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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXV

No. 8

*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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*On Reading*

*Sri Aurobindo*

The August issue is a compilation of passages from the Mother's writings and conversations, where she speaks of Sri Aurobindo.

The passages in the second section are from her commentaries on Sri Aurobindo's *Thoughts and Aphorisms* — first the Aphorism (in box) and then the Mother's commentary.

*References:*

M: The *Collected Works of the Mother* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

MC: The Mother's conversations with Satprem.

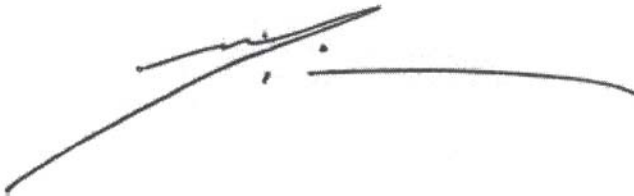
*What is the Divine?*

The Divine is what you adore in Sri Aurobindo.

28 March 1932

(M 13: 27)

What Sri Aurobindo  
represents in the world's  
history is not a teaching,  
not even a revelation;  
it is a decisive action  
direct from the Supreme



What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world's history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme.

14 February 1961

(M 13: 3-4)

Sri Aurobindo is  
an emanation of the  
Supreme who came on  
earth to announce the  
manifestation of the New  
race and a new world: the  
Supramental

Let us prepare  
for it in all sincerity  
and eagerness.



Sri Aurobindo is an emanation of the Supreme who came on earth to announce the manifestation of a new race and a new world: the Supramental.

Let us prepare for it in all sincerity and eagerness.





*Section One*

*On Reading Sri Aurobindo*

You came to earth to learn to know yourself.

Read Sri Aurobindo's books and look carefully within yourself as deeply as you can.

4 July 1969

(M 12: 204)

\*

If one reads Sri Aurobindo carefully one finds the answers to all that one wants to know.

25 October 1972

(M 13: 24)

\*

*What is the true method for studying Sri Aurobindo's works?*

The true method is to read a little at a time, with concentration, keeping the mind as silent as possible, without actively trying to understand, but turned upwards, in silence, and aspiring for the light. Understanding will come little by little.

And later, in one or two years, you will read the same thing again and then you will know that the first contact had been vague and incomplete, and that true understanding comes later, after having tried to put it into practice.

14 October 1967

(M 12: 204)

\*

*To be able to offer my mind to Sri Aurobindo in all sincerity, is it not very necessary to develop a great power of concentration? Will you tell me by what method I could cultivate this precious faculty?*

Fix a time when you can be quiet every day.

Take one of Sri Aurobindo's books. Read a sentence or two. Then remain silent and concentrated to understand the deeper meaning. Try to concentrate deeply enough to obtain mental silence and begin again daily until you obtain a result.

Naturally you should not fall asleep.

3 February 1972

(M 12: 205)

\*

*Sweet Mother,*

*How should we read your books and the books of Sri Aurobindo so that they may enter into our consciousness instead of being understood only by the mind?*

To read my books is not difficult because they are written in the simplest language, almost the spoken language. To get help from them, it is enough to read with attention and concentration and an attitude of inner good-will, with a desire to receive and live what is taught.

To read what Sri Aurobindo writes is more difficult because the expression is highly intellectual and the language far more literary and philosophic. The brain needs a preparation to really be able to understand and generally this preparation takes time, unless one is specially gifted with an innate intuitive faculty.

In any case, I always advise reading *a little* at a time, keeping the mind as quiet as one can, without making an effort to understand, but keeping the head as silent as possible and letting *the force* contained in what one reads *enter deep inside*. This force, received in calm and silence, will do its work of illumining and will create in the brain, if necessary, the cells required for understanding. Thus, when one re-reads the same thing some months later, one finds that the thought expressed has become much clearer and closer and even at times quite familiar.

It is preferable to read regularly, a little every day and at a fixed hour if possible; this facilitates the brain's receptivity.

2 November 1959

(M 16: 231)

\*

It is not by books that Sri Aurobindo ought to be studied but by subjects — what he has said on the Divine, on Unity, on religion, on evolution, on education, on self-perfection, on supermind, etc., etc.

(M 12: 206)

\*

*Mother, how can one become wise?*

Read Sri Aurobindo.

(M 12: 206)



*Section Two*

*Sri Aurobindo's 'Thoughts and Aphorisms'*

*with*

*the Mother's Commentary*

There are two allied powers in man: knowledge and Wisdom. Knowledge is so much of the truth, seen in a distorted medium, as the mind arrives at by groping; Wisdom what the eye of divine vision sees in the spirit.

I suppose that we are so used to seeing all the elements in man quarrelling among themselves that the idea of their being “allied” causes astonishment. But these quarrels are only apparent. All the powers which come from the higher regions are in fact necessarily allied — they are united, they have agreed to fight the Ignorance. And Sri Aurobindo says clearly enough — for those who understand — that one of these powers belongs to the mind and that the other belongs to the Spirit. This is precisely the profound truth that Sri Aurobindo wants to reveal in his aphorism: if the mind tries to obtain the second power, it is unable to do so, since it is a power that belongs to the Spirit and arises in the human being together with the spiritual consciousness.

Knowledge is something that the mind can obtain through much effort, although this is not the true knowledge, but only a mental aspect of knowledge; whereas Wisdom does not at all belong to the mind, which is altogether incapable of obtaining it, because, in fact, it doesn’t even know what it is. I repeat, Wisdom is essentially a power of the Spirit and it can arise only with the spiritual consciousness.

It would have been interesting to ask what Sri Aurobindo means when he speaks of “the truth seen in a distorted medium”. First of all, what is this “distorted medium”, and what does the truth become in a “distorted medium”?

As always, what Sri Aurobindo says can have several levels of meaning — one is more specific, the other more general. In the most specific sense, the distorted medium is the mental medium which works in ignorance and which is therefore unable to express truth in its purity. But since life as a whole is lived in ignorance, the distorted medium is also the earth-atmosphere which, in its entirety, distorts the truth seeking to express itself through it.

And here lies the most subtle point of this aphorism. What can the mind arrive at by groping? We know that it is always groping, seeking to know, erring, returning upon its previous attempts and trying again . . . Its progress is very, very halting. But what can it grasp of the truth? Is it a fragment, a piece, something which is still the truth, but only partially, incompletely, or is it something which is no longer the truth? That is the interesting point.

We are used to being told — perhaps we have also repeated many times — that one can only have partial, incomplete, fragmentary knowledge which therefore cannot be true knowledge. This point of view is rather trite: one need only to have studied a little in life to be aware of it. However, what Sri Aurobindo means by “the truth seen in a distorted medium” is far more interesting than that.

Truth itself takes on another aspect; in this medium it is no longer the truth, but a distortion of the truth. Consequently, what can be seized of it is not a fragment which would be true, but an aspect, the false appearance of a truth which has itself melted away.

I am going to give you an image to try to make myself understood; it is nothing more than an image, do not take it literally.

If we compare the essential truth to a sphere of immaculate, dazzling white light, we can say that in the mental medium, in the mental atmosphere, this integral white light is transformed into thousands and thousands of shades, each of which has its own distinct colour, because they are all separated from one another. The medium distorts the white light and makes it appear as innumerable different colours: red, green, yellow, blue, etc., which are sometimes very discordant. And the mind seizes, not a little fragment of the white light of the white sphere, but a larger or smaller number of little lights of various colours, with which it cannot even reconstitute the white light. Therefore it cannot reach the truth. It does not possess fragments of truth, but a truth that is broken up. It is a state of decomposition.

The truth is a whole and everything is necessary. The distorted medium through which you see, the mental atmosphere, is unsuited for the manifestation or the expression or even the perception of all the elements — and one can say that the better part is lost. So it can no longer be called the truth, but rather something which in essence is true, and yet no longer so at all in the mental atmosphere — it is an ignorance.

So, to summarise, I shall say that knowledge, as it can be grasped by the human mind, is necessarily knowledge in ignorance, one could almost say an ignorant knowledge.

Wisdom is the vision of truth in its essence and of its application in the manifestation.

*12 September 1958*

(M 10: 1-3)





Inspiration is a slender river of brightness leaping from a vast and eternal knowledge; it exceeds reason more perfectly than reason exceeds the knowledge of the senses.

. . . to begin with, one thing should be understood; these are definitions given by Sri Aurobindo, definitions which he gives mostly in a paradoxical form to compel us to think.

There are dictionary definitions, which are the ordinary explanations of words as they are commonly understood. These do not make you think. What Sri Aurobindo says, however, is said in order to break up the usual conception, to bring you in touch with a deeper truth. In this way a whole lot of questions are eliminated.

The effort one must make is to try to find the deeper knowledge, the deeper truth that Sri Aurobindo has expressed in this way, which is not the usual way of defining a word.

I shall select some questions: the first one, which interested me because it comes from a thoughtful person, concerns the word “knowledge” and compares the way Sri Aurobindo has used the word in this aphorism with the way he used it in the aphorism we read last week.

When, in last week’s aphorism, Sri Aurobindo opposed — as one might say — “knowledge” to “Wisdom”, he was speaking of knowledge as it is lived in the average human consciousness, the knowledge which is obtained through effort and mental development, whereas here, on the contrary, the knowledge he speaks of is the essential Knowledge, the supramental divine Knowledge, Knowledge by identity. And this is why he describes it here as “vast and eternal”, which clearly indicates that it is not human knowledge as we normally understand it.

*19 September 1958*

(M 10: 3-4)



When I speak, the reason says, “This will I say”; but God takes the word out of my mouth and the lips say something else at which reason trembles.

When Sri Aurobindo says “I”, he speaks of himself and of his own experience. We would like to be able to say that what he says is symbolic and that it could apply to many people, but unfortunately this is not so at all.

This experience, of not saying what you had meant to say when you speak, but something else, is very common; but it is the opposite of what Sri Aurobindo speaks of here. That is to say, when you are sitting calmly at home using your reason to its full extent, you decide to say this or that, that this is the reasonable thing, but all too often, when you begin to speak, it is the lower impulses, the unreasonable emotions and the vital reactions which take hold of the tongue and make you say things which you should not say.

Here it is the same phenomenon, but, as I said, the other way round. Instead of infrarational impulses which make you speak with excitement and passion, it is, on the contrary, an inspiration coming from above, a light and a knowledge greater than those of the reason which take hold of the tongue and make you say things that you would have been incapable of saying even with the most enlightened reason.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that “the reason trembles” because these higher truths always appear in the human domain as paradoxes, revelations contrary to reason; not because reason is incapable of understanding what comes from the higher regions, but because these revelations are always ahead of, very much ahead of, that which reason has understood or accepted. What the human reason of today finds reasonable has been paradoxical and mad in the past; and probably — one may say, certainly — these unexpected, paradoxical, revolutionary revelations which are manifesting now and making the reason tremble, will in time to come be very reasonable knowledge, which in turn will tremble before new revelations.

It is this sense of something which is always moving, progressing, being transformed, that Sri Aurobindo is trying to give us with these compact phrases which for a time shake our understanding of things. It is to push us forward, to give us the sense of the complete relativity of all that manifests in the world, and of this universe which is always in motion, ever moving towards a higher and greater Truth.

For us, right now, the supramental transformation is the expression of the highest truth, it is the revolution we must bring about on earth; and certainly this revolution must be felt as an absolute by the majority of human beings, otherwise they will not be able to bring it about. But Sri Aurobindo insists that we should not forget that this absolute is still relative and that any manifestation must always be relative with regard to an Absolute which is even more absolute — the Unmanifest that will manifest later.

*26 September 1958*

(M 10: 7-9)

I am not a Jnani, for I have no knowledge except what God gives me for His work. How am I to know whether what I see be reason or folly? Nay, it is neither; for the thing seen is simply true and neither folly nor reason.

“I am not a Jnani . . .” The Jnani is one who follows the path of Knowledge, one who wants to realise Yoga exclusively through Knowledge, and who follows a purely intellectual path with the will to go beyond it and attain Knowledge, which is no longer intellectual, but spiritual. And Sri Aurobindo says: I am not a Jnani. . . . I do not seek knowledge. I have given myself to the Divine to accomplish His work and, by the divine Grace, at every moment I know what must be known in order to accomplish this work.

*3 October 1958*

(M 10: 9)



If mankind only caught a glimpse of what infinite enjoyments, what perfect forces, what luminous reaches of spontaneous knowledge, what wide calms of our being lie waiting for us in the tracts which our animal evolution has not yet conquered, they would leave all and never rest till they had gained these treasures. But the way is narrow, the doors are hard to force, and fear, distrust and scepticism are there, sentinels of Nature, to forbid the turning away of our feet from her ordinary pastures.

What Sri Aurobindo has written, the words [“caught a glimpse”] which have been translated<sup>1</sup> as *entrevoiaient*, means to see something in its totality, but for a very brief moment. It is obvious that a constant vision of all these wonders would automatically compel you to set out on the path. It is also certain that a little fragmentary glimpse is not enough — it would not have enough weight to compel you to follow the path.

