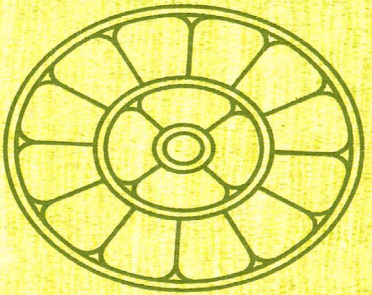
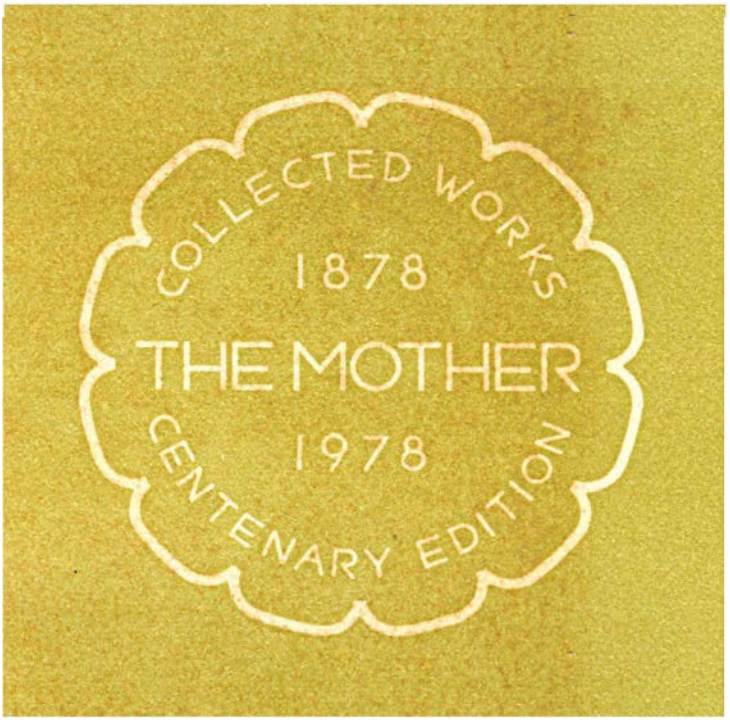
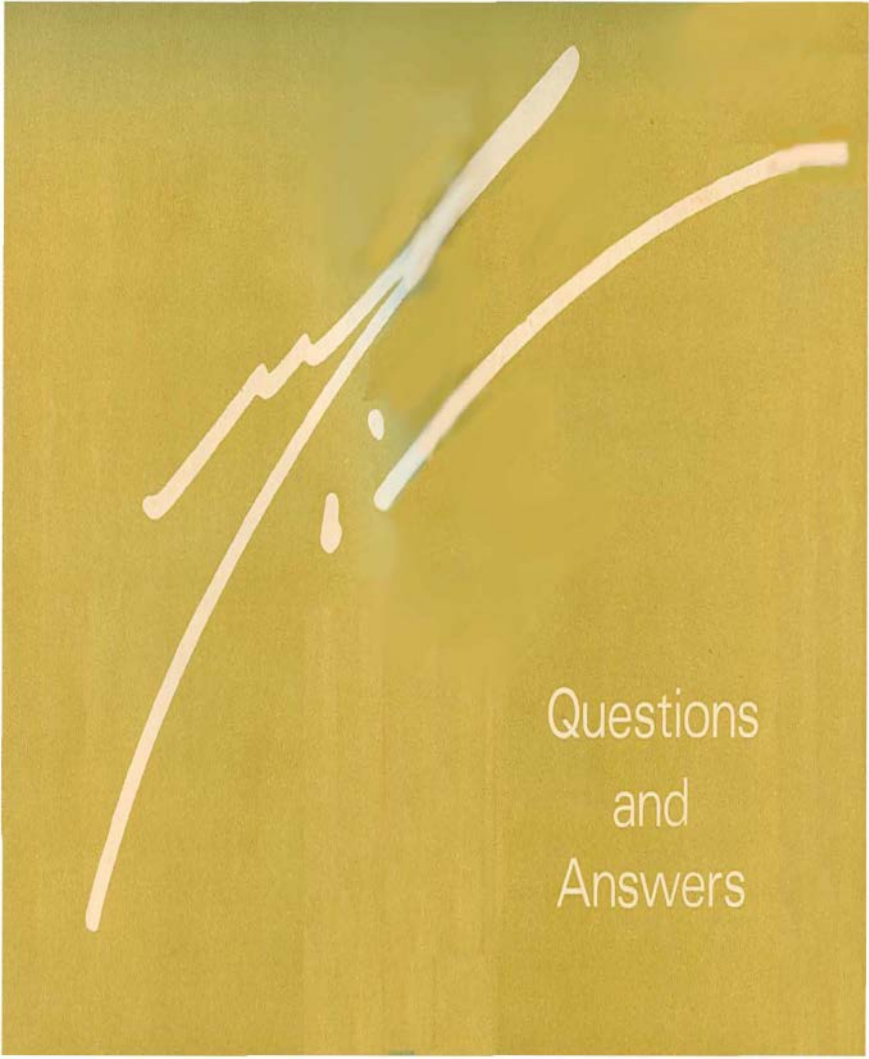



COLLECTED WORKS
1878
THE MOTHER
1978
CENTENARY EDITION


Questions
and
Answers

VOLUME 4

COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER - CENTENARY EDITION

© Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust 1972. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Printed in India at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry 605002

The Mother

BIRTH

February 21, 1878

ARRIVAL IN INDIA

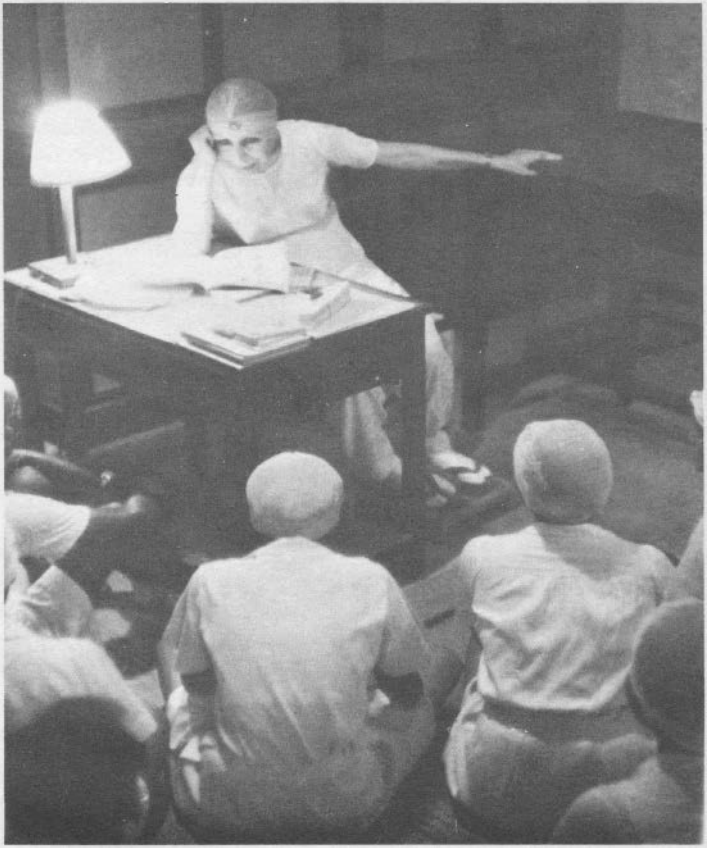
March 29, 1914

MAHASAMADHI

November 17, 1973

CENTENARY

February 21, 1978



THE MOTHER - April 1950

Publisher's Note

This volume contains the Mother's talks from December 1950 to May 1951. It is worth noting how they originated. The Ashram school was founded in 1943 and by 1950 the first students had learned French fairly well. By this time many more children had come and there were not enough teachers of French. So, when the school year commenced in December 1950, the Mother decided to take the highest class in French three times a week. This was the beginning of these gatherings, which came to be called "Mother's classes".

The Mother usually began by reading a passage from her own writings or from the French translations of Sri Aurobindo's works; then she invited questions from the students and some of their teachers who also attended. Gradually, many other sadhaks of the Ashram joined the classes and asked questions. Therefore, the questions here are of various kinds and from many different levels of understanding.

For the first three weeks the Mother read from her essays on education and self-development which were published about that time in the earliest issues of the quarterly *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*. For the next ten weeks she took up her early conversations, *Questions and Answers 1929*. For the last three weeks she read from some letters and short essays of Sri Aurobindo and from his book *The Mother*. The comments of the Mother upon these texts form the basis of her talks.

The earliest talks were noted by hand, but most were recorded on a dictating machine. They were published for the first time in an incomplete form in French and English in the *Bulletin*: extracts from ten talks appeared in various issues between 1957 and 1959; the rest (four complete talks excepted) were serialised in chronological order from November 1963 to February 1967. The first complete edition of the French text, *Entretiens 1950-51*, was published in book-form in 1967. A complete translation, entitled *Questions and Answers 1950-51*, was brought out in 1972.

