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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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SHE LEADS US TO HIM

SHE BRINGS HIM CLOSER TO US

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Photo Caption:

The Mother's class in the Ashram Playground

The Ambience of the "Questions and Answers"

*Sweet is it to utter the name “Sri Aurobindo”
Sweet is it to call the Mother
Sweeter still to listen to Her speak of Him*

This issue is a compilation of passages from the Mother’s *Questions and Answers* where she speaks of Sri Aurobindo.

Rather than including just the relevant sentences, longer passages are presented, hoping to recreate something of the ambience of those golden moments. The contextual significance of the Mother’s utterances on the Master also becomes clear in this way.

The passages are not arranged topic-wise but more or less chronologically, with a short heading to suggest the subject.

The selection is representative rather than exhaustive.

Nearly all the quotations in this issue are from volumes 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the *Collected Works of The Mother*, and have been indicated within parentheses thus: (M 6: 56)—which should be read as: *Collected Works of The Mother*, 2nd Edition, Volume 6, page 56. Passages from volumes 8 and 9 will feature in the next issues.

*She leads us to Him
She brings Him closer to us*

He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; his presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.

The Mother

30 March 1914

SHE LEADS US TO HIM SHE BRINGS HIM CLOSER TO US

1. The First Meeting

...For the laying bare of each falsehood is in itself a victory—each acknowledgment of error is the demolition of one of the lords of Darkness. It may be an acknowledgment to oneself, provided it is absolutely honest and is no subtle regret apt to be forgotten the next moment and without the strength to make an unbreakable resolution not to repeat the mistake. Or it may be the acknowledgment to the Divine embodied in the Guru. As a result of direct personal confession to the Guru, your resolution remains no longer your own, because, if you are sincere, the Divine's fiat goes forth in your favour. To give you an idea of what this means I shall relate an experience of mine when I first met Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. I was in deep concentration, seeing things in the Supermind, things that were to be but which were somehow not manifesting. I told Sri Aurobindo what I had seen and asked him if they would manifest. He simply said, "Yes." And immediately I saw that the Supramental had touched the earth and was beginning to be realised! This was the first time I had witnessed the power to make real what is true: it is the very same power that will bring about the realisation in you of the truth when you come in all sincerity, saying, "This falsehood I want to get rid of", and the answer which you get is "Yes."

(M 3: 141-42)

2. The Converted Vital

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 what-

soever 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.

(M 3: 139-40)

3. Solid Peace

If each of you did your utmost, then there would be the right collaboration and the result would be so much the quicker. I have had innumerable examples of the power of right attitude. I have seen crowds saved from catastrophes by one single person keeping the right attitude. But it must be an attitude that does not remain somewhere very high and leaves the body to its usual reactions. If you remain high up like that, saying, "Let God's will be done", you may get killed all the same. For your body may be quite undivine, shivering with fear: the thing is to hold the true consciousness in the body itself and not have the least fear and be full of the divine peace. Then indeed there is no danger. Not only can attacks of men be warded off, but beasts also and even the elements can be affected. I can give you a little example. You remember the night of the great cyclone, when there was a tremendous noise and splash of rain all about the place. I thought I would go to Sri Aurobindo's room and help him shut the windows. I just opened his door and found him sitting quietly at his desk, writing. There was such a solid peace in the room that nobody would have dreamed that a cyclone was raging outside. All the windows were wide open, not a drop of rain was coming inside.

(M 3: 155)

4. Faith in Sri Aurobindo

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 heavens 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?

(M 3: 157)

5. Sri Aurobindo's Work

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.

(M 3: 173-74)

6. The 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 organisation.

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 need 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.

(M 3: 178-79)

7. Co-operating with the Divine

We must be vigilant to co-operate with the Divine and not placidly think that whatever happens is always the best. All depends upon the personal attitude. If, in the presence of circumstances that are on the point of occurring, you take the highest possible attitude—that is to say, if you put your consciousness in contact with the highest consciousness within your reach—you can be absolutely certain that in such a case what happens is the best that can happen to you. But as soon as you fall from this consciousness and come down into a lower state, then it is evident that what happens cannot be the best, since you are not in your best consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo once said, “What happened had to happen, but it could have been much better.” Because the person to whom it happened was not in his highest consciousness, there was no other consequence possible; but if he had brought about a descent of the Divine, then, even if the situation in general had been inevitable, it would have

turned out in a different way. What makes all the difference is how you receive the impulsion of the Divine Will.

(M 3: 170-71)

8. This World

A man who has no intellectual culture, if you give him some mixed ideas, just at random, to choose from, he will always choose the stupid ones; because, as Sri Aurobindo has told us, this is a world of falsehood, of ignorance and an effort is needed, an aspiration; one must come in contact with one's inmost being—a conscious and luminous contact—if one is to distinguish the true from the false, the good influence from the bad. If you let yourself go, you sink into a hole.

Things are like that because what rules the world—oh! let us put it in the past tense, so that it becomes true—what ruled the world was falsehood and ignorance.

In fact, for the moment, it is still like that; one should have no illusions about it. But perhaps with a great effort and great vigilance we shall be able to make it otherwise... soon—the “perhaps” is for “soon”.

Surely it will come one day, but we want it soon, and that is why the last two recommendations please me: “Arise. Cast off negligence.”

(M 3: 244-45)

9. Fear of Death

In that age and at the time when the Dhammapada was spoken by the Buddha, the possibility of an earthly immortality was never mentioned because this possibility belonged to such a far-off future that there would have been no point in speaking of it.

Today Sri Aurobindo tells us that this possibility is near at hand and that we have only to prepare for it. But the essential condition even to prepare for it is to completely abolish all fear of death.

You must neither fear it nor desire it.

Stand above it, in an absolute tranquillity, neither fear it nor desire it.

(M 3: 188)

10. To Reach the Truth

These few words, “they pursue right desires”, are a proof that the teaching of the Buddha, in its essence, did not turn away from the realisation upon earth, but only from what is false in the conception of the world and in activities as they are carried on in the world. Thus when he teaches that one must escape from life, it is not

to escape from a life that would be the expression of the truth but from the illusory life as it is ordinarily lived in the world.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that in order to reach the Truth and to have the power of realising this Truth you must join the spiritual consciousness to a progressive mental consciousness.

And these few words certainly prove that such was the original conception of the Buddhist teaching.

(M 3: 194)

11. An Integral Transformation

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.

(M 4: 18-19)

12. Miracle and the Vision of the Totality

There is a “miracle” because you do not give people time to see the procedure by which you do things, you do not show them the stages. Thus, 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”.

(M 4: 85)

13. Vedic Hymns—Expression of an Aspiration

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.

(M 4: 136)

14. What Happens is the Best Possible

But in the Manifestation, perfection consists in having a movement of transformation or an unfolding identical with the divine Movement, the essential Movement; whereas all that belongs to the inconscient or tamasic creation seeks to preserve exactly the very same existence instead of trying to last through constant transformation.

That is why some thinkers have postulated that the creation was the result of an error. But one finds all possible concepts: perfect creation, then a “fault” which introduced error; the creation itself as a lower movement which must have an end since it had a beginning; then the Vedic concept, as Sri Aurobindo has explained it, of an unfolding or a progressive and infinite discovery—indefinite and infinite—of the All by Himself.... Naturally, all these are human interpretations. For the moment, as long as you express yourself in human terms, it is a human translation. But according to the initial position of the human translator (that is to say, whether it is the position which admits “original sin” or an “accident” in the creation or a supreme conscious Will from the beginning in a progressive unfolding), in the yogic attitude, the conclusions or “descents” are different.... There are Nihilists, Nirvanists, Illusionists; there are all the religions which admit the devil’s intervention under one form or another; then there is the pure Vedism which is the eternal unfolding of the Supreme in a progressive objectification. And according to taste, one places oneself here, another there or elsewhere, with all the nuances between. But according to what Sri Aurobindo has felt to be the most total truth, according to this conception of a progressive universe, one is led to say that at every minute what happens is the best possible for the unfolding of the whole. It is absolutely logical. And I believe that all contradictions can arise only from a more or less pronounced tendency towards this or that, for one position or another. All who admit the intrusion of a “sin” or an “error” and the conflict resulting from it between forces which pull back and those which pull forward, may naturally contest the possibility. But one has to say that for him who is spiritually linked with the supreme Will or the supreme Truth, for him it is necessarily, at every instant, the best that happens for his personal realisation. In all instances it is like that. An unconditional best can be admitted only by one who sees the universe as an unfolding, as the Supreme’s self-awareness of Himself.

(Silence)

To tell you the truth, all these things are of no importance; for that which *is*, goes in every way entirely and absolutely beyond everything that human consciousness can think about it. It is only when you are no longer human that you *know*; but as soon as this knowledge is expressed, human limits reimpose themselves and then you cease to know.

This is incontestable.

And because of this incapacity, there is a kind of futility also in wanting to reduce the problem altogether to something which human reason can understand. In this case it is very wise to say like someone I knew: “We are here, we have a work to do, and what is needed is to do it as well as we can, without worrying about the why and how.” Why is the world as it is?... When we are capable of understanding, we shall understand.

From the practical point of view, this is evident.

Only, each one takes a position.... I have all the examples here. I have a sample collection of all attitudes and see very clearly their reactions. I see the same Force—the same, one Force—acting in this sample collection and producing naturally different effects; but these “different” effects, to a deeper vision, are very superficial: it is only “It pleases them to think in this way, that’s all, it just pleases them to think thus.” But as a matter of fact, the inner journey, the inner development, the essential vibration is not affected—not at all. One aspires with all his heart for Nirvana, another aspires with all his will for the supramental manifestation, and in both of them the vibratory result is almost the same. And it is a whole mass of vibrations which is prepared more and more to... to receive what must be.

There is a state, a state essentially pragmatic, spiritually pragmatic, in which of all human futilities, the most futile is metaphysics.

(M 4: 214-16)

15. Entering Sri Aurobindo’s Aura

Take a place like this, which is surcharged with certain forces, certain vibrations; these vibrations do not show themselves in visible and tangible things—they can produce changes, but as these changes occur according to a method (as all physical things do), you pass almost logically from one state to another and this logic prevents you from perceiving that there is something here which does not belong to normal life. Well, those who have no other perception than that of the ordinary mind, who see things working out as they habitually do or seem to do in ordinary life, will tell you, “Oh that, that is quite natural.” If they have no other perception than the purely physical perception, if they are not capable of feeling the quality of a vibration (some feel it vaguely, but those who are not even capable of feeling that, who have nothing in them corresponding to that or, if they have something, it is not awakened), they will look at the life here and tell you, “It is like the physical life—you have perhaps some ideas of your own, but there are many who have their own ideas; perhaps you do things in a special way, but there are lots of people who also do things in a special way. After all, it is a life like the one I live.” ... And so, it may very well happen that at a given moment the supramental Force manifests, that it is conscious here, that it acts on Matter, but those who do not consciously participate in its vibration are incapable of perceiving it. People say, “When the supramental force manifests, we

shall know it quite well. It will be seen”—not necessarily. They will not feel it any more than those people of little sensitivity who may pass through this place, even live here, without feeling that the atmosphere is different from elsewhere—who among you feels it in such a precise way as to be able to affirm it? ...You may feel in your heart, in your thought that it is not the same, but it is rather vague, isn't it? But to have this precise perception... Listen, as I had when I came from Japan: I was on the boat, at sea, not expecting anything (I was of course busy with the inner life, but I was living physically on the boat), when all of a sudden, abruptly, about two nautical miles from Pondicherry, the quality, I may even say the physical quality of the atmosphere, of the air, changed so much that I knew we were entering the aura of Sri Aurobindo. It was a *physical* experience and I guarantee that whoever has a sufficiently awakened consciousness can feel the same thing.

I had the contrary experience also, the first time that I went out in a car after many, many years here. When I reached a little beyond the lake, I felt all of a sudden that the atmosphere was changing; where there had been plenitude, energy, light and force, all that diminished, diminished... and then... nothing. I was not in a mental or vital consciousness, I was in an absolutely physical consciousness. Well, those who are sensitive in their physical consciousness ought to feel that quite concretely. And I can assure you that the area we call “the Ashram” has a condensation of force which is not at all the same as that of the town, and still less that of the countryside.

So, I ask you: this kind of condensation of force (which gives you quite a special vibration of consciousness), who is there that is really conscious of it? ... Many among you feel it vaguely, I know, even people from outside feel it vaguely; they get an impression, they speak of it, but the precise consciousness, the scientific consciousness which could give you the exact measure of it, who has that? I'm not alluding to anyone in particular, each one can look into himself. And this, this condensation here is only a far-off reflection of the supramental force. So when this supramental force will be installed here definitively, how long will it take for people to perceive that it is there?... And that it changes everything, do you understand? And when I say that the mind cannot judge, it is on facts like these that I base myself—the mind is not an instrument of knowledge, it cannot know. A scientist can tell you the proportion of the different components in any particular atmosphere, he analyses it. But as for this proportion here, who can give it? Who can say: There is such a vibration, such a proportion of this, such a proportion of that, such a proportion of the supramental? ... I put the question to you so that you may ponder over it.

(M 4: 222-24)

16. The Atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo

There are people who live constantly in a higher consciousness, while others have to make an effort to enter there. But here it is an altogether different thing; in

the experience I was speaking about, what gave it all its value was that I was not expecting it at all, not at all. I knew very well, I had been for a very long time and continuously in “spiritual” contact, if I may say so, with the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo, but I had never thought of the possibility of a modification in the physical air and I was not expecting it in the least, and it was this that gave the whole value to the experience, which came like that, quite suddenly, just as when one enters a place with another temperature or another altitude.... I do not know if you have noticed that the air you breathe is not always the same, that there are different vibrations in the air of one country and in the air of another, in the air of one place and in the air of another. If indeed you are accustomed to have this perception of the subtle physical, you can say immediately, “Ah! This air is as in France” or “This is the air of Japan.” It is something indefinable like taste or smell. But in this instance it is not that, it is a perception of another sense. It is a physical sense, it is not a vital or mental sense; it is a sense of the physical world, but there are other senses than the five that we usually have at our disposal—there are many others.

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.

Generally, when you want to study occultism, the first thing that the Master does is never to speak to you about it, never to explain it to you, precisely because of this ridiculous phenomenon of the mind which begins to “think” about it and brings you “experiences” which have no value: they are mental formations which make a plaything of you, that is all. They have no reality.

You must distrust the mind altogether when you want to enter the world of experiences. It is enough for the mind to be just slightly roused for it to say, “Ah, what is going on?”... Then it may be that things do happen but it is no longer *the* thing, it is a fabrication.

First condition, know how to keep silent. And not only keep your tongue quiet, but silence your mind, keep the head silent. If you wish to have a true, sincere experience upon which you can build, you must know how to be silent, otherwise you have nothing but what you fabricate yourself, which is equivalent to zero. All that one can say is, “Heavens, what a fashioner my mind is!”

(M 4: 229-31)

17. Kiki Stung by a Scorpion

I had a very sweet little cat, absolutely civilised, a marvellous cat. It was born in the house and it had the habit all cats have, that is to say, if something moved, it

played with that. Just then there was in the house a huge scorpion; as was its habit, the cat started playing with the scorpion. And the scorpion stung it. But it was an exceptional cat; it came to me, it was almost dying, but it showed me its paw where it was bitten—it was already swollen and in a terrible state. I took my little cat—it was really sweet—and put it on a table and called Sri Aurobindo. I told him, “Kiki has been stung by a scorpion, it must be cured.” The cat stretched its neck and looked at Sri Aurobindo, its eyes already a little glassy. Sri Aurobindo sat before it and looked at it also. Then we saw this little cat gradually beginning to recover, to come around, and an hour later it jumped to its feet and went away completely healed.... In those days, I had the habit of holding a meditation in the room where Sri Aurobindo slept (the room A uses now) and it was regularly the same people who came; everything was arranged. But there was an armchair in which this very cat always settled beforehand—it did not wait for anyone to get into the chair, it got in first itself! And regularly it went into a trance! It was not sleeping, it was not in the pose cats take when sleeping: it was in a trance, it used to start up, it certainly had visions. And it let out little sounds. It was in a profound trance. It remained thus for hours together. And when it came out from that state, it refused to eat. It was awakened and given food, but it refused: it went back to its chair and fell again into a trance! This was becoming very dangerous for a little cat.... But this was not an ordinary cat.

To finish my story, if you leave an animal in its normal state, far from man, it obeys the spirit of the species, it has a very sure instinct and it will never commit any stupidities. But if you take it and keep it with you, it loses its instinct, and it is then you who must look after it, for it no longer knows what should or should not be done. I was interested in cats to make an experiment, a sort of inverse metempsychosis, if one can call it that, that is, to see if this could be their last incarnation as animals, if they were ready to enter a human body in the next life. The experiment succeeded fully, I had three absolutely flagrant instances; they left with a psychic being sufficiently conscious to enter a human body. But this is not what men ordinarily do; what they usually do is to spoil the consciousness or rather the instinct of animals.

(M 4: 237-39)

18. The Yogi and the Toothache

There are certain regions which offer a much stronger resistance than others to the action of the Yogic forces, and the illnesses affecting them are harder to cure. They are those parts that belong to the most material layers of the being, and the illnesses that pertain to them, as, for instance, skin diseases or bad teeth. Sri Aurobindo spoke once of a Yogi who, still enjoying robust health and a magnificent physique, had been living for nearly a century on the banks of the Narmada. Offered by a disciple medicine for a toothache, he observed, in refusing, that one tooth had given

him trouble for the last two hundred years. This Yogi had secured so much control over material nature as to live two hundred years, but in all that time he had not been able to conquer a toothache.

(M 3: 90)

19. Curing Illnesses

There are two ways of curing an illness spiritually. One consists in putting a force of consciousness and truth on the physical spot which is affected. In this case the effect produced depends naturally on the receptivity of the person. Supposing the person is receptive; the force of consciousness is put upon the affected part and its pressure restores order. Many of you here can tell how Sri Aurobindo cured them. It was like a hand which came and took away the pain. It is as clear as that.

(M 4: 264)

20. Little Beings—Two Stories

I had the experience—among innumerable instances—but precisely of two very striking cases, of two opposite things, only it was not the same beings.... There are little beings like fairies who are very sweet, very obliging, but they are not always there, they come from time to time when it pleases them. I remember the time I used to cook for Sri Aurobindo; I was also doing many other things at the same time, so I often happened to leave the milk on the fire and go for some other work or to see something with him, to discuss with somebody, and truly I was not always aware of the time, I used to forget the milk on the fire. And whenever I forgot the milk on the fire, I felt suddenly (in those days I used to wear a sari) a little hand catching a fold of my sari and pulling it, like this. Then I used to run quickly and would see that the milk was just on the point of boiling over. This did not happen just once, but several times, and very clearly, like a little child's hand clutching and pulling.