But if you had a total vision, however brief, you would not be able to resist the temptation of making the effort needed to realise it. But, in fact, the total vision is exceptional, and that is why Sri Aurobindo says to us: “If mankind only . . .”

...

As for the marvels Sri Aurobindo tells us about, it is better not to describe them, because each individual feels them, undergoes them, experiences them in his own way — and for each person that is the best way. One must not adopt another’s way, one must go one’s own way, then the experience has its full value, its full inestimable value.

10 October 1958

(M 10: 10-11, 14)



1. In the French text of *Thoughts and Aphorisms* read by the Mother.

Late, I learned that when reason died then Wisdom was born; before that liberation, I had only knowledge.

Once again I must repeat that the form of these aphorisms is purposely paradoxical in order to give the mind a little shock and awaken it enough for it to make an effort to understand. One must not take this aphorism literally. Some people seem worried by the idea that reason must disappear for one to become wise. It is not that, it is not that at all.

Reason must no longer be the summit and the master.

For a very long time in life, until one possesses anything resembling Knowledge, it is indispensable that reason be the master, otherwise one is the plaything of one's impulses, one's fancies, one's more or less disordered emotional imaginings, and one is in danger of being very far removed not merely from wisdom but even from the knowledge needed for conducting oneself acceptably. But when one has managed to control all the lower parts of the being with the help of reason, which is the apex of ordinary human intelligence, then if one wants to go beyond this point, if one wants to liberate oneself from ordinary life, from ordinary thought, from the ordinary vision of things, one must, if I may say so, stand upon the head of reason, not trampling it down disdainfully, but using it as a stepping stone to something higher, something beyond it, to attain to something which concerns itself very little with the decrees of reason; something which can allow itself to be irrational because it is a higher irrationality, with a higher light; something which is beyond ordinary knowledge and which receives its inspirations from above, from high above, from the divine Wisdom.

That is what this means.

As for the knowledge of which Sri Aurobindo speaks here, it is ordinary knowledge, it is not Knowledge by identity; it is knowledge that can be acquired by the intellect through thought, through ordinary means.

...

Many times in his writings, particularly in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo warns us against the imaginings of those who believe they can do sadhana without rigorous self-control and who heed all sorts of inspirations, which lead them to a dangerous imbalance where all their repressed, hidden, secret desires come out into the open under the pretence of liberation from ordinary conventions and ordinary reason.

One can be free only by soaring to the heights, high above human passions. Only when one has achieved a higher, selfless freedom and done away with all desires and impulses does one have the right to be free.

...

When one truly attains wisdom, the true wisdom, the wisdom Sri Aurobindo is speaking of here, there is no longer higher and lower; there is only a play of forces in which each thing has its place and its importance. And if there is a hierarchy it is a hierarchy of surrender to the Supreme. It is not a hierarchy of superiority with regard to what is below.

And with human understanding, human reason, human knowledge, one is unable to discern this hierarchy. Only the awakened soul can recognise another awakened soul, and then the sense of superiority disappears completely.

True wisdom comes only when the ego disappears, and the ego disappears only when you are ready to abandon yourself completely to the supreme Lord without any personal motive and without any expectation of profit — when you do it because you cannot do otherwise.

*17 October 1958*

(M 10: 14-16)



What men call knowledge is the reasoned acceptance of false appearances. Wisdom looks behind the veil and sees. Reason divides, fixes details and contrasts them; Wisdom unifies, marries contrasts in a single harmony.

All that Sri Aurobindo writes about knowledge, reason, Wisdom is said in order to bring us out of the rut of conventional thinking, and, if possible, make us perceive the reality behind the appearances.

...

For Sri Aurobindo, true knowledge is precisely Knowledge by identity, and wisdom is the state one achieves when one is in this true knowledge. He says it here: Wisdom looks behind the veil of false appearances and sees the reality behind it. And Sri Aurobindo emphasises that when one defines something with the superficial, outer knowledge, it is always in opposition to something else; it is always by means of a contrast that one explains what one sees, feels, touches — and does not understand.

...

The first absolutely indispensable step is not to repeat, more or less mechanically and without quite knowing what you are saying, that “appearances are false”. You say it because Sri Aurobindo has told us so — but without really understanding it. And yet, when you want to understand something, you continue to look, to observe, to touch, to taste and to feel, because you believe there are no other means of observation. It is only when you have had the experience of the “reversal of consciousness”, when you have gone behind these things, when you can feel, experience, in the most concrete manner, their illusory appearance, that you are able to understand. But, unless you have had the experience, you can read all the aphorisms, repeat and learn them, have faith in them and still not perceive: they have no reality for you. All these appearances remain the only way of coming into contact with the outer world and of becoming aware of what it is. And sometimes you can spend a whole lifetime learning how things are in their appearances and be considered very cultured, very intelligent, highly knowledgeable, when you have observed all this in detail and remembered all that you have observed or learnt . . .

24 October 1958

(M 10: 17-18)



Either do not give the name of knowledge to your beliefs only and of error, ignorance or charlatanism to the beliefs of others; or do not rail at the dogmas of the sects and their intolerance.

. . . What Sri Aurobindo wants to make you understand is that when you say, “We are in possession of the truth and what is not this truth is an error” — though you may not dare say it in such a crude way — you are doing exactly the same thing as all the religions and all the sects.

. . .

Obviously, the first part of the aphorism can be taken as advice, but this is not what Sri Aurobindo meant when he wrote it; he wanted to make us conscious of the error we make ourselves but ridicule in others. . . .

*7 November 1958*

(M 10: 20-21)





My soul knows that it is immortal. But you take a dead body to pieces and cry triumphantly, "Where is your soul and where is your immortality?"

It is certainly not by dissecting a body which is dead because the soul has departed from it that the soul can be found. Had the soul not departed, the body would not have been dead! It is to bring home to us the absurdity of this claim that Sri Aurobindo has written this aphorism.

*21 November 1958*

(M 10: 26)



Immortality is not the survival of the mental personality after death, though that also is true, but the waking possession of the unborn and deathless Self of which body is only an instrument and a shadow.

In each human being the body is animated by the vital being, and governed, or partially governed, by a mental being. This is a general rule, but the extent to which the mental being is formed and individualised varies greatly from one individual to the next. In the great mass of human beings the mind is something fluid which has no organisation of its own, and therefore it is not a personality. And as long as the mind is like that, fluid, unorganised, with no cohesive life of its own and without personality, it cannot survive. What made up the mental being dissolves in the mental region when the body, the substance which made up the body, dissolves in the physical substance.

But as soon as the mental being is formed, organised, individualised, and has become a personality, it does not depend, it no longer depends on the body for its existence, and it therefore survives the body. The earth's mental atmosphere is filled with beings, mental personalities which lead an entirely independent existence, even after the disappearance of the body; they can reincarnate in a new body when the soul, that is to say, the true Self, reincarnates, thus carrying with it the memory of its previous lives.

But this is not what Sri Aurobindo calls Immortality. Immortality is a life without beginning or end, without birth or death, which is altogether independent of the body. It is the life of the Self, the essential being of each individual, and it is not separate from the universal Self. And this essential being has a sense of oneness with the universal Self; it is in fact a personified, individualised expression of the universal Self and has neither beginning nor end, neither life nor death, it exists eternally and that is what is immortal. When we are fully conscious of this Self we participate in its eternal life, and we therefore become immortal.

But there is some misunderstanding about this word "Immortality" — and this is not something new; it is a misunderstanding which has recurred very frequently. When one speaks of immortality most people understand it as the indefinite survival of the body.

The body can survive indefinitely only if, in the first place, it becomes fully conscious of this immortal Self and unites with it, identifies with it to the extent of having the same capacity, the same faculty of constant transformation which would enable it to follow the universal movement. This is an absolutely indispensable condition if the body is to endure. Because the body is rigid, because it does not follow the movement, because it cannot transform itself rapidly enough to constantly

identify itself with the universal evolution, it decomposes and dies. Its fixity, its rigidity, its incapacity to transform itself, make its destruction necessary, so that its substance may return to the general realm of physical substance and so that the body may be remoulded into new forms in order to become capable of further progress. But usually, when one speaks of immortality, people think of physical immortality — it goes without saying that this has not yet been realised.

Sri Aurobindo says that it is possible and even that it will happen, but he lays down one condition: the body must be supramentalised, it must have some of the qualities of the supramental being, which are qualities of plasticity and constant transformation. And when Sri Aurobindo writes that the body is “only an instrument and a shadow”, he is speaking of the body as it is now and will probably continue to be for a long time to come. It is only the instrument of the Self, a very inadequate expression of this Self, and a shadow — a shadow, something vague and obscure in comparison with the light and precision of the eternal Self.

*28 November 1958*

(M 10: 27-29)



They proved to me by convincing reasons that God did not exist, and I believed them. Afterwards I saw God, for He came and embraced me. And now which am I to believe, the reasonings of others or my own experience?

Sri Aurobindo is not asking a question, but rather making an ironic comment. It is to bring out clearly the stupidity of the reasonings of the mind, which imagines it can speak of what it does not know. It is nothing else.

...

Someone has asked me, “How is it possible for God to reveal Himself to an unbeliever?” That’s very funny; because if it pleases God to reveal Himself to an unbeliever, I don’t see what would prevent Him from doing so!

On the contrary, He has a sense of humour — Sri Aurobindo has told us many times already that the Supreme has a sense of humour, that *we* are the ones who want to make Him into a grave and invariably serious character — and He may find it very amusing to come and embrace an unbeliever. Someone who has only the day before declared, “God does not exist. I do not believe in Him. All that is folly and ignorance. . . .”, He gathers him into His arms, He presses him to His heart — and He laughs in his face.

Everything is possible, even things which to our small and limited intelligence seem absurd.

Indeed, it is only when we have come to the end of these aphorisms that we will be able to understand them; because with each one, Sri Aurobindo places us in an entirely different position with regard to the truth to be discovered. There are innumerable facets. There are innumerable points of view. One can say the most contradictory things without being inconsistent or contradicting oneself. Everything depends on the way in which you look at it. And even once we have seen everything, from all the points of view accessible to us, around the central Truth, we will still have had only a very small glimpse — the Truth will escape us on all sides at once. But what is remarkable is that once we have had the experience of a single contact with the Divine, a true, spontaneous and sincere experience, at that moment, in that experience, we will know everything, and even more. That is why it is so important to live the little you know in all sincerity in order to make yourself capable of having experiences, and of knowing by experience, not mentally, but because you live these things, because they become a part of your being and consciousness.

To put into practice the little you know is the best way to learn more; it is the most powerful means of advancing on the way — a little bit of really sincere practice. . . .

5 December 1958

(M 10: 32-34)

They told me, “These things are hallucinations.” I inquired what was a hallucination and found that it meant a subjective or psychical experience which corresponds to no objective or no physical reality. Then I sat and wondered at the miracles of the human reason.

In this aphorism, by “they” Sri Aurobindo means the materialists, the scientists and, in a general way, all those who only believe in physical reality and consider human reason to be the one infallible judge. Furthermore, the “things” he speaks of here are all the perceptions that belong to worlds other than the material, all that one can see with eyes other than the physical, all the experiences that one can have in subtle domains from the sense perceptions of the vital world to the bliss of the Divine Presence.

It was while discussing these and other similar “things” that Sri Aurobindo was told that they were “hallucinations”. When you look up the word “hallucination” in the dictionary, you find this definition: “Morbid sensation not produced by any real object. Objectless perception.” Sri Aurobindo interprets this or puts it more precisely: “A subjective or psychical experience which corresponds to no objective or no physical reality.” There could be no better definition of these phenomena of the inner consciousness, which are most precious to man and make him something more than a mere thinking animal. Human reason is so limited, so down to earth, so arrogantly ignorant that it wants to discredit by a pejorative word the very faculties which open the gates of a higher and more marvellous life to man. . . . In the face of this obstinate incomprehension Sri Aurobindo wonders *ironically* at “the miracles of the human reason”. For the power to change truth into falsehood to such a degree is certainly a miracle.

5 January 1960

(M 10: 39-40)



Hallucination is the term of Science for those irregular glimpses we still have of truths shut out from us by our preoccupation with matter; coincidence for the curious touches of artistry in the work of that supreme and universal Intelligence which in its conscious being, as on a canvas, has planned and executed the world.

Here Sri Aurobindo compares the work of the Supreme Lord, creator of the universe, to the work of an artist painting in his conscious being, with sweeping brush-strokes, as on a canvas, the picture of the world. And when by “curious touches” he paints one stroke over another, we have a “coincidence”.

Usually the word “coincidence” suggests unconscious, meaningless chance. Sri Aurobindo wants to make us understand that chance and unconsciousness have nothing to do with this phenomenon; on the contrary, it is the result of a refinement of taste and consciousness of the kind that artists possess, and it can reveal a deep intention.

*12 January 1960*

(M 10: 40)



That which men term a hallucination is the reflection in the mind and senses of that which is beyond our ordinary mental and sensory perceptions. Superstition arises from the mind's wrong understanding of these reflections. There is no other hallucination.