The present volume, number four of the Collected Works of the Mother (Centenary Edition), is a reprint of the 1972 edition incorporating a few minor revisions. The quoted passages from the texts of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are from the Centenary Editions of their works.

Contents

1950

21 December	"The Mother of Dreams": immobile Consciousness	1
	Acting without preference and desire	1
	Knowing the Divine Will	2
	The teacher's mission	3
23 December	Concentration and energy	4
25 December	Christmas: festival of Light	6
	Energy and mental growth	6
	Meditation and concentration	7
	"The Mother of Dreams"	10
	Playing a game well and energy	10
28 December	Correct judgment	11
30 December	Perfection and progress	14
	Dynamic equilibrium	15
	True sincerity	17

1951

4 January	Transformation and reversal of consciousness	18
8 January	True vision and understanding of the world	22
	Progress, equilibrium	24
	Inner reality; the psychic	25
	Animals and the "psychic"	27
11 January	Modesty and vanity	29
	Generosity	30
13 January	Aim of life; effort and joy	31
	Science of living; becoming conscious	34
	Forces and influences	35
15 January	Sincerity; inner discernment; inner light	38
	Evil and imbalance	40
	Consciousness and instruments	40

CONTENTS

20 January	Developing the mind	43
	Misfortunes, suffering; developed reason	44
	Knowledge and pure ideas	47
25 January	Needs and desires	49
	Collaboration of the vital, mind an accomplice	50
	Progress and sincerity; recognising faults	52
	Organising the body; illness; new harmony; physical beauty	54
27 January	Sleep; desires; repression; the subconscient	58
	Dreams; the "super-conscient": solving problems	60
	"Ladder of being"; *samadhi*	61
	Phases of sleep; silence, true rest	62
	Vital body and illness	63
3 February	What is Yoga? for what?	64
	Aspiration; seeking the Divine	67
	Process of yoga; renouncing the ego	68
5 February	Surrender and *tapasya*	72
	Dealing with difficulties; sincerity; spiritual discipline	73
	Narrating experiences	76
	Vital impulse and will for progress	77
8 February	Unifying the being; ideas of good and bad	80
	Miracles; determinism; Supreme Will	82
	Distinguishing the voice of the Divine	87
10 February	Liberty and license; surrender makes you free	90
	Men in authority as representatives of the divine Truth	92
	Work as offering; total surrender needs time	93
	Effort and inspiration; will and patience	94
12 February	Receiving the divine force	96
	Signs indicating readiness for the path	97
	Weakness in mind and vital	98
	Intense concentration for breaking through	100
	Divine perception and human notion of good and bad	101
	Conversion and consecration; progress	102

	Signs of entering the spiritual path; meditation of different kinds	103
	Mounting aspiration; concentration in the Playground	105
15 February	Dreams, symbolic; true repose	107
	"False visions"	108
	"Earth-memory" and history	110
17 February	"False visions"	113
	Offering one's will	114
	Equilibrium; progress; maturity	116
	Ardent self-giving: perfecting the instrument	117
	Difficulties, a help in total realisation; paradoxes	118
	Sincerity; spontaneous meditation	120
	Ashram meditation and Playground concentration	122
19 February	Exteriorisation: clairvoyance, fainting, etc.	124
	Somnambulism; Tartini; children's "dreams"	126
	Nightmares; guru's protection	129
	Mind and vital roam during sleep	130
22 February	Surrender, offering, consecration	132
	Experiences and sincerity	135
	Aspiration and desire; Vedic hymns	136
	Concentration and time	137
24 February	Psychic being and entity; dimensions	139
	Psychic in the atom	141
	Death; exteriorisation; unconsciousness	142
	Past lives; psychic can progress only upon earth	144
	Psychic's choice of birth	145
	Consecration to divine Work; psychic memories	147
	Individualisation; psychic organises for progress	149
26 February	On reading books; gossip	152
	Discipline and realisation	153
	Imaginary stories: value of	154
	Private lives of "big" men; relaxation	156
	Understanding others; "gnostic" consciousness	157
1 March	Universe and the Divine	160

CONTENTS

	Freedom and determinism; Grace	161
	Time and Creation: in the Supermind	162
	Work and its results	163
	The psychic being; beauty and love	164
	Flowers: beauty and significance	166
	Choice of reincarnating psychic being	168
3 March	Hostile forces; difficulties	169
	Individuality and form; creation	172
5 March	Disasters: the forces of Nature	175
	Story of the "Charity Bazar"	176
	"Liberation" and law	177
	Dealing with the mind and vital: methods	178
8 March	Silencing the mind; changing the nature	182
	Reincarnation: choice	183
	Psychic, higher beings, "gods" incarnating	184
	Incarnation of vital beings; "the Lord of Falsehood"; Hitler	185
	Possession and madness	186
10 March	Fairy Tales: serpent guarding treasure	189
	Vital beings: their incarnations	190
	The vital being after death	191
	Nightmares: vital and mental	193
	Mind and vital after death	195
	"The spirit of the form": Egyptian mummies	196
12 March	Mental forms; learning difficult subjects	198
	Mental fortress; thought	199
	Training the mind	203
	Helping the vital being after death; ceremonies	204
	Human stupidities	205
14 March	Plasticity	207
	Conditions for knowing the Divine Will	208
	Illness; microbes	209
	Fear; body-reflexes	211
	"The best possible happens"	213
	Theories of Creation	214
	True knowledge; "a work to do"; the Ashram	215

CONTENTS

17 March	The universe: eternally new and same	217
	Traditions about Pralaya	218
	Light and thought; new consciousness and forces	219
	The expanding universe; inexpressible experiences	221
	Ashram surcharged with vibrations of Light; new force	222
	Differently vibrating atmospheres	223
19 March	Mental worlds and their beings	225
	Understanding in silence	227
	Psychic world: its characteristics	229
	True experiences and mental formations; twelve senses	230
22 March	Relativity: time	232
	Consciousness; psychic Witness	233
	The twelve senses; water-divining	235
	Instinct in animals; story of Mother's cat	237
24 March	Descent of Divine Love, of Consciousness	240
	Earth: a symbolic formation; the Divine Presence.	242
	The psychic being and other worlds; Divine Love and Grace	243
	Becoming conscious of Divine Love	244
	Finding one's psychic being	245
	Responsibility	246
26 March	"Losing all to gain all"; psychic being	247
	Transforming the vital	248
	Changing physical habits; the subconscient	251
	Overcoming difficulties; weakness, an insincerity	252
	Changing oneself to change the world	253
	Psychic source and flash of experience; preparation for yoga	255
29 March	"The Great Vehicle" and "The Little Vehicle"	257
	Choosing one's family, country	258
	The vital being distorted; atavism	260
	Sincerity; changing one's character	262
31 March	Physical ailment and mental disorder	263
	Curing an illness spiritually	264

CONTENTS

	Receptivity of the body	265
	The subtle-physical: illness, accidents	268
	Curing sunstroke and other disorders	270
2 April	Causes of accidents	272
	Little entities, helpful or mischievous: incidents	274
5 April	Illusion and interest in action	277
	The action of the divine Grace and the ego	279
	Concentration, aspiration, will, inner silence	282
	Value of a story or a "language"	283
	Truth; diversity in the world	285
7 April	Origin of Evil	287
	Misery: its cause	289
9 April	Modern Art	297
	Trend of art in Europe in the twentieth century	302
	Effect of the Wars; descent of vital worlds	303
	Formation of character	304
	"If there is another war"	305
12 April	Japan, its art, landscapes, life, etc.	306
	Fairy-lore of Japan	309
	Culture: its spiral movement	311
	Indian and European: the spiritual life	312
	Art and Truth	313
14 April	Surrender and sacrifice	315
	Idea of sacrifice; Bahaism; martyrdom	317
	Sleep: forgetfulness, exteriorisation, etc.	318
	Dreams and visions: explanations	319
	Exteriorisation: incidents about cats	321
17 April	Unity and diversity	324
	Protective envelope; desires; consciousness, the true defence	325
	Perfection of the physical instrument; the cinema	326
	Choice, constant and conscious	327
	The law of one's being; the One and the infinite Multiplicity	328
	Civilization: preparing an instrument	329