The other story is of the days Sri Aurobindo had the habit of walking up and down in his rooms. He used to walk for several hours like that, it was his way of meditating. Only, he wanted to know the time, so a clock had been put in each room to enable him to see the time at any moment. There were three such clocks. One was in the room where I worked; it was, so to say, his starting-point. One day he came and asked, "What time is it?" He looked and the clock had stopped. He went into the next room, saying, "I shall see the time there"—the clock had stopped. And it had stopped at the same minute as the other, you understand, with the difference of a few seconds. He went to the third room... the clock had stopped. He continued walking three times like that—all the clocks had stopped! Then he returned to my room and said, "But this is impossible! This is a bad joke!" and all the clocks, one after the

other, started working again. I saw it myself, you know, it was a charming incident. He was annoyed, he said, “This is a bad joke!” And all the clocks started going again!

(M 4: 275-76)

21. The Consciousness Must Not Sleep

Perfect your body, make it a remarkable instrument, but never forget that there is a choice to be made and that this choice ought to be made constantly—one doesn’t make it once for all, it must always be renewed. Because, before one reaches the total union, the total expression, there will always be this invasion of external things which will try to enter you and spoil all the work. So, the necessary, indispensable condition is a constant vigilance. Do not sleep with satisfaction under the pretext that you have once made your choice: “Oh! Now it is all right, everything is all right.” In principle everything is all right; in the sincerity of your choice lies also the guarantee of its duration. But for the sincerity to be perfect and the choice unshakable, one must never sleep—I don’t mean you must not sleep physically, I mean the consciousness must not sleep! And this is an introduction to what I shall read to you next time, a letter Sri Aurobindo wrote quite a long time ago; if I remember rightly, it was in 1928, October 1928. You see, things do not change very quickly.

(M 4: 326)

22. Constant and Intense Aspiration and Tapasya

This yoga can only be done to the end by those who are in total earnest about it and ready to abolish their little human ego and its demands in order to find themselves in the Divine. It cannot be done in a spirit of levity or laxity; the work is too high and difficult, the adverse powers in the lower Nature too ready to take advantage of the least sanction or the smallest opening, the aspiration and tapasya needed too constant and intense. It cannot be done if there is a petulant self-assertion of the ideas of the human mind or wilful indulgence of the demands and instincts and pretensions of the lowest part of the being, commonly justified under the name of human nature.

Sri Aurobindo (SABCL, Vol. 24, p. 1310)

Everybody knows this; those who do not want to change their way of doing things or their way of being always say, “Oh! What do you expect, it is human nature.” This is what is called a “wilful indulgence”. That is to say, instead of becoming conscious that these are weaknesses and difficulties on the way, one justifies these

things, saying, “Oh! It can’t be helped, it is human nature.” One wants to continue to do what one is doing, without changing, one is full of a wilful indulgence of one’s demands. For the lower nature of man always demands things; it says, “These are necessities, these are needs, I can’t do without them.” Then, the instincts—a sort of instinct for one’s own satisfaction—and pretensions: the lower being claims that it has a considerable importance and must be given what is necessary for it, otherwise it won’t be able to live; it asserts that it alone is important, and so on. It is all this which creates obstacles, all these obscure, ignorant movements, all these justifications of the old ways of being: those who fly into a temper and say, “What do you expect, it can’t be helped”, and everything one does saying, “Oh! It is human nature”, everything one justifies saying, “What can be done, people are like that, there is nothing to be done about it.” It is the old idea that we are born with a particular nature and must get adjusted to it, for we cannot change it.

So Sri Aurobindo tells us that if one cannot change the nature it is not worth the trouble of doing yoga, for yoga is done precisely in order to change the nature, otherwise it has no meaning.

(M 4: 331-32)

23. Constant Aspiration

Sri Aurobindo says here, “...The aspiration and tapasya needed [are] too constant...”

Sri Aurobindo, (SABCL, Vol. 24, p. 1310)

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 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.

(M 4: 342)

24. The Old Fiasco

At the beginning of this letter Sri Aurobindo writes that he has “no intention of giving his sanction to a new edition of the old fiasco”¹ Does the word “fiasco” refer to something particular or general?

It refers to all the Teachers who have come to the world. One has said, “I bring Love”, another “I bring Peace”, another “I bring Liberation”, and then, there has been a little change within, something has awakened in the depths of men’s con-

sciousness, but externally everything has remained just the same. It is this which makes it a fiasco.

Don't the inner realisation and experiences help in the outer change?

Not necessarily. They help only if one wants it; otherwise, on the contrary, one detaches oneself more and more from the outer nature. This is what happens to all those who seek *mukti*, liberation; they reject their outer nature with its character and habits as something altogether contemptible with which one should not busy oneself; they withdraw all their energies, all forces of consciousness towards the heights, and if they do it with sufficient perfection, generally they leave their body once for all. But in the immense majority of instances, they do it only partially and, when they come out of their meditation, their contemplation, their trance or their *samadhi*, they are generally worse than others because they have left their outer nature aside without working on it at all. Even ordinary people, when their defects are a little too glaring, try to correct them or control them a little so as not to have too much trouble in life, while these people who think that the right attitude is to leave one's body and one's outer consciousness completely and withdraw entirely to the "spiritual heights", treat that like an old coat one throws aside and does not mend—and when one takes it back it is full of holes and stains.

That does not help. It helps only if one has the sincere will to change; if one sincerely has the will to change, it is a powerful help because it gives you the force to make the change, the fulcrum to make the change. But one must sincerely want to change.

* * *

1. I have no intention of giving my sanction to a new edition of the old fiasco, a partial and transient spiritual opening within with no true and radical change in the law of the external nature.

Sri Aurobindo (*SABCL*, Vol. 24, p. 1306)

(M 4: 348-49)

25. Aspiration Can Be Developed

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.¹ 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?

* * *

1. *“[This yoga] cannot be done if you insist on identifying these lowest things of the Ignorance with the divine Truth or even the lesser truth permissible on the way. It cannot be done if you cling to your past self and its old mental, vital and physical formations and habits; one has continually to leave behind his past selves and to see, act and live from an always higher and higher conscious level. It cannot be done if you insist on ‘freedom’ for your human mind and vital ego. All the parts of the human being are entitled to express and satisfy themselves in their own way at their own risk and peril, if he so chooses, as long as he leads the ordinary life. But to enter into a path of yoga whose whole object is to substitute for these human things the law and power of a greater Truth and the whole heart of whose method is surrender to the Divine Shakti, and yet to go on claiming this so-called freedom, which is no more than a subjection to certain ignorant cosmic Forces, is to indulge in a blind contradiction and to claim the right to lead a double life.*

“Least of all can this yoga be done if those who profess to be its sadhaks continue always to make themselves centres, instruments or spokesmen of the forces of the Ignorance which oppose, deny and ridicule its very principle and object.”

Sri Aurobindo (SABCL, Vol. 24, p. 1310)

(M 4: 342-43)

26. Need for Vigilance

“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 (SABCL, 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.

(M 4: 350)

27. Irrevocable Transformation

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.

(M 4: 356)

28. Long Sentences

“But so long as the lower nature is active the personal effort of the Sadhaka remains necessary.”

Sri Aurobindo (SABCL, Vol. 25, p. 6)

Outwardly, one believes in one's own personality and one's own effort. So long as you believe in personal effort, you must make a personal effort.

There is one part of the being which is not at all conscious of being a part of the Divine. The whole of the outer being is convinced that it is something separate, independent and related only to itself. This part of the being must necessarily make a personal effort. It can't be told, “The Divine does the sadhana for you”, for it would never do anything, it would never be changed. When one speaks with somebody, one should use his language,¹ shouldn't one?

What is “physical tamas”?

You don’t know that, you don’t? Then, congratulations! For instance, does it never happen to you that being seated you don’t want to get up, that having something to do you say, “Oh! I have to do all that!”?

Is it the same thing as laziness?

Not quite. Of course, laziness is a kind of tamas, but in laziness there is an ill-will, a refusal to make an effort— while tamas is inertia: one wants to do something, but one can’t.

* * *

1. At the time of publication of this talk, Mother made the following remark: “This is not true. This is not true for it is too categorical. One must not use the language of the outer being, for its language is altogether false, but things must be said in a form in which it can understand them—that is different. But to say things exactly takes a very long time; that is why Sri Aurobindo always used long sentences and what appeared to be long explanations. These are not explanations: they are meant for saying the thing with precision.”

(M 4: 365-66)

29. Leading a Double Life

Friends from outside have often asked me this question: “When one is compelled to earn his living, should one just conform to the common code of honesty or should one be still more strict?”

This depends upon the attitude your friend has taken in life. If he wants to be a sadhak, it is indispensable that rules of ordinary morality do not have any value for him. Now, if he is an ordinary man living the ordinary life, it is a purely practical question, isn’t it? He must conform to the laws of the country in which he lives to avoid all trouble! But all these things which in ordinary life have a very relative value and can be looked upon with a certain indulgence, change totally the minute one decides to do yoga and enter the divine life. Then, all values change completely; what is honest in ordinary life, is no longer at all honest for you. Besides, there is such a reversal of values that one can no longer use the same ordinary language. If one wants to consecrate oneself to the divine life, one must do it truly, that is, give oneself entirely, no longer do anything for one’s own interest, depend exclusively upon the divine Power to which one abandons oneself. Everything changes completely, doesn’t it?— everything, everything, it is a reversal. What I have just read from this book applies solely to those who want to do yoga; for others it has no meaning, it is a language which makes no sense, but for those who want to do yoga it is imperative.

It is always the same thing in all that we have recently read: one must be careful not to have one foot on one side and the other foot on the other, not to stand in two different boats each following its own course. This is what Sri Aurobindo said: one must not lead a “double life”. One must give up one thing or the other—one can’t follow both.

This does not mean, however, that one is obliged to get out of the conditions of one’s life: it is the inner attitude which must be totally changed. One may do what one is in the habit of doing, but do it with quite a different attitude. I don’t say it is necessary to give up everything in life and go away into solitude, to an ashram necessarily, to do yoga. Now, it is true that if one does yoga in the world and in worldly circumstances, it is more difficult, but it is also more complete. Because, every minute one must face problems which do not present themselves to someone who has left everything and gone into solitude; for such a one these problems are reduced to a minimum—while in life one meets all sorts of difficulties, beginning with the incomprehension of those around you with whom you have to deal; one must be ready for that, be armed with patience, and a great indifference. But in yoga one should no longer care for what people think or say; it is an absolutely indispensable starting-point. You must be absolutely immune to what the world may say or think of you and to the way it treats you. People’s understanding must be something quite immaterial to you and should not even slightly touch you. That is why it is generally much more difficult to remain in one’s usual surroundings and do yoga than to leave everything and go into solitude; it is much more difficult, but we are not here to do easy things—easy things we leave to those who do not think of transformation.

(M 4: 376-78)

30. Not Running Away, But Conquering

Does an individual mastery over desire suffice or is a general, collective mastery necessary?

Ah! There we are.... Is it possible to attain a total personal transformation without there being at least a correspondence in the collectivity?... This does not seem possible to me. There is such an interdependence between the individual and the collectivity that, unless one does what the ascetics have preached, that is, escapes from the world, goes out of it completely, leaves it where it is and runs away selfishly leaving all the work to others, unless one does that.... And even so I have my doubts. Is it possible to accomplish a total transformation of one’s being so long as the collectivity has not reached at least a certain degree of transformation? I don’t think so. Human nature remains what it is—one can attain a great change of consciousness, that yes, one can purify one’s consciousness, but the total conquest, the material transformation depends

definitely to a large extent, on a certain degree of progress in the collectivity. Buddha said with reason that as long as you have in you a vibration of desire, this vibration will spread in the world and all those who are ready to receive it will receive it. In the same way, if you have in you the least receptivity to a vibration of desire, you will be open to all the vibrations of desire which circulate constantly in the world. And that is why he concluded: Get out of this illusion, withdraw entirely and you will be free. I find this relatively very selfish, but after all, that was the only way he had foreseen. There is another: to identify oneself so well with the divine Power as to be able to act constantly and consciously upon all vibrations circulating through the world. Then the undesirable vibrations no longer have any effect upon you, but you have an effect upon them, that is, instead of an undesirable vibration entering into you without being perceived and doing its work there, it is perceived and immediately on its arrival you act upon it to transform it, and it goes back into the world transformed, to do its beneficent work and prepare others for the same realisation. This is exactly what Sri Aurobindo proposes to do and, more clearly, what he asks you to do, what he intends us to do:

Instead of running away, to bring into oneself the power which can conquer.

Note that things are arranged in such a way that if the tiniest atom of ambition remained and one wanted this Power for one's personal satisfaction, one could never have it, that Power would never come. Its deformed limitations, of the kind seen in the vital and physical world, those yes, one may have them, and there are many people who have them, but the true Power, the Power Sri Aurobindo calls "supramental", unless one is absolutely free from all egoism under all its forms, one will never be able to manifest. So there is no danger of its being misused. It will not manifest except through a being who has attained the perfection of a complete inner detachment. I have told you, this is what Sri Aurobindo expects us to do—you may tell me it is difficult, but I repeat that we are not here to do easy things, we are here to do difficult ones.

(M 4: 381-82)

31. Abolish the Ego

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

Ah! That, that is the work for each one. That is what I told you the other day, I read to you what Sri Aurobindo has written: "Do not harbour the indolent illusion that you will be given the aspiration and the work will be done for you." The aspiration must come from you and the abolition of the ego also. You are helped, you are supported; every time you take a step forward you will feel there is something which gives you all that is necessary to enable you to take the step, but it is you who must walk, no one will take you on his back and carry you.... Abolish the ego first, that's

a wonderful programme! Once the ego is abolished, there will be nothing more to do, all the work will be over, for it is precisely the ego which impedes you from being in touch with the Divine. Once the ego is gone, quite simply you will be like that, in a beatific union with the Divine, and all the work will be over. But generally, one does not begin by the end. In any case, what I have just told you holds good: to abolish the ego is your work. You will be helped, but you must walk on your own feet. Do not at all hope that someone is going to carry you on his back and that you will have nothing to do except let yourself be carried.

(M 4: 410)

32. Three Hundred Years

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*)

No, 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.

(M 5: 57-58)

33. Ill-Will

Why is there ill-will?

My child, it is as though you asked me why there is inconstancy, ignorance, darkness in the nature! It is the why of the world you are asking me! Why is the world like this and not otherwise?... There are people who have written volumes on the subject. And each one explains it in his own way and that changes nothing, in fact. You may ask me: Why is there ill-will? Why is there ignorance? Why is there stupidity? Why is there wickedness? Why is there all the evil? Why is the world not a very charming place?... All the philosophers explain it to you, each in his own way. The materialists explain it in their way, the scientists explain it in their way, but nobody in all that can find the means of getting out of it! and after all, the one thing that's truly important is, it would be just (you ask me: Why is there ill-will?) it would be to find the way so that there may no longer be any ill-will. That would be worth the trouble. If you tell me: Why is there suffering, why is there misery?... What can that do to you, this why, unless it be a means of finding a remedy? But I don't believe it would, for (we have said that here) if you seek for the why, you will find within yourself simply all sorts of explanations which will be more or less useless and will lead you nowhere.

The fact is that it *is* so, isn't it? and the second fact is that one doesn't want it thus, and the third is to find the means that it may no longer exist. That is our problem. The world is not as we think it ought to be. There are lots of things in the world which we do not approve of. Well, there are people who like what they call "knowledge" very much and begin to inquire why it is like that. In a way this is very well, but as I said, it would be much more important to find out what to do so that it may be otherwise. This is exactly the problem the Buddha put to himself. He sat under a tree, it is said, until he found the solution. But his solution is not very good,

for when you tell me: “The world is bad”, well, his solution is: “Do away with the world.”—“For whose benefit?” as Sri Aurobindo has written somewhere. Then the world will no longer be bad, for it will not exist! But what is the use of its no longer being bad, since it will not exist? It is very simple logic. It is like those who want the whole world to return to its Origin; and so Sri Aurobindo answers: “You will be the all-powerful master of something that no longer exists, an emperor without an empire or a king without a kingdom”, that’s all.... It is one solution. But there are other better ones. I believe we have found better ones.

Some say that ill-will comes from ignorance (that was exactly what the Buddha claimed) and that if ignorance disappeared there would no longer be any ill-will. There are others who say that ill-will comes from division, separation, that if the universe were not cut off from its Origin there would be no ill-will. Others still say that it is ill-will which is the cause of everything, of separation and ignorance; and so there arises the problem: Whence does it come, this ill-will? If it were at the origin of everything, it was then *in* the origin of everything. And there we are altogether at a loss, my children! We could speculate upon this for years, we shall never get out of it. And so those who push it so far finish by telling you: Ill-will doesn’t exist, it is an illusion. And that’s simply because they stop midway in their reasoning, for if they went a little farther they might say: Perhaps it is a human invention, this ill-will.... That is possible!

(M 5: 145-46)

34. Decided in Advance

Mother, you told us one day that all that happens to us has been decided in advance. What does that mean?

This is but a way of speaking. This happens because to express a thing I can’t be saying all the words at the same time, can I? I am obliged to say them one after another. Otherwise, if all the words were spoken at the same time, it would make a big noise and nobody would understand anything! Well, when you try to explain the universe, you do as you would when you speak. You say one thing after another, but to tell the truth, you must say everything at one go. Now, how can that be done?... Indeed, since you repeat it to me, it is very likely that I must have said that somewhere.... I must have said the contrary also! But if you put it in this way, that everything that happens has been decided in advance, then with the consciousness of time that you have now, it is as if you said: yesterday it was decided what would happen today; and this year it is decided what will happen next year. It is in this way that the thing is translated in your consciousness—naturally, because it is thus that we see, think, understand and above all speak and express ourselves. But it is not like that.

There are people who have perceived this unreality so strongly that they have

felt there was no reason why they could not go back instead of going forward, for backward, forward, the present, everything that we express in this way exists all at the same time. It is on different levels. If I tell you: “What is happening to you had been decided in advance”, I could also say: “What is happening here, has already happened elsewhere”, that would be equally true, and equally false, because it is impossible to express this in words.

I am going to give you an example which perhaps will make you understand. I do not remember exactly when it happened; it must have been some time in the year 1920 probably (perhaps earlier, perhaps in 1914-1915, but I don't think so, it was some time in the year 1920). One day—every day I used to meditate with Sri Aurobindo: he used to sit on one side of a table and I on the other, on the veranda—and one day in this way, in meditation, I entered (how to put it?...), I went up very high, entered very deep or came out of myself (well, whatever one may say does not express what happened, these are merely ways of speaking), I reached a place or a state of consciousness from which I told Sri Aurobindo just casually and quite simply: “India is free.” It was in 1920. Then he put to me a question: “How?” And I answered him: “Without any fight, without a battle, without a revolution. The English themselves will leave, for the condition of the world will be such that they won't be able to do anything else except go away.”