A vision is a perception, by the visual organs, of phenomena that really exist in a world corresponding to the organ which sees.

...

It is the same for all the subtle worlds — vital, mental, overmental, supramental — and for all the intermediate worlds and planes of the being. In this way one can have visions that are vital, mental, overmental, supramental, etc.

On the other hand, Sri Aurobindo tells us that what is termed a hallucination is the reflection in the mind or the physical senses of that which is beyond our mind and our ordinary senses; it is therefore not a direct vision, but a reflected image which is usually not understood or explained. This character of uncertainty produces an impression of unreality and gives rise to all kinds of superstition. This is also why “serious” people, or people who think themselves serious, do not accord any value to these phenomena and call them hallucinations. And yet, in those who are interested in occult phenomena, this type of perception often precedes the emergence of the capacity of vision which may be in course of formation. But you must guard against mistaking this for true vision. . . .

*20 January 1960*

(M 10: 41)



Do not like so many modern disputants smother thought under polysyllables or charm inquiry to sleep by the spell of formulas and cant words. Search always; find out the reason for things which seem to the hasty glance to be mere chance or illusion.

There are many planes or zones of the mind, from the plane of the physical mind, the lower zone of ordinary thoughts, full of error and ignorance and falsehood, to the plane of the higher mind which receives, in the form of intuitions, the rays of the supramental truth. Between these two extremes there is a gradation of countless intermediate planes that are superimposed one upon another and which influence each other. In one of the lower zones lies the practical reason, the common sense of which man is so proud and which, for ordinary minds, appears to be the expression of wisdom, although it still works wholly in the field of ignorance. To this region of practical reason belong the “polysyllables” of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, the commonplaces and clichés, all the ready-made phrases which run about in the mental atmosphere from one brain to another and which people repeat when they want to appear knowledgeable, or when they think themselves wise.

Sri Aurobindo puts us on our guard against this trite and inferior way of thinking when we are faced with a new or unexpected phenomenon and try to explain it. He tells us to search always, untiringly, using our highest intelligence, the intelligence which thirsts to know the true cause of things, and to go on searching without being satisfied by facile and popular explanations, until we have discovered a more subtle and truer truth. Then at the same time we shall find that behind everything, even what seems to be chance and illusion, there is a conscious will at work to express the Supreme Vision.

*27 January 1960*

(M 10: 42-43)





Chance is not in this universe; the idea of illusion is itself an illusion. There was never illusion yet in the human mind that was not the concealing and disfigurement of a truth.

In this aphorism, by “the idea of illusion”, Sri Aurobindo means the philosophical theory which states that the material world has no real existence: it is merely an appearance created by an aberration of the ego and the senses, and when this aberration disappears the world will disappear at the same time.

Sri Aurobindo affirms, on the contrary, that behind all appearances, even the most illusory, there is a truth, a conscious will that presides over the unfolding of the universe. In this unfolding, each thing, each event, each circumstance is both the result of what has gone before and the cause of what is to follow. Chance and incoherence are only a deceptive appearance as seen by the human consciousness which is too partial and limited to see the truth of things. But this tangible and real truth exists behind all appearances and their illusory incoherence.

What Sri Aurobindo tells us is: The world is real, it is only our perception of it that is false.

*10 February 1960*

(M 10: 44-45)



When I had the dividing reason, I shrank from many things; after I had lost it in sight, I hunted through the world for the ugly and the repellent, but I could no longer find them.

To understand truly what Sri Aurobindo means here, you must yourself have had the experience of transcending reason and establishing your consciousness in a world higher than the mental intelligence. For from up there you can see, firstly, that everything that exists in the universe is an expression of Sachchidananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) and therefore behind any appearance whatever, if you go deeply enough, you can perceive Sachchidananda, which is the principle of Supreme Beauty. Secondly, you see that everything in the manifested universe is relative, so much so that there is no beauty which may not appear ugly in comparison with a greater beauty, no ugliness which may not appear beautiful in comparison with a yet uglier ugliness.

When you can see and feel in this way, you immediately become aware of the extreme relativity of these impressions and their unreality from the absolute point of view. However, so long as we dwell in the rational consciousness, it is, in a way, natural that everything that offends our aspiration for perfection, our will for progress, everything we seek to transcend and surmount, should seem ugly and repellent to us, since we are in search of a greater ideal and we want to rise higher.

And yet it is still only a half-wisdom which is very far from the true wisdom, a wisdom that appears wise only in the midst of ignorance and unconsciousness.

In the Truth everything is different, and the Divine shines in all things.

*17 February 1960*

(M 10: 45-46)



God had opened my eyes; for I saw the nobility of the vulgar, the attractiveness of the repellent, the perfection of the maimed and the beauty of the hideous.

Once again, Sri Aurobindo tells us clearly that behind the appearances there is a sublime Reality which is, one may say, the luminous opposite of all external deformations. Thus, when the inner eyes are open to this divine Reality, it is seen with such power that it is able to dissolve all that normally veils it to the ordinary vision.

*24 February 1960*

(M 10: 46)



Forgiveness is praised by the Christian and the Vaishnava, but for me, I ask, “What have I to forgive and whom?”

Sri Aurobindo himself gives us the Divine’s answer: “Forgive whom and what?” The Lord knows that all is Himself and therefore that all actions are His and all things are Himself. To forgive, one must be *other* than the one who is forgiven and the thing to be forgiven must have been done by someone other than oneself.

2 March 1960

(M 10: 47)



When I pine at misfortune and call it evil, or am jealous and disappointed, then I know that there is awake in me again the eternal fool.

Sri Aurobindo describes the state of one who is sunk in ignorance and desire and who judges everything from the point of view of his narrow and limited ego as that of “eternal fool”. To be able to understand and feel things correctly one must have a universal vision and be conscious of the Divine Presence and Will in all things and in all circumstances.

Then we know that whatever happens to us is always for our good, if we take the point of view of the spirit in the unfolding of time.

*16 March 1960*

(M 10: 48-49)



I saw a child wallowing in the dirt and the same child cleaned by his mother and resplendent, but each time I trembled before his utter purity.

For the purity of which Sri Aurobindo speaks here is the purity of instinct, that obeys Nature's impulses spontaneously, never calculating, never questioning, never asking whether it is good or bad, whether what one does is right or wrong, whether it is a virtue or a sin, whether the outcome will be favourable or unfavourable. All these notions come into play when the mental ego makes its appearance and begins to take a dominant position in the consciousness and to veil the spontaneity of the soul.

*27 April 1960*

(M 10: 54-55)



What I wished or thought to be the right thing does not come about; therefore it is clear that there is no All-Wise one who guides the world but only blind Chance or a brute Causality.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that for human beings the degree of success in physical life depends on the degree of harmony between the individual and universal physical Nature. Some people have a will which is spontaneously in tune with the will of Nature, and they succeed in everything they undertake; others, on the contrary, have a will which is more or less totally out of tune with the will of cosmic Nature and they fail in everything they do or try to do.

*4 May 1960*

(M 10: 55-56)



O Misfortune, blessed be thou; for through thee I have seen the face of my Lover.

Obviously, far from being a misfortune, it is a blessing. And this is precisely what Sri Aurobindo means.

*25 May 1960*

(M 10: 58)





Strange! The Germans have disproved the existence of Christ; yet his crucifixion remains still a greater historic fact than the death of Caesar.

*To what plane of consciousness did Christ belong?*

In the *Essays on the Gita* Sri Aurobindo mentions the names of three Avatars, and Christ is one of them. An Avatar is an emanation of the Supreme Lord who assumes a human body on earth. I heard Sri Aurobindo himself say that Christ was an emanation of the Lord's aspect of love.

The death of Caesar marked a decisive change in the history of Rome and the countries dependent on her. It was therefore an important event in the history of Europe.

But the death of Christ was the starting-point of a new stage in the evolution of human civilisation. This is why Sri Aurobindo tells us that the death of Christ was of greater historical significance, that is to say, it has had greater historical consequences than the death of Caesar. The story of Christ, as it has been told, is the concrete and dramatic enactment of the divine sacrifice: the Supreme Lord, who is All-Light, All-Knowledge, All-Power, All-Beauty, All-Love, All-Bliss, accepting to assume human ignorance and suffering in matter, in order to help men to emerge from the falsehood in which they live and because of which they die.

16 June 1960

(M 10: 61)



Sometimes one is led to think that only those things really matter which have never happened; for beside them most historic achievements seem almost pale and ineffective.

Sri Aurobindo, who had made a thorough study of history, knew how uncertain are the data which have been used to write it. Most often the accuracy of the documents is doubtful, and the information they supply is poor, incomplete, trivial and frequently distorted. As a whole, the official version of human history is nothing but a long, almost unbroken record of violent aggressions: wars, revolutions, murders or colonisations. True, some of these aggressions and massacres have been adorned with flattering terms and epithets; they have been called religious wars, holy wars, civilising campaigns; but they nonetheless remain acts of greed or vengeance.

Rarely in history do we find the description of a cultural, artistic or philosophical outflowering.

That is why, as Sri Aurobindo says, all this makes a rather dismal picture without any deep significance. On the other hand, in the legendary accounts of things which may never have existed on earth, of events which have not been declared authentic by “official” knowledge, of wonderful individuals whose existence is doubted by the scholars in their dried-up wisdom, we find the crystallisation of all the hopes and aspirations of man, his love of the marvellous, the heroic and the sublime, the description of everything he would like to be and strives to become.

That, more or less, is what Sri Aurobindo means in his aphorism.

*22 June 1960*

(M 10: 62)



There are four very great events in history, the siege of Troy, the life and crucifixion of Christ, the exile of Krishna in Brindavan and the colloquy with Arjuna on the field of Kurukshetra. The siege of Troy created Hellas, the exile in Brindavan created devotional religion (for before there was only meditation and worship), Christ from his cross humanised Europe, the colloquy at Kurukshetra will yet liberate humanity. Yet it is said that none of these four events ever happened.

*(1) Were the meditation and worship of former times the same as those of today? (2) What does this mean: "the colloquy at Kurukshetra will yet liberate humanity"?*

(1) In ancient times, as in our own day, each religion had its own particular kind of meditation and worship. And yet everywhere, always, meditation is a special mode of mental activity and concentration, only the details of the practice vary. Worship is a series of ceremonies and rites that are scrupulously and exactly performed in honour of a deity.

Here Sri Aurobindo refers to the worship and meditation of ancient India, in Vedic and Vedantic times.

(2) The colloquy at Kurukshetra is the Bhagavad Gita.

Sri Aurobindo considers the message of the Gita to be the basis of the great spiritual movement which has led and will lead humanity more and more to its liberation, that is to say, to its escape from falsehood and ignorance, towards the truth.

From the time of its first appearance, the Gita has had an immense spiritual action; but with the new interpretation that Sri Aurobindo has given to it, its influence has increased considerably and has become decisive.

29 June 1960

(M 10: 62-63)



If God assigns to me my place in Hell, I do not know why I should aspire to Heaven. He knows best what is for my welfare.

The hell which Sri Aurobindo speaks of here is more a state of consciousness than a place, it is a psychological condition that one creates for oneself.

Just as you can carry within you a heaven of blissful communion with the Divine, you can, if you do not take care to master the asuric tendencies in your nature, also carry in your consciousness a hell of misery and desolation.

There are moments in life when everything around you, people and circumstances, is so obscure, so adverse, so ugly that all hope of a higher realisation seems to vanish. The world seems irremediably doomed to a night of cruel hatred, unconscious and obstinate ignorance and intractable bad will. Then one may say with Sri Aurobindo, "God has assigned to me a place in hell"; and, with him too, in all circumstances, however terrible they may seem, one should dwell in the peaceful joy of total surrender to the Divine and say to the Lord in all sincerity, "Let Thy will be done."

*13 July 1960*

(M 10: 64-65)



If God draw me towards Heaven, then, even if His other hand strive to keep me in Hell, yet must I struggle upwards.

And if, like Sri Aurobindo, you can see that both movements have the same divine origin, then, instead of lamenting and being alarmed, you rejoice and keep a firm and luminous faith.

*19 July 1960*

(M 10: 65-66)



Logic is the worst enemy of Truth, as self-righteousness is the worst enemy of virtue; for the one cannot see its own errors nor the other its own imperfections.

*What is the role of logic and reason in our lives?*

The best answer I can give to your question is this quotation from *The Synthesis of Yoga*: “The characteristic power of the reason in its fullness is a logical movement assuring itself first of all available materials and data by observation and arrangement, then acting upon them for a resultant knowledge gained, assured and enlarged by a first use of the reflective powers, and lastly assuring itself of the correctness of its results by a more careful and formal action, more vigilant, deliberate, severely logical which tests, rejects or confirms them according to certain secure standards and processes developed by reflection and experience. The first business of the logical reason is therefore a right, careful and complete observation of its available material and data.”<sup>1</sup>

But in this aphorism Sri Aurobindo does not speak of reason. He speaks of logic, which is the partner and instrument of reason.

