were. I have seen any number of instances of that. There must be a descent of the light not merely into the mind or part of it but into all the being down to the physical and below before a real transformation can take place. A light in the mind may spiritualise or otherwise change the mind or part of it in one way or another, but it need not change the vital nature; a light in the vital may purify and enlarge the vital movements or else silence and immobilise the vital being, but leave the body and the physical consciousness as it was, or even leave it inert or shake its balance. And the descent of Light is not enough, it must be the descent of the whole higher consciousness, its Peace, Power, Knowledge, Love, Ananda. Moreover, the descent may be enough to liberate, but not to perfect, or it may be enough to make a great change in the inner being, while the outer remains an imperfect instrument, clumsy, sick or unexpressive. Finally, transformation effected by the sadhana cannot be complete unless it is a supramentalisation of the being. Psychicisation is not enough, it is only a beginning; spiritualisation and the descent of the higher consciousness is not enough, it is only a middle term; the ultimate achievement needs the action of the supramental Consciousness and Force. Something less than that may very well be considered enough by the individual, but it is not enough for the earth-consciousness to take the definitive stride forward it must take at one time or another.”

*Letters on Yoga, SABCL, 98-99*

## **Spiritual Transformation: “the descent of the higher (the Mother’s) consciousness” – and the Yoga-Shakti**

With psychicisation of the mind, vital and physical the change comes from within; but with spiritualisation the emphasis is on the descent into one’s lower nature of the Mother’s transforming Force. In the following pages I reproduce some of the many quotes from *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, where in reply to the sadhaks submitting their experiences Sri Aurobindo highlights this descent as the crowning event triggering the second transformation, spiritualisation:

“The power of concentration above the head is to bring peace, silence, liberation from the body sense, the identification with mind and life and open the way for the lower (mental vital-physical) consciousness to rise up to meet the higher Consciousness above and for the powers of the higher (spiritual or divine) Consciousness to descend into mind, life and body. This is what is called in this Yoga the spiritual transformation.” [725]

“The practice of this yoga is double – one side is of an ascent of the consciousness to the higher planes, the other is that of a descent of the power of the higher planes into the earth-consciousness.” [1126]

“I am not speaking of mere rising above. The rising above has to be followed by the descent of the higher consciousness into the different parts of the being.” [1127]

“To ascend is easier than to bring down; the higher consciousness gets entangled and impeded in the physical and the mind and vital.” [1127]

“The spiritual change is the established descent of the peace, light, knowledge, power, bliss from above, the awareness of the Self and the Divine and of a higher cosmic consciousness and the change of the whole consciousness to that.” [1093]

The “higher spiritual or divine consciousness”, descending from above the head, is the Mother’s. Sri Aurobindo’s stresses:

“There is a higher consciousness above you, not in the body, so above the head which we call the higher spiritual or divine consciousness, or the Mother’s consciousness. When the

being opens then all in you, the mind (head), emotional being (heart), vital, even something in the physical consciousness begin to ascend in order to join themselves to this greater higher consciousness. One has when one sits with eyes closed in meditation the sensation of going up which you describe. It is called the ascension of the lower consciousness. Afterwards things begin to descend from above, peace, joy, light, strength, knowledge etc. and a great change begins in the nature. This is what we call the descent of the higher (the Mother's) consciousness." [1130-1]

"What you see above is of course the true or higher consciousness – the Mother's – in which one sees all the world as one, a vast free consciousness full of freedom, peace and light – it is that that we speak of as the higher or divine consciousness. Even if it comes and goes, yet its effect on the heart shows that a connection has been established through the psychic – for the psychic is behind the heart. It is there above the head that the consciousness has to ascend and remain; while it also descends into the head and heart and lower vital and physical and brings there its wideness, light, peace and freedom." [1132]

The Higher Consciousness, the Mother's, is where the ascending and descending forces meet, above the head. With the descent there is usually an opening into the cosmic consciousness. A momentous stride forward is when the consciousness takes its station above permanently, extended in space, but also as a true realisation. In this permanent change the body is felt as "a wide practically infinite consciousness which is oneself ... or if not at once infinite, yet what is now called a boundless finite." Sri Aurobindo points out:

"There is no fixed rule in such things. With many the descent comes first and the ascension afterwards, with others it is the other way; with some the two processes go on together. If one can fix oneself above so much the better." [1126-7]

"It is what we call the higher or spiritual consciousness – it contains or supports all the higher planes, the higher worlds. When one begins to feel this always above, it is a great step forward in the sadhana; then the consciousness can go up there and from there see, discern and control all that is in the mind,

vital and body. It is the meeting-place of the ascending and descending forces.” [1132]

“When the higher consciousness descends or is intensely felt, there is usually an opening of the limited personal being into the cosmic consciousness – one feels a wide and infinite being which alone exists, the identification with the body and even the sense of the body disappears, the limited personal consciousness is lost in the Cosmic Existence.” [1130]

In the yogic consciousness one is aware of forces and of the conscious being behind them, not just in oneself but in the universe. “The Energy in the Kundalini is the Mother’s”<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo writes, and in reply to a disciple: “That there is a divine force asleep or veiled by Inconscience in Matter and that the Higher Force has to descend and awaken it with the Light and Truth is a thing that is well known; it is at the very base of this yoga.”<sup>2</sup> And he explains, regarding the *chakras* in the subtle body:

“These centres are closed or half closed within us and have to be opened before their full potentiality can be manifested in our physical nature: but once they are opened and completely active, no limit can easily be set to the development of their potencies and the total transformation to be possible.”