It was *done*. I spoke in the future when he asked me the question, but there where I had seen, I said, India *is* free, it was a fact. Now, India was not free at that time: it was 1920. Yet it was there, it had been done. And it happened in 1947. That is to say, from the external physical point of view I saw it twenty-seven years in advance. But it had been done.

Could you see Pakistan?

No, for the freedom could have come about without Pakistan. Indeed, if they had listened to Sri Aurobindo there would have been no Pakistan.

Well, externally it seems to take time, but in fact it is like that.

(M 5: 187-88)

35. A Vedic Experience

You said that this physical world was a projection of invisible worlds. Then why should the divine Emanations come into the physical world to transform it? They have only to do the work in the invisible planes; then the projections will be good.

That indeed is a serious question!... You know the image sometimes given to the universe: a serpent biting its tail? And it is taken as the symbol of the infinite, of

the universe. Well, it is a fact. In the creation there is a progressive, a greater and greater materialisation. But we could take another image (I am taking an approximate image): the universe is a circle or rather a sphere (but for the convenience of explanation, let us take a circle). There is a progressive descent from the most subtle to the most material. But the most material happens to touch the point of origin of the most subtle. Then, if you understand the image, instead of going all the way round to change matter, it is much more easy to do the thing directly, for the two extremities meet—the extremely subtle and the extremely material touch, since it is a sphere. Hence, instead of doing all that (*Mother draws a circle*), it is much better to do this (*Mother touches the extreme material end of the circle*). In fact, psychologically it is that. The rest will follow quite naturally. If that is done (*Mother touches the same extreme material end*), all the rest will get settled as a matter of course. And it is not even like this! It is precisely for the convenience of work that all has been concentrated or concretised at one point so that instead of having to spread oneself out in the infinite to change things, one can work just on the point that serves as the symbol of the whole universe. And from the occult standpoint, earth (which is nothing from the astronomical standpoint; in the immensity of the astronomical skies, earth is a thing absolutely without interest and without importance), but from the occult and spiritual point of view, earth is the concentrated symbol of the universe. For it is much more easy to work on one point than in a diluted vastness. All those who do the work know this. Well, for the convenience and necessity of work, the whole universe has been concentrated and condensed symbolically in a grain of sand which is called Earth. And therefore it is the symbol of everything; all that is to be changed, all that is to be transformed, all that is to be converted is there. This means that if one concentrates on this work and does it there, all the rest will follow automatically, otherwise there will be no end—and no hope.

But that is also why this point appears as particularly bad! Because everything is concentrated. And that can be particularly good also. For always there are the two, the two opposites are together. And always the best borders on the worst, or the worst borders on the best (it depends on the side you look from). But it is because of the worst that you can find the best and it is because of the best that you can transform the worst—the two act and react upon each other.... That was published in the *Bulletin*: the “Evil Persona”.¹ It is always said that there is a dark double of all the stars and a luminous double of all the planets. In the occult way, it is said that there is a luminous earth. All that is the experience of the luminous earth. Sri Aurobindo has described the experience.

What experience?

It is an experience that I had and I wrote about it to Sri Aurobindo. He answered me saying that it was an experience of Vedic times, an experience that happened in

the luminous double of the earth.... That will come out somewhere one day.²

(M 5: 274-76)

* * *

1. "What you say about the 'Evil Persona' interests me greatly as it answers to my consistent experience that a person greatly endowed for the work has, always or almost always—perhaps one ought not to make a too rigid universal rule about these things—a being attached to him, sometimes appearing like a part of him, which is just the contradiction of the thing he centrally represents in the work to be done. Or, if it is not there at first, not bound to his personality, a force of this kind enters into his environment as soon as he begins his movement to realise. Its business seems to be to oppose, to create stumblings and wrong conditions, in a word, to set before him the whole problem of the work he has started to do. It would seem as if the problem could not, in the occult economy of things, be solved otherwise than by the predestined instrument making the difficulty his own. That would explain many things that seem very disconcerting on the surface."

Sri Aurobindo, (*SABCL*, Vol. 24, p. 1660)

2. The experience referred to is one which the Mother had on 26 November 1915. This has been described in her *Prayers and Meditations*.

November 26, 1915

The entire consciousness immersed in divine contemplation, the whole being enjoyed a supreme and vast felicity.

Then was the physical body seized, first in its lower members and next the whole of it, by a sacred trembling which made all personal limits fall away little by little even in the most material sensation. The being grew in greatness progressively, methodically, breaking down every barrier, shattering every obstacle, that it might contain and manifest a force and a power which increased ceaselessly in immensity and intensity. It was as a progressive dilatation of the cells until there was a complete identification with the earth: the body of the awakened consciousness was the terrestrial globe moving harmoniously in ethereal space. And the consciousness knew that its global body was thus moving in the arms of the universal Being, and it gave itself, it abandoned itself to It in an ecstasy of peaceful bliss. Then it felt that its body was absorbed in the body of the universe and one with it; the consciousness became the consciousness of the universe, immobile in its totality, moving infinitely in its internal complexity. The consciousness of the universe sprang towards the Divine in an ardent aspiration, a perfect surrender, and it saw in the splendour of the immaculate Light the radiant Being standing on a many-headed serpent whose body coiled infinitely around the universe. The Being in an eternal gesture of triumph mastered and created at one and the same time the serpent and the universe that issued from him; erect on the serpent he dominated it with all his victorious might, and the same gesture that crushed the hydra enveloping the universe gave it eternal birth. Then the consciousness became this Being and perceived that its form was changing once more; it was absorbed into something which was no longer a form and yet contained all forms, something which, immutable, sees,—the Eye, the Witness. And what It sees, is. Then this last vestige of form disappeared and the consciousness itself was absorbed into the Unutterable, the Ineffable.

The return towards the consciousness of the individual body took place very slowly in a constant and invariable splendour of Light and Power and Felicity and Adoration, by successive gradations, but directly, without passing again through the universal and terrestrial forms. And it was as if the modest corporeal form had become the direct and immediate vesture, without any intermediary, of the supreme and eternal Witness.

[Sri Aurobindo's reply to the Mother is dated 31 December 1915:]

The experience you have described is Vedic in the real sense, though not one which would easily be recognised by the modern systems of Yoga which call themselves Vedic. It is the union of the "Earth" of the Veda and Purana with the divine Principle, an earth which is said to be above our earth, that is to say, the physical being and consciousness of which the world and the body are only images. But the modern Yogas hardly recognise the possibility of a material union with the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo (*SABCL*, Vol. 25, p. 384)

36. Light and Shadow

You have said: "Everyone possesses... two opposite tendencies of cha-racter,... which are like the light and the shadow of the same thing."¹

Why are things made in this way? Can't one have only the light?

Yes, if one eliminates the shadow. But it must be eliminated. That does not happen by itself. The world as it is is a mixed world. You cannot have an object which gets the light from one side without its casting a shadow on the other. It is like that, and indeed it is the shadows which make you see the lights. The world is like that, and to have only the light one must definitely go through the entire discipline necessary for eliminating the shadow. This is what I have explained a little farther; I have said that this shadow was like a sign of what you had to conquer in your nature in order to be able to realise what you have come to do. If you have a part to play, a mission to fulfil, you will always carry in yourself the main difficulty preventing you from realising it, so that you have within your reach the victory you must win. If you had to fight against a difficulty which is everywhere on earth, it would be very difficult (you would need to have a very vast consciousness and a very great power), while if you carry in your own nature just the shadow or defect you must conquer, well, it is there, within your reach: you see all the time the effects of this thing and can fight it directly, immediately. It is a very practical organisation.

You haven't seen in the *Bulletin* that letter of Sri Aurobindo's: the "Evil Persona"? It is in the *Bulletin*. The thing is very well explained there.

(M 6: 16-17)

* * *

1. "...Everyone possesses in a large measure, and the exceptional individual in an increasing degree of precision, two opposite tendencies of character, in almost equal proportions, which are like the light and the shadow of the same thing. Thus someone who has the capacity of being exceptionally generous will suddenly find an obstinate avarice rising up in his nature, the courageous man will be a coward in some part of his being and the good man will suddenly have wicked impulses. In this way life seems to endow everyone not only with the possibility of expressing an ideal, but also with contrary elements representing in a concrete manner the battle he has to wage and the victory he has to win for the realisation to become possible. Consequently, all life is an education pursued more or less consciously, more or less willingly."

The Mother (*SABCL*, Vol. 12, p. 19)

37. The Overmind

Mother, you have said¹ 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 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.

There is however a kind of Grace which makes it possible for us to profit by the experience of others. It is something similar to the way of teaching the sciences. If each scientist had to do all over again all the experiments of the past in order to arrive at a new discovery, go over all that the others had found, he would have to spend his whole life doing that and there would be no time left to make his new discovery! Now one doesn't need to do all that: one opens a book and sees the results and starting from there can proceed further. Well, Sri Aurobindo wanted to do the same thing. He tells you where you can find the results of what others before him have found—the experiments they made and their results—and where you stand: historically where you stand in the spiritual history of the world. And then he takes you from there, and after the basis has been firmly laid for you, he makes you climb higher up the mountain.

(M 5: 282-84)

* * *

1. "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."

The Mother (SABCL, Vol. 3, p. 94)

38. Relation with the Divine

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.

(M 5: 322-23)

39. Self-Complacency

Is self-complacency an obstacle to art?

Yes, it is even an obstacle to intelligence. Fatuity is one of the greatest of human stupidities. There is a very great difference between having faith in what can be done, the will to realise it, the certitude of the possibilities open in creation (and also the certitude that these possibilities will be realised), and self-complacency; these are two things which turn their backs completely on each other. To be convinced that nothing is impossible if one puts in the time, energy, will, trust, sincerity and all else, is very essential, but to be self-satisfied in any way whatever is always, without exception, a stupidity. And this is one of the things that takes you farthest away from the divine realisation, for it makes you foolish. And it is at the same time one of the things most contrary to the goodwill of Nature, for Nature laughs at you immediately.

You become an object of ridicule at once. For, in truth, there is no human being who is something by himself. He is only a possibility created by the Divine and one which can be developed only by the Divine, which exists only by the Divine, and which should live only for the Divine. And so, in this I do not see any place for self-complacency; for, as we are nothing in ourselves but what the Divine makes of us, and as we can do nothing by ourselves except what the Divine wants to do through us, I don't see what satisfaction one can have in that. One can only have the feeling of one's perfect powerlessness. Only, what is very bad is to have this the wrong side out—for there is always a wrong side and a right to every state of consciousness—and, fundamentally, it is the same vanity which makes you say: "I can do nothing, I am good for nothing, I am incapable of doing anything whatsoever"; that, that is the wrong side of "I can, I am great, I have all sorts of powers in me." It is the same thing. One is the shadow and the other the light, but they are exactly alike: one is no better than the other. And if really one were aware of being nothing at all, one would not bother to know what one is like. That would already be something. But truly, sincerely, I tell you, and I have a sufficiently long experience of life, I know nothing so grotesque as people who are satisfied with themselves. It is truly ridiculous. They make themselves utterly ridiculous. There are people like that; some of them came to see Sri Aurobindo telling him all that they were capable of, all that they had done and all they could do, all that they had realised—and so Sri Aurobindo looked at them very seriously and replied: "Oh! you are too perfect to be here. It would be better for you to go away."

(M 5: 336-37)

40. A Programme of 1912

(Mother is about to begin reading the first pages of *Quelques Paroles, Quelques Prières*.)

The first texts were written in 1912. Many of you were not yet born. It was a small group of about twelve people who met once a week. A subject was given; an answer was to be prepared for the following week. Each one brought along his little work. Generally, I too used to prepare a short paper and, at the end, I read it out. That is what is given here—not all, only these two. These two first ones. Later, it was something else. The others appeared in *Words of Long Ago*.

There were four meetings. The subject for the first meeting was: What is the aim to be achieved, the work to be done, the means of achievement? And here is my answer:

[Mother reads the text of 7 May 1912: "*The general aim to be attained is the advent of a progressing universal harmony.*"]

This is the Supermind.

I did not know Sri Aurobindo at that time and he had not written anything yet.

(M 5: 351)

“In regard to the earth, the means of achieving this aim is the realisation of human unity by the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity who is one.

In other words: to create unity by establishing the kingdom of God which is in all.

Hence, the most useful work to be done is:

1) For everyone individually the becoming aware in oneself of the divine Presence and one’s identification with it.”

Yes, you do not understand? I have said it fifty thousand times already, haven’t I? ... Ah, you understand now?

(Laughter)

“2) The individualisation of states of being which have so far never been conscious in man and, consequently, putting the earth into touch with one or several sources of universal force which are yet sealed to it.”

“The individualisation of states of being which have so far never been conscious in man”, that is to say, there are superposed states of consciousness, and there are new regions which have never yet been manifested on earth, and which Sri Aurobindo called supramental. It is that, this was the same idea. That is, one must go into the depths or the heights of creation which have never been manifested upon earth, and become conscious of that, and manifest it on earth. Sri Aurobindo called it the Supermind. I simply say these are states of being which were never yet conscious in man (that is, that man has so far never been aware of them). One must get identified with them, then bring them into the outer consciousness, and manifest them in action. And then, I add (exactly what I foresaw—I did not know that Sri Aurobindo would do it, but still I foresaw that this had to be done):

“3) To speak to the world, under a new form adapted to the present state of its mentality, the eternal word.”

That is, the supreme Truth, Harmony. It was the whole programme of what Sri Aurobindo has done, and the method of doing the work on earth, and I had foreseen this in 1912. I met Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1914, that is, two years later, and I had already made the whole programme.

(M 5: 353-54)

41. Keeping Things in Order

Are bad habits, as for instance that of not keeping things in order, due to the vital?

That depends. For example, children who have no order, who can't keep their things carefully but lose or spoil them—there are three reasons for this. Most often it is a child who lacks vitality. When it is like that, when it can't keep its things carefully and all is in disorder around it, this is always a sign of a lack of vitality; it does not have sufficient vitality to take interest in these outer things. The second reason is that it lacks interest in material life, the life of things, and that it has no discipline, doesn't discipline itself. For instance, children when they undress throw their clothes all over the place; or else, when they have finished playing, they leave their toys lying about; when they have written out their homework, everything is littered all around: the fountain-pen on one side, the notebook on another, the reader on a third, and then all these get lost. Unfortunately that's how it is with the great majority of the children here at the school, they lose everything. I have found books reduced to pulp because they had spent the whole night on a flower-pot and it had rained the next morning! When they were found, they were like gruel. But that is rare. Pencils too—I have a collection of fountain-pens and pencils picked up thus, having been lost. These are absolutely undisciplined natures, those who have no method—and within themselves they don't have any method either. And moreover they despise things—so, as Sri Aurobindo says, they are not worthy of having them. People who don't know how to deal with things carefully, don't deserve to have them. Sri Aurobindo has often written on this subject in his letters. He has said that if you don't know how to take care of material things, you have no right to have them. Indeed this shows a kind of selfishness and confusion in the human being, and it is not a good sign. And then later when they grow up, some of them cannot keep a cupboard in order or a drawer in order. They may be in a room which looks very tidy and very neat outwardly, and then you open a drawer or a cupboard, it is like a battlefield! Everything is pell-mell. You find everything in a jumble; nothing is arranged. These are people with a poor little head in which ideas lie in the same state as their material objects. They have not organised their ideas. They haven't put them in order. They live in a cerebral confusion. And that is a sure sign, I have never met an exception to this rule: people who don't know how to keep their things in order—their ideas are in disorder in their heads, always. They exist together, the most contradictory ideas are put together, and not through a higher synthesis, don't you believe it: simply because of a disorder and an incapacity to organise their ideas. You don't need to speak even for ten minutes with people if you can manage to enter their room and open the drawers of their tables and look into their cupboard. You know in what state they are, don't you?

On the other hand, there was someone (I shall tell you who afterwards) who

had in his room hundreds of books, countless sheets of paper, notebooks and all sorts of things, and so you entered the room and saw books and papers everywhere—a whole pile, it was quite full. But if you made the mistake to shift a single little bit of paper from its place, he knew it immediately and asked you, “Who has touched my things?” You, when you come in, see so many things that you feel quite lost. And yet each thing had its place. And it was so consciously done, I tell you, that if one paper was displaced—for instance, a paper with notes on it or a letter or something else which was taken away from one place and placed in another with the idea of putting things in order—he used to say, “You have touched my things; you have displaced them and put my things in disorder.” That of course was Sri Aurobindo! That means you must not confuse order with poverty. Naturally if you have about a dozen books and a very limited number of things, it is easier to keep them in order, but what one must succeed in doing is to put into order—and a logical, conscious, intelligent order—a countless number of things. That asks for a capacity of organisation.

Of course, if someone is very ill, has no strength to spare, then that’s different. And yet even here, there are limits. I knew ill people who could tell you, “Open this drawer and in the left corner at the back you will find such and such a thing under such another”; the man could not move and take it himself, but he knew very well where it was. But apart from that, the ideal is to have some organisation, as for instance of the kind found in libraries where there are hundreds of thousands of books and where everything is classified (naturally it is not done by just one man), but it is a work in which each thing is so well classified that even if you bring a card and say “I want this book”, a quarter of an hour later you have it or sometimes in five minutes. That is organisation. And yet there are rooms full of books there. But all this is the result of work perfected by a large number of men, the result of a professional organisation. Well, for oneself, one must organise one’s own things—and at the same time one’s own ideas—in the same way, and must know exactly where things are and be able to go straight to them, because one’s organisation is logical. It is your own logic—it may not be your neighbour’s logic, not necessarily, it is your own logic—but your organisation being logical, you know exactly where a thing is and, as I told you, if that thing is displaced, you know it immediately. And those who can do that are generally those who can put their ideas into order and can also organise their character and can finally control their movements. And then, if you make progress, you succeed in governing your physical life; you begin to have a control over your physical movements. If you take life in that way, truly it becomes interesting. If one lives in a confusion, a disorder, an inner and outer chaos in which everything is mixed up and one is conscious of nothing and still less is master of things, this is not living. This is not living, it is being in a sea of inconscience, being tossed about by the waves, caught by the currents, thrown against rocks, seized again by another wave and thrown against another rock; and one goes on thus with bruises and blows and bumps. And then, should one ask you, “Why is it like this?”—“I don’t know.”—

“Why did you do that?”—“I don’t know.”—“Why do you think in this way?”—“I don’t know.”—“Why did you make that movement?”—“I don’t know.” All the answers are “I don’t know”.