Logic is the art of correctly deducing one idea from another and inferring from a fact all its consequences. But logic does not itself possess the capacity to discern the truth. So your logic may be indisputable, but if your starting-point is wrong, your conclusions will also be wrong, in spite of the correctness of your logic, or rather, because of it. The same holds true for self-righteousness, which is a feeling of virtuous superiority. Your virtue makes you disdainful of others, and this pride — which fills you with disdain for those who, according to you, are less virtuous than you are — makes your virtue completely worthless.

That is why Sri Aurobindo tells us in his aphorism that logic is the worst enemy of Truth, just as the feeling of virtuous superiority is the worst enemy of virtue.

24 August 1960

(M 10: 67-68)



1. *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 21, p. 820.

When I was asleep in the Ignorance, I came to a place of meditation full of holy men and I found their company wearisome and the place a prison; when I awoke, God took me to a prison and turned it into a place of meditation and His trysting-ground.

*Is Sri Aurobindo speaking here of his own experience in prison during his political life?*

Yes. Sri Aurobindo is referring here to his experience in Alipore jail.

But what is interesting in this aphorism is the contrast he points out between the material prison where only his body was confined, while his spirit, unfettered by social conventions and prejudice, free from all preconceived ideas and all doctrinaire limitations, had a direct and conscious contact with the Divine and a first revelation of the integral Yoga; and, on the other hand, the mental prison of narrow rules which excludes life and within which people often confine themselves when they renounce ordinary existence in order to devote themselves to a spiritual life based on traditional dogmatic ideas.

So Sri Aurobindo is here, as always, the champion of the real freedom beyond all rules and limitations, the total freedom of perfect union with the supreme and eternal Truth.

*24 October 1960*

(M 10: 68-69)



I knew my mind to be conquered when it admired the beauty of the hideous, yet felt perfectly why other men shrank back or hated.

*What does “the beauty of the hideous” mean?*

It is always the same realisation presented from different angles, expressed through various experiences: the realisation that everything is a manifestation of the Supreme, the Eternal, the Infinite, immutable in his total perfection and in his absolute reality. That is why, by conquering our mind and its ignorant and false perceptions we can, through all things, enter into contact with this Supreme Truth which is also the Supreme Beauty and the Supreme Love, beyond all our mental and vital notions of beauty and ugliness, the good and the bad.

Even when we say “Supreme Truth, Supreme Beauty, Supreme Love”, we should give to these words a meaning other than the one which is attributed to them by our intellect. It is to emphasise this fact that Sri Aurobindo writes, paradoxically, “the beauty of the hideous”.

*14 November 1960*

(M 10: 69-70)

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*What is this other meaning?*

I meant that we cannot conceive the Divine intellectually. It is only when we leave the mental world and enter into the spiritual world, and, instead of thinking things, we live them and become them, that we can truly understand them. But even then, when we want to express our experience we have only those words that express our mental experiences, and in spite of all our efforts these words are inapt to convey what we want to express.

That is why Sri Aurobindo so often uses paradoxes to lift the mind out of the rut of ordinary thinking and, behind the apparent absurdity of what is said, to make us see the light of what is felt and perceived.

*26 November 1960*

(M 10: 70)





To feel and love the God of beauty and good in the ugly and the evil, and still yearn in utter love to heal it of its ugliness and its evil, this is real virtue and morality.

If you rise high enough, you find yourself at the heart of all things. And what is manifest in this heart can manifest in all things. That is the great secret, the secret of the divine incarnation in an individual form, because in the normal course of things what manifests at the centre is realised in the external form only with the awakening and the response of the will in the individual form. Whereas if the central Will is represented constantly and permanently in an individual being, this individual being can serve as an intermediary between this Will and all beings, and will for them. Everything this individual being perceives and offers in his consciousness to the supreme Will is answered as if it came from each individual being. And if for any reason the individual elements have a more or less conscious and voluntary relation with that representative being, their relation increases the efficacy, the effectiveness of the representative individual; and thus the supreme Action can act in Matter in a much more concrete and permanent manner. That is the reason for these descents of consciousness — which we may describe as “polarised”, for they always come to earth with a definite purpose and for a special realisation, with a mission — a mission which is decided upon, determined before the incarnation. These are the great stages of the supreme incarnations on earth.

And when the day comes for the manifestation of supreme love, for the crystallised, concentrated descent of supreme love, that will truly be the hour of transformation. For nothing will be able to resist That.

But since it is all-powerful, some receptivity must be prepared on earth so that the effects are not shattering. Sri Aurobindo has explained this in one of his letters. Someone asked him, “Why does it not come immediately?” He answered something like this: if divine love were to manifest in its essence upon earth, it would be like a bombshell; because the earth is neither supple nor receptive enough to be able to widen itself to the dimensions of this love. It not only needs to open, but to widen itself and to become more supple — Matter is still too rigid. And even the substance of the physical consciousness — not only the most material Matter, but the substance of the physical consciousness — is too rigid.

*January 1961*

(M 10: 70, 73-74)



When I hear of a righteous wrath, I wonder at man's capacity for self-deception.

. . . the . . . spirit of irony and humour that Sri Aurobindo has put in his aphorism, when he marvels at man's capacity for self-deception. . . .

*January 1961*

(M 10: 79-80)



This is a miracle that men can love God, yet fail to love humanity. With whom are they in love then?

Here Sri Aurobindo does not use the word philanthropy, for, as it is usually understood, philanthropy is a social and conventional attitude, a kind of magnified egoism which is not love but a condescending pity which assumes a patronising air.

In this aphorism Sri Aurobindo refers to those who follow the ascetic path in solitary search of a solitary God, by trying to cut themselves off completely from the world and men.

But for Sri Aurobindo men form part of the Divine; and if you truly love the Divine, how can you not love men, since they are an aspect of Himself?

*18 January 1961*

(M 10: 82)



The quarrels of religious sects are like the disputing of pots, which shall be alone allowed to hold the immortalising nectar. Let them dispute, but the thing for us is to get at the nectar in whatever pot and attain immortality.

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You say that the flavour of the pot alters the liquor. That is taste; but what can deprive it of its immortalising faculty?

Each religious sect has its own way of approaching the Divine and this is why Sri Aurobindo compares them to different pots. But he says: No matter which path you follow, the goal alone is important, and the goal is the same whatever the path you follow. The nectar is the same in whichever pot it is contained.

Some say that the flavour of the pot, the path you follow changes the taste of the nectar, that is to say, affects your union with the Divine. Sri Aurobindo answers: The approach may be different, each one chooses the one he prefers or which most suits his taste, but the nectar itself, the union with the Divine, always keeps its power of immortality.

*28 January 1961*

(M 10: 83)



Be wide in me, O Varuna; be mighty in me, O Indra; O Sun, be very bright and luminous; O Moon, be full of charm and sweetness. Be fierce and terrible, O Rudra; be impetuous and swift, O Maruts; be strong and bold, O Aryama; be voluptuous and pleasurable, O Bhaga; be tender and kind and loving and passionate, O Mitra. Be bright and revealing, O Dawn; O Night, be solemn and pregnant. O Life, be full, ready and buoyant; O Death, lead my steps from mansion to mansion. Harmonise all these, O Brahmanaspati. Let me not be subject to these gods, O Kali.

It is good and necessary to possess all the divine qualities that these gods represent and symbolise; that is why Sri Aurobindo invokes them and asks them to take possession of his nature. But for one who wants union with the Supreme, for one who aspires for the supreme Realisation, this cannot be sufficient. This is why at the end he calls upon Kali to give him the power to go beyond them all.

For Kali is the most powerful aspect of the universal Mother and her power is greater than that of all the gods in her creation. To unite with her means therefore to become more vast, more complete, more powerful than all the gods together and that is why Sri Aurobindo places union with her above and beyond all the others.

*2 February 1961*

(M 10: 84-85)



One of the greatest comforts of religion is that you can get hold of God sometimes and give him a satisfactory beating. People mock at the folly of savages who beat their gods when their prayers are not answered; but it is the mockers who are the fools and the savages.

*How can one give a satisfactory beating to God?*

Religion always tends to make God in the image of man, a magnified and aggrandised image, but in the end it is always a god with human qualities. This is what makes it possible for people to treat him as they would treat a human enemy. In some countries, when their god does not do what they want, they take him and throw him into the river!

*But are these idols not merely human creations? Do they have any existence in themselves?*

Whatever the image — what we disdainfully call an idol — whatever the external form of the deity, even if to our physical eye it appears ugly or commonplace or horrible, a caricature, there is always within it the presence of the thing it represents. And there is always someone, a priest or an initiate, or a sadhu, a sannyasin, who has the power and who draws — this is usually the work of the priests — who draws the force, the presence within. And it is real: it is quite true that the force, the presence is there; and it is that, not the form of wood or stone or metal, which people worship — it is the presence.

But people in Europe do not have this inner sense, not at all. For them everything is like a surface — not even that, just a thin outer film with nothing behind — so they cannot feel it. And yet it is a fact that the presence is there; it is an absolutely real fact, I guarantee it.

*Many people say that the teaching of Sri Aurobindo is a new religion. Would you say that it is a religion?*

People who say that are fools who don't even know what they are talking about. You only have to read all that Sri Aurobindo has written to know that it is impossible to base a religion on his works, because he presents each problem, each question in all its aspects, showing the truth contained in each way of seeing things, and he explains that in order to attain the Truth you must realise a synthesis which goes beyond all mental notions and emerge into a transcendence beyond thought.

So the second part of your question is meaningless. Besides, if you had read what was published in the last *Bulletin*,<sup>1</sup> you could not have asked this question.

I repeat that when we speak of Sri Aurobindo there can be no question of a teaching nor even of a revelation, but of an action from the Supreme; no religion can be founded on that.

But men are so foolish that they can change anything into a religion, so great is their need of a fixed framework for their narrow thought and limited action. They do not feel secure unless they can assert this is true and that is not; but such an assertion becomes impossible for anyone who has read and understood what Sri Aurobindo has written. Religion and Yoga do not belong to the same plane of being and spiritual life can exist in all its purity only when it is free from all mental dogma.

26 April 1961

(M 10: 94-96)



1. "What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world's history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme."

(*Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo Centre of Education*, April 1961, p. 169)

I heard a fool discoursing utter folly and wondered what God meant by it; then I considered and saw a distorted mask of truth and wisdom.

It is the very definition of folly that Sri Aurobindo gives here. A mask is something that conceals, that makes invisible what it covers. And if the mask is distorted, it not only renders invisible what it conceals but also totally changes its nature. So, according to this definition, folly is something that veils and distorts beyond all recognition the Truth which is at the origin of all things.

*23 June 1961*

(M 10: 98)





God is great, says the Mahomedan. Yes, He is so great that He can afford to be weak, whenever that too is necessary.

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God often fails in His workings; it is the sign of His illimitable godhead.

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Because God is invincibly great, He can afford to be weak; because He is immutably pure, He can indulge with impunity in sin; He knows eternally all delight, therefore He tastes also the delight of pain; He is inalienably wise, therefore He has not debarred Himself from folly.

*Why does God need to be weak?*

Sri Aurobindo does not say that God has any need of weakness. He says that in any particular whole, for the perfection of the play of forces, a moment of weakness may be just as necessary as a display of strength. And he adds, somewhat ironically, that since God is almighty force, He can at the same time afford to be weak, if necessary.

This is to widen the outlook of certain moralists who attribute definite qualities to God and will not permit Him to be otherwise.

Strength as we see it and weakness as we see it are both an equally distorted expression of the Divine Truth which is secretly present behind all physical manifestations.

30 June 1961

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*Does God ever really fail? Is God ever really weak? Or is it simply a game?*

It is not like that! That is precisely the distortion in the Western attitude as opposed to the attitude of the Gita. It is extremely difficult for the Western mind to understand in a living and concrete manner that *everything* is the Divine.

People are so deeply imbued with the Christian idea of “God the Creator” — the creation on one side and God on the other. When you think about it you reject it, but it has penetrated into the sensations and feelings; so, spontaneously, instinctively,

almost subconsciously, you attribute to God everything you consider to be best and most beautiful and, above all, everything you want to attain, to realise. Naturally, each one changes the content of his God according to his own consciousness, but it is always what he considers to be best. And that is also why instinctively and spontaneously, subconsciously, you are shocked by the idea that God can be things that you do not like, that you do not approve of or do not think best.

I put that rather childishly, on purpose, so that you can understand it properly. But it is like that — I am sure, because I observed it in myself for a very long time, because of the subconscious formation of childhood, environment, education, etc. You must be able to press into this body the consciousness of Oneness, the absolute exclusive Oneness of the Divine — exclusive in the sense that nothing exists except in this Oneness, even the things we find most repulsive.