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 34*

The force that grows along with this new consciousness, helping to perfect it, is the Yoga-Shakti, the Mother’s energy. In the kundalini it is coiled up in the *chakras*, but above the head it is the Mother’s Divine Force and Power. When the awakened Yoga-Shakti arises and meets the Divine Consciousness above this descends into the body and changes the lower nature:

“Yoga means union with the Divine – a union either transcendental (above the universe) or cosmic (universal) or individual or, as in our yoga, all three together. Or it means getting into a consciousness in which one is no longer limited by the small ego, personal mind, personal vital and body but is in union with the supreme Self or with the universal (cosmic)

<sup>1</sup> *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, 1151.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

consciousness or with some deeper consciousness within in which one is aware of one's own soul, one's own inner being and of the real truth of existence. In the yogic consciousness one is not only aware of things, but of forces, not only of forces, but of the conscious being behind the forces. One is aware of all this not only in oneself but in the universe.

There is a force which accompanies the growth of the new consciousness and grows with it and helps it to come about and to perfect itself. This force is the Yoga-Shakti. It is here coiled up and asleep in all the centres of our inner being (Chakras) and is at the base what is called in the Tantras the Kundalini Shakti. But it is also above us, above our head as the Divine Force – not there coiled up, involved, asleep, but awake, scient, potent, extended and wide; it is there waiting for manifestation and to this Force we have to open ourselves – to the power of the Mother. In the mind it manifests itself as a divine mind-force or a universal mind-force and it can do everything that the personal mind cannot do; it is then the yogic mind-force. When it manifests and acts in the vital or the physical in the same way, it is there apparent as a yogic life-force or a yogic body-force. It can awake in all these forms, bursting outwards and upwards, extending itself into wideness from below; or it can descend and become there a definite power for things; it can pour downwards into the body, working, establishing its reign, extending into wideness from above, link the lowest in us with the highest above us, release the individual into a cosmic universality or into absoluteness and transcendence.” [1149-50]

“There is a Yoga-Shakti lying coiled or asleep in the inner body, not active. When one does yoga, this force uncoils itself and rises upward to meet the Divine Consciousness and Force that are waiting above us. When this happens, when the awakened Yoga-Shakti arises, it is often felt like a snake uncoiling and standing up straight and lifting itself more and more upwards. When it meets the Divine Consciousness above, then the force of the Divine Consciousness can more easily descend into the body and be felt working there to change the nature.

The feeling of your body and eyes being drawn upwards is part of the same movement. It is the inner consciousness in the body and the inner subtle sight in the body that are looking and

moving upward and trying to meet the divine consciousness and divine seeing above.” [1150-1]

## **Descent of the Higher Consciousness in its four transforming aspects**

A cardinal tenet of the Integral Yoga is the double practice of an ascent of the lower consciousness through the spinal cord and the *chakras* (sometimes an uprush in current or waves) to the higher planes of consciousness above the head – and a descent of the Divine Consciousness and Force with its transforming powers, its peace and light and ecstasy into the whole being, down to the subconscious. Each level in the descent, Sri Aurobindo stresses, is a stage in an ascension.

The ordinary functioning of the mental, vital/emotional and lower physical layers are thus being replaced with a mind and life and body that, fully integrated, are manifest expression of the greatest spiritual heights. This new consciousness, open to all knowledge from above, has larger means of awareness and no longer think with the brain, for “there comes a definitive rise by which the consciousness permanently takes its station above”. Sri Aurobindo explains:

“The consciousness can thus ascend and rise higher and higher with the awareness of entering regions above the ordinary mind; usually it does not go very far at first but acquires the capacity to go always higher in repetitions of this experience. At the close of the experience it returns to the body. But also there comes a definitive rise by which the consciousness permanently takes its station above. It is no longer in the body or limited by it; it feels itself not only above it but extended in space; the body is below its high station and enveloped in its extended consciousness. Sometimes indeed the extension is felt only above on the higher level and the enveloping extension below comes only afterwards as a later experience. But the nature of it is to be definitive, it is not merely an experience but a realisation, a permanent change. This brings a liberation from identification with the body which becomes only a circumstance in the largeness of the being, an instrumental part of it; or it is felt as something very small or even non-existent, nothing seems to be felt but a wide practically

infinite consciousness which is oneself – or if not at once infinite, yet what is now called a boundless finite.” [1136]

“In the physical consciousness the descent is the most important. Something of the subtle physical can always go up – but the external physical consciousness can only do it when the force from above comes down and fills it. There is then a sort of unification made when the higher consciousness and the physical are one undivided consciousness and there is an ascent of forces from below and descent from above, simultaneous and mutually interpenetrating.” [1127]

In the Integral Yoga the *chakras* open automatically, allowing the descending Higher Consciousness to be received into the various centres. One cannot remain in the higher consciousness, though, because the lower nature keeps pulling downward until this too, transformed, becomes of one kind with the Higher Consciousness:

“No methodical opening of the centres is necessary – the centres are in fact open, otherwise there could not be this ascent. In this yoga their opening comes automatically – what we call opening is not that, but an ability of the consciousness itself on the various levels to receive the descent of the Higher Consciousness above. By the ascent one can indeed bring down knowledge from above. But the larger movement is to receive it from above and let it flow through into the lower mental and other levels. I may add that on all these levels, in mind, heart and below there comes a liberation from the physical limitation, a wideness which no longer allows an identification with the body.” [1137]

“If one can remain always in the higher consciousness, so much the better. But why does not one remain always there? Because the lower is still part of the nature and it pulls you down towards itself. If on the other hand the lower is transformed, it becomes of one kind with the higher and there is nothing lower to pull downward.