Essentially there is but one single true reason for living: it is to know oneself. We are here to learn—to learn what we are, why we are here, and what we have to do. And if we don’t know that, our life is altogether empty—for ourselves and for others.

And so, generally, it is better to begin early, for there is much to learn. If one wants to learn about life as it is, the world as it is, and then really know the why and the how of life, one can begin when very young, from the time one is very, very tiny—before the age of five. And then, when one is a hundred, one will still be able to learn. So it is interesting. And all the time one can have surprises, always learn something one didn’t know, meet with an experience one did not have before, find something one was ignorant of. It is surely very interesting. And the more one knows, the more aware does one become that one has everything to learn. Truly, I could say that only fools believe they know. That indeed is a sure sign, someone coming and telling you, “Oh! I know all that; oh! I know all that”; he is immediately sized up!

(M 6: 12-16)

42. Two Stories—Tigers, Snakes

When will we be ready, Sweet Mother?

That depends upon you, my children! I practised occultism when I was twelve. But I must say I had no fear, I feared nothing. One goes out of one’s body, but is tied by something resembling an almost imperceptible thread; if the thread is cut, it is all over. Life also is ended. One goes out, and then can begin seeing the world he has entered. And usually the first things one sees, as I said, are terrifying. Because, for you the air is empty, there is nothing in it—you see something blue or white, there are clouds, sunbeams, and all that is very pretty—but when you have the other sight, you see that it is filled with a multitude of small formations which are all residues of desires or of mental deformation and these swarm inside it, you see, in a mass, and this is not always very pretty. At times it is extremely ugly. This assails you; it comes, presses upon you, attacks you; and if you are afraid, it takes absolutely frightful forms. Naturally, if you do not flinch, if you can look upon all that with a healthy curiosity, you perceive that it is not at all so terrifying. It may not be pretty, but it is not terrifying.

I could tell you a little story.

I knew a Danish painter who was quite talented and who wanted to learn occultism. He had come here, you know, had met Sri Aurobindo; he had even done

his portrait. That was during the war, and when he came back to France, he wanted me to teach him a little of this occult science. I taught him how to go out of his body etc., and the controls, all that. And I told him that, above all, the first thing was not to have any fear. Then, one day he came to tell me that he had had a dream the night before. But it was not a dream, for, as I have told you, he knew a bit about how to go out of his body, and he had gone out consciously. And once he had gone out he was looking around seeing what was to be seen, when suddenly he saw a formidable tiger coming towards him, drawing close with the most frightful intentions.... He remembered what I had told him, that he must not be afraid. So he began to say to himself, "There is no danger, I am protected, nothing can happen to me, I am wrapped up in the power of protection", and he began looking at the tiger in that way, without any fear. And as he went on looking at the tiger, immediately it began to grow smaller and smaller and smaller and—it became a tiny little cat! (*Laughter*)

What does the tiger represent?

It was probably... That day he had become angry with somebody, he had lost his temper and entertained bad thoughts; he had hoped that something very unpleasant would happen to this person. Now, in occultism there is the "rebound". You send out a bad thought, it returns to you as an attack. That is exactly one of the reasons why you must have a complete control over your feelings, sensations, thoughts, for if you become angry with someone or think badly of him, or if, still worse, you wish him ill, well, in your very dream you see this person coming with an extreme violence to attack you. Then, if you do not know these things, you say, "Why, I was right in having bad thoughts against him!" But in fact, it is not at all that. It is your own thought that comes back to you. And the person may be absolutely unaware of all that has happened, for—and this is one of the commonest laws in occultism—if you make a formation, for instance a mental formation that an accident or something unpleasant should happen to a certain person and you send out this formation, if it so happens that this person is in a very high state of consciousness, does not at all wish anything bad, is quite indifferent and disinterested in the affair, the formation will come up against his atmosphere and instead of entering will rebound upon the one who has made it. In this way serious accidents have taken place. There were certain people who practised that low deformation of occultism which is called magic and they had made formations through magic against someone. But this person happened to be far above this and could not be touched by those formations. So they returned upon those people, fatally. If they had made a formation of death, it would have been they who died.

I don't know whether you remember or not the story of the stones which fell in Sri Aurobindo's house? Everybody knows it, so I won't narrate it.

What happens to this formation once it has worked ill? Does it continue?

No. When a formation of this kind acts, it goes with a definite purpose. It has been made with a definite purpose. It acts and once its action is over, it disappears, it has no longer any *raison d'être*. It was a formation for a particular action. When the action is accomplished, the formation dissolves. There are many other kinds of formations with more or less durable lives. I tell you it is a science—you cannot learn chemistry in an hour! But still, in a case like that, when the formation returns and strikes the one who has made it, it is finished. Its action is accomplished and comes to an end.

Everybody doesn't know the story of the stones.... You narrated it only to the little children, Sweet Mother.

I narrated it to the little ones....

Yes, but the older ones were not there! (Laughter)

It is nine o'clock. You have no other questions? If I tell you the story...

Sweet Mother, this morning you told us you would narrate...

Look here, I had another. How many stories can I tell you!

Well, the other one is very short. It is also interesting. It is about curing oneself of fear. (Perhaps Pavitra knows the name!)... There was a French scientist who had written a book in which he narrated an experience he had had in the *Jardin des Plantes*. He wanted to know to what extent reason can have an effect over reflexes. I don't remember now—for years I knew his name; I have forgotten it, but still the story remains. He was a well-known scientist and he has written about his experiment in a book. It is often quoted as an example. He was very much interested in knowing to what extent reason, intelligence with clear knowledge, could have an effect upon reflexes, that is, upon movements which come up spontaneously from the subconscious, automatic movements, and he made this experiment: he went to the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris where not only plants but animals also are kept. And among these animals there were huge snakes. There was a snake there (I knew it, that snake), which had the reputation of having a very bad temper. That is, it could be made angry very easily. It was a very large snake and was very beautiful; it was black. And the scientist had been told by the keeper that this snake was very aggressive. These snakes are enclosed in huge glass cases, the glass being sufficiently thick to prevent any accident, as you may well imagine. So, he went to the cage of this serpent just when it was hungry (it had not eaten; when they have eaten they sleep). It had not

eaten, so it was active. And he stood there in front of the cage, quite close to the glass and began exciting the snake—I don't remember now what he did—until it started getting angry. Then it coiled up and shot out like a released spring against the glass, against the face of that gentleman who was on the other side, and the man—who knew very well that the glass was there and nothing could happen to him—jumped back! And he repeated the experiment several times, and not once could he control his movement of recoil. He recoiled—every time the snake jumped he recoiled! (*Laughter*)

So he has spoken of his experiment. But he lacked one element of knowledge, for he did not know that the physical movement was accompanied by a considerable vital projection of the nervous force of the snake, and that it was this that affected him. It was because of this. He tried in vain to remain stiff, to tell himself, "But after all there is no danger, nothing can happen to me, there is the glass; why do I recoil?" (*Laughter*) It was that which came and gave him a shock and he jumped back.

There you are, now *au revoir*, my children. The story of the stones for another day. It is too late now.

(M 6: 40-45)

43. Stones in the Guest House

You had said you would tell us the story of the stones.

That is quite another domain. That's not the domain of death; it is a domain of the material vital, the most material vital, that which controls the physical, is just behind the physical—the material vital.

There was a time we were living in the Guest House.¹ Sri Aurobindo lived on the first floor, in the room right at the end which is now the meditation-room of the children's boarding. I believe there are two rooms side by side, one used to be a bathroom but is now an ordinary room, and a room next to it which was mine—the bathroom and another room. Sri Aurobindo was on one side.

How many of us were there in that house?... Amrita was there (*turning to the disciple*), weren't you, Amrita, do you remember that day? (*Laughter*) We had a cook called Vatel. This cook was rather bad-tempered and didn't like being reproved about his work. Moreover, he was in contact with some Musulmans who had it seems, magical powers—they had a book of magic and the ability to practise magic. One day, this cook had done something very bad and had been scolded—I don't know if any of you knew Datta, it was Datta who had scolded him—and he was furious. He had threatened us, saying, "You will see, you will be compelled to leave this house." We had taken no notice of it.

Two or three days later, I think, someone came and told me that stones had

fallen in the courtyard—a few stones, three or four: bits of brick. We wondered who was throwing stones from the next house. We did exactly what we forbid children to do: we went round on the walls and roofs to see if we could find someone or the stones or something—we found nothing.

That happened, I believe, between four and five in the afternoon. As the day declined, the number of stones increased. The next day, there were still more. They started striking specially the door of the kitchen and one of them struck Datta's arm as she was going across the courtyard. The number increased very much. The interest was growing. And as the interest grew, it produced a kind of effect of multiplication! And the stones began falling in several directions at the same time, in places where there were neither doors nor windows; there was a staircase, but it had no opening in those days: there was only a small bull's-eye. And the stones were falling on the staircase this way (*vertical gesture*); if they had come through the bull's-eye, they would have come like this (*slantwise movement*), but they were falling straight down. So, I think everyone started to become truly interested. I must tell you that this Vatel had informed us that he was ill and for the last two days—since the stones had started falling—he hadn't come. But he had left with us his under-cook, a young boy of about thirteen or fourteen, quite fat, somewhat lifeless and a little quiet, perhaps a little stupid. And we noticed that when this boy moved around, wherever he went the stones increased. The young men who were there—Amrita among them—shut the boy up in a room, with all the doors and windows closed; they started making experiments like the spiritists (*laughing*): “Close all the doors, close all the windows.” And there was the boy sitting there inside and the stones began falling, with all the doors and windows closed! And more and more fell, and finally the boy was wounded in the leg. Then they started feeling the thing was going too far.

I was with Sri Aurobindo: quietly we were working, meditating together. The boys cast a furtive glance to see what was going on and began warning us, for it was perhaps time to tell us that the thing was taking pretty serious proportions. I understood immediately what the matter was.

I must tell you that we had made an attempt earlier to exhaust all possibilities of an ordinary, physical explanation. We had called in the police, informed them that there was somebody throwing stones at us, and they wanted very much to come and see what was happening. So a policeman—who was a fine good fellow—immediately told us, “Oh! You have Vatel as your cook. Yes, yes, we know what it is!” He had a loaded pistol and stood waiting there in the courtyard—not a stone! I was on the terrace with Sri Aurobindo; I said to Sri Aurobindo, “That's a bit too bad, we call the police and just then the stones stop falling! But that is very annoying, in this way he will think we haven't told the truth, for no stones are falling.” Instantaneously the stones began falling again. (*Laughter*)

You should note that the stones were falling quite a long way off from the terrace and not one of them came anywhere near us.

So the policeman said, "It's not worthwhile, my staying here, I know what it is, it is Vatel who has done this against you, I am going."

It was after this that we made the experiment of shutting up the boy, and the stones began to fall in the closed room and I was informed that the boy had been wounded. Then I said, "All right, send the boy out of the house immediately. Send him to another house, anywhere, and let him be looked after, but don't keep him here, and then, that's all. Keep quiet and don't be afraid." I was in the room with Sri Aurobindo and I thought, "We'll see what it is." I went into meditation and gave a little call. I said, "Let us see, who is throwing stones at us now? You must come and tell us who is throwing stones."... I saw three little entities of the vital, those small entities which have no strength and just enough consciousness confined to one action—it is nothing at all; but these entities are at the service of people who practise magic. When people practise magic, they order them to come and they are compelled to obey. There are signs, there are words. So, they came, they were frightened—they were terribly frightened! I said, "But why do you fling stones like that? What does it mean, this bad joke?" They replied, "We are compelled, we are compelled... (*Laughter*) It is not our fault, we have been ordered to do it, it is not our fault."

I really felt so much like laughing but still I kept a serious face and told them, "Well, you must stop this, you understand!" Then they told me, "Don't you want to keep us? We shall do all that you ask." "Ah!" I thought, "Let us see, this is perhaps going to be interesting." I said to them, "But what can you do?"—"We know how to throw stones." (*Laughter*)—"That doesn't interest me at all, I don't want to throw stones at anyone... but could you perchance bring me flowers? Can you bring me some roses?" Then they looked at one another in great dismay and answered, "No, we are not made for that, we don't know how to do it." I said, "I don't need you, go away, and take care specially never to come back, for otherwise it will be disastrous!" They ran away and never came back.

There was one thing I had noticed: it was only at the level of the roof that the stones were seen—from the roof downwards, we saw the stones; just till the roof, above it there were no stones. This meant that it was like an automatic formation. In the air nothing could be seen: they materialised in the atmosphere of the house and fell.

And to complete the movement, the next morning—all this happened in the evening—the next morning I came down to pay a visit to the kitchen—there were pillars in the kitchen—and upon one of the pillars I found some signs with numbers as though made with a bit of charcoal, very roughly drawn—I don't remember the signs now—and also words in Tamil. Then I rubbed out everything carefully and made an invocation, and so it was finished, the comedy was over.

However, not quite. Vatel's daughter was *ayah* in the house, the maid-servant. She came early in the afternoon in a state of intense fright saying, "My father is in the hospital, he is dying; this morning something happened to him; suddenly he felt

very ill and he is dying, he has been taken to the hospital, I am terribly frightened.” I knew what it was. I went to Sri Aurobindo and said to him, “You know, Vatel is in the hospital, he is dying.” Then Sri Aurobindo looked at me, he smiled: “Oh, just for a few stones!” (*Laughter*)

That very evening Vatel was cured. But he never started anything again.

How could the stones be seen?

That’s what is remarkable. There are beings that have the power of dematerialising and rematerialising objects. These were quite ordinary pieces of bricks, but these pieces materialised only in the field where the magic acted. The magic was practised for this house, especially for its courtyard, and the action of vital forces worked only there. That was why when I sent away the boy and he went to another house, not a single stone hit him any more. The magical formation was made specially for this house, and the stones materialised in the courtyard. And as it was something specially directed against Datta, she was hit on her arm.

There was yet something else.... Ah, yes! We came to know later to which magician Vatel had gone. He had gone to a magician who, it seems, is very well known here and he had said that he wanted definitely to make us leave that house—I don’t know why. He was furious. And so he asked the magician to make stones fall there. The magician told him, “But that’s the house Sri Aurobindo lives in!” He said, “Yes.”—“Ah! No, I am not going to meddle in this business; you manage it, I am not getting involved.” Then Vatel insisted very much; he even promised him a greater reward, a little more money. The magician said, “Well, look here; we are going to make a rule: in a circle of twenty-five metres around Sri Aurobindo”—I think he said twenty or twenty-five metres—“the stones will not fall. Always there will have to be twenty-five metres’ distance between the stones and Sri Aurobindo.” And he arranged his order of magic in this way. And that was why never did a single stone come anywhere near us, never. They fell at the other end of the courtyard.

They know how to do all that, it is written in their books. These are words and ceremonies having a certain power. Naturally, those who do that must have a vital force. A vital force is necessary—a little mental force also, not much, even very little—but quite a strong vital power to control these little entities, govern them. And these people rule them precisely through fear, for they have the power to dissolve them, so these entities fear this very much. But upon all these formations, all these entities, it is enough to put simply one drop of the true, pure light, the pure white light—the true, pure light which is the supreme light of construction—you put one drop upon them: they dissolve as though there had been nothing at all there. And yet this is not a force of destruction; it is a force of construction but it is so alien to their nature that they disappear. It is this they feared, for I had called them by showing them this white light; I had told them, “Look, here is this! Come.” But their offer was

touching: “Oh! We shall do everything you want.” I said, “Good, what can you do?”—
 “Throw stones!” (*Laughter*)

* * *

1. Sri Aurobindo lived in the Guest House (41 rue François Martin) between 1913 and September 1922. The incident related by Mother here occurred in 1921, sometime in the middle of December.

(M 6: 57-62)

44. The Black Kali

That one [The Black Kali]—it was at the time of the First World War, the early days of the First War. I was here. I was staying in the house on Dupleix Street, Dupleix House. From the terrace of that house could be seen Sri Aurobindo’s room, the one in the Guest House. Sri Aurobindo was staying there. He had two rooms and the small terrace. And from the terrace of Dupleix House the terrace of the Guest House could be seen. I don’t know if it can still be seen; that depends on the houses in between, but at that time it could. And I used to sit on the terrace to meditate every morning, facing Sri Aurobindo’s room. That day I was in my room, but looking at Sri Aurobindo’s room through a small window. I was in meditation but my eyes were open. I saw this Kali entering through my door; I asked her, “What do you want?” And she was dancing, a truly savage dance. She told me, “Paris is taken, Paris will be destroyed.” We used to have no news, it was just at the beginning of the war. I was in meditation. I turned towards her and told her, “No, Paris will not be taken, Paris will be saved”, quietly, just like this, but with a certain force. She made a face and went away. And the next day, we received the “dispatch”. In those days there were no radios yet, we had telegraph messages, “dispatches”, which were proclaimed, posted on the gate of the Government House. We got the news that the Germans had been marching upon Paris, that Paris was not defended; the way was quite open, they had to advance only a few kilometres more and they would have entered the city. But when they saw that the road was clear, that there was nobody to oppose them, they felt convinced that it was an ambush, that a trap had been set for them. So they turned round and went back! (*Laughter*) And when the French armies saw that, naturally they gave chase and caught them, and there was a battle. It was the decisive battle: they were stopped. Well, evidently it was that. It took this form: When I said to Kali, “No”, they were panic-stricken. They turned back. Otherwise, if they had continued to advance it would have been all over.

What is Mahakali like?

Well, my children, when you see her, you can tell me! She is not like that Kali. All I can tell you is that she is not black, she doesn’t stick out a big tongue, and she

doesn't wear a necklace of human heads!

(M 6: 68-70)

45. Even the Organs Will Be Transformed

Mother, here it is written: "In our Yoga our aim is to be united [with the Divine] in the physical consciousness and on the supramental plane"; then, 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 aim¹—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 what must happen in the end, what Sri Aurobindo has spoken about in one of his last articles² 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. If you read attentively the next issue of the *Bulletin* which you will get on the 24th of April, you will see that it has begun. But in fact we shall see later if I can explain to you what it means. *Voilà*.

Another question?

Sweet Mother, "later" means when? When will you explain?

Explain when? I don't know, my children!

* * *

1. "To be in full union with the Divine is the final aim."

2. "The Divine Body", *SABCL*, Vol. 16, pp. 20-40.

(M 6: 109-11)

46. Habits

"The mind clinging to its own ideas"! See, how many times I have told you this! "The vital preferring its own desires"! And then the mind becomes the accomplice of the vital and gives admirable explanations for keeping the desires by reasoning,

explaining, giving justifications also, and all these things are very useful to it. I have heard people say that the best way to get rid of desires is to satisfy them. They make a theory of it. You continue to satisfy your desires and then, naturally, you have others, for desires—well, one replaces another very easily, and you continue to satisfy the new ones under the idea that you are going to get cured. That will take you at least a hundred lives!