And this is what Sri Aurobindo is fighting, for he too had this Christian education, he too had to struggle; and these aphorisms are the result — the flowering, as it were — of this necessity of fighting a subconscious formation. For that is what makes you ask such questions: “How can God be weak? How can God be foolish? How. . . ?” But there is nothing other than God, only He exists, there is nothing outside Him. And if something seems ugly to us, it is simply because He no longer wants it to exist. He is preparing the world so that this thing may no longer be manifested, so that the manifestation can move from that state to something else. So naturally, within us, we violently repulse everything that is about to go out of the active manifestation — there is a movement of rejection.

But it is Him. There is nothing but Him. This is what we should repeat to ourselves from morning to evening and from evening to morning, because we forget it at each moment.

There is only Him. There is nothing but Him — He alone exists, there is no existence without Him, there is only Him!

So, to ask a question like this is still to react like those who make a distinction between what is and what is not Divine or rather between what is and what is not God. “How can He be weak?” It is a question I cannot ask.

*7 July 1961*

(M 10: 100-03)



Sin is that which was once in its place, persisting now it is out of place; there is no other sinfulness.

Cruelty was one of the things that was most repugnant to Sri Aurobindo, but he always said that it was the distortion of an intensity, one could almost say the distortion of an intensity of love, something which is not satisfied with a middle course, which wants extremes — and that is justifiable.

I had always known that cruelty, like sadism, is a need for violent, extremely strong sensation, to penetrate a thick layer of tamas that feels nothing — tamas needs something extreme in order to be able to feel. The explanation may lie in this direction.

...

The concept of sin is something that I do not understand and have never understood; original sin seems to me one of the most monstrous ideas that man could ever have — sin and I don't go together! So naturally, I fully agree with Sri Aurobindo that there is no sin, this is understood, but . . .

Certain things, like cruelty, could be called "sin", but I can only see this explanation, that it is a distortion of the taste or need for an extremely strong sensation. I have observed in cruel people that they feel Ananda at that moment; they find an intense joy in it. So that is its justification, only it is in such a state of distortion that it is repugnant.

...

I was extremely interested, because later Sri Aurobindo said the same thing, that nothing is bad, it is just that things are not in their place — their place not only in space but also in time; their place in the universe, beginning with the worlds, the stars, etc., each thing exactly in its place. And so, when each thing is exactly in its place, from the most stupendous to the most microscopic, the whole will express the Supreme progressively, without any need of being withdrawn to be emanated again. On this Sri Aurobindo based the fact that in this creation, in this universe, the perfection of a divine world — what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind — will be able to manifest. Equilibrium is the essential law of this creation and this is why perfection can be realised in the manifestation.

*In this connection what are the very first things that the Supramental Force intends to drive out, or is trying to drive out, so that everything may be in its place, individually and cosmically?*

Drive out? But will it “drive out” anything? If we accept Sri Aurobindo’s idea, it will put each thing in its place, that’s all.

One thing must necessarily cease, and that is the distortion, that is to say, the veil of falsehood upon Truth, because that is what is responsible for everything we see here. If this is removed, things will be completely different, completely. They will be what we feel them to be when we come out of this consciousness. When one comes out of this consciousness and enters into the Truth-consciousness; the difference is such that one wonders how there can be anything like suffering and misery and death and all that. There is a kind of astonishment in the sense that one does not understand how it can happen — when one has really tipped over to the other side. But this experience is usually associated with the experience of the unreality of the world as we know it, whereas Sri Aurobindo says that this perception of the unreality of the world is not necessary to live in the supramental consciousness — it is only the unreality of Falsehood, not the unreality of the world. That is to say, the world has a reality of its own, independent of Falsehood.

I suppose that is the first effect of the Supermind — the first effect in the individual, because it will begin with the individual.

*18 July 1961*

(M 10: 105-08)



Examine thyself without pity, then thou wilt be more charitable and pitiful to others.

Very good!

It is very good, very good for everybody, particularly for people who think themselves very superior.

But this really corresponds to something very profound.

In fact, this is an experience which I have been having for some time. It is almost like a reversal of attitude.

Indeed, men have always considered themselves victims harassed by adverse forces; those who are courageous fight, the others complain. But I have an increasingly concrete vision of the role that the adverse forces play in the creation, of the almost absolute necessity for them, so that there can be progress and for the creation to become its Origin once again — and such a clear vision that instead of asking for the conversion or abolition of the adverse forces one must realise one's own transformation, pray for it and carry it out. This is from the terrestrial point of view, I am not taking the individual standpoint. We know the individual standpoint; this is from the terrestrial point of view. It was the sudden vision of all the error, all the misunderstanding, all the ignorance and obscurity, and even worse, all the bad will in the terrestrial consciousness which felt responsible for the perpetuation of these adverse beings and forces and which offered them in a great aspiration — more than an aspiration, a kind of holocaust — so that the adverse forces might disappear and have no further reason to exist, so that they might no longer be there to point out everything that has to be changed.

Their presence was made unavoidable by all these things that were negations of the divine life. And this movement of offering of the earth consciousness to the Supreme, in an extraordinary intensity, was like a redemption so that the adverse forces might disappear.

It was a very intense experience which expressed itself like this: “Take all the faults I have committed, take them all, accept them, efface them so that these forces may disappear.”

This aphorism is the same thing from the other end, it is the same thing in essence. As long as it is possible for a human consciousness to feel, act, think or be contrary to the great divine Becoming, it is impossible to blame anyone else for it; it is impossible to blame the adverse forces which are maintained in creation as the means of making you see and feel all the progress that has yet to be made.

*(Silence)*

The state I found myself in was like a memory — a memory that is eternally present — of that Consciousness of supreme Love which the Lord emanated upon earth, in the earth — *in* the earth — to bring it back to Him. For that was truly a descent into the most total negation of the Divine, the negation of the very essence of the divine Nature, and therefore a renunciation of the divine state in order to accept earth's obscurity and bring earth back to the divine state. And unless this supreme Love becomes all-powerfully conscious here on earth, the return can never be final.

This experience came after the vision of the great divine Becoming, and I asked myself, "Since this world is progressive, since it is becoming more and more the Divine, will there not always be this intensely painful feeling of the thing which is undivine, of the state which is undivine compared to the one which is to come? Will there not always be what we call 'adverse forces', that is, something which is not following the movement harmoniously?" Then the answer came, the vision came: no, indeed the time for this possibility is near, the time for the manifestation of that essence of perfect Love which can transform this unconsciousness, this ignorance and the bad will which results from it into a progression that is luminous, joyful, eager for perfection and all-inclusive.

It was very concrete.

And this corresponds to a state in which one is so *perfectly* identified with all that is, that one becomes all that is anti-divine in a concrete way, and that one can offer it — one can offer it and truly transform it by offering it.

Basically, this kind of will for purity, for good, in men — which expresses itself in the ordinary mentality as the need to be virtuous — is the *great obstacle* to true self-giving. This is the origin of Falsehood and even more the very source of hypocrisy — the refusal to accept to take upon oneself one's own share of the burden of difficulties. And in this aphorism Sri Aurobindo has gone straight to this point in a very simple way.

Do not try to appear virtuous. See how much you are united, one with everything that is anti-divine. Take your share of the burden, accept yourselves to be impure and false and in that way you will be able to take up the Shadow and offer it. And in so far as you are capable of taking it and offering it, then things will change.

Do not try to be among the pure. Accept to be with those who are in darkness and give it all with total love.

21 January 1962

(M 10: 118-21)



Practical knowledge is a different thing; that is real and serviceable, but it is never complete. Therefore to systematise and codify it is necessary but fatal.

But certainly, objective, scientific knowledge carried to its extreme, if it is possible for it to become absolutely total, leads at least to the threshold. That is what Sri Aurobindo says. Only he says that it is fatal, because all those who have devoted themselves to that knowledge, have believed in it as an absolute truth, and for them this has closed the door to the other approach. In that way it is fatal.

*24 May 1962*

(M 10: 134-35)



When knowledge is fresh in us, then it is invincible; when it is old, it loses its virtue. This is because God moves always forward.

Sri Aurobindo is speaking here of knowledge by inspiration or revelation, when something suddenly descends and illumines the understanding. You suddenly have the impression that you know something for the first time, because it comes directly from the domain of Light, of true Knowledge, and it comes with all its innate power of truth — it illumines you. And when you have just received it, it seems indeed that nothing can resist that Light. And if you take care to allow it to act within you, it accomplishes all the transformation it can achieve in its own domain.

This is an experience one may often have. When it comes, for some time — not very long — everything seems to organise itself quite naturally around that Light. And then, little by little, it mingles with the rest; the intellectual knowledge remains — it is formulated in one way or another — it remains, but it is just as if it were empty. It no longer has that driving power which transforms all the movements of the being into the image of this Light. That is what Sri Aurobindo means: the world moves quickly, the Lord is always moving onward and all this is the trail He leaves behind Him, but it no longer has the same immediate and almighty power as when He projected it into the world.

It feels like a rain of truth falling; everyone who can catch even a drop of it receives a revelation. But unless they themselves are moving forward at a fantastic speed, the Lord with His rain of truth is already very far ahead and they must run very fast to catch up with it! This is what he means.

...

Yes, it is the higher Knowledge, the Truth expressing itself, what Sri Aurobindo calls the true Knowledge, and it is this Knowledge that transforms all creation. But it is as if He were pouring it down all the time and you have to make great haste so as not to be too late!

6 October 1962

(M 10: 141-42)





God is infinite Possibility. Therefore Truth is never at rest; therefore, also, Error is justified of her children.

...

I think that Sri Aurobindo meant that error is an illusion like all the rest — that there is no error, that all possibilities are there, that they are often — and *necessarily* — contradictory if they are all there. They appear contradictory. But one only has to look at oneself and say, “What do I call error?” If you look it in the face you see immediately that it is a stupidity — there is no error, it slips through your fingers.

(*Silence*)

I have a feeling that Sri Aurobindo was in his ascension; the intuitive mind was piercing a hole and coming into contact with the Supermind, and so it would come like that, pop! like an explosion in the thought, and he would write these things. And if you follow the movement you see the Origin.

Obviously what he meant is that Error is one of the innumerable, infinite possibilities. “Infinite” means that absolutely nothing is beyond possibility. So where does error fit into it? We call it error, but it is completely arbitrary. We say, “This is an error” — in relation to what? In relation to our judgment that “this is true”, but certainly not in relation to the judgment of the Lord, since it is a part of Himself!

Very few people can bear this widening of the understanding.

Now, when I start looking like this (*Mother closes her eyes*), two things are there at the same time: this smile, this joy, this laughter are there, and such peace! Such *full*, luminous, total peace, in which there are no more conflicts, no more contradictions. There are no more conflicts. It is *one single* luminous harmony — and yet everything we call error, suffering, misery, everything is there. *It eliminates nothing*. It is another way of seeing.

(*Long silence*)

There can be no doubt that if you sincerely want to get out of it, it is not so difficult after all: you have nothing to do, you only have to allow the Lord to do everything. And He does everything. He does everything. It is so wonderful, so wonderful!

12 October 1962

(M 10: 145, 149-50)



Great saints have performed miracles; greater saints have railed at them; the greatest have both railed at them and performed them.

As for Sri Aurobindo, I only know what he told me several times. People give the name of “miracle” only to interventions in the material or the vital world. And these interventions are always mixed with ignorant and arbitrary movements.

But the number of miracles that Sri Aurobindo performed in the mind is incalculable; but naturally you could only see it if you had a very straight, very sincere, very pure vision — a few people did see it. But he refused — this I know — he refused to perform any vital or material miracles, because of this mixture.

...

*What would be a true miracle?*

I can't see what a true miracle can be because, after all, what is a miracle? A true miracle . . . Only the mind has the notion of miracles; because the mind decides, by its own logic, that given this and that, another thing can or cannot be. But this represents all the limitations of the mind. Because, from the point of view of the Lord, how can there be a miracle? Everything is Himself which He objectifies.

So here we come to the great problem of the way which is being followed, the eternal way, as Sri Aurobindo explains it in *Savitri*\* . . . .

6 March 1963

(M 10: 157-58, 160)



\* *Savitri*, SABCL, Vol. 28, p. 85. “All’s miracle here and can by miracle change.”

This world was built by Death that he might live. Wilt thou abolish death? Then life too will perish. Thou canst not abolish death, but thou mayst transform it into a greater living.

\* \* \*

This world was built by Cruelty that she might love. Wilt thou abolish cruelty? Then love too will perish. Thou canst not abolish cruelty, but thou mayst transfigure it into its opposite, into a fierce Love and Delightfulness.

\* \* \*

This world was built by Ignorance and Error that they might know. Wilt thou abolish ignorance and error? Then knowledge too will perish. Thou canst not abolish ignorance and error, but thou mayst transmute them into the utter and effulgent exceeding of reason.

\* \* \*

If Life alone were and not death, there could be no immortality; if love were alone and not cruelty, joy would be only a tepid and ephemeral rapture; if reason were alone and not ignorance, our highest attainment would not exceed a limited rationality and worldly wisdom.

\* \* \*

Death transformed becomes Life that is Immortality; Cruelty transfigured becomes Love that is intolerable ecstasy; Ignorance transmuted becomes Light that leaps beyond wisdom and knowledge.