CONTENTS

19 April	Demands and needs; "human nature"	332
	Abolishing the ego	333
	Food: tamas, consecration	334
	Changing the nature: the vital and the mind	335
	"The yoga of the body"; cellular consciousness	338
21 April	Sri Aurobindo's letter on conditions for doing yoga	341
	Aspiration, *tapasya*, surrender	343
	The lower vital; old habits; "obsession"	345
	Sri Aurobindo on choice and the double life	347
	"The old fiasco"; inner realisation and outer change	349
23 April	The goal and the way	351
	Learning how to sleep; relaxation	352
	Adverse forces: test of sincerity	354
	Attitude to suffering and death	355
26 April	"Irrevocable transformation"	357
	The divine Shakti; "glad submission"	358
	Rejection, integral	359
	Consecration; total self-forgetfulness; work	363
28 April	Personal effort; tamas, laziness	366
	Static and dynamic power	368
	Stupidity; psychic and intelligence	369
	Philosophies: different "languages"	370
	Theories of Creation	371
	Surrender of one's being and one's work	373
3 May	Money and its use for the divine work; problems	375
	Mastery over desire: individual and collective change	382
5 May	Needs and desires	384
	Discernment; sincerity and true perception	386
	Mantra and its effects	389
	"Object in action": to serve; relying only on the Divine	390
7 May	A Hierarchy	392

	Transcendent, universal, individual Divine	393
	The Supreme Shakti and Creation	394
	Inadequacy of words, language	395
11 May	Mahakali and Kali	396
	Avatar and Vibhuti	399
	Sachchidananda behind all states of being	399
	The power of will; receiving the Divine Will	400
12 May	Mahalakshmi and beauty in life	403
	Mahasaraswati; "conscious hand"	404
	Riches and poverty	405
14 May	Chance; the play of forces	406
	Peace, given and lost	409
	Abolishing the ego	411

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1950-51

21 December 1950

> *"O Consciousness, immobile and serene, Thou watchest at the confines of the world like a sphinx of eternity. And yet to some Thou confidest Thy secret. These can become Thy sovereign will which chooses without preference, executes without desire."*
>
> *Prayers and Meditations*, 10 November 1914

This immobile Consciousness is the "Mother of Dreams",[1] the sphinx of eternity who keeps vigil on the confines of the world like an enigma to be solved. This enigma is the problem of our life, the very *raison d'être* of the universe. The problem of our life is to realise the Divine or rather to become once again aware of the Divine who is the Universe, the origin, cause and goal of life.

Those who find the secret of the sphinx of eternity become that active and creative Power.

To choose without preference and execute without desire is the great difficulty at the very root of the development of true consciousness and self-control. To choose in this sense means to see what is true and bring it into existence; and to choose thus, without the least personal bias for any thing, any person, action, circumstance, is exactly what is most difficult for an ordinary human being. Yet one must learn to act without any preference, free from all attractions and likings, taking one's stand solely on the Truth which guides. And having chosen in accordance with the Truth the necessary action, one must carry it out without any desire.

If you observe yourself attentively, you will see that before acting you need an inner impetus, something which pushes you. In the ordinary man this impetus is generally desire. This desire

[1] "The Mother of Dreams", a poem by Sri Aurobindo: *Collected Poems*, p. 67.

ought to be replaced by a clear, precise, constant vision of the Truth.

Some call this the Voice of God or the Will of God. The true meaning of these words has been falsified, so I prefer to speak of "the Truth", though this is but a very limited aspect of That which we cannot name but which is the Source and the Goal of all existence. I deliberately do not use the word God because religions have given this name to an all-powerful being who is other than his creation and outside it. This is not correct.

However, on the physical plane the difference is obvious. For we are yet all that we no longer want to be, and He, He is all that we want to become.

How can we know what the divine Will is ?

One does not know it, one feels it. And in order to feel it one must will with such an intensity, such sincerity, that every obstacle disappears. As long as you have a preference, a desire, an attraction, a liking, all these veil the Truth from you. Hence, the first thing to do is to try to master, govern, correct all the movements of your consciousness and eliminate those which cannot be changed until all becomes a perfect and permanent expression of the Truth.

And even to will this is not enough, for very often one forgets to will it.

What is necessary is an aspiration which burns in the being like a constant fire, and every time you have a desire, a preference, an attraction it must be thrown into this fire. If you do this persistently, you will see that a little gleam of true consciousness begins to dawn in your ordinary consciousness. At first it will be faint, very far behind all the din of desires, preferences, attractions, likings. But you must go behind all this and find that true consciousness, all calm, tranquil, almost silent.

Those who are in contact with the true consciousness see all the possibilities at the same time and may deliberately choose

even the most unfavourable, if necessary. But to reach this point, you must go a long way.

Should preferences be neutralized or forgotten ?

One should not have them !

When the mind becomes silent, when it stops judging, pushing itself forward with its so-called knowledge, one begins to solve the problem of life. One must refrain from judging, for the mind is only an instrument of action, not an instrument of true knowledge — true knowledge comes from elsewhere.

If one refrained from judging, one would arrive at an ever more precise knowledge of the Truth and nine-tenths of the world's misery would disappear.

The great disorder in the world would to a large extent be neutralized if the mind could admit that it does not know.

> *"When we have passed beyond enjoyings, we shall have Bliss. Desire was the helper, Desire is the bar."*
> Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glimpses*, Cent. Vol. 16, p. 377

...according to the stage where you are.

Naturally, I speak to those who sincerely want to become conscious of their true truth and to express it in their life.... I think this holds true for all who are here.

And I tell the teachers that they must teach more and more in accordance with the Truth; for if we have a school here, it is in order that it be different from the millions of schools in the world; it is to give the children a chance to distinguish between ordinary life and the divine life, the life of truth — to see things in a different way. It is useless to want to repeat here the ordinary life. The teacher's mission is to open the eyes of the children to something which they will not find anywhere else.

23 December 1950

Mother reads her article "Concentration and Dispersion" (*On Education*), then comments on it:

To solve a problem, to learn a lesson, a lot of concentration and attention is needed, everyone knows that — an intellectual attention and concentration. But concentration is not only an intellectual thing, it may be found in all the activities of the being, including bodily activities. The control over the nerves should be such as would allow you a complete concentration on what you are doing and, through the very intensity of your concentration, you acquire an immediate response to external touches. To attain this concentration you need a conscious control of the energies.

Are you conscious of the energies you receive and those you spend ?

One is more or less conscious of the energy one spends, especially when one wastes it too much ! It is a question here of the constant exchange between receiving and spending ! Before the age of reason, little children receive a lot of energy and they spend it lavishly, without thinking, and this allows them to play for hours together without getting tired. But gradually, as thought develops, one begins to measure and calculate the energy spent — usually this is futile, for unless you have the knowledge of the process of receiving energy, it is better to spend freely what you get than let it stagnate within you.

First, you must become conscious of the receiving of energies, their passing into your being and their expenditure. Next, you must have a sort of higher instinct which tells you whence the most favourable energies come; then you put yourself in contact with them through thought, through stillness or any other process — there are many. You must know what energy you want, whence it comes, of what it is composed. Later comes the

control of the energy received. Ninety per cent of men do not absorb enough energy or they take in too much and do not assimilate what they take — as soon as they have had a sufficient dose they immediately throw it out by becoming restless, talking, shouting, etc. You must know how to keep within you the received energy and concentrate it fully on the desired activity and not on anything else. If you can do this, you won't need to use your will. You need only gather together all the energies received and use them consciously, concentrate with the maximum attention in order to do everything you want.

And you must know how to give a real value to what you *want* to do — what the higher part of your being wants to do — for to do what one *likes* to do is not difficult.

What is concentration ?

It is to bring back all the scattered threads of consciousness to a single point, a single idea. Those who can attain perfect attention succeed in everything they undertake; they will always make a rapid progress. And this kind of concentration can be developed exactly like the muscles; one may follow different systems, different methods of training. Today we know that the most pitiful weakling, for example, can with discipline become as strong as anyone else. One should not have a will which flickers out like a candle.

The will, concentration must be cultivated; it is a question of method, of regular exercise. If you will, you can.

But the thought "What's the use ?" must not come in to weaken the will. The idea that one is born with a certain character and can do nothing about it is a stupidity.

25 December 1950

A disciple explains to the children that the shortest day of the year corresponds to the greatest declination of the sun to the south, about the 21st of December; then the sun again mounts to the north.
Mother comments:

That is why the 25th of December was a festival of Light long before Jesus Christ. This festival was in vogue long before Christianity; it originated in Egypt and very probably the birthday of Christ was fixed on the same day as that of the return of the Light.

Then Mother reads the first part of her article "Energy Inexhaustible" (*On Education*).

> *How is it that as mental activities increase, the capacity to renew one's energies diminishes ?*

In adults mental activity tends to paralyse the spontaneous movement of exchange of energies. Till he is fourteen, every child, apart from a few rare exceptions, is a little animal; he renews his energies spontaneously like an animal by means of the same activities and exchanges. But the mind introduces a disequilibrium in the being; spontaneous action is replaced by something that wants to know, to regulate, to decide, etc., and to get back this capacity to renew spontaneously one's energies, one must rise to a higher rung above the instincts, that is, from ordinary mental activity one must pass direct into intuition.