And then, finally, habits!... There is a charming phrase here—I appreciated it fully—in which Sri Aurobindo is asked, “What is meant by ‘the physical adhering to its own habits’?” What are the habits which the physical must throw off? It is this *terrible, frightful* preference for the food you were used to when you were very young, the food you ate in the country where you were born and about which you feel when you no longer get it that you have not anything at all to eat, that you are miserable.

I don’t know, I believe there won’t be a dozen people here who have come to the Ashram and eaten the food of the Ashram without saying, “Oh! I am not used to this food. It is very difficult.” And how many, how many hundreds of people who prepare their own food because they cannot eat the food of the Ashram! (*Mother slams the book down on the stool.*) And then, they justify this! So it is here that these ideas begin to come, and they say, “My health! I can’t digest well!” All this is only in their head. There is not a word of truth in it. NOT ONE WORD OF TRUTH. It is a perpetual lie in which everybody lives, and in this matter, indeed, I may tell you what I think, you have not advanced any farther than the mass of human beings.

I make an exception for the very, very, very rare ones who are not like that. They could be counted on one’s fingers. And all, all justify this, all, all—“Oh, my poor children! They are not used to eating this food. How shall we manage? They will die because of this change of food!” Well, I, indeed, can give a remedy for that. You take a boat, take a train and go round the world several times, you are obliged to eat in each country the food of that country, and after you have done this several times, you will understand your stupidity... It is a stupidity. A frightful *tamas*. One is tied up there like this (*Mother makes a movement with her hands*) to one’s gastric habits.

Now I have said what was on my mind! You may ask questions.

(M 6: 158-59)

47. A Little Rule

The question of food is just one question—I can’t say it’s secondary, for it is very symptomatic—it is altogether... it is related to the most physical consciousness, and from that point of view it expresses very well the physical condition. But indeed, this poor body! One must be a little patient with it. It is not that which discourages me—if I could be discouraged—it is the vital. Oh! Really, with its accomplice, the mind, these two rascals together, taking each other’s support, making excuses and

presenting to you such a marvellous picture of your own difficulties in order to justify them—that, indeed, is terrible. From this point of view Sri Aurobindo wrote a little rule which for some time we had put up everywhere. But, I believe, it must have disappeared now or else people are so used to it that they no longer even look at it. It said: “Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you,” and Sri Aurobindo added, “because she is, indeed, always present.” Still these physical eyes... “No, no, no, she is not there”, and so the first instinct is to hide things. Not only does one do everything that one wouldn’t do before me, but as one doesn’t at all believe the last part of Sri Aurobindo’s sentence, that even though I am not there physically, perhaps still I know how things are, so the first instinct is to hide things, and the moment one enters that path, it is like stepping into quicksand. One goes down, down, down; it seizes you, swallows you up, it draws you down in such a way that it is very difficult to come out of it. Of all things this is the worst: “Ah, provided that Mother does not know!” And so it begins like that and that’s the end. Well, I hope not many among you tell lies, but still, usually the end of the curve is that! And so, you understand, this is one of those stupidities without equal; for—I am going to tell you something—and I can tell you this with impunity: even if you don’t want that to happen, it will happen all the same!

People come for blessings in the morning, you know, or else during the night I go on inspection, everywhere I move around, going to everyone. In both cases, even in the morning when they come to receive a flower, I have only to look at them. There is something around their heads, and at times it is as clear as though they said, “This indeed is something I shall never tell.” They tell *me* this, “Never will I tell you this and this and that”; you understand, they tell me this by telling me that they will not say it. By telling me, “I shall not tell you this”, they tell me.

(M 6: 163-64)

48. Human Love and Divine Love

Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo has said that one can pass from human love to divine Love.

He was speaking of human love manifesting as Bhakti, as a force of devotion for the Divine, and he says that at the beginning your love for the Divine is a very human love with all the characteristics of human love. He describes this very well, besides. Yet if you persist and make the necessary effort, it is not impossible for this human love to be transformed into divine love through identification with what you love. He has not said that the love between two persons can change into divine love. It is not that at all! He has always said the opposite. He spoke about someone who had asked him about devotion, you know, about the sadhak’s love for the Divine. At the beginning your love is altogether human—and he speaks of it even as com-

mercial barter. If you make progress, your love will change into divine love, into true devotion.

(M 6: 174-75)

49. Superstition, Faith, Trust

When we have a ring or some ornament with your image, does it give us protection?

My child, all I can hear is the fireworks!

(The child repeats the question.)

It depends above all on what you think about it! Something I give you with my own hands—there I put in something; but if it is of your own choice that you have taken a ring or a portrait, something, and you wear it... if you have the trust, the faith that it protects you, it protects you. When I give it, I give it with something completely different from the thing itself. It can contain this thing if I put it in, but if I don't, it does not contain it.

Sri Aurobindo used to say, you know, that to wear a ring with his portrait and think that it protects you, is a superstition! He would tell you it is a superstition! That is, it depends on what you think about it.... It depends solely on what you think about it. If he had given you a ring, saying, "Wear this, my force will be with you", then it would have been altogether different; there's a world of difference.

I shall tell you another little story. Long ago some people used to believe that a perforated coin... It was in the days when coins were not perforated... now we have perforated coins, don't we, some countries have perforated coins, but in those days they were not perforated, and yet sometimes there were holes in a coin. And there was indeed a superstition like this, that when one found a perforated coin, it brought good luck. It brought you good luck and success in what you wanted to do.

There was a man working in an office whose life was rather poor and who was not very successful, and one day he found a perforated coin. He put it in his pocket and said to himself, "Now I am going to prosper!" And he was full of hope, courage, energy, because he knew: "Now that I have the coin, I am sure to succeed!" And, in fact, he went on prospering, prospering more and more. He earned more and more money, he had a better and better position, and people said, "What a wonderful man! How well he works! How he finds all the solutions to all problems!" Indeed, he became a remarkable man, and every morning when he put on his coat, he felt it—like this—to be sure that his coin was in his pocket.... He touched it, he felt that the coin was there, and he had confidence. And then, one day, he was a little curious, and said, "I am going to see my coin!"—years later. He was having his breakfast with his

wife and said, "I am going to see my coin!" His wife told him, "Why do you want to see it? It's not necessary." "Yes, yes, let me see my coin." He took out the little bag in which he kept the coin, and found inside a coin which was not perforated!

"Ah," he said, "this is not my coin! What is this? Who has changed my coin?" Then his wife told him, "Look, one day there was some dust on your coat.... I shook it off through the window and the coin fell out. I had forgotten that the coin was there. I ran to look for it but didn't find it. Someone had picked it up. So I thought you would be very unhappy and I put another coin there." (*Laughter*) Only, he, of course, was confident that his coin was there and that was enough.

It is the faith, the trust that does it, you see.... The perforated coin gives you nothing at all. You can always try. When one has confidence...

There! now... and that's enough.

(M 6: 234-35)

50. Mental Arrogance

Sweet Mother, what does "mental arrogance" mean?

My children, speak dis-tinct-ly! You don't need to shout loudly... You must articulate clearly!

(The child repeats the same sentence distinctly.)

Mental arrogance? That means... what all of you have! (*Laughter*)

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!

You have only to look at yourself, you will see, you will catch yourself all the time.... Not to speak of those who have long ago decided about all the errors God has committed and how the world would be if it were they who had been commissioned to make it! There.

(M 6: 241-42)

51. A Surcharged Atmosphere

“There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation,—most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the other Powers of the universe.”

Sri Aurobindo (SABCL, Vol. 25, pp. 35-36)

Sweet Mother, what Personality is this and when will she manifest?

I have prepared my answer. I knew someone would ask me that, because of all things this is the most interesting in this passage, and I have prepared my answer. I have prepared my answer to this and my answer to another question also. But first I am going to read this one.

You asked: “What personality is this and when will she come?” (*Silence*) And this is my reply:

“She has come, bringing with her a splendour of power and love, an intensity of divine joy unknown to the earth so far.

The physical atmosphere was completely changed by it, saturated with new and marvellous possibilities.

But for her to be able to settle and act down here, she needed to meet with at least a minimum of receptivity, to find at least one human being having the requisite qualities in the vital and physical nature, a kind of super-Parsifal endowed with a spontaneous and integral purity, but at the same time having a strong and balanced body in order to bear the intensity of the Ananda she had brought without giving way.

Till now she has not obtained what was necessary. Men obstinately remain men and do not want to or cannot become supermen. They can only receive and express a love cut to their measure—a human love! And the marvellous joy of the divine Ananda

escapes their perception.

So, at times, she thinks of withdrawing, finding that the world is not ready to receive her. And this would be a cruel loss. It is true that for the moment her presence is more nominal than active, for she does not have the opportunity to manifest herself. But even so, she is a powerful help in the Work. For, of all the aspects of the Mother, this is the one which has the greatest power for the transformation of the body. Indeed, the cells which are able to vibrate to the contact of divine joy, to receive and preserve it, are regenerated cells on the way to becoming immortal. But the vibrations of divine joy and those of pleasure cannot lodge together in the same vital and physical system. So one must have *totally* renounced experiencing all pleasure in order to be in a state to receive the Ananda. But very few are those who can renounce pleasure without, by the very fact, renouncing all participation in active life and plunging into a rigorous asceticism. And among those who know that it is in active life that the transformation must take place, some try to see pleasure as a more or less warped form of Ananda, and thus justify in themselves the quest for personal satisfaction, creating in themselves an almost insuperable obstacle to their own transformation.”

Shall we stop here? We shall finish next time. That will give me time to find out.

There, then. Now, if you want to ask something... (*Long silence*) Speak!

Whoever wants to say something may speak... anybody who wants to say something, not only the students.

If one has not succeeded, Mother, one can try?

What?

If one hasn't succeeded so far, one can try?

Oh, one can always try.... The world is recreated at every moment. You can recreate a new world this very moment if you know how to create it, that is, if you are capable of changing your nature.

I have not said that she has gone away. I said that she thinks of going away, sometimes, from time to time.

But, Mother, she came down because she must have seen some possibility!

Eh?

She came down because there was a possibility, because things had come to a certain stage and the time had come when she could descend.

In fact she came down because I thought it was possible that... she could succeed. (*Silence*) There are always possibilities, only... they must materialise. You see, a proof of what I told you is that it happened at a given moment and during... for two or

three weeks, the atmosphere, not only of the Ashram but of the earth, was surcharged with such power, precisely, with so intense a divine joy, which creates so wonderful a power that things which were difficult to do before could be done almost instantaneously! There were repercussions in the whole world. I don't think there was one among you who was aware of it. You couldn't even tell me when it happened, could you?

When did it happen? (Laughter)

I don't know the dates. I don't know. I don't remember dates. I could tell you approximately, like that... *(Silence)* Perhaps if I consult my papers I would find the dates. But I don't know the dates. These, for me, are things which... All I know is that it happened before Sri Aurobindo left the body, that he had been told beforehand and recognised the fact...

(Silence)

There was a terrible fight with the inconscient; for, as I saw that the receptivity was not what it ought to be, I put the responsibility for it on the inconscient and it was there that I tried to give battle. I don't say that this had no result, but between the result obtained and the result hoped for, there was a great difference.

But I tell you this, you see... you are all so close, you bathe in the atmosphere, but... who was aware of anything? You continued to live your little life as usual, didn't you?

(Silence)

I think it was in 1946, Mother, for you told us so many things at that time!

Right!

(Long silence)

Sweet Mother, now that she has come, what should we do?

Eh?

What should we do?

You do not know? You... *(Silence)* Try to change your consciousness.

(Long silence)

There! Now ask the questions you wanted to ask me... (*Turning to a child*)
Nothing to say?

Mother, there isn't even a single person?

Eh?

There isn't even a single person?

I don't know!

So you waste your time with all these people in the Ashram now?

Oh, but you see, from the occult point of view, it is a selection! From the external point of view you may tell me that there are people in the world who are much superior to you, I won't contradict you. But from the occult point of view it is a selection. There are here... one can say without being mistaken that most of the young people who are here have come because they have been promised that they will be here at the time of the Realisation. They do not remember this. (*Mother laughs.*) I have already said quite often that when one comes down upon earth one falls headlong and this stuns one. (*Laughter*) It's a pity. But still, one can get out of this stupefaction, can't one? What is necessary is to enter into oneself, find the immortal consciousness within, and then one becomes very keenly aware, one can remember very clearly the circumstances in which one aspired to be here when the Work is accomplished. But after all, to tell the truth, I think you have such an easy life that you don't take much trouble!... Are there many among you who really feel *an intense need* to find your psychic being, to know what you really are, what you have to do, why you are here? One just goes on living or even complains when things are not too easy. And then one takes things as they come, and sometimes, if some aspiration arises and one meets a difficulty in oneself, one says, "Oh, Mother is there, she will manage this for me", and then thinks of something else!

(M 6: 291-96)

52. Descending for the Yoga

What is that other thing, Mother, that you have written?

I thought someone would ask me, "Why doesn't she stay because of you, since she has come at your call; why doesn't she stay because of you?" But I have not been asked this.

Tell us, Mother!

For her this body is only one instrument among so many others in the eternity of times to come, not having for her any other importance than what is given to it by the earth and men and the measure in which it can serve as an intermediary to help in her manifestation and in her diffusion.

If I am surrounded by people who cannot receive her, I am useless—for her. This is very clear. So it is not that which will make her stay; and it is certainly not for any selfish reason that I can ask her to stay. And then, all those aspects, all those personalities constantly manifest, but never manifest for personal reasons. Not a single one among them has ever thought of helping my body and I do not ask them, for they do not come for that. But it is obvious that if I had around me receptivity and they could constantly manifest because there were people capable of receiving, this would help my body enormously. For, you see, all the vibrations would go through my body, and that would help it. But she has no opportunity to manifest, she has no chance. She only meets people who don't even feel that she is here, they are not even aware of it. It makes no difference at all to them! So, how could she manifest?

And I am not going to ask her, "If you please, come and change my body." We don't have that kind of relation... and the body itself would not want it. It has never thought of itself, it has never cared for itself. And it is only through work that it can be transformed. Yes, surely, when she came, if there had been a receptivity and if she could have manifested with the power she came with... Even before her arrival... I can tell you one thing, that is, when I began with Sri Aurobindo to descend for the yoga, to descend from the mind into the vital, when we brought down our yoga from the mind into the vital, within one month—I was forty at that time, I didn't look old, I looked younger than forty, but still I was forty—and after a month's yoga I looked exactly eighteen. And someone who had seen me before, who had lived with me in Japan and came here, found it difficult to recognise me. He asked me, "But really, is it you?" I said, "Obviously!"

Only when we descended from the vital into the physical, then it was gone, for in the physical the work is much harder. It was because there were many more things to change. But if a force like that could be manifested and received, it would have a tremendous action! Still, you see, it is... I am speaking about it because I thought you would ask the question... otherwise it is not... I am not in that kind of relation. You see, I mean, you take my body, this poor body; it is quite harmless, it does not at all try to draw either any attention or the forces, nor even to do anything else except its work as well as it can. And that's how it is, you know. Its importance for the work is in proportion to its usefulness and the importance the world gives it, because the action is for this world. In itself it is one body among countless others.

If you could have taken a small decision to feel your psychic, I wouldn't have wasted my time.

That's all. There we are! Now it is over.

53. On the Mental Plane

“At present your experiences are on the mental plane....”

This is in reply to someone, I don't know to whom. Someone who wrote a letter and to whom Sri Aurobindo has replied: “At present your experiences are on the mental plane.” I don't know what letter it was nor this person.

But what does “only on the mental plane” mean?

What does it mean? Well, these are experiences concerning thought, mental activity, the understanding of things, the observation of things, thought, deduction, reasoning, the contact with teaching, knowledge, the result of this knowledge on your understanding—all these things which are purely mental. And in fact one should always begin with that.

(M 6: 350-51)

54. Only an Aspect of the Truth

Sweet Mother, here [The Bases of Yoga] it is written: “Do not be troubled by your surroundings and their opposition. These conditions are often imposed at first as a kind of ordeal.” Imposed by the Divine?

He has not put it that way, has he? You must take it in the way it helps you most. This is a very difficult question.

Oh, I have already explained to you very often that when you live in an ordinary consciousness, and to the extent you remain on a certain plane which is a combination of the most material mind, vital, physical, that is, the ordinary plane of life, you are subject to the determinism of this plane and it is this subjection to the determinism of this plane which puts you exactly in these conditions, for you have deep within you something which aspires for another life but doesn't yet know how to live that other life, and which pushes from inside in order to get the conditions necessary for this other life. These are inner conditions, they are not outer conditions. But this takes its support on outside obstacles in order to strengthen itself in its will to progress; and so, if you look at it from within, you can even say that it is you yourself who create the difficulties to help you to go forward.

Now, if you enter another plane and tell yourself (but this is a thing subject to many explanations and discussions), if you say that there is nothing in the universe that is not the work of the Divine, which is essentially true, though not true here, then you say, “Good. It is the Divine who organises everything; consequently it is He who has organised the difficulties also.” But this is indeed a very childish way of putting things—oversimple. Only, as I said at the beginning, “If it helps you to think in this

way, think in this way.” You see, thought is so approximate a thing, it is so far from *the* truth... it is only a kind of vague, incomplete, confused reflection, full of falsehood, even at its best. So, in truth, it is the moment to be practical and tell yourself, “Well, I shall adopt this thought if it helps me to progress.” But if you think that it is the absolute truth, you are sure to go wrong, for there is not a single thought which is the absolute truth.

Ah, yes, we are going to put into the books of the lending library of the University one of Sri Aurobindo’s short reflections, which is wonderful—I had it printed today—in which he says that any teaching, however great it may be, however pure, noble, true it may be, is only one aspect of the Truth and not the Truth itself (I am commenting, the text¹ is not exactly this), it is not the entire Truth. Well, that is it. Whatever your thought may be, even if it is very high, very pure, very noble, very true, it is only a very tiny microscopic aspect of the Truth, and consequently it is not entirely true. So in that field one must be practical, as I said, adopt the thought for the time being, the one which will help you to make progress when you have it. Sometimes it comes as an illumination and this helps you to progress. So long as it helps you to make progress, keep it; when it begins to crumble, not to act any longer, well, drop it, and try to get another which will lead you a little farther.