Transformation means that the higher consciousness or nature is brought down into the mind, vital and body and takes the place of the lower. There is a higher consciousness of the true self, which is spiritual, but it is above; if one rises above into it, then one is free as long as one remains there, but if one comes

down into or uses mind, vital or body – and if one keeps any connection with life, one has to do so, either to come down and act from the ordinary consciousness or else to be in the self but use mind, life and body, then the imperfections of these instruments have to be faced and mended – they can only be mended by transformation.” [1143]

“The sadhana is based on the fact that a descent of Forces from the higher planes and an ascent of the lower consciousness to the higher planes is the means of transformation of the lower nature – although naturally it takes time and the complete transformation can only come by the supramental descent.” [1126]

The spiritual transformation is a bringing down of the Divine Consciousness, which is static as well as dynamic, into every layer of the being down to the subconscient – replacing the present consciousness by that. Highlighting this descent in its four transforming aspects, Sri Aurobindo writes:

“The descent of Peace (Sat), the descent of Force or Power (Chit), the descent of Light, the descent of Ananda, these are the four things that transform the nature”. [1170]

“It is not really the plane that descends, it is the Power and Truth of it that descends into the material and then the veil between the material and it no longer exists”. [1170]

“Whenever there is a descent of the higher consciousness in the Adhar (i.e. support or physical body):

1. Part of it is stored up in the frontal consciousness and remains there.
2. Part of it goes behind and remains as a support to the active part of the being.
3. Part flows out into the universal Nature.
4. Part is absorbed by the inconscient and lost to the individual consciousness and its action.” [1173]

“The spiritual transformation is something dynamic (not merely liberation of the Self or realisation of the One which can very well be attained without any descent). It is a putting on of the spiritual consciousness, dynamic as well as static, in every part of the being down to the subconscient. That cannot be done by the influence of the Self leaving the consciousness fundamentally as



it is with only purification, enlightenment of the mind and heart and quiescence of the vital. It means a bringing down of the Divine Consciousness static and dynamic into all these parts and the entire replacement of the present consciousness by that.” [109]

### **The Overmind consciousness, the higher and the lower hemispheres, the rendering of the veil and the golden lid**

The Indian systems of Yoga do not distinguish between Overmind and the Supermind or Gnosis; but the Overmind is only a delegate of the supramental consciousness, its delegate to Ignorance:

“...although [the Overmind] draws from the Truth, it is here that begins the separation of aspects of the Truth, the forces and their working out as if they were independent truths and this is a process that ends, as one descends to ordinary Mind, Life and Matter, in a complete division, fragmentation, separation from the indivisible Truth above. There is no longer the essential, total, perfectly harmonising and unifying knowledge, or rather knowledge for ever harmonious because forever one, which is the character of supermind. In the supermind, mental divisions and oppositions cease, the problems created by our dividing and fragmenting mind disappear and Truth is seen as a luminous whole. In the overmind there is not yet the actual fall into Ignorance, but the first step is taken which will make the fall inevitable.”

*Letters on Yoga, SABCL, 257*

Following the psychic change, the sadhak starts ascending through a series of gradations above the mind – Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind – experiencing revelations of an ever-increasing knowledge, while the influence of the subconscious and the inconscient is progressively reduced. But only with the descent of the Overmind the ego is abolished and the individual merges with the cosmic consciousness. Then only the play of cosmic forces is left, “an unlimited consciousness of unity which pervades everywhere.” The Overmind is “a principle of global knowledge which carries in it a delegated light from the supramental Gnosis”.

Expounding the principles of the Overmind’s action and descent,

Sri Aurobindo explains:

“When the Overmind descends, the predominance of the centralising ego-sense is entirely subordinated, lost in largeness of being and finally abolished; a wide cosmic perception and feeling of a boundless universal self and movement replaces it: many motions that were formerly egocentric may still continue, but they occur as currents or ripples in the cosmic wideness. Thought, for the most part, no longer seems to originate individually in the body or the person but manifests from above or comes in upon the cosmic mind-waves: all inner individual sight or intelligence of things is now a revelation or illumination of what is not in one’s separate self but in the universal knowledge; the feelings, emotions, sensations are similarly felt as waves from the same cosmic immensity breaking upon the subtle and the gross body and responded to in kind by the individual centre of the universality; for the body is only a small support or even less, a point of relation, for the action of a vast cosmic instrumentation. In this boundless largeness, not only the separate ego but all sense of individuality, even of a subordinated or instrumental individuality, may entirely disappear; the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic delight, the play of cosmic forces alone are left: if the delight or the centre of Force is felt in what was the personal mind, life or body, it is not with a sense of personality but as a field of manifestation, and this sense of the delight or of the action of Force is not confined to the person or the body but can be felt at all points in an unlimited consciousness of unity which pervades everywhere.”

*The Life Divine, SABCL, 950-51*

The cosmogony of ancient India divided the macrocosm (“the world-being”) and the microcosm (“the total being of man”) into a higher hemisphere, *parardha*, where Spirit reigns eternally – and a lower hemisphere, *aparardha*, where Spirit is veiled by mind, life and matter. The lower hemisphere is a reflection of the higher one, Sat-Chit-Ananda: Pure Being, Consciousness-Force, and Bliss. Sri Aurobindo writes that our “lower being begins where a veil falls between soul and nature, between spirit in supermind and spirit in mind, life and body. Where this veil has not fallen, these instrumental powers are not

what they are in us, but an enlightened part of the unified action of supermind and spirit”.<sup>1</sup>

The Vedas and the Upanishads point to a golden lid dividing “this whole lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance” from the supraconsciousness. Sri Aurobindo refers repeatedly to this golden lid (*hiranmayapatra*); in *The Life Divine* he describes it as the Overmind (“a delegate of the Supermind Consciousness, its delegate to the Ignorance”), veiling the greater Truth of the Supermind:

“At the source of this Intuition we discover a superconscient cosmic Mind in direct contact with the supramental Truth-Consciousness, an original intensity determinant of all movements below it and all mental energies, – not Mind as we know it, but an Overmind that covers as with the wide wings of some creative Oversoul this whole lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance, links it with that greater Truth-Consciousness while yet at the same time with its brilliant golden Lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight, intervening with its flood of infinite possibilities as at once an obstacle and a passage in our seeking of the spiritual law of our existence, its highest aim, its secret Reality. This then is the occult link we were looking for; this is the Power that at once connects and divides the supreme Knowledge and the cosmic Ignorance.”