> *"Yet there is a source of energy which, once discovered, never dries up, whatever the circumstances and the physical conditions in life. It is the energy that can be described as spiritual, that which is received not*

from below, from the depths of inconscience, but from above, from the supreme origin of men and the universe, from the all-powerful and eternal splendours of the superconscious. It is there, everywhere around us, penetrating everything and to enter into contact with it and receive it, it is sufficient to sincerely aspire for it, to open oneself to it in faith and confidence so as to enlarge one's consciousness for identifying it with the universal Consciousness."

"Energy Inexhaustible", *On Education*

In these articles I am trying to put into ordinary terms the whole yogic terminology, for these *Bulletin*s are meant more for people who lead an ordinary life, though also for students of yoga — I mean people who are primarily interested in a purely physical material life but who try to attain more perfection in their physical life than is usual in ordinary conditions. It is a very difficult task but it is a kind of yoga. These people call themselves "materialists" and they are apt to get agitated or irritated if yogic terms are used, so one must speak their language avoiding terms likely to shock them. But I have known in my life persons who called themselves "materialists" and yet followed a much severer discipline than those who claim to do yoga.

What we want is that humanity should progress; whether it professes to lead a yogic life or not matters little, provided it makes the necessary effort for progress.

What is the difference between meditation and concentration ?

Meditation is a purely mental activity, it interests only the mental being. One can concentrate while meditating but this is a mental concentration; one can get a silence but it is a purely mental silence, and the other parts of the being are kept immobile and inactive so as not to disturb the meditation. You

may pass twenty hours of the day in meditation and for the remaining four hours you will be an altogether ordinary man because only the mind has been occupied — the rest of the being, the vital and the physical, is kept under pressure so that it may not disturb. In meditation nothing is directly done for the other parts of the being.

Certainly this indirect action can have an effect, but... I have known in my life people whose capacity for meditation was remarkable but who, when not in meditation, were quite ordinary men, even at times ill-natured people, who would become furious if their meditation was disturbed. For they had learnt to master only their mind, not the rest of their being.

Concentration is a more active state. You may concentrate mentally, you may concentrate vitally, psychically, physically, and you may concentrate integrally. Concentration or the capacity to gather oneself at one point is more difficult than meditation. You may gather together one portion of your being or consciousness or you may gather together the whole of your consciousness or even fragments of it, that is, the concentration may be partial, total or integral, and in each case the result will be different.

If you have the capacity to concentrate, your meditation will be more interesting and easier. But one can meditate without concentrating. Many follow a chain of ideas in their meditation — it is meditation, not concentration.

Is it possible to distinguish the moment when one attains perfect concentration from the moment when, starting from this concentration, one opens oneself to the universal Energy ?

Yes. You concentrate on something or simply you gather yourself together as much as is possible for you and when you attain a kind of perfection in concentration, if you can sustain this perfection for a sufficiently long time, then a door opens and

you pass beyond the limit of your ordinary consciousness — you enter into a deeper and higher knowledge. Or you go within. Then you may experience a kind of dazzling light, an inner wonder, a beatitude, a complete knowledge, a total silence. There are, of course, many possibilities but the phenomenon is always the same.

To have this experience all depends upon your capacity to maintain your concentration sufficiently long at its highest point of perfection.

To have this experience is it necessary to concentrate every time ?

In the beginning, yes, for you have not the capacity to keep what you have acquired, to maintain your concentration at its maximum — you slip back and lose even the memory of the experience you have had. But if you once follow a path, it is easier to follow the same path a second time and so on. The second concentration is therefore easier than the first one. You must persevere in your concentration till you come to the point when you no longer lose the inner contact.

From that time onward you must remain in this inner and higher consciousness from where you can do everything. You see your body and the material world and you know what is to be done and how to do it.

That is the first aim of concentration, but naturally not the last.

To attain that concentration much effort is necessary; an immediate or even a quick result is rarely possible. But if the inner door has once been opened, you may be sure that it will open again if you know how to persevere.

As long as the door has not been opened, you may doubt your capacity, but once opened, no more doubt is possible, if you go on willing and aspiring.

This experience has a considerable value.

What does "Mother of Dreams"[1] mean ?

When he speaks of the "immobile and serene Consciousness", Sri Aurobindo often uses poetic terms which are very suggestive. He has used the term "Mother of Dreams" because he has put himself in the place of one who is below, one who sees, perceives something mysterious, altogether wonderful, inaccessible and almost incomprehensible; but if you look from another point of view, you may say that it is the creative Consciousness, the Origin of the universe, the universal Mother, the creative Power, and so on.

When we play badly we find that we have no energy, but if we play well, with great enthusiasm, we find that energy comes. Why ?

This is perfectly true. To enter into contact with terrestrial energy, one must establish a certain harmony within oneself. If you know the game well, if you know how to make the moves and if you take an enthusiastic interest, if you have a sort of ambition (quite childish perhaps), a desire to win, then as you go on succeeding you feel a kind of inner joy, not perhaps very profound, but creating the harmony necessary for the interchange of energy. On the other hand, those who do not know how to accept defeat, who get angry and bad-tempered when things do not go according to their wish, lose their energy more and more.

Also, if you slip into depression, you cut every source of energy — from above, from below, from everywhere. That is the best way of falling into inertia. You must absolutely refuse to be depressed.

Depression is always the sign of an acute egoism. When you feel that it is coming near, tell yourself: "I am in a state of egoistic illness, I must cure myself of it."

[1] Sri Aurobindo, "The Mother of Dreams", *Collected Poems*, p. 67.

28 December 1950

Mother reads her article "Correct Judgment" (*On Education*). After examining various elements that falsify our judgment, Mother adds this commentary:

The sense organs are under the influence of the psychological state of the individual because something comes in between the eye's perception and the brain's reception. It is very subtle; the brain receives the eye's perceptions through the nerves; there is no reasoning, it is so to say instantaneous, but there is a short passage between the eye's perception and the cell which is to respond and evaluate it in the brain. And it is this evaluation of the brain which is under the influence of feelings. It is the small vibration between what the eye sees and what the brain estimates which often falsifies the response. And it is not a question of good faith, for even the most sincere persons do not know what is happening, even very calm people, without any violent emotion, who do not even feel an emotion, are influenced in this way without being aware of the intervention of this little falsifying vibration.

At times moral notions also intermix and falsify the judgment but we must throw far away from us all moral notions; for morality and Truth are very far from each other (if I am shocking anybody by saying this, I am sorry, but it is like that). It is only when you have conquered all attraction and all repulsion that you can have a correct judgment. As long as there are things that attract you and things that repel you, it is not possible for you to have an absolutely sure functioning of the senses.

Everybody knows, for example, that when there is an accident, there may be two, three or ten witnesses, but they do not see the same thing at all; one thing happens but there are no two persons who see it in the same way. With the inner shock,

they perceive only a very small part of what happens.

But there is a way of reconciling the impressions — the idea and the opposite idea — it is by considering them as two ends of one and the same line; then by putting between these two ends innumerable other ideas which follow each other, you come to find that there is an accord among them. You also find out that this is a very interesting exercise.

> *"He alone who is above likes and dislikes, desires and preferences can look at things with perfect impartiality, through senses that are in their functioning objective, like that of an extremely delicate and perfected machine, to which is added the clarity of a living consciousness."*
>
> "Correct Judgment", *On Education*

I say "objective perception". To see objectively is to see and judge without adding anything from oneself, free from all personal reaction. One must learn to see a thing without mixing up in it any personal feelings.

And I add that this "perfected machine" can do nothing without the clarity of a living consciousness. When the consciousness is *one*, you can know by identity; that is, by uniting your consciousness with the object or the person you want to know or judge impartially, you enter into an inner contact with this object or person, and then it is possible for you to know with absolute certainty....

Also what deforms and falsifies is the anxiety for the consequences. To have an absolutely true judgment, you must know how to execute and act without desire — only one in a thousand can do that. Almost all are anxious about the result or have the ambition to obtain a result. You must not be anxious about the results; simply do a thing because you have seen that it is that which must be done: tell yourself, "I am doing this because this is the thing to be done, and whatever may happen

afterwards is not my concern."

That evidently is an ideal and until it is reached the action will always be mixed. Therefore unless you are moved by a clear vision of the Truth, you must take as your rule to do always what you have to do, for it is that and nothing else that has to be done.

> *"We are not aiming at success — our aim is perfection.*
>
> *"We are not seeking fame or reputation; we want to prepare ourselves for a Divine manifestation."*
>
> "Tournaments", *On Education*

What is perfection?

Some people put perfection at the apex. It is generally thought that perfection is the maximum one can do. But I say that perfection is not the apex, it is not an extreme. There is no extreme — whatever you may do, there is always the possibility of something better, and it is exactly this possibility of something better which is the very meaning of progress.

Since there is no extreme, how can we attain perfection?

> *If we make some progress, could it be said that we are going towards perfection?*

You are mixing up perfection and progress. You do not necessarily progress towards perfection. In progress there is perhaps a certain perfection, but it can't be said that progress is perfection. Progress is rather an ascent.

Perfection is a harmony, an equilibrium.