Many miseries and misfortunes in the world would disappear if people knew the relativity of knowledge, the relativity of faith, the relativity of the teachings and also the relativity of circumstances... to what extent a thing is so relatively important! For the moment it may be capital, it may lead you to life or to death—I am not speaking of physical life and death, I am speaking of the life and death of the spirit—but this is for the moment; and when you have made a certain progress, when you have grown a few years older from the spiritual point of view, and you look back on this thing, this circumstance or idea which perhaps has decided your life, it will seem so relative, so insignificant to you... and you will need something much higher to make new progress.

If one could always remember this, well, one would avoid much sectarianism, much intolerance, and annul all quarrels immediately, because a quarrel means just this, that one thinks in one way and the other in another, that one has taken one attitude and the other another, and that instead of trying to bring them together and find out how they could be harmonised, one puts them over against each other as one fights with one’s fists. It is nothing else.

But if you become aware of the complete relativity of your point of view, your thought, your conviction of what is good, to what an extent it is relative in the march of the universe, then you will be less violent in your reactions and more tolerant. Here we are.

* * *

1. “But thought nor word can seize eternal truth.”—Sri Aurobindo

55. Foretaste of the Supermind

Here [The Bases of Yoga] it is written: "It is very unwise for anyone to claim prematurely to have possession of the supermind or even to have a taste of it." What is a foretaste of the supermind?

It is still more unwise to imagine that one has it. That's it. Yes, because some people, as soon as they find a phrase in a book, in a teaching, immediately imagine that they have realised that. So, when Sri Aurobindo began speaking about the supermind—in what he was writing—everyone wrote to him: "I have seen the supramental Light, I had an experience of the supermind!" Now, it is better to keep the word "supermind" for a later time. For the moment let us not speak about it.

Somewhere he has written a very detailed description of all the mental functions accessible to man. Well, when we read this, we say that merely to traverse the mental domain to its highest limit there are so many stages which have not yet been crossed that truly we don't need to speak about the supermind for the time being.

When he speaks of the higher ranges of the mind, one becomes aware that one very rarely lives in these places. It is very rare for one to be in this state of consciousness. On the contrary it is in what he calls the altogether ordinary mind, the mind of the ordinary man, that we live. And to the ordinary consciousness the reason seems to belong to a very high region; and the reason for him is one of the average faculties of the human mind. There are mental regions very much higher than that, which he has described in detail. And it is quite certain that those correspondents, if they had... Suddenly they said that they were having wonderful supramental experiences, because one is rarely in these regions which lie beyond the reason, which are regions of direct perception, intuition and other faculties of intuition of the same kind, which go far beyond the reason; and these are still mental regions, they have nothing of the supramental.

(M 6: 415-16)

56. Many Mental Regions

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.

It can very well happen—besides, when he 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.

There we are. I think this is enough.

(M 6: 417-18)

57. Moral Laws

Now, I may put you on your guard against something—I think it is precisely in this very book¹ that Sri Aurobindo has spoken about it—about people who live in their vital consciousness and say, “I indeed am above moral laws, I follow a higher law, I am free from all moral laws.” And they say this because they want to indulge in all irregularities. These people, then, have a double impurity: they have spiritual impurity and in addition social impurity. And these usually have a very good opinion of themselves, and they assert their wish to live their life with an unequalled impudence. But such people we don’t want.

Yet usually the people whom I have found most difficult to convert are very respectable people. I am sorry, but I have had much more difficulty with respectable people than with those who were not so, for they had such a good opinion of themselves that it was impossible to open them. But the true thing *is* difficult. That is to say, one must be very vigilant and very self-controlled, very patient, and have a

never-failing goodwill. One must not neglect having a small dose of humility, a sufficient one, and one must never be satisfied with the sincerity one has. One must always want more.

* * *

1. *The Bases of Yoga.*

(M 6: 439-40)

58. “I Want the Supramental Light”

In fact, you see—I say except for a very few, so few that one can hardly speak about them—all men live in a total ignorance, a total ignorance of the way to live, not of the things in the universe but simply of the most elementary knowledge of living. They don’t know how to live. All the time they do things they should not do, and I am not speaking of satisfying desires and all that, I am speaking simply of the life of each moment, the movement of each instant; because one is in a state of total ignorance, one does exactly the opposite of what one should do to get the result one wants. One tries to follow some aim, whatever it may be—it may be a selfish aim, it may be a disinterested aim, it may be a material aim, it may be a spiritual aim, but one wants to get somewhere—and one does just the opposite of what is necessary to go there, all the time. And if you are simply just a little attentive and are able to look at yourself at any minute, whatever be the thing you have to do, stop for half a second and look at yourself and ask, “Do I know what I have to do?” If you are sincere you will see that you don’t know it at all. You do it automatically, instinctively, by habit or else with some kind of impulse, you see; but to know: “Is this what must be done? Is it in this way that it ought to be done?”—I don’t think once in a thousand times you can answer.

And then, when the problem of wanting to help someone comes up... If you have goodwill and want to help someone... You don’t know how to help yourself to begin with, but still, you are not selfish; at a particular moment you want to help someone, and then comes this question: “What should I do?” You know nothing at all about it. “What does he need?” I mean not only material things but the feeling you must have, the thought you must have, the word you ought to say. If you just take a step backward, you look at yourself, but you know nothing about it; you do it like that, haphazardly, at random, in the hope that it will succeed, but the knowledge is not there. Without speaking, naturally, about... I am not speaking of people who know nothing at all and who, when they happen to have even a child, don’t even know what is to be done to keep it clean and healthy. I am not even speaking of this kind of ignorance, because this everybody recognises. I knew, you see, countless mothers who hadn’t *the faintest idea* of what had to be done to keep their children healthy. I am not even speaking of this. Because this—if one reads a book, works a little, studies, one can at least have a minimum of knowledge.

I am speaking simply of a slightly higher stage: morally, your moral, psychological relation with people. You are with someone who is in difficulty. Do you know what you should say to him? Do you even know the cause, the origin of his difficulty? What is going on in him? You may guess, you may imagine it, you may deduce, may reason, but you don't know!

To have this certitude, the knowledge, the knowledge to know: "That's it", this you don't have. "Is it this, is it like that? If I do this, will that happen? And if I do that, is that what will happen?" And you go on, you may go on and on for hours, hesitating, groping, asking yourself.... And this is exactly what Sri Aurobindo has written in his last article which appeared in the *Bulletin*. He says that if you want to prepare for the descent of the supermind, first of all your mind of ignorance and incapacity must be replaced by a mind of light which sees and knows. And this is the first step! Before this step is crossed, one cannot go forward. It is not to discourage you that I tell you this, but it is for those who believe that one has only to say, "Oh, I want the supramental light", and it will come just like that, as when one says, "I want to drink a glass of water" and drinks it up. Not so easy! There we are.

(M 6: 449-51)

59. Message, Letters, Poems

I am going to read the prayer to you in French—it is a message not a prayer—in French and in English. And then I have brought two of Sri Aurobindo's replies to questions which have not been published anywhere, and you will be the first to hear them. And then two... not poems, some lines; a very short little poem and just a stanza from another poem, which are a magnificent illustration of our message for the next year.

This message was written because it is foreseen that next year [1955] will be a difficult year and there will be many inner struggles and even outer ones perhaps. So I tell all of you what attitude you should take in these circumstances. These difficulties may perhaps last not only twelve months, that is, one full year, but perhaps fourteen months; and during these fourteen months you must make an effort never to lose the attitude about which I am going to speak to you just now.

In fact, I insist that the more difficult things are, the more you must remain quiet, and the more should you have an unshakable faith. Of all things this is the most important.

Usually, as soon as things become difficult, human beings get agitated, become irritated, get terribly excited and they make the difficulties ten times more difficult. So I am warning you right away that this is not to be done, that you must do the opposite; and what I am going to read to you is precisely what you must repeat to yourself as soon as you feel some anxiety or worry within you; you must remember

what I am telling you today and remember it throughout the year. You can repeat it morning and evening profitably. Here, then.

Now, first in French:

“Aucune volonté humaine ne peut prévaloir contre la Volonté Divine. Rangeons-nous délibérément et exclusivement du côté du Divin et la victoire finale est certaine.”

Now here is the English:

“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.”

Now I shall read to you two questions which were asked and Sri Aurobindo’s answers. It’s not that the questions express a very high state of mind, but I am afraid many people let themselves fall into this kind of mental state. And so I think the answers will be very useful to many people also.

Here’s the first question:

“It seems to me that the number of people in the world accepting the truth of our Yoga of Transformation would not be as large as those who accepted Buddhism, Vedanta or Christianity.”

Here is Sri Aurobindo’s answer. Notice his humour. I draw your attention to his humour.

“Nothing depends on the number. The numbers of Buddhism or Christianity were so great because the majority professed it as a creed without its making the least difference to their external life.

“If the new consciousness were satisfied with that, it could also and much more easily command homage and acceptance by the whole earth. It is because it is a greater consciousness, the Truth Consciousness, that it will insist on a real change.”¹

The second one:

“You have said that the aim of our Yoga is to rise beyond the Nirvana, but in the Ashram there are extremely few who have reached or have tried to reach even the Nirvana. To reach even the Nirvana one has to give up ego and desire. Could it be said that even a few sadhaks in the Ashram have succeeded in doing so? Surely everybody must be making some effort to do this. Why then are they

not successful? Is it that after some effort they forget the aim and live here as in ordinary life?"

The answer:

*"I suppose if the Nirvana aim had been put before them, more would have been fit for it, for the Nirvana aim is easier than the one we have put before us—and they would not have found it so difficult to reach the standard. The sadhaks here are of all kinds and in all stages. But the real difficulty even for those who have progressed is with the external man. Even among those who follow the old ideal, the external man of the sadhak remains almost the same even after they have attained to something. The inner being gets free, the outer follows still its fixed nature. Our Yoga can succeed only if the external man too changes, but that is the most difficult of all things. It is only by a change of the physical nature that it can be done, by a descent of the highest light into this lowest part of Nature. It is here that the struggle is going on. The internal being of most of the sadhaks here, however imperfect still, is still different from that of the ordinary man, but the external still clings to its old ways, manners, habits. Many do not seem even to have awakened to the necessity of a change. It is when this is realised and done, that the Yoga will produce its full results in the Ashram itself, and not before."*²

This indeed is a programme for next year, my children. I hope that next year I shall be able to say that many have tried to make their external life the expression of their deeper aspiration. For the moment there are not very many.

Now, as we have spoken about difficulties, I am going to read to you two things which will give you just a little glimpse of what true consciousness is, that which is free from all difficulties, that which is above all conflicts.

The first one goes like this—you have read it perhaps but I don't think you could have quite understood it. It is called

ONE DAY
The Little More

*One day, and all the half-dead is done,
One day, and all the unborn begun;
A little path and the great goal,
A touch that brings the divine whole.*

*Hill after hill was climbed and now,
Behold, the last tremendous brow*

*And the great rock that none has trod:
A step, and all is sky and God.³*

Sri Aurobindo

And then this:

*Even in rags I am a god;
Fallen, I am divine;
High I triumph when down-trod,
Long I live when slain.⁴*

Sri Aurobindo

There we are.

Now, I said that if someone asks “reasonable” questions, I shall perhaps answer.

What human will is at present particularly against the divine Will?

You mean from what point of view?

All human will which is against the divine Will is an anti-divine will. That’s all. No matter where it manifests, even in you!

There are no party politics in the divine life, you know. (*Laughter*) There are only states of consciousness.

(*To a child*) You have a question to ask, you?

No, Mother, will you explain the two poems?

Explain? There is no explanation. They speak for themselves, very clearly. It cannot be explained—poetry. You must feel it and not reason about it. Poetic inspiration is beyond the reason. You must not bring it down into the domain of reason, because then it is spoilt. It is felt much more than... it can be understood by an inner contact much more than by words.

* * *

1. Letter of 29 April 1934.

2. Letter of 30 April 1934.

3. *Collected Poems*, SABCL, Vol. 5, p. 109.

4. A stanza from “Life”, *Collected Poems*, SABCL, Vol. 5, p. 95.

60. Psychoanalysis

What is this psychoanalysis of Freud, Sweet Mother?

Ah, my child, it is something that was in vogue, very much in vogue at the beginning of the century... no, in the middle of the century!

(Mother turns to Pavitra) Do you know, Pavitra, when it was in fashion?

(Pavitra) At the beginning of the century.

At the beginning of the century, that's it.

This is what Sri Aurobindo says: dangerous, useless, ignorant, superficial; and it was in fashion because people like these things, it corresponds precisely with all that is unhealthy in their nature. You know how children love to waddle in the mud! Well, big people are no better than that. There!

(M 7: 107)

61. The Subliminal

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.

(M 7: 110)

62. True Psychology

Sweet Mother, what should true psychology be like?

True psychology, what do you mean by true psychology?

Because we said...

Sri Aurobindo says that this is not true psychology, he says that modern psychology has no knowledge. True psychology would be a psychology which has knowledge.

Psychology means... What is the precise meaning of *logos*? It is knowing, science; and *psyche* means soul. So it means the science of the soul or the science of the psychic, you see. This is the original sense. Now one has made of that the knowledge of all the inner movements, of all feelings, all the inner movements which are not purely physical movements, you see, all that concerns the feelings, thoughts, even the sensations in their subtlety. But true psychology is the knowledge of the soul, that is, the knowledge of the psychic being. And if one has the knowledge of the psychic being, one has at the same time the knowledge of all the true movements of the being, the inner laws of the being. This is true psychology but it is the etymological meaning of the word, not as it is used nowadays.

(M 7: 111-12)

63. A Body Immune to All Attacks

Sweet Mother, how can we make the body immune to every attack?

Well, Sri Aurobindo has written it later, hasn't he? He says that only the descent of the supramental Force can make the body immune to every attack. He says that otherwise it is only momentary and that it doesn't always work. He says that it can be practically immune but not absolutely so; and to be absolutely so, it is only by transforming the nature as it is into a supramental nature that one can make the body absolutely immune to all attacks.

(M 7: 141)

64. Yogic Forces and Supramental Nature

Sweet Mother, I did not understand the last part.

The last part speaks of the Supermind, doesn't it?

Ah, yes, you mean you did not understand the difference between yogic forces and the supramental nature. But Sri Aurobindo explains it.

I did not understand.

In the outer consciousness, mental and physical—corporal— in order to get a result like the one we were speaking about just now (for example, to have a protective personal atmosphere which can keep you safe from any undesirable contact), you must have the yogic force, that is, the force given by the practice of yoga; whereas if your body were supramentalised, if it had the supramental nature instead of the ordinary physical nature, there would be no need of the intervention of any yogic knowledge or any yogic force to protect you, because you would be quite naturally

protected by the very fact of this supramental nature. That's what Sri Aurobindo says.

But the supramental nature in the body is something yet to be realised. In the physical consciousness it is possible but in the body, not yet.

Besides, Sri Aurobindo has told us that it would take three hundred years, so we have time to wait. We must only learn to wait, learn to last it out.

(M 7: 146-47)

65. The Mother of the Gods

Sweet Mother, here you have said that the Supreme Mother is the creatrix of the universe. But in India usually it is said that Brahma is the creator.

But Sri Aurobindo has said that the Supreme Mother is the mother of Brahma. She is the Mother of all the gods.

(M 7: 156)

66. The Gods and the Overmind

Sweet Mother, how were the gods and goddesses born?

But it is precisely... it is part of the creation. What we call "Aditi" here, that is, the Creative Consciousness, well, the Creative Consciousness...

I am going to tell you about this in an absolutely childish way:

She formed at first four beings; when she received the mission to create she put out four emanations from her being; and these four emanations were made and given the charge to develop the universe. And then—I think I have already spoken to you about this once—it turned out badly, we could put it like that; and so when things went wrong, she made another creation of all the beings who became the gods; and parallel to the disorder created by the first four emanations, there was the development in order, that is, under the guidance of the Supreme, the creation in order of all the worlds descending further and further towards Matter. And it is to this line that the gods belong who were manifested later, a formation, a greater and greater materialisation in the domain which Sri Aurobindo has termed the Overmind. And from there they presided over the creation of the material universe and the earth. And one of the proceedings was the formation of the earth as a symbolic creation representative of the whole universe, in order to condense and concentrate the problem so that it might be solved more easily. And this earth, though it may be from the astronomical point of view something infinitesimal and as unimportant as can be,

from the occult point of view of the universal creation it is a symbol which represents the universe so perfectly that by transforming the earth one can through contagion or analogy transform the universe, because the earth is the symbol of the universe. This was the procedure adopted by the gods. And the place that's the seat of existence of these gods Sri Aurobindo has called the Overmind.

Of course things are not like that. Don't think that I have just told you the story as it really happened. Things are not like that, but it's a way of speaking, a way of making them understandable to the brain. It appears to have occurred like that.

But the four beings I first spoke to you about are sexless, they were neither man nor woman; and in the vital world there is an entire part of the vital creation which is the result of these beings, an entire part which has no sex. Besides, the gods too made a world which was sexless. It is the world of angels, what are called angels, what in occultism are called fashioners. But these are sexless spirits; they are represented with wings, you know, they are sexless spirits.

There are in the universe, already, beings who have no sex, who are neither men nor women, and there are many of them in the vital world. There are entities with sex in the vital world but in its most material part, the one closest to the earth, and not in its most important part; the most important part is sexless. This does not make them any better, however, since they are all beings hostile to the divine Will and divine realisation, but it gives them a terrific force. And so in return the gods too have created a whole set of beings who have no sex and whom men speak of as angels; how does one call it? "Your guardian angel", or what else? It is especially "angel".

(Pavitra) *Cherubim, seraphim.*

Yes, yes, that's it. They have given many names. There, then.

(M 7: 157-59)

67. Religion

You see, Sri Aurobindo defines religion as the seeking after the spiritual, that is, the Supermind, of what is beyond the ordinary human consciousness, and what ought to influence life from a higher realm. So, as religion seeks this it is beyond the reason, because it goes to the suprarational. And so how can reason help in the realm of religion? What he means is that if one uses reason to judge the field of religion and progress in it, one is sure to make mistakes, because reason is not the master there and it is not capable of enlightening. If you want to judge any religion with your reason, you are sure to make mistakes, for it is outside and beyond the field of reason. Reason can judge things which belong to the rational domain of ordinary life. And as he says later, the true role of reason is to be like a control and an organiser of the movements of human life in the mind and the vital.

Each time, for example, that one has some kind of vital disorder, of the passions,

desires, impulses and all these things, if one calls the reason and looks at these things from the point of view of reason, one can put them back into order. It is truly the role of reason to organise and regulate all the movements of the vital and the mind. For instance, you can call the reason in order to see whether two ideas can go together or whether they contradict each other, whether two theories can stand side by side in your mental construction or one demolishes the other. It belongs to the domain of reason to judge and organise all these things, and also perhaps still more it is the work of reason to see whether the impulses are reasonable or not, whether they will lead to a catastrophe or can be tolerated and will not disturb anything in the life. So, this is its full domain; that's what Sri Aurobindo says.