It is the same idea, that is, opposition and contraries are a stimulus to progress. Because to say that without cruelty Love would be tepid . . . The principle of Love as it exists beyond the Manifested and the Non-Manifested has nothing to do with either tepidness or cruelty. Only, Sri Aurobindo's idea would seem to be that opposites are the quickest and most effective means of shaping Matter so that it can intensify its manifestation.

*15 May 1963*

(M 10: 164-65)

Hard is it to be in the world, free, yet living the life of ordinary men; but because it is hard, therefore it must be attempted and accomplished.

*. . . how can one find a way to be what one should be, in normal conditions?*

How can one avoid falling into one kind of excess or the other?

*Yes, to live normally and to be free.*

My child, that is why the Ashram was created! That was the idea. Because, in France, I was always asking myself: How can one find the time to find oneself? How can one even find the time to understand how to become free? So then I thought: a place where material needs will be sufficiently provided for, so that if one truly wants to become free, one can do so. And the Ashram was founded on this idea, not on any other — a place where people would have enough to live on so as to have time to think of the True Thing.

*(Mother smiles)* Human nature is such that laziness has taken the place of aspiration — not for everyone, but anyway in quite a general way — and licence or libertinism has taken the place of freedom — which would tend to prove that the human race has to pass through a period of rough handling before it is ready to pull itself away more sincerely from its slavery to activity.

Indeed, the first movement is this: “Oh! To find the place where one can concentrate, find oneself, truly live without being preoccupied with material things.” That is the first aspiration. It was even on this basis, at any rate in the beginning, that disciples were chosen — but it does not last! Things become easy and so one lets oneself go. There are no moral restraints and so one acts foolishly.

But one cannot even say that there was a mistake in the selection — one would be tempted to believe it, but it is not true; because the selection was made according to a very precise and clear inner indication. . . . It is probably the difficulty of keeping the inner attitude unmixed. This is exactly what Sri Aurobindo wanted, what he was trying for. He said: “If I could find one hundred people, that would be enough.” But it did not stay one hundred for long, and I must say that even when it was a hundred, it was already mixed.

Many came, attracted by the True Thing, but . . . one lets oneself go. That is, it is impossible to hold firm in one’s true position.

*Yes, I have noticed that in the extreme difficulty of the outer conditions of the world, the aspiration was much more intense.*

Yes, of course!

*It is much more intense, it is almost a question of life and death.*

Yes, that's it! That is to say, man is still so crude that he needs extremes. That is what Sri Aurobindo said: For love to be true, hatred was necessary; true love could be born only under the pressure of hatred. That's it. Well, one must accept things as they are and try to go further. That is all.

That is probably why there are so many difficulties — difficulties accumulate here: difficulties of character, health and circumstances. It is because the consciousness awakens under the stress of difficulties. If everything is easy and peaceful, one falls asleep.

That is also how Sri Aurobindo explained the necessity of war. In peacetime, one becomes slack.

It is a pity.

I cannot say that I find it very pretty, but it seems to be like that.

This is just what Sri Aurobindo said in *The Hour of God*: If you have the Force and the Knowledge and misuse the moment, woe to you.

It is not revenge, it is not punishment, not at all, but you draw upon yourself a necessity, the necessity for a violent impulsion — to react to something violent.

(Silence)

This is an experience I am having more and more: for the contact with this true divine Love to be able to manifest, that is, to express itself freely, it demands an extraordinary strength in beings and things, which does not yet exist. Otherwise everything falls apart.

There are lots of very convincing details, but of course, because they are “details” or very personal things, one cannot speak of them; but on the evidence of repeated experiences, I have to say this: when this Power of *pure* Love — which is so wonderful, which is beyond all expression — as soon as it begins to manifest abundantly, freely, it is as if quantities of things crumbled down immediately — they cannot stand. They cannot stand, they are dissolved. Then . . . then everything stops. And this stopping, which one might think is a disgrace, is just the opposite! It is an infinite Grace.

Simply to perceive, a little concretely and tangibly, the difference between the vibration in which one lives normally and almost continually, and that vibration — simply to observe this infirmity, which I call sickening — it really makes you feel sick — that is enough to stop everything.

Only yesterday, this morning, there are long moments when this Power manifests; then suddenly, there is a kind of wisdom, an immeasurable wisdom which causes everything to subside in perfect tranquillity: what must be shall be, it will

take the time that is needed. And then everything is all right. In this way, everything is all right immediately. But the splendour fades.

One has only to be patient.

Sri Aurobindo also has written this: Aspire intensely, but without impatience. . . . The difference between intensity and impatience is very subtle — it is all a difference in vibration. It is subtle, but it makes all the difference.

Intensely, but without impatience. That's it. One must be in that state.

*16 September 1964*

(M 10: 194, 197-200)



When he watched the actions of Janaka, even Narada the divine sage thought him a luxurious worldling and libertine. Unless thou canst see the soul, how shalt thou say that a man is free or bound?

This raises all sorts of questions. For example, how is it that Narada could not see the soul?

For me, it is very simple. Narada was a demi-god, he belonged to the overmind world and he was able to materialise himself, but these beings have no psychic. The gods do not have within them the divine spark, which is the core of the psychic, because only on earth — I am not even speaking of the material universe — only on earth did this descent of divine Love take place, which was the origin of the divine Presence in the core of Matter. And naturally, since they have no psychic being, they do not know the psychic being. Some of these beings have even wanted to take a physical body so as to have the experience of the psychic being — but not many of them.

As a rule, they did it only partially, through an “emanation”, not a total descent. For example, Vivekananda is said to have been an incarnation — a *Vibhūti* — of Shiva; but Shiva himself has clearly expressed his will to come down on earth only with the supramental world. When the earth is ready for the supramental life, he will come. And almost all these beings will manifest — they are waiting for that moment, they do not want any of the present struggle and the obscurity.

Certainly Narada was one of those who came here. . . . In fact, it was for fun! He liked to play with circumstances. But he had no knowledge of the psychic being and that must have prevented him from recognising the psychic being where it existed.

But all these things cannot be explained; they are personal ideas and experiences; this knowledge is not objective enough to be taught. One can say nothing about a phenomenon which depends on one’s personal experience and which has a value only for the person who has the experience.

What Sri Aurobindo said is based on the traditional learning of India and he spoke of what agreed with his own experience.

*So to see the soul, one must know one’s own soul?*

Yes, to be in relation with the soul, that is, the psychic being, one must have a psychic being oneself, and only men — men who belong to the evolution, who are sons of the terrestrial creation — possess a psychic being.

None of these gods has a psychic being. It is only by coming down and uniting

with the psychic being of a man that they can have one, but they have none themselves.

*12 January 1965*

(M 10: 202-03)





All things seem hard to man that are above his attained level and they are hard to his unaided effort; but they become at once easy and simple when God in man takes up the contract.

This is perfect.

As it happens, two or three days ago I wrote something in reply to a question and I said something like this: Sri Aurobindo is the Lord, but only a part of the Lord, not the Lord in His totality, because the Lord is all — all that is manifested and all that is not manifested. Then I added: There is nothing that is not the Lord, nothing — there is nothing that is not the Lord, but few indeed are those who are *conscious* of the Lord. And it is this unconsciousness of the creation which constitutes its Falsehood.

All at once it was so obvious: “There it is! There it is!” How did Falsehood come? But that’s it, it is the unconsciousness of the creation that constitutes the Falsehood of the creation. And as soon as the creation once more becomes conscious of *being* the Lord, Falsehood will cease.

And it’s that, isn’t it? Everything is difficult, laborious, hard, painful because everything is done outside the consciousness of the Lord. But when He takes possession of His domain once more — or rather when we allow Him to take possession of His domain once more — and when things are done in His consciousness, with His consciousness, everything will become not only easy, but wonderful, glorious — and in an inexpressible delight.

It came like something self-evident. We say, “What is it? What do we call Falsehood? Why is the creation false?” It is not an illusion in the sense of not existing: it really exists, but . . . it is not conscious of what it is! Not only unconscious of its origin, but unconscious of its essence, of its truth — it is not conscious of its truth. And that is why it lives in Falsehood.

This aphorism is magnificent. There is nothing to say, it says everything.

3 March 1965

(M 10: 204-05)



*Section Three*

*Some Conversations*

*of*

*the Mother*

Only now am I beginning to understand what Sri Aurobindo has written in *The Synthesis of Yoga!* . . .

1 May 1958

(MC)

\*

Something I have never said completely. On the one hand, there is the attitude of those in yesterday evening's film:<sup>1</sup> God is everything, God is everywhere, God is in he who smites you (as Sri Aurobindo wrote — "God made me good with a blow, shall I tell Him: O Mighty One, I forgive you your harm and cruelty but do not do it again!"), an attitude which, if extended to its ultimate conclusion, accepts the world as it is: the world is the perfect expression of the divine Will. On the other hand, there is the attitude of progress and transformation. But for that, you must recognise that there are things in the world which are not as they should be.

In *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo says that this idea of good and bad, of pure and impure, is a notion needed for action; but the purists, such as Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and others, do not agree. They do not agree that it is indispensable for action. They simply say: your acceptance of action as a necessary thing is contrary to your perception of the Divine in all things.

*How can the two be reconciled?*

I recall that once I tried to speak of this, but no one followed me, no one understood, so I did not insist. I left it open and never pursued it further, for they could not decipher anything or find any meaning in what I was saying. But now I could give a very simple answer: Let the Supreme do the work. It is He who has to progress, not you!

. . .

But this crystal clear vision Sri Aurobindo had, where everything is in its place, where contradictions no longer exist — they never soared to that height. This was the thing, this really crystalline, perfect supramental vision, even from the standpoint of understanding and knowledge. They never went that far.

2 July 1958

(MC)

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1. 'Bishnupriya' — a Bengali film.

The first time I came here and spoke with Sri Aurobindo about what was needed for the Work, he told me (he also wrote it to me) that for the secure achievement of the Work we would need three powers: one was the power over health, the second was the power over government, and the third was the power over money.

Health naturally depends upon the sadhana; but even that is not so sure: there are other factors. As for the second, the power over government, Sri Aurobindo looked at it, studied it, considered it very carefully, and finally he told me, "There is only one way to have that power: it is *to be* the government. One can influence individuals, one can transmit the will to them, but their hands are tied. In a government, there is no one individual, nor even several who is all-powerful and who can decide things. One must be the government oneself and give it the desired orientation."

For the last, for money, he told me, "I still don't know exactly what it depends on." Then one day I entered into trance with this idea in mind, and after a certain journey I came to a place like a subterranean grotto (which means that it is in the subconscious, or perhaps even in the inconscient) which was the source, the place and the power over money. I was about to enter into this grotto (a kind of inner cave) when I saw, coiled and upright, an immense serpent, like an all-black python, formidable, as big as a seven-storey house, who said, "You cannot pass!"

"Why not? Let me pass!"

"Myself, I would let you pass, but if I did, 'they' would immediately destroy me."

"Who, then, is this 'they'?"

"They are the asuric powers who rule over money. They have put me here to guard the entrance, precisely so that you may not enter."

"And what is it that would give one the power to enter?"

Then he told me something like this: "I heard (that is, he himself had no special knowledge, but it was something he had heard from his masters, those who ruled over him), I heard that he who will have a total power over the human sexual impulses (not merely in himself, but a universal power — that is, a power enabling him to control this everywhere, among all men) will have the right to enter." In other words, these forces would not be able to prevent him from entering.

A personal realisation is very easy, it is nothing at all; a personal realisation is one thing, but the power to control it among all men — that is, to control or master such movements at will, everywhere — is quite another. I don't believe that this . . . condition has been fulfilled. If what the serpent said is true and if this is really what will vanquish these hostile forces that rule over money, well then, it has not been fulfilled.

It has been fulfilled to a certain extent — but it's negligible. It is conditional, limited: in one case, it works; in another, it doesn't. It is quite problematic. And naturally, where terrestrial things are involved (I don't say universal, but in any

case terrestrial), when it is something involving the earth, it must be complete; there cannot be any approximations.

Therefore, it's an affair between the asuras and the human species. To transform itself is the only solution left to the human species — in other words, to tear from the asuric forces the power of ruling over the human species.

You see, the human species is a part of Nature, but as Sri Aurobindo has explained, from the moment mind expressed itself in man, it put him into a relationship with Nature very different from the relationship all the lower species have with her. All the lower species right up to man are completely under the rule of Nature; she makes them do whatever she wants, and they can do nothing without her consent. Whereas man begins to act and to live as an equal; not as an equal in terms of power, but from the standpoint of consciousness (he is beginning to do so since he has the capacity to study and to find out Nature's secrets). He is not superior to her, far from it, but he is on an equal footing. And so he has acquired — this is a fact — he has acquired a certain power of independence that he immediately used to put himself under the influence of the hostile forces, which are not terrestrial but extra-terrestrial.