But what is equilibrium? Who has studied a little physics here?

> *In a balance, when the two scales are equally loaded, it is said that an equilibrium is established.*

That's it. And so what do I mean when I say that perfection is an equilibrium?

When, in a given circumstance, what is against the realisation, that is to say the opposition, is conquered by a conscious force, the result is the manifestation of the realisation.

Yes, it is more or less like that, but I should put it otherwise.

The idea of perfection is something which comes to us from the Divine, it descends from plane to plane; and we climb back from plane to plane.

This is still an evolutionary idea. It is always said that when a creation reaches its maximum possibility, this is perfection; but it is not that ! and it is exactly against this idea that I protest. All this is only a rung in the progress. That is, Nature goes to the extreme limit of what she has, and when she sees that she can go no further, can no longer stir, she destroys everything and begins again. This can't be called a perfection, for perfection cannot be demolished. Perfection will come only when Nature can no longer undo what she has begun. For the moment there is no instance where she has not successively undone what she had begun, believing that it was not enough or it was not that which she wanted to do. Hence it cannot be said that she has attained perfection in her creation. It would be the maximum only if she had no need to undo what she has done.

You say that we do not seek success, but is not success a sort of perfection ?

For the ordinary human mentality success is perhaps a perfection, but not for us.

Perfection is not a static state, it is an equilibrium. But a progressive, dynamic equilibrium. One may go from perfection to perfection. There can come a state from which it would not be necessary to descend to a lower rung in order to go farther;

at the moment the march of Nature is like that, but in this new state, instead of being obliged to go back to be able to start again, one can walk always forward, without ever stopping. As things are, one comes to a certain point and, as human beings as they are at present cannot progress indefinitely, one must pass to a higher species or leave the present species and create another. The human being as he is at the moment cannot attain perfection unless he gets out of himself — man is a transitional being. In ordinary language it may be said: "Oh, this man is perfect", but that is a literary figure. The maximum a human being can attain just now is an equilibrium which is not progressive. He may attain perhaps a static equilibrium but all that is static can be broken for lack of progress.

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

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

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

We may say that perfection will be attained in the individual, the collectivity, on the earth and in the universe, when, at *every moment*, the receptivity will be equal in quality and quantity to the Force which wants to manifest.

That is the supreme equilibrium.

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

"It is better to be than to seem. We do not need to appear to be good if our sincerity is perfect. And by perfect sincerity we mean that all our thoughts, feel-

ings, sensations and actions should express nothing but the central Truth of our being."

"Tournaments", *On Education*

When you are absolutely sincere, you make a constant effort to live in harmony with the highest ideal of your being, the truth of your being. At every moment, in all that you think, all that you feel and all that you do, you try as perfectly as possible, as completely as possible, to put yourself in harmony with the highest ideal or, if you are conscious of it, with the truth of your being — then you have reached true sincerity. And if you are like that, if truly you do not act from egoistic motives or for personal reasons, if you act guided by your inner truth, that is, if you are perfectly sincere, it is absolutely the same to you whether the whole world judges you in one way or another. In this state of perfect sincerity you do not need to appear good or to be approved by others, for the first thing you experience when you are in harmony with your true consciousness is that you do not care what you look like. Whether you look like this or like that, whether you seem indifferent, cold, distant, proud, all this is of no importance; provided, I repeat this, you are absolutely sincere, that is, you never forget that you live in order to realise your inner, central truth.

Does not perfection consist in pleasing the Divine and no one else ?

Yes, if you like, but when one is not absolutely sincere, one deceives oneself very easily, and if one feels comfortable, one says: "Oh, I am sure that I please the Divine."

4 January 1951

Mother reads her article "Transformation" (*On Education*), then comments on it:

We want an integral transformation, the transformation of the body and all its activities.

Formerly, when one spoke of transformation one meant solely the transformation of the inner consciousness. One tried to discover in oneself this deep consciousness and rejected the body and its activities like an encumbrance and a useless thing, in order to attend only to the inner movement. Sri Aurobindo declared that this was not enough; the Truth demanded that the material world should also participate in this transformation and become an expression of the deeper Truth. But when people heard this, many thought that it was possible to transform the body and its activities without bothering in the least about what was happening within — naturally this is not quite true. Before you can undertake this work of physical transformation, which of all things is the most difficult, your inner consciousness must be firmly established, solidly established in the Truth, so that this transformation may be the final expression of the Truth — "final" for the moment at least.

The starting-point of this transformation is receptivity, we have already spoken about it. That is the indispensable condition for obtaining the transformation. Then comes the change of consciousness. This change of consciousness and its preparation have often been compared with the formation of the chicken in the egg: till the very last second the egg remains the same, there is no change, and it is only when the chicken is completely formed, absolutely alive, that it itself makes with its little beak a hole in the shell and comes out. Something similar takes place at the moment of the change of consciousness. For a long time you have the impression that nothing is happening, that your

consciousness is the same as usual, and, if you have an intense aspiration, you even feel a resistance, as though you were knocking against a wall which does not yield. But when you are ready within, a last effort — the pecking in the shell of the being — and everything opens and you are projected into another consciousness.

I said that it was a revolution of the basic equilibrium, that is, a total reversal of consciousness comparable with what happens to light when it passes through a prism. Or it is as though you were turning a ball inside out, which cannot be done except in the fourth dimension. One comes out of the ordinary three-dimensional consciousness to enter the higher four-dimensional consciousness, and into an infinite number of dimensions. This is the indispensable starting-point. Unless your consciousness changes its dimension, it will remain just what it is with the superficial vision of things, and all the profundities will escape you.

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

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

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

X: *It was as though something in me was not happy, but all that changed during the night; the next day the uneasiness had gone.*

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

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

This was a contact with your psychic being.

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

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

more or less deformed expression of this inner truth. And it is because of this that I say that the basic equilibrium is completely changed. Instead of being outside the world and seeing it as something outside you, you are inside the world and see outer forms expressing in a more or less clumsy fashion what is within, which for you is the Truth.

8 January 1951

Mother reads her article "What a Child Should Always Remember" (*On Education*).

> *You say that one should have "the certitude of Truth's final victory". But doesn't this certitude seem very different from, and often the very opposite of, what one teaches in ordinary life?*

Yes. Generally it is believed that things always end badly in Nature. Everyone knows the story of those who have met a lamentable end after having enjoyed great success in their life; of those who had extraordinary capacities and who finally lost them; of a nation which for a long period was the model of a marvellous civilisation — the civilisation vanishes and the nation is changed into something so deplorable that one can no longer recollect what it was. It seems that the story of the earth is a story of victories followed by defeats and not of defeats followed by victories.

But in fact, whenever it is a question of universal and divine things, what is needed is the universal vision and divine understanding of things in order to know how the truth expresses itself. There is a kind of general pessimism which says that even if things begin well they end badly, that it is weakness, hypocrisy, falsehood and wickedness which always seem to have the upper hand. That is why those who see the world in their own personal dimension have said that the world is bad and that we have only to finish with it and get out of it as soon as possible. Teachers have taught this but their teaching only proves that their vision is too narrow and in the dimension of their human individuality.

In truth, the movements of Nature are like those of the tides: they advance, they recede, advance and recede; in the uni-

versal life and even in terrestrial life, this means a progressive advance, though apparently it is cut up by withdrawals. But these withdrawals are only an appearance, as when one draws back to spring forward. You seem to be drawing back but it is simply in order to go much farther.

You will tell me that all this is very well, but how to give a child the certitude that the truth will triumph ? For, when he learns history, when he observes Nature, he will see that things don't always end well.[1]

Children must be taught to see the divine manifestation in the world and not the side which ends badly.

No, if the child thinks that the Divine is different from the world, its idea that everything ends badly will be quite justified.

Children must be given the idea of divine justice.

But we know nothing about it, for this justice does not manifest in the world as it is today.

However, if one observes things a little deeply, one perceives that there is progress, that things become better and better, though apparently they do not improve. And for a consciousness seated a little higher, it is quite evident that all evil — at

[1] In 1963, at the time this conversation was first published, Mother made the following remark:

"After all, as long as there is death, things always end badly. It is only victory over death which will make it possible for things not to end badly; that is when the return into the Inconscience will no longer be necessary to allow a new progress.

"The whole process of development, at least terrestrial development, is like that (I do not know how it happens on the other planets !). Traditions say that a universe is created, then withdrawn in the *pralaya*, then a new one comes and so on; and according to them we should be the seventh universe, and being the seventh universe, we are that which will not return into *pralaya* but progress constantly without going back. It is because of this, besides, that there is in the human being this need of permanence and of an uninterrupted progress; it is because the time has come."

least what we call evil — all falsehood, all that is contrary to the Truth, all suffering, all opposition is the result of a disequilibrium. I believe that one who is habituated to seeing things from this higher plane sees immediately that it is like that. Consequently, the world cannot be founded upon a disequilibrium, for if so it would have long since disappeared. One feels that at the origin of the universe there must have been a supreme Equilibrium and, perhaps, as we said the other day, a progressive equilibrium, an equilibrium which is the exact opposite of all that we have been taught and all that we are accustomed to call "evil". There is no absolute evil, but *an* evil, a more or less partial disequilibrium.