But in order to know the value of a religion, whether it truly has the power to put you into contact with the Divine, with the spiritual life, to lead you to it, how can the reason judge, since it is beyond its domain? It knows nothing about it. It is not its field, it understands nothing there. We must use other means. Naturally, that's how he begins, at the end he will say what means one can use; I don't know whether it is at the end of these chapters,¹ but in any case he always gives an indication. That's what this means; he says: Don't use reason, you cannot judge with it—that's all.

(M 7: 166-67)

* * *

1. The Mother has been reading from chapter 14 of *The Human Cycle*.

68. Not to Be Sectarian

In fact, people who are interested in general questions, those who come out of their little daily preoccupations of being born, living and dying, living as well as possible—there are people not satisfied with this, who try to have general ideas and look at world problems—these people make an inner effort or a mental effort, and in one way or another enter into contact with the great currents of forces, at first currents of mental force, of the higher light and sometimes of spiritual force. Then they receive a kind of drop of that within their consciousness, and this produces in them the illumination of a revelation, and they feel that they have grasped the truth. They have a revelation and so naturally are very happy and immediately think, “My happiness I am going to pass on to others”; for they are very fine people, they have very good intentions. Then, to pass on their happiness to others they begin by making a construction around their revelation; they must make it into a system; otherwise how to preach to others? So they make a system, like this gentleman. I have met hundreds like this in the world. Now, each one had had a revelation and had constructed something which seemed to him to be the solution to all problems. They wanted to apply

it to everything. So they gathered people around them; according to the strength of their influence, their power, they gathered more people or less, from three or four to some hundreds; sometimes they had groups and they said, "Here we are, if everyone does what we do, well, the world will be transformed." Unfortunately it was only a spark of light, and their construction was purely mental and not free from the ordinary laws of life. And so the people in the groups who were to have preached to the world harmony, beauty, happiness, joy and peace, etc., quarrelled among themselves. This took away all power from their teaching. It is like this, and in fact it is true.

It is only when something absolutely new and absolutely superior enters the earth atmosphere and changes it by a kind of spiritual coercion, it is only at that moment that human consciousness will change sufficiently for circumstances also to change.

As for me, I have no illusions on the subject, because I know that Sri Aurobindo saw the truth of things and therefore, if humanity were ready to be transformed simply by the vision of the truth of things, well, at least all those who are in contact with this truth should be transformed. Well, they aren't.

You know all the defects which you have, personally and collectively, and how in spite of a goodwill which must be obvious, there is still much to do for the world to be as one conceives it when one comes out of ordinary notions—simply, let us say a world of harmony, peace, understanding, broadmindedness, goodwill, unselfishness, disinterested consecration to a higher ideal, self-forgetfulness... you want more of these things, there are still many more. You must begin with just a little at first, simply this: to have slightly greater ideas, a little vaster understanding, not to be sectarian.

(M 7: 184-85)

69. The Divine Work Has to Be Accomplished

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "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 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 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.

It is just because 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.

But that kind of feeling that you have only one single reason for existence, one single goal, one single motive, the entire, perfect, complete consecration to the Divine to the point of not being able to distinguish yourself from Him any longer, to be Himself entirely, completely, totally without any personal reaction intervening, this is the ideal attitude; and besides, it is the only one which makes it possible for you to go forward in life and in the work, absolutely protected from everything and protected from yourself which is of all dangers the greatest for you—there is no greater danger than the self (I take "self" in the sense of an egoistic self).

This is what Sri Aurobindo meant there, nothing else.

(M 7: 189-90)

70. To Do the Yoga

Here, it is said: "One must not enter on this path, far vaster and more arduous than most ways of yoga, unless one is sure of the psychic call and of one's readiness to go through to the end." Does this mean, Mother, that those who are accepted or those who are here in this Ashram are sure to go through and succeed?

Excuse me! But there is... I don't exactly know the proportion, but still it is certainly not most of the people here who are doing yoga. They happen to be here for

many reasons; but those who have taken the resolution to do yoga, sincerely, do not form the majority. And as I told you, for you, children, those of you who have come here as children, how could you at the moment have even the least idea of what yoga is and come for the yoga? It is impossible. For all those who have come quite small, there is an age when the problem comes up; it is then that you must reflect, and then at that time I ask them. Well, have I asked you often about it? Since I am giving you these lessons, I speak to you about the thing, but it is very rarely that I have taken you individually and asked you, “Do you want to do it or not?”—Only those who have within themselves, who have had an impulsion, a kind of instinct, who have come and said, “Yes, I want to do yoga.” Then it is finished. But I tell them, “Good, these are the conditions, this is how it is. And you know, it is not something easy. You have to start with an inner certitude that you are here for that and you want that; that’s enough.” You see, one may have a very good will, a life oriented towards a divine realisation, in any case, a kind of more or less superficial consecration to a divine work, *and not do yoga*.

To do Sri Aurobindo’s yoga is to want to transform oneself integrally, it is to have a single aim in life, such that nothing else exists any longer, that alone exists. And so one feels it clearly in oneself whether one wants it or not; but if one doesn’t, one can still have a life of goodwill, a life of service, of understanding; one can labour for the Work to be accomplished more easily—all that—one can do many things. But between this and doing yoga there is a great difference.

And to do yoga you must want it consciously, you must know what it is, to begin with. You must know what it is, you must take a resolution about it; but once you have taken the resolution, you must no longer flinch. That is why you must take it in full knowledge of the thing. You must know what you are deciding upon when you say, “I want to do yoga”; and that is why I don’t think that I have ever pressed you from this point of view. I can speak to you about the thing. Oh! I tell you a lot about it, you are here for me to speak to you about it; but individually it is only to those who have come saying, “Yes, in any case I have my idea about the yoga and want to do it”; it is good.

And then for them it’s something different, and the conditions of life are different, specially inwardly. Specially within, things change.

There is always a consciousness there acting constantly to rectify the situation, which puts you all the time in the presence of obstacles which prevent you from advancing, make you bump against your own errors and your own blindnesses. And this acts only for those who have decided to do the yoga. For others the Consciousness acts like a light, a knowledge, a protection, a force of progress, so that they may reach their maximum capacities and be able to develop as far as possible in an atmosphere as favourable as possible—but leaving them completely free in their choice.

The decision must come from within. Those who come consciously for the yoga, knowing what yoga is, well, their conditions of living here are... outwardly

there is no difference but inwardly there is a very great difference. There is a kind of absoluteness in the consciousness, which does not let them deviate from the path: the errors one commits become immediately visible with consequences strong enough for one not to be able to make any mistake about it, and things become very serious. But it is not often like that.

All of you, my children—I may tell you this, I have repeated it to you and still repeat it—live in an exceptional liberty. Outwardly there are a few limitations, because, as there are many of us and we don't have the whole earth at our disposal, we are obliged to submit to a certain discipline to a certain extent, so that there may not be too great a disorder; but inwardly you live in a marvellous liberty: no social constraint, no moral constraint, no intellectual constraint, no rule, nothing, nothing but a light which is there. If you want to profit by it, you profit by it; if you don't want to, you are free not to.

But the day you make a choice—when you have done it in all sincerity and have felt within yourself a radical decision—the thing is different. There is the light and the path to be followed, quite straight, and you must not deviate from it. It fools no one, you know; yoga is not a joke. You must know what you are doing when you choose it. But when you choose it, you must hold on to it. You have no longer the right to vacillate. You must go straight ahead. There!

All that I ask for is a will to do well, an effort for progress and the wish to be a little better in life than ordinary human beings. You have grown up, developed under conditions which are exceptionally luminous, conscious, harmonious, and full of goodwill; and in response to these conditions you should be in the world an expression of this light, this harmony, this goodwill. This would already be very good, very good.

To do the yoga, this yoga of transformation which, of all things, is the most arduous—it is only if one feels that one has come here for that (I mean here upon earth) and that one has to do nothing else but that, and that it is the only reason of one's existence—even if one has to toil hard, suffer, struggle, it is of no importance—“This is what I want, and nothing else”—then it is different. Otherwise I shall say, “Be happy and be good, and that's all that is asked of you. Be good, in the sense of being understanding, knowing that the conditions in which you have lived are exceptional, and try to live a higher, more noble, more true life than the ordinary one, so as to allow a little of this consciousness, this light and its goodness to express itself in the world. It would be very good.” There we are.

But once you have set foot on the path of yoga, you must have a resolution of steel and walk straight on to the goal, whatever the cost.

There!

(M 7: 197-200)

71. Begin at the Beginning

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.

(M 7: 201-02)

72. When We All Have Supramental Bodies...

It is absolutely certain that, in a general way, it is still the Overmind which is ruling and that if the Supermind comes, it's that it is only beginning to come and to have an influence, and that, in a period of transition, what Sri Aurobindo says here is absolutely obvious: If you understand nothing of the Overmind you will understand still less of the Supermind, and he has repeated, I don't know how often, that one must not try to leap to the highest summit without having climbed all the steps. Once again... when did I read... it's not so long ago... that it was necessary to climb all the steps to go to the top? You can't take a leap and neglect all the rest. It is not possible. You can do it quickly. What can happen is that what took several lifetimes can be done in a few years or even perhaps in a few months; but you have to do it.

When we all have supramental bodies and when within ourselves we are in the supramental consciousness, we shall perhaps be able to manufacture little supramental beings who will not need to pass through these experiences! But it is only "when", it is not so at present. (*Laughter*)

One must not hope for things before they are done. They will be done, but a little later.

(M 7: 207)

73. Purusha and Prakriti

In the ordinary case, of the ordinary being and ordinary life, the Purusha is subjected to Prakriti, to the external Nature, he is her slave. So Sri Aurobindo says that it is not enough to free oneself from this slavery. He begins that way: it is not enough to free oneself from the slavery; he must keep his allegiance, but instead of obeying Prakriti, he must obey the Divine Mother; that is, instead of obeying something which is lower than himself, he must obey what is higher. That is the sentence: transfer his allegiance from this to that.

Do you understand? No? Ah, it is probably someone who wrote to him saying that he wanted his Purusha to be completely free from allegiance to Prakriti. So he answered: No, that's not enough; if you free it, it is only half the work; your allegiance must be there, but instead of being related to Prakriti, it must exist for the Divine Mother. And then later he explains the difference. There is an entire passage there in which he says that the Divine Mother should not be identified with Prakriti. Naturally there is something of the Divine Mother there, because something of the Divine Mother is behind everything. But one must not think that Prakriti is the Divine Mother.

(M 7: 204)

74. A Constant Unfolding

...I think we have already spoken about this several times. It has been said that in the process of creation, there is the movement of creation followed by a movement of preservation and ending in a movement of disintegration or destruction; and even it has been repeated very often: "All that begins must end", etc., etc.

In fact in the history of our universe there have been six consecutive periods which began by a creation, were prolonged by a force of preservation and ended by a disintegration, a destruction, a return to the Origin, which is called Pralaya; and that is why this tradition is there. But it has been said that the seventh creation would be a progressive creation, that is, after the starting-point of the creation, instead of its being simply followed by a preservation, it would be followed by a progressive manifestation which would express the Divine more and more completely, so that no disintegration and return to the Origin would be necessary. And it has been announced that the period we are in is precisely the seventh, that is, it would not end by a Pralaya, a return to the Origin, a destruction, a disappearance, but that it would be replaced by a constant progress, because it would be a more and more perfect unfolding of the divine Origin in its creation.

And this is what Sri Aurobindo says. He speaks of a constant unfolding, that is, the Divine manifests more and more completely; more and more perfectly, in a progressive creation.

(M 7: 205)

75. The Impersonal

What does “to seek after the Impersonal” mean?

Oh! It’s very much in fashion in the West, my child. 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.

(M 7: 240)

76. Concentrating to Find the Psychic

Once the consciousness rises where does one find it?

Above the head, above the mind. What Sri Aurobindo means is: Unless one has gone beyond the mind and into altogether higher regions, so long as one remains in the human consciousness, the mental, vital, physical consciousness, one must concentrate in order to find the psychic. It is only if you have soared up out of the human consciousness and entered consciously the higher regions above the mind, far above the mind, that you no longer need to concentrate in the psychic because you will naturally find it.

But to rise above the mental consciousness, not into a higher speculative mind, but far beyond all mental movements is not an easy thing. To begin with, the mind must be absolutely silent and quiet, otherwise one can’t do it. It is only when the

mind enters into a complete silence, a perfect quietude, that it becomes just a mirror for reflecting what is above; then one can rise above. But so long as *that* goes on, there's no hope.

Yet you must not mistake the feelings for the psychic, you understand!—these two are absolutely different things. People always think that when they have emotions, feelings, they are entering the psychic. These things have nothing to do with the psychic, they are purely vital. They are the most subtle part of the vital, if you like, but they are vital. It's not through the feelings that one goes to the psychic, it is through a very intense aspiration and a self-detachment.

(M 7: 248-49)

77. Impossible?

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said "It is impossible." Why? For you have said that nothing is impossible!

Nothing is impossible in principle. But if one refuses to do what is necessary, obviously one cannot succeed.

In the material world there are conditions, otherwise it would not be what it is. If there were no conditions and processes, everything could be transformed and done miraculously. But evidently it is not in this way that it was decided, because things don't happen miraculously—in any case, not miracles as the human mind conceives of them, that is, constant arbitrary decisions. It is obvious that in the world there are no arbitrary decisions.

Sri Aurobindo says: In order to do such and such a thing, these are the conditions. If you refuse to fulfil these conditions you won't do that particular thing, you will do something else; that, evidently, is not the only thing possible. But if that's the thing one wants to do, one must fulfil the conditions... One can do something else!

I believe that if you take the world in its totality, in Time and Space, it is obvious that you can say, "Nothing is impossible", and that probably everything will be; but that's in the totality, and in Time and Space, that is, through eternities of time and infinities of space all is possible. But at a given moment, at a given point, there is a certain number of "possibles", and all are not there, and certain conditions have to be fulfilled for these possibilities to be realised. The world is constructed like that. We can do nothing about it. I mean it is useless to say, "It ought to be otherwise." It is like that, we must take it as it is, endeavour to make the best possible out of it.

(M 7: 258-59)

78. Buddha, Shankara, The Rishis, Terrestrial Realisation

The Buddha certainly had an inner contact with something which, in comparison with the external life, was a non-existence; and in this non-existence, naturally, all the results of existence disappear. There is a state like this; it is even said that if one can keep this state for twenty days, one is sure to lose one's body; if it is exclusive, I quite agree with it.

But it may be an experience which remains at the back, you see, and is conscious even while not being exclusive, and which causes the contact with the world and the outer consciousness to be supported by something that is free and independent. This indeed is a state in which one can truly make very great progress externally, because one can be detached from everything and act without attachment, without preference, with that inner freedom which is expressed outwardly.

Yet this is the real necessity: once this inner freedom has been attained and the conscious contact with what is eternal and infinite, then, without losing this consciousness one must return to action and let that influence the whole consciousness turned towards action.

This is what Sri Aurobindo calls bringing down the Force from above. In this way there is a chance of being able to change the world, because one has brought in a new Force, a new region, a new consciousness and put it into contact with the outer world. So its presence and action will produce inevitable changes and, let us hope, a total transformation in what this outer world is.

So we could say that the Buddha quite certainly had the first part of the experience, but that he never dreamt of the second, because it was contrary to his own theory. His theory was that one had to run away; but it is obvious that there is only one way of escape, to die, and yet, as he himself has said so well, you may be dead and be completely attached to life and still be in the cycle of births and not have liberation. And in fact he has admitted the idea that it is by successive passing lives on the earth that one can manage to develop oneself to reach this liberation. But for him the ideal was that the world would not exist any longer. It was as though he accused the Divine of having made a mistake and that there was only one thing to do, to rectify the mistake by annulling it. But naturally, to be reasonable and logical, he did not admit the Divine. It was a mistake made by whom, how, in what way?—this he never explained. He simply said that it was made and that the world had begun with desire and had to end with desire. He was just on the point of saying that this world was purely subjective, that is, a collective illusion, and that if the illusion ceased the world would cease to be. But he did not come so far. It is Shankara who took over and made the thing altogether complete in his teaching.

If we go back to the teaching of the Rishis, for example, there was no idea of flight out of the world; for them the realisation had to be terrestrial. They conceived a Golden Age very well, in which the realisation would be terrestrial. But starting

from a certain decline of vitality in the spiritual life of the country, perhaps, from a different orientation which came in, you see... it is certainly starting from the teaching of the Buddha that this idea of flight came, which has undermined the vitality of the country, because one had to make an effort to cut oneself off from life. The outer reality became an illusory falsehood, and one had no longer to have anything to do with it. So naturally one was cut off from the universal energy, and the vitality went on diminishing, and with this vitality all the possibilities of realisation also diminished.

But it is very remarkable... I have met many people who were trying this method of detachment and separation from life, and living exclusively in the inner reality. These people, almost all of them, had in the outer life absolutely gross defects. When they returned to the ordinary consciousness, they were very much lower than one of the élite, for instance, a man of great culture and great intellectual and moral development. These people in their ordinary conduct, when they came out of their meditation, their exclusive concentration, lived very grossly. They had very, very ordinary defects, you see. I knew many of this kind. Or perhaps they had come to a stage where their outer life was a sort of dream in which they were, so to say, not existing. But one had altogether the impression of beings who were completely incomplete, totally incomplete, that is, outwardly there was nothing at all.

(M 7: 288-90)

79. Thinking About the New Consciousness

Have you ever tried to picture what this new consciousness could be and what a new race could be like, and finally what a new world could be like?

By analogy, it is quite obvious that the arrival of man upon earth has changed the earth-condition. I cannot say that from a certain point of view this was for the greatest good of all, because there are many who have suffered terribly from it, and here it is obvious that the complications the human being has brought into life have not always been very favourable either for him or for others. But from a certain point of view this has brought about a considerable progress, even in the lower species: man meddled with the life of animals, he meddled with the life of plants, he meddled with the life of metals, of minerals; as I said, it was not always for the greatest joy of those he dealt with, but still it certainly changed their conditions of life considerably. Well, in the same way, it is probable that the supramental being, whatever it might be, will considerably change the life of the earth. In our heart and our thought we hope that all the evils the earth suffers from will be at least ameliorated if not cured, and that the general conditions will be more harmonious, and in any case more tolerable. This may happen, because it was the very nature of the mental consciousness which incarnated in man, who acted for his own satisfaction, with his own development in view and without much consideration for the consequences of his actions. Perhaps

the Supermind will act more harmoniously. In any case we hope so. That is how we conceive of it.