*The Life Divine, SABCL, 278*

Supramentalisation is the third and last transformation of the Integral Yoga “in which all becomes supramentalised in the divine gnostic consciousness”<sup>2</sup> Sri Aurobindo writes. But this demands the removal of the overmental ‘lid’ dividing the two hemispheres, so that “the supermind instead of the overmind becomes the governing power of the existence”:

“The spiritual transformation proper begins or becomes possible when one rises above the mind and lives there governing all from above. Even in the psychic transformation one can rise above by a sort of going above of the mental, vital, physical being and a return, but one does not yet live above in the

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1 *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, 603.

2 *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, 95.

summit consciousness where overmind has its seat with the other planes that are above the human Mind. The supramental transformation can only come when the lid between the lower and higher hemispheres or halves of existence is removed and the supermind instead of the overmind becomes the governing power of the existence – but of that nothing can be spoken now.”

*Letters on Yoga, SABCL, 1092-3*

“The overmind is a sort of delegation from the supermind (this is a metaphor only) which supports the present evolutionary universe in which we live here in Matter. If supermind were to start here from the beginning as the direct creative Power, a world of the kind we see now would be impossible; it would have been full of the divine Light from the beginning, there would be no involution in the inconscience of Matter, consequently no gradual striving evolution of consciousness in Matter. A line is therefore drawn between the higher half of the universe of consciousness, *parārdha*, and the lower half, *aparārdha*. The higher half is constituted of Sat, Chit, Ananda, Mahas (the supramental) – the lower half of mind, life, Matter. This line is the intermediary overmind which, though luminous itself, keeps from us the full indivisible supramental Light, depends on it indeed, but in receiving it, divides, distributes, breaks it up into separated aspects, powers, multiplicities of all kinds, each of which it is possible by a further diminution of consciousness, such as we reach in Mind, to regard as the sole or the chief Truth and all the rest as subordinate or contradictory to it. To this action of the overmind may be applied the words of the Upanishad, “The face of the Truth is covered by a golden Lid”, or those of the Vedic *ṛtenaṛtamapihitam*. (... ) In the overmind itself there is not this confusion, for the overmind knows the One as the support, essence, fundamental power of all things, but in the dynamic play proper to it it lays emphasis on its divisional power of multiplicity and seeks to give each power or Aspect its full chance to manifest, relying on the underlying Oneness to prevent disharmony or conflict.”

*Letters on Yoga, SABCL, 243-4*

Under the pressure of the psycho-spiritual mutation the mental lid

breaks asunder or disappears, opening to the supraconscious ranges above the head into an infinity of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. When the consciousness takes its station permanently above the body identification with it ceases. The body is then apprehended as enveloped in its extended consciousness; this is not a fleeting experience, but an irreversible realization. An infinite consciousness, which is but oneself, is all there is. About the rending of the veil, “the condition of the divine life in humanity”, Sri Aurobindo writes:

“The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being; we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of supermind towards the divine being. The knot of the two, the higher and the lower hemisphere, is where mind and supermind meet with a veil between them. The rending of the veil is the condition of the divine life in humanity; for by that rending, by the illumining descent of the higher into the nature of the lower being and the forceful ascent of the lower being into the nature of the higher, mind can recover its divine light in the all-comprehending supermind, the soul realise its divine self in the all-possessing all-blissful Ananda, life repossess its divine power in the play of omnipotent Conscious-Force and Matter open to its divine liberty as a form of the divine Existence.”

*The Life Divine, SABCL, 264-5*

## **The upper hemisphere: Sachchidananda and Supermind**

In Indian metaphysics the Absolute is Sat (Being), Chit (Consciousness), Ananda (Bliss); this trinity constitutes the upper hemisphere. As Sri Aurobindo points out, “Existence is Consciousness and there can be no distinction between them; Consciousness is Bliss and there can be no distinction between them”<sup>1</sup>, yet each “can stand in front of the others and manifest its own spiritual determinates, for each has its primal aspects or inherent self-formulations, although all of these together are original to the triune Absolute.”<sup>2</sup>

About this inseparable unity in three specific modes, eternally pre-

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, SABCL, 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 314.

existent, he further explains:

“Sachchidananda is the One with a triple aspect. In the Supreme the three are not three but one — existence is consciousness, consciousness is bliss, and they are thus inseparable, not only inseparable but so much each other that they are not distinct at all. In the superior planes of manifestation they become triune — although inseparable, one can be made more prominent and base or lead the others. In the lower planes below they become separable in appearance, though not in their secret reality.”

*Letters on Yoga, SABCL, 239*

But to Sat (Pure Being), Chit-Tapas (Consciousness-Force), Ananda (Delight) Sri Aurobindo adds a fourth component of the upper hemisphere, transforming it into a quaternity: the Truth-Consciousness or Supermind, the Conscious Force of Sachchidananda that builds the worlds. Whereas the mind operates by appearances and phenomenal divisions, Supermind acts in the fundamental truth and unity of things, cosmic and individual.