This may be taught to a child in a very simple way; it may be shown with the help of material things that an object will fall if it is not balanced, that only things in equilibrium can keep their position and duration.

There is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoilt by its milieu, by deplorable examples around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded.

For, if you want to find one teaching, one doctrine upon which to base your progress, you will never find anything — or,

to be more exact, you will find something else, for in accordance with the climate, the age, the civilisation, the teaching given is quite conflicting. When one person says, "This is good", another will say, "No, this is bad", and with the same logic, the same persuasive force. Consequently, it is not upon this that one can build. Religion has always tried to establish a dogma, and it will tell you that if you conform to the dogma you are in the truth and if you don't you are in the falsehood. But all this has never led to anything and has only created confusion.

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.

Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education, it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power of distinguishing between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality — within themselves, within the earth, within the universe — and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it did not exist the child would not last, even the short time that it does, and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and all that opposes this cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe.

It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of this kind of inner comfort, of satisfaction, and sometimes, of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone is permanent.

Can a child become conscious of this inner truth like an adult ?

For a child this is very clear, for it is a perception without any complications of word or thought — there is that which puts him at ease and that which makes him uneasy (it is not necessarily joy or sorrow which come only when the thing is very intense). And all this is much clearer in the child than in an adult, for the latter has always a mind which works and clouds his perception of the truth.

To give a child theories is absolutely useless, for as soon as his mind awakes he will find a thousand reasons for contradicting your theories, and he will be right.

This little true thing in the child is the divine Presence in the psychic — it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, in animals it begins to be conscious, and in children it is very conscious. I have known children who were much more conscious of their psychic being at the age of five than at fourteen, and at fourteen than at twenty-five; and above all, from the moment they go to school where they undergo that kind of intensive mental training which draws their attention to the intellectual part of their being, they lose almost always and almost completely this contact with their psychic being.

If only you were an experienced observer, if you could tell what goes on in a person, simply by looking into his eyes !... It is said the eyes are the mirror of the soul; that is a popular way of speaking but if the eyes do not express to you the psychic, it is because it is very far behind, veiled by many things. Look carefully, then, into the eyes of little children, and you will see a kind of light — some describe it as frank — but so true, so true, which looks at the world with wonder. Well, this sense of wonder, it is the wonder of the psychic which sees the truth but does not understand much about the world, for it is too far from it. Children have this but as they learn more, become more intelligent, more educated, this is effaced, and you see all sorts of

things in their eyes: thoughts, desires, passions, wickedness — but this kind of little flame, so pure, is no longer there. And you may be sure it is the mind that has got in there, and the psychic has gone very far behind.

Even a child who does not have a sufficiently developed brain to understand, if you simply pass on to him a vibration of protection or affection or solicitude or consolation, you will see that he responds. But if you take a boy of fourteen, for example, who is at school, who has ordinary parents and has been ill-treated, his mind is very much in the forefront; there is something hard in him, the psychic being has gone behind. Such boys do not respond to the vibration. One would say they are made of wood or plaster.

If the inner truth, the divine presence in the psychic is so conscious in the child, it could no longer be said that a child is a little animal, could it ?

Why not ? In animals there is sometimes a very intense psychic truth. Naturally, I believe that the psychic being is a little more formed, a little more conscious in a child than in an animal. But I have experimented with animals, just to know; well, I assure you that in human beings I have rarely come across some of the virtues which I have seen in animals, very simple, unpretentious virtues. As in cats, for example: I have studied cats a lot; if one knows them well they are marvellous creatures. I have known mother-cats which have sacrificed themselves entirely for their babies — people speak of maternal love with such admiration, as though it were purely a human privilege, but I have seen this love manifested by mother-cats to a degree far surpassing ordinary humanity. I have seen a mother-cat which would never touch her food until her babies had taken all they needed. I have seen another cat which stayed eight days beside her kittens, without satisfying any of her needs because she was afraid to leave them alone; and a cat which repeated more than fifty

times the same movement to teach her young one how to jump from a wall on to a window, and I may add, with a care, an intelligence, a skill which many uneducated women do not have. And why is it thus ? — because there was no mental intervention. It was altogether spontaneous instinct. But what is instinct ? — it is the presence of the Divine in the genus of the species, and that, that is the psychic of animals; a collective, not an individual psychic.

I have seen in animals all the reactions, emotional, affective, sentimental, all the feelings of which men are so proud. The only difference is that animals cannot speak of them and write about them, so we consider them inferior beings because they cannot flood us with books on what they have felt.

When I was a child if I did something bad immediately I felt uneasy and I would decide never to do that again. Then my parents also used to tell me never again to do it. Why ? because I had myself decided not to do it any more ?

A child should never be scolded. I am accused of speaking ill of parents ! but I have seen them at work, you see, and I know that ninety per cent of parents snub a child who comes spontaneously to confess a mistake: "You are very naughty. Go away, I am busy" — instead of listening to the child with patience and explaining to him where his fault lies, how he ought to have acted. And the child, who had come with good intentions, goes away quite hurt, with the feeling: "Why am I treated thus ?" Then the child sees his parents are not perfect — which is obviously true of them today — he sees that they are wrong and says to himself: "Why does he scold me, he is like me !"

11 January 1951

Mother comments upon some of the qualities enumerated in her article "What a Child Should Always Remember" (*On Education*).

"To be modest"

This is to take oneself at one's true worth.

Generally people pass from an excessive appreciation of their personal value to an equally excessive discouragement. One day they say, "I am wonderful", and the next day, "Oh ! I am good for nothing, I can do nothing." That is like a pendulum, isn't it ? There is nothing more difficult than knowing exactly what one is; one must neither overrate oneself nor depreciate oneself, but understand one's limits and know how to advance towards the ideal set before oneself. There are people who see in a big way and immediately imagine they can do everything. There are petty officers, for example, who imagine themselves capable of winning all the battles of the world, and small people who think they surpass everybody in the world. On the other hand, I have known some people who had abilities but who spent their time thinking, "I am good for nothing." Generally the two extremes are found in the same person. But to find someone who knows exactly where he stands and exactly where he can go, is very rare. We have avoided speaking of vanity because we expect that you won't be filled with vanity as soon as you score a success.

Just imagine, there are plants which are vain ! I am speaking of plants one grows for oneself. If one pays them compliments, by words or by feelings, if one admires them, well, they hold up their head — with vanity ! It is the same with animals. I am going to tell you a short amusing story.

In Paris there is a garden called "The Garden of Plants": there are animals there also, as well as plants. They had just

received a magnificent lion. It was of course in a cage. And it was furious. There was a door in the cage behind which it could hide. And it would hide itself just when the visitors came to see it! I saw that and one day I went up to the cage and began speaking to it (animals are very sensitive to spoken language, they really listen). I began speaking softly to my lion, I said to it, "Oh! how handsome you are, what a pity that you are hiding yourself like this, how much we would like to see you...." Well, it listened. Then, little by little, it looked at me askance, slowly stretched its neck to see me better; later it brought out its paw and, finally, put the tip of its nose against the bars as if saying, "At last, here's someone who understands me!"

"To be generous"

I shall not speak here of material generosity which naturally consists in giving others what one has. But even this virtue is not very widespread, for as soon as one becomes rich one thinks more often of keeping one's wealth than of giving it away. The more men possess, the less are they generous.

I want to speak of moral generosity. To feel happy, for example, when a comrade is successful. An act of courage, of unselfishness, a fine sacrifice have a beauty in them which gives you joy. It may be said that moral generosity consists in being able to recognise the true worth and superiority of others.

13 January 1951

"An aimless life is always a miserable life."

"The Science of Living", *On Education*

Why ?

If one has an aim, one can follow quietly the way which leads to the goal.

It is not necessary to have a goal in order to follow the way quietly. So many men who have no goal follow quite calmly the course of their daily round without making any effort !

An aim gives joy.

Sometimes it takes an entire lifetime to attain one's aim; one would then find joy only at the end of one's life !

An aim is an ideal and an ideal is an enrichment.

Yes, but one may have an altogether material ideal; it is not the ideal which gives joy.

An aim gives a meaning, a purpose to life, and this purpose implies an effort; and it is in effort that one finds joy.

Exactly. It is the effort which gives joy; a human being who does not know how to make an effort will never find joy. Those who are essentially lazy will never find joy — they do not have the strength to be joyful ! It is effort which gives joy. Effort makes the being vibrate at a certain degree of tension which makes it possible for you to feel the joy.

But is the effort which brings joy an effort imposed by circumstances or an effort which makes for progress ?