I am speaking of terrestrial Nature. Through their mental power, men had the choice and the freedom to make pacts with these extraterrestrial vital forces. There is a whole vital world that has nothing to do with the earth, it is entirely independent or prior to earth's existence, it is self-existent — well, they have brought that down here! They have made . . . what we see! And such being the case . . . This is what terrestrial Nature told me: "It is beyond my control."

So considering all that, Sri Aurobindo came to the conclusion that only the supramental power . . . (*Mother brings down her hands*) as he said, will be able to rule over everything. And when that happens, it will be all over — including Nature. For a long time, Nature rebelled (I have written about it often). She used to say, "Why are you in such a hurry? It will be done one day." But then last year, there was that extraordinary experience. And it was because of that experience that I told her, "Well, now that we agree, give me some proof; I am asking you for some proof — do it for me." She didn't budge, absolutely nothing.

Perhaps it is a kind of . . . it can hardly be called an intuition, but a kind of divination of this idea that made people speak of 'selling one's soul to the devil for money,' of money being an evil force, which produces this shrinking on the part of all those who want to lead a spiritual life — but as for that, they shrink from everything, not only from money!

Perhaps it would not be necessary to have this power over all men, but in any event, it should be great enough to act upon the mass. It is likely that once a certain movement has been mastered to some degree, what the mass does or doesn't do (this whole human mass that has barely, barely emerged into even the mental consciousness) will become quite irrelevant. You see, the mass is still under the

great rule of Nature. I am referring to mental humanity, predominantly mental, which developed the mind but misused it and immediately set out on the wrong path — first thing.

There is nothing to say since the first thing done by the divine forces which emanated for the Creation was to take the wrong path! That is the origin, the seed of this marvellous spirit of independence — the negation of *surrender*, in other words. Man said, “I have the power to think; I will do with it what I want, and no one has the right to intervene. I am free, I am an independent being, *in-de-pen-dent!*” So that’s how things stand: we are all independent beings!

6 July 1958

(MC)

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It is very difficult to manage both at the same time: the transformation of the body and taking care of people. But what can I do? I told Sri Aurobindo I would do the work, and I am doing it — I cannot just abandon everything.

When I think of the time the hatha yogis devote to the work on the body — they do nothing but that; they do nothing but that all the time, until they have attained a certain point. This is in fact the reason why Sri Aurobindo wanted none of it: he found that it took a lot of time for a rather meagre result.

7 August 1958

(MC)

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Before, I always had the negative experience of the disappearance of the ego, of the oneness of Creation, where everything implying separation disappeared — an experience that, personally, I would call negative. Last Wednesday,<sup>2</sup> while I was speaking (and that’s why at the end I could no longer find my words), I seemed suddenly to have left this negative phenomenon and entered into the positive experience: the experience of *being* the Supreme Lord, the experience that nothing exists but the Supreme Lord — all is the Supreme Lord, there is nothing else. And at

2. During the Wednesday class in the Playground on October 1, 1958. The Mother later spoke of the experience: “It was so strong, so strong that it was really inexpressible. The negative experience of no longer being an individual, or in other words, the dissolution of the ego, took place a long time ago and still takes place quite often: the ego completely vanishes. But this was a positive experience of being . . . not just the universe in its totality, but something else — ineffable, yet concrete, absolutely concrete! Unutterable — and yet utterly concrete: the divine Person beyond the Impersonal.

“The experience lasted for only a few minutes. And I knew, then, that all our words . . . all our words are empty. But circumstances were such that I had to speak . . .”

that moment, the feeling of this infinite power that has no limit, that nothing can limit, was so overwhelming that all the functions of the body, of this mental machine that summons up words, all this was . . . I could no longer speak French. Perhaps the words could have come to me in English — probably, because it was easier for Sri Aurobindo to express himself in English, and that's how it must have happened: it was the part embodied in Sri Aurobindo (the part of the Supreme that was embodied in Sri Aurobindo for its manifestation) that had the experience. This is what joined back with the Origin and caused the experience — I was well aware of it. And that is probably why its transcription through English words would have been easier than through French words (for at these moments, such activities are purely mechanical, rather like automatic machines). And naturally the experience left something behind. It left the sense of a power that can no longer be 'qualified', really. And it was there yesterday evening.

4 October 1958

(MC)

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There is a difference between immortality and the deathless state. Sri Aurobindo has described it very well in *Savitri*.

The deathless state is what can be envisaged for the human physical body in the future: it is constant rebirth. Instead of again tumbling backwards and falling apart due to a lack of plasticity and an incapacity to adapt to the universal movement, the body is undone 'futurewards,' as it were.

There is one element that remains fixed: for each type of atom, the inner organisation of the elements is different, which is what creates the difference in their substance. So perhaps similarly, each individual has a different, particular way of organising the cells of his body, and it is this particular way that persists through all the outer changes. All the rest is undone and redone, but undone in a forward thrust towards the new instead of collapsing backwards into death, and redone in a constant aspiration to follow the progressive movement of the divine Truth.

But for that, the body — the body-consciousness — must first learn to widen itself. It is indispensable, for otherwise all the cells become a kind of boiling porridge under the pressure of the supramental light.

What usually happens is that when the body reaches its maximum intensity of aspiration or of ecstasy of Love, it is unable to contain it. It becomes flat, motionless. It falls back. Things settle down — you are enriched with a new vibration, but then everything resumes its course. So you must widen yourself in order to learn to bear unflinchingly the intensities of the supramental force, to go forward always, always with the ascending movement of the divine Truth, without falling backwards into the decrepitude of the body.

That is what Sri Aurobindo means when he speaks of an *intolerable ecstasy*; it is not an intolerable ecstasy: it is an unflinching ecstasy.

25 November 1959

(MC)

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Sri Aurobindo had made it clear to me when I was still in France that this yoga in matter is the most difficult of all. For the other yogas, the paths have been well laid, you know where to tread, how to proceed, what to do in such-and-such a case. But for the yoga of matter, nothing has ever been done, never, so at each moment everything has to be invented.

28 January 1960

(MC)

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Only a few days ago, on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>, I had one of those experiences that mark one's life. It happened upstairs in my room. I was doing my japa, walking up and down with my eyes wide open, when suddenly Krishna came — a gold Krishna, all golden, in a golden light that filled the whole room. I was walking, but I could not even see the windows or the rug any longer, for this golden light was everywhere with Krishna at its center. And it must have lasted at least fifteen minutes. He was dressed in those same clothes in which he is normally portrayed when he dances. He was all light, all dancing: "You see, I will be there this evening during the Darshan." And suddenly, the chair I use for darshan came into the room! Krishna climbed up onto it, and his eyes twinkled mischievously, as if to say, "I will be there, you see, and there'll be no room for you."

When I came down that evening for distribution, at first I was annoyed. I had said that I didn't want anybody in the hall, precisely because I wanted to establish an atmosphere of concentration, the immobility of the Spirit — but there were at least thirty people in there, those who had decorated the hall, thirty of them stirring, stirring about, a mass of little vibrations. And before I could even say '*ouf*'! — I had hardly taken my seat — someone put the tray of medals on my lap and they started filing past.

But what is surprising is that in a flash, no one was there any longer. No one, you understand — I was gone. Perhaps I was everywhere (but in fact I am always everywhere, I am always conscious of being everywhere at the same time), though normally there is the sense of the body, a physical centre, but that evening there was no more centre! Nothing, no one, not even the sense that there was no one — nothing. I was gone. There was indeed something handing out the medals which



felt the joy of giving the medal, the joy of receiving it, the joy of mutually looking at each other. It was simply the joy of the action taking place, the joy of looking, this joy everywhere, but me? — Nothing, no one, gone. Only later, afterwards, did I see what had happened, for everything had disappeared, even the higher mind that understands and organises things (by ‘understand’ I mean contain, which ‘contains’ things). That also was gone. And this lasted the entire distribution. Only when that [the body] had gone back upstairs to the room did the consciousness of what is me return.

There is a line by Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri* which expresses this very well: to annul oneself so that only the Supreme Lord may be.

And there are many, many experiences like this. It is only a small, a very small beginning. This one in particular came to mark the new stage: four years have elapsed, and now four years to come. Because everything has focused on this body to prepare it, everything has concentrated on it — Nature, the Master of the Yoga, the Supreme, everything . . . So only when it’s over, not before, will it really be interesting to speak of all this. But maybe it will never be over, after all. It’s a small beginning, very small.

3 March 1960

(MC)

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At times I sense there’s an extraordinary secret to discover, just there at my fingertips; I feel that I am going to catch the Thing, to know . . .

Sometimes, for a second, I see the Secret; there is an opening, and again it closes. Then once again it is unveiled for a second and I come to know a little more. Yesterday the Secret was there completely clear, wide open. But it’s not something that can be explained: words are silly, it must be experienced.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of this Secret almost everywhere, especially in his *Essays on the Gita*. He tells us that in the *Gita* itself one gets glimpses of this thing which is beyond the Impersonal, beyond even the Personal behind the Impersonal, beyond the Transcendent.

Well, I saw this Secret — I saw that the Supreme only becomes perfect in terrestrial matter, on earth.

‘Becomes’ is just a way of speaking, of course, for everything already is, and the Supreme is what He is. But we live in time, in a successive unfoldment, and it would be absurd to say that at present Matter is the expression of a perfect Divine.

I saw this Secret (which is getting more and more perceptible as the Supramental becomes clear), I saw it in the everyday, outer life, precisely in this very physical life which all spirituality rejects . . . a kind of accuracy or exactitude right down to the atom.

I am not saying that the ‘Divine’ becomes perfect in Matter — the Divine is

already there — but that *The Supreme* becomes perfect in Matter.

6 May 1960

(MC)

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If there is one fundamental necessity, it is humility. To be humble. Not humble as it is normally understood, such as merely saying, “I am so small, I’m nothing at all” — no, something else . . .

Because the pitfalls are innumerable, and the further you progress in yoga, the more subtle they become, and the more the ego masks itself behind marvellous and saintly appearances. So when somebody says, “I no longer want to rely on anything but Him. I want to close my eyes and rest in Him alone”, this comfortable ‘Him’, which is exactly what you want him to be, is the ego — or a formidable Asura, or a Titan (depending on each one’s capacity). They’re all over the earth, the earth is their domain. So the first thing to do is to pocket your ego — not preserve it, but get rid of it as soon as possible!

You can be sure that the God you’ve created is a God of the ego whenever something within you insists, “This is what I feel, this is what I think, this is what I see; it’s my way, my very own — it’s my way of being, my way of understanding, my relationship with the Divine, etc.”

And then they say, “I want to close my eyes and see nothing but Him; I want nothing more of the outer world.” And they forget there’s Love! That is the great Secret, that which is behind the Existent and the Non-Existent, the Personal and the Impersonal — Love. Not a love between two things, two beings . . . A love containing everything.

In the early part of the century, I wrote *Prayers and Meditations*, and I too spoke of ‘Him’; but I wrote that with all my aspiration, all my sincerity (at least with all the sincerity of the conscious parts of my being) and I locked it up in a drawer so that no one would see it. It was Sri Aurobindo who later asked me to publish it, for it could be useful . . . If I knew then, fifty years ago, what I know now, I would have been crushed! . . .

. . .

After all, it’s good to know gradually, good to have some illusions — not for the sake of illusions but as a necessary step along the way.

Everything comes at the right moment.

And what is wonderful is that at each moment the Grace, the Joy, the Light, the Love never cease pouring down in the very midst of all this — despite the ego, despite the shame, despite the unworthiness. To be humble . . .

16 May 1960

(MC)

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When I read what Sri Aurobindo writes in *The Synthesis*, how things should be and what they are now, when I see the two, that's when I feel we're turning in circles.

It's more and more a universal yoga — the whole earth — and it is like that day and night, when I walk and when I speak and when I eat. It's constantly like that. As if the whole earth were . . . it's like kneading dough to make it rise.

But when I read his *Yoga of Self-Perfection* and see . . . simply what we are . . . phew! What yeast we would need to make all that rise!

But this is not true: *He* alone is doing it, it's always *He*.

23 July 1960

(MC)

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[A question was sent to the Mother regarding the purpose of the Centre of Education: "Is it to teach Sri Aurobindo's works? And these only? And all or some of these? Or is it to prepare students to read Sri Aurobindo's works and Mother's? . . ."]

And this is what I wrote to X (*Mother reads*):

"It is not a question of preparing to read these works or other works. It is a question of pulling all those who are capable to do so, out of the general human routine of thought, feeling and action; it is to give all opportunities to those who are here to cast off from them the slavery to the human way of thinking and doing; it is to teach all those who want to listen that there is another and truer way of living, that Sri Aurobindo has taught us how to live and become a *true being* — and that the aim of the education here is to prepare the children and make them fit for *that life*.

For all the rest, the human ways of thinking and living, the world is vast and there is place out there for everybody.

It is not a number that we want — it is a selection; it is not brilliant students that we want, it is living souls."

*It is not a number that we  
want — it is a selection;  
it is not brilliant students that  
we want, it is living souls.*

Once I've drummed that into their heads long enough, they may end up understanding.