The essential nature of the Supermind – the Divine Gnosis – is knowledge by identity, by which it apprehends Spirit and Nature: manifestation and Sachchidananda are one. Supermind is the intermediary plane between the manifest world (the lower hemisphere of mind, life, and matter) and the triune world of Sachchidananda, of which it is the dynamic manifestation and the transforming agent, and which Sri Aurobindo distinguishes from the Overmind. He stresses:

“In the ancient Indian system there is only one triune supernal, Sachchidananda. Or if you speak of the upper hemisphere as the supernal, there are three, Sat plane, Chit plane and Ananda plane. The supermind could be added as a fourth, as it draws upon the other three and belongs to the upper hemisphere. The Indian systems did not distinguish between two quite different powers and levels of consciousness, one which we can call overmind and the other the true supermind or Divine Gnosis.” [249-50]  
“Supermind is between the Sachchidananda and the lower creation. It alone contains the self-determining Truth of the Divine Consciousness and is necessary for a Truth-creation.” [239]  
“The supermind therefore does not transcend all possible

manifestation, but it is above the triplicity of mind, life and Matter which is our present experience of this manifestation.” [243]

In possession of the integral truth, Supermind is Sachchidananda’s “power of self-awareness and world-awareness”; to live in it one must pass through Supermind. “Supermind has an indivisible knowledge, while overmind proceeds by union in division and Mind by division taking division as the first fact”. Furthermore, in the planes below it the oppositions can only be harmonised, whereas in the supermind they are inseparably one. Supermind only can grasp “the full dynamic truth of Sachchidananda and the universe”; even if the consciousness of the other spiritual planes descends this can make no radical change in the earth-consciousness. Sri Aurobindo explains:

“The supreme supracosmic Sachchidananda is above all. Supermind may be described as its power of self-awareness and world-awareness, the world being known as within itself and not outside. So to live consciously in the supreme Sachchidananda one must pass through the supermind. (...) The supermind is an entirely different consciousness not only from the spiritualised Mind, but from the planes above spiritualised Mind which intervene between it and the supramental plane. Once one passes beyond overmind to supermind, one enters into a consciousness to which the norms of the other planes do not at all apply and in which the same Truth, e.g. Sachchidananda and truth of this universe, is seen in quite a different way and has a different dynamic consequence. This necessarily results from the fact that supermind has an indivisible knowledge, while overmind proceeds by union in division and Mind by division taking division as the first fact, for that is the natural process of its knowledge. (...) The full dynamic truth of Sachchidananda and the universe and its consequence cannot be grasped by any other consciousness than the supermind, because the instrumentation in all other (lower) planes is inferior and there is therefore a disparity between the fullness of the static experience and the incompleteness of the dynamic power, knowledge, result of the inferior light and power of other planes. This is the reason why the consciousness of the other spiritual planes, even if it descends, can make no radical change in the earth-consciousness, it can

only modify or enrich it. The radical transformation needs the descent of a supramental power and nature.” [240-1]

And he concludes:

“It is the supramental Power that transforms mind, life and body — not the Sachchidananda consciousness which supports impartially everything. But it is by having experience of the Sachchidananda, pure existence-consciousness-bliss, that the ascent to the supramental and the descent of the supramental become (at a much later stage) possible.” [239]

### **The new evolutionary order: spiritualisation of the human mind**

To break down “the veil between the subliminal and the surface parts” is a preliminary condition, changing inconscience “into what it always was in reality, a sea of the secret Superconscience”:

“But before the supramental change can begin, the veil between the subliminal and the surface parts must have been already broken down; the influx, the descent will be in the entire consciousness as a whole, it will not take place partly behind a veil: the process will be no longer a concealed, obscure and ambiguous procedure but an open outflowing consciously felt and followed by the whole being in its transmutation. In other respects the process will be identical, — a supramental inflow from above, the descent of a gnostic being into the nature, and an emergence of the concealed supramental force from below; the influx and the unveiling between them will remove what is left of the nature of the Ignorance. The rule of the Inconscient will disappear: for the Inconscience will be changed by the outburst of the greater secret Consciousness within it, the hidden Light, into what it always was in reality, a sea of the secret Superconscience. A first formation of a gnostic consciousness and nature will be the consequence.

The creation of a supramental being, nature, life on earth, will not be the sole result of this evolution; it will also



carry with it the consummation of the steps that have led up to it: for it will confirm in possession of terrestrial birth the overmind, the intuition and the other gradations of the spiritual nature-force and establish a race of gnostic beings and a hierarchy, a shining ladder of ascending degrees and successive constituent formations of the gnostic light and power in earth-nature.”

*The Life Divine*, SABCL, 1004-5

The evolutionary change Sri Aurobindo foresees — ultimately, a race of supramental, gnostic beings — will be brought about by the superconscient planes of the spiritualised mind uplifting the human mind to their peaks. About the descent into the earth-life of the Supermind and its truth-consciousness Sri Aurobindo writes:

“Especially it could not fail to exercise an immense influence on mankind as a whole, even a radical change in the aspect and prospect of its existence here, even if this power had no other capital result on the material world in which it had come down to intervene. One cannot but conclude that the influence, the change made would be far reaching, even enormous: it would not only establish the Supermind and a supramental race of beings upon the earth, it could bring about an uplifting and transforming change in mind itself and as an inevitable consequence in the consciousness of man, the mental being and would equally bring about a radical and transforming change in the principles and forms of his living, his ways of action and the whole build and tenor of his life. It would certainly open to man the access to the supramental consciousness and the supramental life; for we must suppose that it is by such a transformation that a race of supramental beings would be created, even as the human race itself has arisen by a less radical but still a considerable uplifting and enlargement of consciousness and conversion of the body’s instrumentation and its indwelling and evolving mental and spiritual capacities and powers out of a first animal state. But even without any such complete transformation the truth-principle might so far replace the principle we see here of an original ignorance seeking for knowledge and arriving only at a partial knowledge that the human mind could become

a power of light, of knowledge finding itself, not the denizen of a half-way twilight or a servant and helper of the ignorance, a purveyor of mingled truth and error. Mind might even become in man, what it is in fundamental origin, a subordinate, limited and special action the Supermind, a sufficiently luminous receptacle of truth, and at least all falsity in its works might cease.”