You are mixing up two things: one physical, the other psychological. It is quite obvious that an act done because one has decided to do it and an act imposed by circumstances, more or less favourable, do not have at all the same result. It is known, for instance, that people who follow yogic discipline often fast. Many yogic disciplines require very long fastings and those who practise them are generally very happy to do so, for that is their own choice. But take this very person and put him in circumstances where food is scarce, either because it cannot be had or because this person has no money, and you will see him in a lamentable state, complaining that life is terrible, though the conditions may be identically the same; but in one case there was the decision not to eat, whilst in the other the man did not eat because he could not do otherwise. That is obvious, but this is not the only reason.

It is only effort, in whatever domain it be — material effort, moral effort, intellectual effort — which creates in the being certain vibrations which enable you to get connected with universal vibrations; and it is this which gives joy. It is effort which pulls you out of inertia; it is effort which makes you receptive to the universal forces. And the one thing above all which spontaneously gives joy, even to those who do not practise yoga, who have no spiritual aspiration, who lead quite an ordinary life, is the exchange of forces with universal forces. People do not know this, they would not be able to tell you that it is due to this, but so it is.

There are people who are just like beautiful animals — all their movements are harmonious, their energies are spent harmoniously, their uncalculating efforts call in energies all the time and they are always happy; but sometimes they have no thoughts in their head, sometimes they have no feelings in their heart, they live an altogether animalish life. I have known people like

that: beautiful animals. They were handsome, their gestures were harmonious, their forces quite balanced and they spent without reckoning and received without measure. They were in harmony with the material universal forces and they lived in joy. They could not perhaps have told you that they were happy — joy with them was so spontaneous that it was natural — and they would have been still less able to tell you why, for their intelligence was not very developed. I have known such people, who were capable of making the necessary effort (not a prudent and calculated effort but a spontaneous one) in no matter what field: material, vital, intellectual, etc., and in this effort there was always joy. For example, a man sits down to write a book, he makes an effort which sets vibrating something in his brain to attract ideas; well, suddenly, this man experiences joy. It is quite certain that, whatever you do, even the most material work, like sweeping a room or cooking, if you make the necessary effort to do this work to the maximum of your ability, you will feel joy, even if what you do is against your nature. When you want to realise something, you make quite spontaneously the necessary effort; this concentrates your energies on the thing to be realised and that gives a meaning to your life. This compels you to a sort of organisation of yourself, a sort of concentration of your energies, because it is this that you wish to do and not fifty other things which contradict it. And it is in this concentration, this intensity of the will, that lies the origin of joy. This gives you the power to receive energies in exchange for those you spend.

"To work for your perfection the first step is to become conscious of yourself."

"The Science of Living", *On Education*

"To know oneself and control oneself",[1] what does this mean ?

[1] "The Science of Living", *On Education.*

This means to be conscious of one's inner truth, conscious of the different parts of one's being and their respective functions. You must know why you do this, why you do that; you must know your thoughts, know your feelings, all your activities, all your movements, of what you are capable, etc. And to know oneself is not enough: this knowledge must bring a conscious control. To know oneself perfectly is to control oneself perfectly.

But there must be an aspiration at every moment.

It is never too early to begin, never too late to continue. That is, even when you are quite young, you can begin to study yourself and know yourself and gradually to control yourself. And even when you are what is called "old", when you are quite aged, it is not too late to make the effort to know yourself better and better and control yourself better and better. That is the Science of Living.

To perfect oneself, one must first become conscious of oneself. I am sure, for instance, that the following situation has arisen many times in your life: someone asks you suddenly, "Why have you done that?" Well, the spontaneous reply is, "I don't know." If someone asks you, "What are you thinking of?" You reply, "I don't know." "Why are you tired?" — "I don't know." "Why are you happy?" — "I don't know", and so on. I can take indeed fifty people and ask them suddenly, without preparation, "Why have you done that?" and if they are not inwardly "awake", they will all answer, "I don't know" (of course I am not speaking here of those who have practised a discipline of self-knowledge and of following up their movements to the extreme limits; these people can, naturally, collect themselves, concentrate and give the right answer, but only after a little while). You will see that it is like that if you look well at your whole day. You say something and you don't know why you say it — it is only after the words are out of your mouth that you notice that this was not quite what you wanted to say. For instance, you go to see someone, you prepare beforehand the words you are going to speak, but once you are in front of

the person in question, you say nothing or it is other words which come from your mouth. Are you able to say to what extent the atmosphere of the other person has influenced you and stopped you from saying what you had prepared ? How many people can say that ? They do not even observe that the person was in such or such a state and that it was because of this that they could not tell him what they had prepared. Of course, there are very obvious instances when you find people in such a bad mood that you can ask nothing of them. I am not speaking of these. I am speaking of the clear perception of reciprocal influences: what acts and reacts on your nature; it is this one does not have. For example, one becomes suddenly uneasy or happy, but how many people can say, "It is this" ? And it is difficult to know, it is not at all easy. One must be quite "awake"; one must be constantly in a very attentive state of observation.

There are people who sleep twelve hours a day and say the rest of the time, "I am awake" ! There are people who sleep twenty hours a day and the rest of the time are but half awake !

To be in this state of attentive observation, you must have, so to say, antennae everywhere which are in constant contact with your true centre of consciousness. You register everything, you organise everything and, in this way, you cannot be taken unawares, you cannot be deceived, mistaken, and you cannot say anything other than what you wanted to say. But how many people normally live in this state ? It is this I mean, precisely, when I speak of "becoming conscious". If you want to benefit most from the conditions and circumstances in which you find yourself, you must be fully awake: you must not be taken by surprise, you must not do things without knowing why, you must not say things without knowing why. You must be constantly awake.

You must also understand that you are not separate individualities, that life is a constant exchange of forces, of consciousnesses, of vibrations, of movements of all kinds. It is as in a crowd, you see: when everyone pushes all go forward, and

when all recede, everyone recedes. It is the same thing in the inner world, in your consciousness. There are all the time forces and influences acting and reacting upon you, it is like a gas in the atmosphere, and unless you are quite awake, these things enter into you, and it is only when they have gone well in and come out as if they came from you, that you become aware of them. How many times people meet those who are nervous, angry, in a bad mood, and themselves become nervous, angry, moody, just like that, without quite knowing why. Why is it that when you play against certain people you play very well, but when you play against others you cannot play ? And those very quiet people, not at all wicked, who suddenly become furious when they are in a furious crowd ! And no one knows who has started it: it is something that went past and swept off the consciousness. There are people who can let out vibrations like this and others respond without knowing why. Everything is like that, from the smallest to the biggest things.

To be individualised in a collectivity, one must be absolutely conscious of oneself. And of which self ? — the Self which is above all intermixture, that is, what I call the Truth of your being. And as long as you are not conscious of the Truth of your being, you are moved by all kinds of things, without taking any note of it at all. Collective thought, collective suggestions are a formidable influence which act constantly on individual thought. And what is extraordinary is that one does not notice it. One believes that one thinks "like that", but in truth it is the collectivity which thinks "like that". The mass is always inferior to the individual. Take individuals with similar qualities, of similar categories, well, when they are alone these individuals are at least two degrees better than people of the same category in a crowd. There is a mixture of obscurities, a mixture of unconsciousness, and inevitably you slip into this unconsciousness. To escape this there is but one means: to become conscious of oneself, more and more conscious and more and more attentive.

Try this little exercise: at the beginning of the day, say: "I

won't speak without thinking of what I say." You believe, don't you, that you think all that you say ! It is not at all true, you will see that so many times the word you do not want to say is ready to come out, and that you are compelled to make a conscious effort to stop it from coming out.

I have known people who were very scrupulous about not telling lies, but all of a sudden, when together in a group, instead of speaking the truth they would spontaneously tell a lie; they did not have the intention of doing so, they did not think of it a minute before doing it, but it came "like that". Why ? — because they were in the company of liars; there was an atmosphere of falsehood and they had quite simply caught the malady !

It is thus that gradually, slowly, with perseverance, first of all with great care and much attention, one becomes conscious, learns to know oneself and then to become master of oneself.

15 January 1951

> *"It is only by observing these movements (of our being) with great care, by bringing them, as it were, before the tribunal of our highest ideal, with a sincere will to submit to its judgment, that we can hope to educate in us a discernment which does not err."*
>
> "The Science of Living", *On Education*

One must be clearly aware of the origin of one's movements because there are contradictory velleities in the being — some pushing you here, others pushing you there, and that obviously creates a chaos in life. If you observe yourself, you will see that as soon as you do something which disturbs you a little, the mind immediately gives you a favourable reason to justify yourself — this mind is capable of gilding everything. In these conditions it is difficult to know oneself. One must be absolutely sincere to be able to do it and to see clearly into all the little falsehoods of the mental being.