But I am asking you, in turn, a question: have you thought of it? Have you thought of what it could be?

(*To a child*) You, have you thought about it? (*To another child*) You? No? You have thought about it? Then tell me what you have thought. Naturally I am not asking you to repeat to me what you have read in Sri Aurobindo's books, because that's not what is in question: you must endeavour to imagine and live something yourself.

(M 7: 320-21)

80. The Sublimest of Adventures

It is quite obvious that now, through all the swirlings and all the stupidities, there is an awakening need, almost a kind of sensation of what this could and should be—which means that the time is near. For a very long time it has been said, “It will be, it will be”, and it was promised... thousands and thousands of years ago they had already begun to promise that there would be a new consciousness, a new world, something divine which would manifest upon earth, but it was said, “It will be, it will be”, like that; they spoke of ages, eons, thousands and millions of years. They did not have this sensation which we now have, that it must come, that it is very close. Of course human life is very short and there is a tendency to wish to shorten the distances so that they may be in proportion to the dimensions; but in spite of all, there will come a moment when it happens... there will be a time when it happens, there will be a time when the movement swings over into a new reality... There was a time when the mental being could manifest upon earth. The starting point might have been poor, very incomplete, very partial, but all the same there was a starting point. Why can't it be now?... That's all.

Perhaps if those who from the beginning have proclaimed that it would be, those very people say, “It is going to be...”, after all, perhaps they are the best informed. I am considering how from the beginning of the earth's history (we shall not go farther back to the antecedents, you know, for we have already enough to do with the earth), from the beginning of the earth's history, in one form or another, under one name or another, Sri Aurobindo has always presided over the great terrestrial transformations; and so when he tells you, “Well, this is the right time”, perhaps he knows. That's all that I can say.

So, if it is the right time, this is how the problem is put: there are people who are ready or will become ready, and these precisely will be the first to start on the new path. There are others who, perhaps, will become aware of it too late, who will have missed the opportunity; I think there will be many of this kind. But in any case, my point of view is this: even if there should be only half a chance, it would be worth the trouble of trying. For after all... I don't know... I told you just now, there is a

moment when life such as it is, the human consciousness such as it is, seems something absolutely impossible to bear, it creates a kind of disgust, repugnance; one says, “No, it is not that, it is not that; it can’t be that, it can’t continue.” Well, when one comes to this, there is only to throw in one’s *all*—all one’s effort, all one’s strength, all one’s life, all one’s being—into this chance, if you like, or this exceptional opportunity that is given to cross over to the other side. What a relief to set foot on the new path, that which will lead you elsewhere! This is worth the trouble of casting behind much luggage, of getting rid of many things in order to be able to take that leap. That’s how I see the problem.

In fact it is the sublimest of adventures, and if one has in him in the slightest the true spirit of adventure, it is worth risking all for all. But those who are afraid, who wonder, “Am I not going to let go the substance for the shadow?” according to the most banal proverb one can imagine, those who tell themselves, “Bah! After all it is better to profit by what one has than to risk losing everything, we don’t know what is going to happen tomorrow, let us take precautions”... unfortunately this is very widespread, extremely widespread... well, about those who are in this state of mind, I can assure you of one thing: that even when the thing occurs before their very nose, they will not perceive it. They will say, “It is good, in this way I won’t regret anything.” It is possible. But perhaps later they will; this we do not know.

In any case what *I* call being sincere is this: if one thinks that this new realisation is the only thing which is truly worth being lived; if what is, is intolerable—not only for oneself, perhaps not so much for oneself... but still, if one is not absolutely selfish and mean, one feels that, truly, it has lasted long enough, that one has had enough of it, that it must change—well, when one feels like that, one takes everything, all that one is, all that one can, all that one has, and one throws oneself into it completely without ever looking behind, and come what may! I indeed feel that it would be preferable even to plunge into an abyss in this way than to be on the shore, trembling and wondering, “What will happen to me tomorrow if I take this rather rash step?” There we are.

It is preferable to buck up a little, as they say familiarly, and chance it! That’s my opinion.

(M 7: 322-24)

81. Tradition and Change

I remember having heard learned people discussing things, and they thought themselves very wise—and discussed with an imperturbable seriousness to find out in which language God had said: “Let there be Light.”

Some of them said that it must have been in Sanskrit, others said that it must have been a still more ancient tongue, others said that it must have been Syrian, and so on, you see; and nobody thought that perhaps it was not any language at all!

Does the Word also follow the evolution?

That means?...

It means that what was studied before has now become mediocre.

What Word?

What had been conceived by the scholars in the written Shastras; that is, what is written here...

Of the old traditions?... Yes. But Sri Aurobindo also says that there is no reason for it not to change, for things not to be added, changed. He says... he himself answers your question.

It is very good to keep the memory of the past if it helps you, but it should not prevent you from going forward. And the teaching which was good at one time is no longer so at another, that's absolutely certain.

(M 7: 344-45)

82. "Our Yoga Begins Where the Others End"

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. There.

I am speaking of yoga. I am not speaking of your life, of you all, you children here. That's different. You are here to develop yourselves. And when you are developed and have a precise thought of your own, a vision of your own, when you have enough knowledge to be able to choose freely what life you want to lead, then at that time you will take a decision.

But those who have already taken the decision, well for them it is first of all indispensable to find their soul and unite with their psychic being, and with the Divine who is within it. This is an absolutely indispensable beginning. One can't leap over that bridge; it is not possible. It can be done very quickly if you know how to use the help that's given to you; but it has to be done.

(M 7: 350-51)

83. The Vedic Age

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo says: "...the same problem has to be approached from a new starting-point."

Yes. That's exactly what I have just said. The problem remains the same...

The problem...

The problem is to find one's soul and unite with the Divine.

But, Mother, was it the same during the Vedic times also?

To find their soul and the Divine? Of course.

But they did not succeed?

No, Sri Aurobindo says that in the Vedic age they tried to bring the spiritual life into the physical life, but he says that the means they employed, the paths they followed at that time are no longer any good now. Just imagine us before an altar making a *puja!*... It won't do now, it is not suitable.

Is their goal and ours the same?

I think so.

In any case, 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.

(M 7: 351-53)

84. Involution and Evolution

...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.

(M 7: 356)

85. The Sense of Personal Effort

Mother, I don't understand "Our sense of personal effort and aspiration comes from the attempt of the egoistic mind to identify itself in a wrong and imperfect way with the workings of the divine Force."

What is it that you do not understand? The sentence or the idea?

The idea, Mother.

It can be put in very familiar terms.

The individual being, and particularly the mind in it, have an instinctive repulsion to admitting that it's another force than their own small personal one which does things. There is a kind of instinct which makes you feel absolutely convinced that the effort of aspiration, the will to progress are things belonging to you by your own right and, therefore, that you have all the merit.

From the man of art or of literature or of science, who produces something, studies something, and is absolutely convinced that it is he himself who is doing it, to the aspirant yogi who is convinced that it is the ardour of his own aspiration, his personal need for realisation which push him—if someone tells these people (I have had this experience), if someone tells them a little too soon, “Why, no, it is the Divine who aspires in you, it is the divine Force which produces in you...”, they no longer do anything, they fall flat, it doesn't interest them at all any longer; they say, “Good, I have nothing to do then, let the Divine do it.”

And this is what Sri Aurobindo means—that the mind is something so egoistic and so proud that if you take away from it the satisfaction it seeks, it no longer collaborates; nor the vital either. And as the physical is very obedient to the vital and the mind, it too collaborates no longer. Then one is before an inert mass which says, “Good, if it isn't I, well, let the Divine do what He likes, I am not going to do anything at all any more.”

I knew people who had truly made a lot of progress, who were very close to the moment when one emerges into the truth of things, and who were held back simply by this. Because this need to be the source of the action, to have the merit of the effort, this need is so deeply rooted that they cannot take the last step. Sometimes it takes years. If they are told, “No, it isn't you, this energy which is in you, this will which is in you, this knowledge which is in you, all this is the Divine; it is not what you call yourself”, this makes them so miserable that they can't do anything any more. That's what Sri Aurobindo wants to say in this sentence.

There are people who have such a need to keep the sense of their separate personality that if they are forced to admit that all that springs upwards is inspired by the Divine or even done by Him, they keep for their little person the whole side of defects, faults, errors, and they cherish their defects, so that at least something remains theirs, which is indeed their own, their personal property: “Yes, all that is beautiful, luminous, is the Divine; all horrible things—that's myself.” But a self... a big self; one must not touch it!

(M 7: 358-59)

86. A Mantra

ॐ आनन्दमायि चैतन्यमायि सत्यमायि परमे
 OM anandamayi chaitanyemayi
 satyamayi parame

OM anandamayi chaitanyamayi satyamayi parame

In the prayer you gave us this time for Kali Puja, you have written something in Sanskrit.

It is Sri Aurobindo who has written a mantra.

Then why has he written like this?

Why has he written this? Why don't you ask him? Perhaps he will tell you.

It is an evocation. You know what it means? Did you find someone to explain it to you? No? Ah, that's the first thing you should have done, ask what the meaning of these four words is.

The transcription underneath: there are only two of them. He had begun transcribing and then his paper... it was on a tiny little scrap of paper, and there wasn't any more space to write everything; so he stopped.

Have you read it? You don't know how to read Sanskrit? So now you must find someone to show you how to read it; and then to give you the significance. And after that you will ask me why he wrote it. Not now!

(M 7: 365)

87. One Single Divine

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.

(M 7: 374-75)

88. Tempting God

Mother, you say that for conquering, it is only joy which can conquer the Adversary. But to attain the joy one must first conquer the Adversary!

Why no! One must go beyond him and ignore him.

There is one thing you must begin by doing, it is true, that is to free yourself from his influence. But there is a difference between freeing oneself from the Adversary's influence and conquering the Adversary. To conquer the Adversary is not a small thing. One must have a greater power than his to vanquish him. But one can liberate oneself totally from his influence. And from the minute one is completely free from his influence, one's self-giving can be total. And with the self-giving comes joy, long before the Adversary is truly vanquished and disappears.

The Adversary will disappear only when he is no longer necessary in the world. And we know very well that he is necessary, as the touch-stone for gold: to know if it is pure.

But if you, whoever it may be, become truly sincere—what I call sincere, you see, what Sri Aurobindo calls sincere, that is, when nothing in the being contradicts the aspiration and the will to consecration, nothing disguises itself to continue living its own independent life... The disguises are countless, they are full of craftiness and malice, very deceptive, and unfortunately the human being has a very great innate tendency to deceive himself; and the more one deceives himself, the less one recognises the self-deception. But if one is *really* sincere, the Adversary can't even approach him any longer; and he doesn't try it, because that would be courting his own destruction.

Only, some people have in them a kind of fighting instinct and they are not content to liberate themselves and come out of the influence; indeed they think they have the capacity to go to war and fight with the Adversary. So sometimes, if they are not quite ready, they go and land in very bad situations, difficult predicaments.

These are saved only by their trust in the divine Grace. Because, even if they act foolishly and land in difficult situations, there will always be something which comes

and pulls them out of the hole at the last moment. A little like the mother cat catching its young one which is going to drown because it has made a mistake and wanted to walk upon water—she catches it, pulls it, brings it out. A little like that.

But it is always said that one must not tempt God. One should not do something through—how to put it sweetly—premature boldness, with the idea: “Oh, it doesn’t matter, the Divine will always pull me out of the difficulty.” This is not good. Because instead of helping the work, it complicates it.

(M 7: 397-99)

89. The First Question that Came Up

[Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “Self-Consecration”.]

“Often he (the sadhak) finds that even after he has won persistently his own personal battle, he has still to win it over and over again...”

Yes. So?

Then does this mean that others profit by his sadhana?

You understand, it’s like that for everyone.

If there was only one, it could be like this: that he alone could do it for all; but if everybody does it... you understand...

You are fifty persons doing the Integral Yoga. If it is only one of the fifty who is doing it, then he does it for all the fifty. But if each one of the fifty is doing it, each doing it for all the fifty, he does it actually for one person alone, because all do it for all.

But the work is much longer?

One must widen oneself.

The work is more complicated, it is more complete, it asks for a greater power, a greater wideness, a greater patience, a greater tolerance, a greater endurance; all these things are necessary. But in fact, if each one does perfectly what he has to do, it is no longer only one single person who does the whole thing: not one single person who does it for all, but all now form only one person who does it for the whole group.

This ought to form a kind of sufficient unity among all those who are doing it, so that they no longer feel the distinction. This is indeed the ideal way of doing it: that they now form only one single body, one single personality, working at once each for himself and for the others without any distinction.

Truly speaking, it was the first question which came up when I met Sri

Aurobindo. I think I have already told you this; I don't remember now, but I spoke about it recently. Should one do one's yoga and reach the goal and then later take up the work with others or should one immediately let all those who have the same aspiration come to him and go forward all together towards the goal?

Because of my earlier work and all that I had tried, I came to Sri Aurobindo with the question very precisely formulated. For the two possibilities were there: either to do an intensive individual sadhana by withdrawing from the world, that is, by no longer having any contact with others, or else to let the group be formed naturally and spontaneously, not preventing it from being formed, allowing it to form, and starting all together on the path.

Well, the decision was not at all a mental choice; it came spontaneously. The circumstances were such that there was no choice; that is, quite naturally, spontaneously, the group was formed in such a way that it became an imperious necessity. And so once we have started like that, it is finished, we have to go to the end like that.

At the beginning there were five, ten, not more. There were five or six for a long time. It became ten, twelve, about twenty; then thirty, thirty-five. That remained for quite a long while. And then suddenly, you know, it started; and then here we are! The last figure was more than eleven hundred. We are growing.

Now, among these there are many who do not do the sadhana, then the problem does not come up. But for all those who do it, it is like this, it is as Sri Aurobindo has described it here. And if one wants to do the thing in a solitary way, it is absolutely impossible to do it totally. For every physical being, however complete he may be, is only partial and limited; he represents only one law in the world; it can be a very complex law, but it is only one law; what is called in India, you know, the Dharma, one Truth, one Law.

Each individual being, even if he be of a completely higher kind, even if he is made for an absolutely special work, is only one individual being; that means, the totality of the transformation cannot take place through one single body. And that is why, spontaneously, the multiplication came about.

One can reach, alone and solitary, his own perfection. One can become in one's consciousness infinite and perfect. But when it is a question of a work, it is always limited.

I don't know if you understand me well. But personal realisation has no limits. One can become inwardly in himself perfect and infinite. But the outer realisation is necessarily limited, and if one wants to have a general action, at least a minimum number of physical beings is needed.

In a very old tradition it was said that twelve were enough; but in the complexities of modern life it doesn't seem possible. There must be a representative group. Which means that... you know nothing about it or you don't imagine it very well, but each one of you represents one of the difficulties which must be conquered for the trans-

formation. And this makes many difficulties! (*Mother laughs*) I have written somewhere... I have said that, more than a difficulty, each one represents an impossibility to be solved. And it is the whole set of all these impossibilities which can be transformed into the Work, the Realisation. Each case is an impossibility to be solved, and it is when all these impossibilities are resolved that the Work will be accomplished.

But now I am more gentle. I take away “impossibility” and put “difficulty”. Perhaps they are no longer impossibilities.

Only, from the beginning, and still more now that our group has grown so considerably, each time someone comes to tell me, “I come for *my* yoga”, I say, “Oh, no! Then don’t come. It is much more difficult here than anywhere else.” And the reason is what Sri Aurobindo has written here.

If someone comes to tell me, “I come to work, I come to make myself useful”, it is all right. But if someone comes and says, “I have many difficulties outside, I can’t manage to overcome these difficulties, I want to come here because it will help me”, I say, “No, no, it will be *much* more difficult here; your difficulties will increase *considerably*.” And that is what it means, because they are no longer isolated difficulties; they are collective difficulties.

So in addition to your own personal difficulty you have all the frictions, all the contacts, all the reactions, all the things which come from outside. As a test. Exactly on the weak point, the thing that’s most difficult to solve; it is there that you will hear from someone the phrase which was just the one you did not want to hear; someone will make towards you that gesture which was exactly the one which could shock you; you find yourself facing a circumstance, a movement, a fact, an object, anything at all—just the things which... “Ah, how I should have liked this not to happen!” And it’s that which will happen. And more and more. Because you do not do your yoga for yourself alone. You do the yoga for everybody—without wanting to—automatically.

So when people come and tell me, “I come here for peace, quietness, leisure, to do my yoga”, I say, “No, no, no! Go away immediately somewhere else, you will be much more peaceful anywhere else than here.”

If someone comes and says, “Well, here I am, I feel that I should consecrate myself to the divine Work, I am ready to do any work at all that you give me”, then I say, “Good, that’s all right. If you have goodwill, endurance, and some capacity, it is all right. But to find the solitude necessary for your inner development it is better to go somewhere else, *anywhere else*, but not here.” There we are.

I said all this just today; I had the occasion to do so. And at the same time I said, “There is an exception to this rule: that’s the children.” Because here the children have the advantage of living from the time when they are still unconscious, in an atmosphere which helps them to find themselves. And this one doesn’t have outside. I am saying what I just said to people who are... not necessarily old but still... formed, who are past the age not only of childhood but of their first youth.

But all those who are quite small, the younger they are, the better it is for them—because from their young and most tender childhood they are in the most favourable atmosphere for an integral development, and so they can grow up, develop more and more in the right atmosphere. It is only when one comes out of the personal development and wants to begin to do the yoga that the problem comes up. But for those who have been entirely brought up here, the problem is much less difficult, because from their very first childhood they have already been members of a whole, without knowing it, without being aware of it; and they move with the whole towards the Realisation. So it is no longer something absolutely new, which adds to the difficulty; on the contrary it is something that helps them.

Now, you see, when the problem comes up, it is for them to know whether they want to do the yoga or not. I have already told you this several times. You see, a moment comes when... “Well, now I am going out into life to have my experience.”—“Go, my children, with my blessings; and try to see that it is not too unpleasant.” (*Mother laughs*) But those who say, “No, now I have taken my decision, I want to do yoga”, then, well, I don’t hide it from them that the difficulty begins. From this moment, special qualities are necessary; and they must know how to profit by all the preparation that has been given to them. They are in a better position than the poor people who come from outside; much better! But all the same they will have to make an effort, because without effort nothing succeeds—unless they have learnt from the time they were very small to let themselves be carried. But there are very few who are mature enough, it can be said, or old enough, in the sense of eternity, to be able to allow themselves to be carried all at once, like that, at a single go, without needing to receive all the blows from outside in order to know that *this* is the true thing.

This depends a great deal on what they are within themselves. Here, really, comes in the question of the predestined one, the one born for this. Then indeed it is much easier.

There we are.

(M 7: 408-13)

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(*To be continued*)