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 50-1*

In the transition from “a most highly developed animal mind” to a mind awoken to “its own higher yet unattained capacities”, evolution through knowledge is the triggering factor:

“A leap, a saltus, there would be, as there is now; but it would not be between animality and divinity, from animal mind to Supermind: it would be between a most highly developed animal mind turning towards human possibilities – for without that the passage from animal to man could not be achieved – and a human mind waking to the possibility, not yet the full achievement, of its own higher yet unattained capacities.

One result of the intervention of Supermind in the earth-nature, the descent of the supreme creative Truth-Power, might well be a change in the law of evolution, its method and its arrangement: a larger element of the principle of evolution through knowledge might enter into the forces of the material universe.”

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 52-3*

## **Mind of Light, subordinate action of the Supermind**

Sri Aurobindo writes about the new evolutionary order:

“Mind is not in its very nature an inventor of errors, a father of lies bound down to a capacity of falsehood, wedded to its own mistakes and the let of a stumbling life as it too largely is at present owing to our human shortcomings: it is in its origin a principle of light, an instrument put forth from the Supermind and, though set to work within limits and even set to create limits, yet the limits are luminous borders for a special working, voluntary and purposive bounds, a service of the finite ever

extending itself under the eye of infinity. It is this character of Mind that will reveal itself under the touch of Supermind and make human mentality an adjunct and a minor instrumentation of the supramental knowledge. It will even be possible for the mind no longer limited by the intellect to become capable of a sort of mental gnosis, a luminous reproduction of the Truth in a diminished working extending the power of the Light not only to its own but to lower levels of consciousness in their climb towards self-transcendence. Overmind, Intuition, Illumined Mind and what I have called Higher Mind, these and other levels of a spiritualised and liberated mentality, will be able to reflect in the uplifted human mind and its purified and exalted feeling and force of life and action something of their powers and prepare the ascent of the soul to their own plateaus and peaks of an ascending existence. This is essentially the change which can be contemplated as a result of the new evolutionary order and it would mean a considerable extension of the evolutionary field itself and will answer the question as to the result on humanity of the advent of Supermind into the earth-nature.”

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 53-4*

The outcome of this momentous change is that “There would be a new mental being not only capable of standing enlightened in the radiance of the Supermind but able to climb consciously towards it and into it training life and body to reflect and hold something of the supramental light, power and bliss, aspiring to release the secret divinity into self-finding and self-fulfilment and self-poise, aspiring towards the ascension to the divine consciousness, able to receive and bear the descent of the divine light and power, fitting itself to be a vessel of the divine Life.”<sup>1</sup>

Supermind is concealed in the lower hemisphere of mind, life and Matter. But as these have manifested on earth, it is inevitable that Supermind will manifest as well, in its two aspects – “a descent from above, an ascent from below, a self-revelation of the Spirit, an evolution in Nature”; by its action gradually spiritualising the ordinary mind, transmuting it into the supracoscient gradations of divine mind and into mind of light, before the supramentalisation proper takes place. Afterwards evolution could proceed by rapid transformation, as

<sup>1</sup> *The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 59.*

in a succession of miracles.

Sri Aurobindo envisages a supramental race endowed with “a mind of light which could even be a subordinate action of the supermind or Truth-Consciousness” – this is the action on Nature of the Supermind – “acting as a recipient of that truth and at least a secondary action of it in thought and life. It could even be a part of what could be described as a divine life upon earth. We have supposed not only the descent of the supermind upon the earth but its embodiment in a supramental race with all its natural consequences and a new total action in which the new humanity would find its complete development and its assured place in the new order.”<sup>1</sup>

The Mind of Light is “the last of a series of descending planes of consciousness in which the Supermind veils itself by a self-chosen limitation or modification of its self-manifesting activities, but its essential character remains the same.” In this Mind Sri Aurobindo individuates the organizing principle of an intermediate race from which the supramental race of gnostic beings will inevitably be recruited, although not in one bound:

“At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature. Even, the highest manifestations of a mind of Light would be an instrumentality of the supermind, a part of it or a projection from it. Above all, its possession would enable the human being to rise beyond the normalities of his present thinking, feeling and being into those highest power of the mind in its self-exceedings which intervene between our mentality and supermind and can be regarded as steps towards the greater and more luminous principle. This like others in the evolution might not be reached and would naturally not be reached at one bound but from the very beginning it would be inevitable: the pressure of the supermind creating from above out of itself the mind of Light would compel this certainty of the eventual outcome.”

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 67*

Those who cannot reach there will tend, consciously, towards a supramental life governed by this luminous principle, heralding a

1 *The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 60.*

beginning of divinised life:

“A mind of light will replace the present confusion and trouble of this earthly ignorance; it is likely that even those parts of humanity which cannot reach it will yet be aware of its possibility and consciously tend towards it; not only so, but the life of humanity will be enlightened, uplifted, governed, harmonised by this luminous principle and even the body become something much less powerless, obscure and animal in its propensities and capable instead of a new and harmonised perfection. It is this possibility that we have to look at and that would mean a new humanity uplifted into Light, capable of a spiritualised being and action, open to governance by some light of the Truth-Consciousness, capable even on the mental level and in its own order of something that might be called the beginning of a divinised life.”