...

Then they asked some questions about teaching literature and poetry. I answered them. And then, at the bottom, I added this:

“By studying carefully what Sri Aurobindo has said on *all subjects* . . .”

He wrote on *everything*, there is not one subject on which he has not written! The point is to find it everywhere.

“ . . . one can easily reach a complete knowledge of the things of this world.”

What I call ‘studying’ is to take Sri Aurobindo’s books, where he quotes or speaks of one thing or another, then have the corresponding books — when he quotes something, you must take the book it corresponds to; when he speaks of something, you must study the writings on that subject. This is what I call ‘studying’. Then, after having read the corresponding works, you compare them with what Sri Aurobindo has said, and in this way there may be a beginning of understanding. If someone is very studious, he can ‘review’ all that has ever been written or taught by going through Sri Aurobindo’s books. I mean this for someone who loves working.

10 August 1960

(MC)

I'm continuing *The Yoga of Self-Perfection*. It's really something . . . I shall never tire of saying it's 'fabulous'. Everything, absolutely everything, in detail, everything is there. And he foresaw — foresaw, gave the remedy; foresaw, gave the remedy; foresaw, gave . . .

10 August 1960

(MC)

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There are moments while reading *The Synthesis of Yoga* when I feel so clearly why he put this particular word in that particular place, and why it could not have been otherwise — that's what makes the translation difficult.

For the placement of words is not the same in English and in French. In English, for example, the place an adverb occupies is of major importance for the precise meaning. In French also, but generally it's not the same! If at least it were exactly the opposite of English it would be easier, but it's not exactly the opposite. It's the same thing for the word order in a series of modifiers or any string of words; usually in English, for example, the most important word comes first and the least important last. In French, it's usually the opposite — but it doesn't always work!

The spirit of the two languages is not the same. Something always escapes. This must surely be why 'revelations' (as Sri Aurobindo calls them) sometimes come to me in one language and sometimes in the other. And it does not depend on the state of consciousness I'm in, it depends on what has to be said.

And the revelations would probably be more exact if we had a more perfect language. Our language is poor.

Sanskrit is better. Sanskrit is a much fuller and subtler language, so it's probably much better. But these modern languages are so artificial (by this, I mean superficial, intellectual); they cut things up into little pieces and remove the light behind.

I also read *On the Veda* where Sri Aurobindo speaks of the difference between the modern mind and the ancient mind; and it's quite obvious, especially from the linguistic point of view. Sanskrit was certainly much more fluid, a better instrument for a more . . . global, more comprehensive light, a light containing more things within itself.

In these modern languages, it's as if things are passed through a sieve and broken up into separate little bits, so then you have all the work of putting them back together. And something is always lost.

But I even doubt that the modern mind, built as it now is, would be able to know Sanskrit in this way. I think they are cutting up Sanskrit as well, out of habit.

We need a new language.

We need to make a new language.

Not some kind of Esperanto! — but sounds springing straight from above.

The *sound* must be captured. There must be one sound at the origin of all language . . . And then, to capture it and project it. To make it vibrate . . . because it doesn't vibrate in the same way here as it does above.

That would be an interesting work.

The words must have a power — an expressive power. Yes, they should carry the meaning in themselves!

8 October 1960

(MC)

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The day before yesterday, I spent the whole night looking on. I had read the passage by Sri Aurobindo in *The Synthesis* on 'supramental time' (wherein past, present and future coexist in a global consciousness). While you're in it, it's marvellous! You understand things perfectly. But when you're not in it . . . Above all, there's this problem of how to keep the force of one's aspiration, the power of progress, this power which seems so inevitable — so inevitable if existence (let's simply take terrestrial existence) is to mean anything and its presence to be justified. (This ascending movement towards a progressive 'better' that will be eternally better) — How is this to be kept when you have the total vision . . . this vision in which everything coexists. At that moment, the other becomes something like a game, an amusement, if you will. (Not everyone finds it amusing!) And when you contain all that, why allow yourself the pleasure of succession? . . . Is this pleasure of succession, of seeing things one after the other, equal to this intensity of the will for progress? . . . Words are foolish!

The effort to see and to understand this gripped me all night. And when I woke up this morning, I thanked the Lord; I said to Him, "Obviously, if You were to keep me totally in that consciousness, I could no longer . . . I could no longer do my work!" How could I do my work? For I can only say something to people when I feel it or see it, when I see that it's what must be said, but if I am simultaneously in a consciousness in which I'm aware of everything that has led to that situation, everything that is going to happen, everything I'm going to say, everything the other's going to feel — then how could I do it!

There are still many hundreds of years to go before it becomes entirely what Sri Aurobindo describes — there's no hurry!

11 October 1960

(MC)

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I am just finishing *The Synthesis of Yoga*, and what Sri Aurobindo says is exactly what has happened to me throughout my life. And he explains how you can still make mistakes as long as you are not supramentalised. Sri Aurobindo describes all the ways by which images are sent to you — and they are not always images or reflections of the truth of things past, present or future; there are also all the images that come from human mental formations and all the various things that want to be considered. It is very, very interesting. And interestingly enough, in these few pages I have found a description of the work I have spent my whole life doing, trying to *sift* out all we see.

I can only be sure of something once a certain type of picture comes, and then the whole world could tell me, “But things didn’t happen like that”; I would reply, “Sorry, but I see it.” And that type of picture is certain, for I have studied it, I have studied their differences in quality and the texture of the pictures. It is very interesting.

11 October 1960

(MC)

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It’s a lack of plasticity in the mind, and they are bound by the expression of things; for them, words are rigid. Sri Aurobindo explained it so well in *The Secret of the Veda*; he shows how language evolves and how, before, it was very supple and evocative. For example, one could at once think of a river and of inspiration. Sri Aurobindo also gives the example of a sailboat and the forward march of life. And he says that for those of the Vedic age it was quite natural, the two could go together, superimposed; it was merely a way of looking at the same thing from two sides, whereas now, when a word is said, we think only of this word all by itself, and to get a clear picture we need a whole literary or poetic imagery (with explanations to boot!). That’s exactly the case with these children; they’re at a stage where everything is rigid. Such is the product of modern education. It even extracts the subtlest nuance between two words and *fixes* it: “And above all, don’t make any mistake, don’t use this word for that word, for otherwise your writing’s no good.” But it’s just the opposite.

12 November 1960

(MC)

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But it’s explained very well in *Savitri*! All these things have their laws and their conventions (and truly speaking, a really *formidable* power is needed to change anything of their rights, for they have rights — what they call ‘laws’) . . . Sri Aurobindo explains this very well when Savitri, following Satyavan into death, argues with the

god of Death. “It’s the Law, and who has the right to change the Law?” he says. And then comes this wonderful passage at the end where she replies, “My God can change it. And my God is a God of Love.” Oh, how magnificent!

And by force of repeating this to him, he yields . . . She replies in this way to *everything*.

12 November 1960

(MC)

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. . . And I have observed, in practice, that for all things, even for the very little things of everyday life, it’s true — if you yield on one point (if, even though you see what should be, you yield on a very secondary and unimportant point), it immediately gives you the power to impose your will for something much more important. I mentioned this to Sri Aurobindo and he said that it was true. It is true in the world as it is today, but it’s not what we want; we want it to change, really change.

He wrote this in a letter, I believe, and he spoke of this system of compensation — for example, those who take an illness on themselves in order to have the power to cure; and then there’s the symbolic story of Christ dying on the cross to set men free. And Sri Aurobindo said, “That’s fine for a certain age, but we must now go beyond that.” As he told me (it’s even one of the first things he told me), “We are no longer at the time of Christ when, to be victorious, it was necessary to die.”

I have always remembered this.

But things are *pulling* backwards — phew, how they pull! . . . “The Law, the Law, it’s a Law. Don’t you understand, it’s a *Law*, you can’t change the Law.”

“But I *came* to change the Law.”

“Then pay the price.”

(*Silence*)

*What can make them yield?*

Divine Love.

It’s the only thing.

Sri Aurobindo has explained it in *Savitri*. Only when Divine Love has manifested in all its purity will everything yield, will it all yield — it will then be done.

It’s the only thing that can do it.

It will be the great Victory.

(*Silence*)



On a small scale, in very small details, I feel that of all the forces, this is the strongest. And it's the only one with a power over hostile wills. Only . . . for the world to change, it must manifest here in all its fullness. We have to be up to it . . .

Sri Aurobindo had also written to the effect, "If Divine Love were to manifest now in all its fullness and totality, not a single material organism would but burst." So we must learn to widen, widen, widen not only the inner consciousness (that is relatively easy — at least feasible), but even this conglomeration of cells. And I've experienced this: you have to be able to widen this sort of crystallisation if you want to be able to hold this Force. I know. Two or three times, upstairs (*in Mother's room*), I felt the body about to burst. Actually, I was on the verge of saying, "burst and be done with". But Sri Aurobindo always intervened — all three times he intervened in an entirely tangible, living and concrete way . . . and he arranged everything so that I was forced to wait.

12 November 1960

(MC)

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It's what Sri Aurobindo always said: *first* you must accept *everything* — accept it as coming from the Divine, as the Divine Will; accept without disgust, without regret, without getting upset or impatient. Accept with a perfect equanimity; and only *after* that can you say, "Now let's get to work to change it."

But to work to change it before having attained a perfect equanimity is impossible. That's what I have learned during these last years.

And for every detail, it's the same. First, "May Thy Will be done"; then, afterwards, "The Will of tomorrow" — and then those things will disappear. But first, one must accept.

That's why it takes so long. Because those who readily accept are . . . they get encrusted and buried under it; they no longer move. And those who see the future and what must be have a hard time accepting; they pull back, they kick and protest — so they don't have any power.

17 December 1960

(MC)

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. . . I am hearing (through Nirod) certain things that Sri Aurobindo said, and he says that even he contradicted himself a great number of times . . .

*Yes, yes, Mother!*

. . . and that, of course, the two or three different approaches are all true. So we can afford to be as . . . as wide as he is!

Truly speaking, his comprehension of things was very supple — very supple. Listening to certain things he said, I felt I had understood very little of what he meant. Now that I am more and more in contact with the supramental Consciousness, I see how supple — supple and complex — it is, and how it is our narrow human consciousness that sees things . . . (*Mother draws little boxes in the air*) fixed, cut and dried.

*Yes, of course.*

So. . . we are under the mind's sway, and the mind is rigid like this (*same little boxes in the air*). But I see that as soon as you go beyond the mind, it's . . . it's like waves on the sea.

In a word, we have everything to learn. We try to understand in the mental way, so we understand nothing. We simply demarcate things (*same gesture of drawing boxes*), and that's what we call understanding.

When we have thoroughly put everything in boxes (*same gesture*), then we say we have understood!

*14 February 1973*

(MC)

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. . . We have a mental way of knowing, which is worthless — truly worthless. As Sri Aurobindo said, it goes from falsehood to truth — whereas the Supramental goes from truth to truth. And it has nothing to do with the mental approach. That I know. When I am completely still, with no one here and none to disturb me, then . . . (*Mother closes her eyes*) a certain condition comes . . . and you feel that if that developed, it . . . (*Mother smiles silently*).

You enter a luminous immensity . . . devoid of any questions.

*28 February 1973*

(MC)



*Section Four*

*Reading, Understanding, Loving, Opening*



*Sweet Mother,*

*Sri Aurobindo has said somewhere that if we surrender to the Divine Grace, it will do everything for us. Then what is the value of tapasya?*

If you want to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on a given subject, you must at least read all he has written on that subject. You will then see that he seems to have said the most contradictory things. But when one has read everything and understood a little, one sees that all the contradictions complement one another and are organised and unified in an integral synthesis.

Here is another quotation by Sri Aurobindo which will show you that your question is an ignorant one. There are many others which you could read to advantage and which will make your intelligence more supple:

“If there is not a complete surrender, then it is not possible to adopt the baby cat attitude, — it becomes mere tamasic passivity calling itself surrender. If a complete surrender is not possible in the beginning, it follows that personal effort is necessary.”\*

*16 December 1964*

(M 16: 309-10)

\* *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 23, pp. 593-94.



*Sweet Mother,*

*Often when I read Sri Aurobindo's works or listen to his words, I am wonder-struck: how can this eternal truth, this beauty of expression escape people! It is really strange that he is not yet recognised, at least as a supreme creator, a pure artist, a poet par excellence! So I tell myself that my judgments, my appreciations are influenced by my devotion for the Master — and not everyone is devoted. I do not think this is true. But then, why are men's hearts not yet enchanted by His Words?*

Who can understand Sri Aurobindo? He is as vast as the universe and his teaching is limitless . . .

The only way to come a little close to him is to love him sincerely and give oneself unreservedly to his work. In that way, each one does his best and contributes as much as he can to the transformation of the world which Sri Aurobindo has predicted.

*2 December 1964*

(M 16: 308-09)



Open to Sri Aurobindo's consciousness  
and let it transform your life.

*26 September 1971*

(M 13: 14)