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 65-6*

### **Supramental transformation: the gnostic consciousness is the ultimate *siddhi***

*The Supramental Manifestation* is the last text Sri Aurobindo wrote before entering *mahasamadhi*. These eight essays “reveal a vision which includes the perfection of the body as an instrument of the action of the spirit, the nature and structure of a divine body and the conditions and operations of its life on earth, the manifestation of a supramental truth-consciousness as the basis for a divine life upon earth, and the creation of a new humanity possessed of a mind of light.”<sup>1</sup> Highlighting that the manifestation of the Supermind is bound to happen he writes:

“As mind, life and Matter have manifested on the earth, so too must Supermind in the inevitable course of things manifest in this world of Matter. In fact, a supermind is already here but it is involved, concealed behind this manifest mind, life and Matter and not yet acting overtly or in its own power: if it acts, it is through these inferior powers and modified by their characters and so not yet recognisable. It is only by the approach and arrival of the descending Supermind that it can be liberated upon earth

<sup>1</sup> [www.sabda.in/catalog/bookinfo.php?websec=BENA-CA-0200](http://www.sabda.in/catalog/bookinfo.php?websec=BENA-CA-0200)

and reveal itself in the action of our material, vital and mental parts so that these lower powers can become portions of a total divinised activity of our whole being: it is that that will bring to us a completely realised divinity or the divine life. It is indeed so that life and mind involved in Matter have realised themselves here; for only what is involved can evolve, otherwise there could be no emergence. The manifestation of a supramental truth-consciousness is therefore the capital reality that will make the divine life possible. It is when all the movements of thought, impulse and action are governed and directed by a self-existent and luminously automatic truth-consciousness and our whole nature comes to be constituted by it and made of its stuff that the life divine will be complete and absolute. Even as it is, in reality though not in the appearance of things, it is a secret self-existent knowledge and truth that is working to manifest itself in the creation here. The Divine is already there immanent within us, ourselves are that in our inmost reality and it is this reality that we have to manifest; it is that which constitutes the urge towards the divine living and makes necessary the creation of the life divine even in this material existence.

A manifestation of the Supermind and its truth-consciousness is then inevitable; it must happen in this world sooner or later. But it has two aspects, a descent from above, an ascent from below, a self-revelation of the Spirit, an evolution in Nature.

There is then no longer any necessity for the slow pace of the ordinary evolution; there can be rapid conversion, quick transformation after transformation, what would seem to our normal present mind, a succession of miracles.”

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 43-4*

And in *The Life Divine*:

“As there has been established on earth a mental Consciousness and Power which shapes a race of mental beings and takes up into itself all of earthly nature that is ready for the change, so now there will be established on earth a gnostic Consciousness and Power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings and take up into itself all of earth-nature that is ready for this new transformation. It will also receive into itself from above,

progressively, from its own domain of perfect light and power and beauty all that is ready to descend from that domain into terrestrial being. For the evolution proceeded in the past by the upsurging, at each critical stage, of a concealed Power from its involution in the Inconscience, but also by a descent from above, from its own plane, of that Power already self-realised in its own higher natural province.”

*The Life Divine, CWSA, 1003-4.*

The ascent to Supermind is to be followed by its descent triggering the complete transmutation of the lower nature. In the gnostic, supramental plane the perfect absolutes reconcile, “for behind the appearance of these opposites are their truths and the truths of the Eternal are not in conflict with each other. Our mind’s and life’s opposites transformed in the supermind into their own true spirit link together and are seen as tones and colouring of an eternal Reality and everlasting Ananda. Supermind or Gnosis is the supreme Truth, the supreme Thought, the supreme Word, the supreme Sight, the supreme Will-Idea; it is the inner and outer extension of the Infinite who is beyond Space, the unfettered Time of the Eternal who is timeless, the supernal harmony of all absolutes of the Absolute.”<sup>1</sup>

Revolution, a divine transmutation of our entire being, “in the end even of the very substance and functioning of our body” – this is the action of the Supermind on earth – “embodied in a new race of divinised creatures”. However, “A divine life upon earth, the ideal we have placed before us, can only come about by a spiritual change of our being and a radical and fundamental change, an evolution or revolution of our nature.” Sri Aurobindo explains:

“The change that is effected by the transition from mind to supermind is not only a revolution in knowledge or in our power for knowledge. If it is [to] be complete and stable, it must be a divine transmutation of our will too, our emotions, our sensations, all our power of life and its forces, in the end even of the very substance and functioning of our body. Then only can it be said that the supermind is there upon earth, rooted in its very earth-substance and embodied in a new race of divinised creatures.

Supermind at its highest reach is the divine Gnosis, the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL., 466.

Wisdom-Power-Light-Bliss of God by which the Divine knows and upholds and governs and enjoys the universe”

*Essays Divine and Human, CWSA, 366*

In this complete metamorphosis all human elements are raised to their own perfection: the supramental transformation into the gnostic divine consciousness is the ultimate *siddhi*. Sri Aurobindo writes that only then “there can begin the complete transformation of mind, life and body – in my sense of completeness”. However, when the supramental Gnosis takes over the evolutionary lead from the Overmind, “It will not be a sudden revelation and effectuation of the absolute Supermind and the supramental being as they are in their own plane, the swift apocalypse of a truth-conscious existence ever self-fulfilled and complete in self-knowledge; it will be the phenomenon of the supramental being descending into a world of evolutionary becoming and forming itself there, unfolding the powers of the gnosis within the terrestrial nature.”<sup>1</sup>

“An awakening must come in the earth-nature and in the earth-consciousness which will be, if not the actual beginning, at least the effective preparation and the first steps of its evolution towards a new and diviner world order”, Sri Aurobindo announces. “This change might happen not only in the few, but extend and generalise itself in the race.” When Supermind manifests, “it would inevitably not only create superman but change and uplift man”, and it will encompass all levels of being, down to the cells:

“For a divine life on earth need not be a thing apart and exclusive having nothing to do with the common earthly existence: it will take up human being and human life, transform what can be transformed, spiritualise whatever can be spiritualised, cast its influence on the rest and effectuate either a radical or an uplifting change, bring about a deeper communion between the universal and the individual, invade the ideal with the spiritual truth of which it is a luminous shadow and help to uplift into or towards a greater and higher existence. Even the body, if it can bear the touch of Supermind, will become more aware of its own truth, – for there is a body-consciousness that has its own instinctive truth and power of right condition and action, even a kind of unexpressed occult knowledge in the constitution of its cells and

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, CWSA, 1002.



tissues which may one day become conscious and contribute to the transformation of the physical being. An awakening must come in the earth-nature and in the earth-consciousness which will be, if not the actual beginning, at least the effective preparation and the first steps of its evolution towards a new and diviner world order.”

*The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, 47*

### **A race of supramental, gnostic beings: divine life upon earth**

A critical mass of gnostic individuals, in integral relationship with themselves and all others, would create an entirely new paradigm of society; acting as spiritual integers, they will create a divine life on earth established on mutuality and harmony. Abiding oneness with Spirit everywhere in the world, in oneself and all sentient and insentient existences is the gnostic intrinsic nature; those individuals will set no boundaries between themselves and the societal body, nor within classes, nations and continents. The law of the collective life will be the union of “freedom of the diverse play of the Infinite in divine souls” along with “order of the conscious unity of souls which is the law of the supramental Infinite”:

“A gnostic collectivity would be a collective soul-power of the Truth-consciousness, even as the gnostic individual would be an individual soul-power of it: it would have the same integration of life and action in unison, the same realised and conscious unity of being, the same spontaneity, intimate oneness-feeling, one and mutual truth-vision and truth-sense of self and each other, the same truth-action in the relation of each with each and all with all; this collectivity would be and act not as a mechanical but a spiritual integer. A similar inevitability of the union of freedom and order would be the law of the collective life; it would be a freedom of the diverse play of the Infinite in divine souls, an order of the conscious unity of souls which is the law of the supramental Infinite.”

*The Life Divine, CWSA, 1047*

There will be no single fixed pattern, for the supramental law is unity

in diversity:

“A supramental or gnostic race of beings would not be a race made according to a single type, moulded in a single fixed pattern; for the law of the supermind is unity fulfilled in diversity, and therefore there would be an infinite diversity in the manifestation of the gnostic consciousness although that consciousness would still be one in its basis, in its constitution, in its all-revealing and all-uniting order.”

*The Life Divine, CWSA, 1007*

Feeling the Divine in every cell of his body the gnostic individual – Sri Aurobindo writes – is the consummation of the spiritual man governed by a vast universal spirituality. He “would not be a surface personality partly expressive of a larger secret being, he would be not the wave but the ocean: he would be the Purusha, the inner conscious Existence self-revealed, and would have no need of a carved expressive mask or persona.”<sup>1</sup> He will be in the world and of the world and yet transcend them; his individuality is universal, for he individualises the universe and the divine Transcendence:

“The gnosis is the effective principle of the Spirit, a highest dynamis of the spiritual existence. The gnostic individual would be the consummation of the spiritual man; his whole way of being, thinking, living, acting would be governed by the power of a vast universal spirituality. All the trinities of the Spirit would be real to his self-awareness and realised in his inner life. All his existence would be fused into oneness with the transcendent and universal Self and Spirit; all his action would originate from and obey the supreme Self and Spirit’s divine governance of Nature. All life would have to him the sense of the Conscious Being, the Purusha within, finding its self-expression in Nature; his life and all its thoughts, feelings, acts would be filled for him with that significance and built upon that foundation of its reality. He would feel the presence of the Divine in every centre of his consciousness, in every vibration of his life-force, in every cell of his body. In all the workings of his force of Nature he would be aware of the workings of the supreme World-Mother,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, SABCL, 995.

the Supernature; he would see his natural being as the becoming and manifestation of the power of the World-Mother. In this consciousness he would live and act in an entire transcendent freedom, a complete joy of the spirit, an entire identity with the cosmic self and a spontaneous sympathy with all in the universe. All beings would be to him his own selves, all ways and powers of consciousness would be felt as the ways and powers of his own universality. But in that inclusive universality there would be no bondage to inferior forces, no deflection from his own highest truth: for this truth would envelop all truth of things and keep each in its own place, in a relation of diversified harmony, — it would not admit any confusion, clash, infringing of boundaries, any distortion of the different harmonies that constitute the total harmony. His own life and the world life would be to him like a perfect work of art; it would be as if the creation of a cosmic and spontaneous genius infallible in its working out of a multitudinous order. The gnostic individual would be in the world and of the world, but would also exceed it in his consciousness and live in his self of transcendence above it; he would be universal but free in the universe, individual but not limited by a separative individuality. The true Person is not an isolated entity, his individuality is universal; for he individualises the universe: it is at the same time divinely emergent in a spiritual air of transcendental infinity, like a high cloud-surpassing summit; for he individualises the divine Transcendence.”

*The Life Divine, CWSA, 1007-8*







*The Mother made this drawing to explain to a child the meaning of Yoga. Man is at the bottom, the Divine at the top. The wavy line is the path of the ordinary life, the straight line the path of Yoga.*



Evolution is not finished; reason is not the last word nor the reasoning animal the supreme figure of Nature. As man emerged out of the animal, so out of man the superman emerges.

SRI AUROBINDO





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