If in your mind you go over the various movements and reactions of the day like one repeating indefinitely the same thing, you will not progress. If this reviewing is to make you progress, you must find something within you in whose light you can be yourself your own judge, something which represents for you the best part of yourself, which has some light, some goodwill and which precisely is in love with progress. Place that before you and first, pass across it as in a cinema all that you have done, all that you have felt, your impulses, your thoughts, etc.; then try to coordinate them, that is, find out why this has followed that. And look at the luminous screen that is before you: certain things pass by well, without throwing a shadow; others, on the contrary, throw a little shadow; others yet cast a shadow altogether black and disagreeable. You must do this very sincerely, as though you were playing a game: under such circum-

stances I did such and such a thing, feeling like this and thinking in this way; I have before me my ideal of knowledge and self-mastery, well, was this act in keeping with my ideal or not ? If it was, it would not leave any shadow on the screen, which would remain transparent, and one would not have to worry about it. If it is not in conformity, it casts a shadow. Why has it left this shadow ? What was there in this act that was contrary to the will to self-knowledge and self-mastery ? Most often you will find that it corresponds to unconsciousness — then you file it among unconscious things and resolve that next time. you will try to be conscious before doing anything. But in other cases you will see that it was a nasty little egoism, quite black, which had come to distort your action or your thought. Then you place this egoism before your "light" and ask yourself: "Why has it the right to make me act like that, think like that ?..." And instead of accepting any odd explanation you must search and you will find in a corner of your being something which thinks and says, "Ah, no, I shall accept everything but that." You will see that it is a petty vanity, a movement of self-love, an egoistic feeling hidden somewhere, a hundred things. Then you take a good look at these things in the light of your ideal: "Is cherishing this movement in conformity with my seeking and the realisation of my ideal or not ? I put this little dark corner in front of the light until the light enters into it and it disappears." Then the comedy is over. But the comedy of your whole day is not finished yet, you know, for there are many things which have to pass thus before the light. But if you continue this game — for truly it is a game, if you do this sincerely — I assure you that in six months you will not recognise yourself, you will say to yourself, "What ? I was like that ! It is impossible !"

You may be five years old or twenty, fifty or sixty and yet transform yourself in this way by putting everything before this inner light. You will see that the elements which do not conform with your ideal are not generally elements which you have to throw wholly out of yourself (there are very few of this kind);

they are simply things not in their place. If you organise everything — your feelings, your thoughts, your impulses, etc. — around the psychic centre which is the inner light, you will see that all inner disorder will change into a luminous order.

It is quite evident that if a similar procedure were adopted by a nation or by the earth, most of the things which make men unhappy would disappear, for the major part of the world's misery comes from the fact that things are not in their place. If life were organised in such a way that nothing was wasted and each thing was in its place, most of these miseries would not exist any longer. An old sage has said:

"There is no evil. There is only a lack of balance.

"There is nothing bad. Only things are not in their place."

If everything were in its place, in nations, in the material world, in the actions and thoughts and feelings of individuals, the greater part of human suffering would disappear.

There are two things to be considered: consciousness and the instruments through which consciousness manifests. Let us take the instruments: there is the mental being which produces thoughts, the emotional being which produces feeling, the vital being which produces the power of action and the physical being that acts.

The man of genius may use anything at all and make something beautiful because he has genius; but give this genius a perfect instrument and he will make something wonderful. Take a great musician; well, even with a wretched piano and missing notes, he will produce something beautiful; but give him a good piano, well-tuned, and he will do something still more beautiful. The consciousness is the same in either case but for expression it needs a good instrument — a body with mental, vital, psychic and physical capacities.

If physically you are badly built, badly set up, it will be difficult for you, even with a good training, to do gymnastics as well as one with a beautiful well-built body. It is the same with the mind — one who has a well-organised mind, complex, com-

plete, refined, will express himself much better than one who has a rather mediocre or badly organised mind. First of all, you must educate your consciousness, become conscious of yourself, organise your consciousness according to your ideal, but at the same time do not neglect the instruments which are in your body.

Take an example. You are in your body with your deepest ideal but you find yourself before a school class and you have to teach something to the students. Well, this light is up there, this light of consciousness, but when you have to explain to your class the science you have to teach, is it more convenient to have a fund of knowledge or will the inspiration be such that you will not need this fund of knowledge ? What is your personal experience ?.... You find, don't you, that there are days when everything goes well — you are eloquent, your students listen to you and understand you easily. But there are other days when what you have to teach does not come, they do not listen to you — that is, you are bored and are boring. This means that in the former case your consciousness is awake and concentrated upon what you are doing, while in the second it is more or less asleep — you are left to your most external means. But in this case, if you have a fund of knowledge you can tell your students something; if you have a mind trained, prepared, a good instrument responding well when you want to make use of it, and if you have also gathered all necessary notes and notions all will go very well. But if you have nothing in your head and, besides, you are not in contact with your higher consciousness, then you have no other recourse than to take a book and read out your lesson — you will be obliged to make use of someone else's mind.

Take games. There too you find days when everything goes well; you have done nothing special previously, but even so you succeed in everything; but if you have practised well beforehand, the result is still more magnificent. If, for example, you find yourself facing someone who has trained himself slowly, seriously, with patience and endurance, and who all of a sudden

has a strong aspiration, well, this one will beat you in spite of your aspiration unless your aspiration is very much superior to that of your adversary. If you have opposite you someone who knows only the technique of the game but has no conscious aspiration, while you are in a fully conscious state, evidently it is you who will defeat him because the quality of consciousness is superior to the quality of technique. But one cannot replace the other. The one which is superior is more important, granted, but you must also have nerves which respond quickly, spontaneous movements; you must know all the secrets of the game to be able to play perfectly. You must have both the things. What is higher is the consciousness which enables you to make the right movement at the right moment but it is not exclusive. When you seek perfection, you must not neglect the one under the pretext that you have the other.

Should one play in order to win ?

When you have a three or four-year old consciousness, this is an altogether necessary stimulant. But you may have a four-year old consciousness even at the age of fifty, may you not ? No, when you have a ripe consciousness you must not play in order to win. You must play for the sake of playing and to learn how to play and to progress in games and in order that your play may become the expression of your inner consciousness at its highest — it is this which is important. For example, people who like to play well do not go and choose bad players to play with, simply for the pleasure of winning — they choose those who are the best players and play with them. I remember having learnt to play tennis when I was eight, it was a passion; but I never wished to play with my little comrades because I learnt nothing (usually I used to defeat them), I always went to the best players. At times they looked surprised, but in the end they played with me — I never won but I learnt much.

> *"To complete this movement of inner discovery, it is good not to neglect the mental development. For the mental instrument can be equally a great help or a great hindrance. In its natural state the human mind is always limited in its vision, narrow in its understanding, rigid in its conceptions, and a certain effort is needed to enlarge it, make it supple and deep."*
>
> "The Science of Living", *On Education*

Unfortunately, most people, the more they think, the more they believe themselves superior. The mind is satisfied with itself and does not aspire much for progress — it thinks it knows everything. And many people believe that their way of thinking is the best; they cannot understand that there are *always* several ways of thinking about the same subject. And the more their thought is strong and precise, the more are they convinced that there is only *one* way of thinking. That is why I have said here that certain exercises can enlarge your thought and give you the habit of seeing things from several points of view at the same time:

> *"It is very necessary that one should consider everything from as many points of view as possible. There is an exercise in this connection which gives great suppleness and elevation to thought; it is as follows. A clearly formulated thesis is set; against it is opposed the antithesis, formulated with the same precision. Then by careful reflection, the problem must be widened or transcended until a synthesis is found which unites the two contraries in a larger, higher and more comprehensive idea."*
>
> *Ibid.*

Give me a thesis.

X: *Thesis: Each one carries his cross in the world. Antithesis: There are men who are above all human affliction.*

And the synthesis ?

Y: *There is one part of the being in everyone which is above all affliction.*

Z: *There are different types of people in the world.*

W: *The cross is necessary to leap beyond suffering.*

That is not a synthesis.

X: *In my thesis I spoke of ordinary men. In the antithesis I speak of extraordinary men.*

Yes, but you believe that extraordinary men do not have their cross ! Even higher beings have their cross to bear.

It is a question of a difference of consciousness. In some it is the external states of consciousness which are most developed; others, on the contrary, have taken care to develop the higher states of consciousness. So, to say "each one bears his cross" is true of the external consciousness (of material happenings, happenings which touch the vital being, the emotional being and the mental being); for such people there will always be a considerable number of catastrophes, all the more because catastrophes seem to be proportionate to the capacity of the individual, they seem to be dealt out according to his capacity to bear things. It may just be that those who have greater capacities have an over-plus of suffering and misfortune.

But there are people who are above all misfortune and yet

misfortunes exist for them. Why ? Because the inner consciousness in them is stronger, more developed than the other consciousness (I do not speak here of "transformed" beings, for in them one can visualise a state of things in which even the physical being is above suffering; we are speaking of men as they are at present). If your consciousness is seated in a place where these external things do not exist, then it may be said that you do not bear your cross because you are above it. Yet there are exceptions, there are human beings who are above afflictions, yet carry their cross. How can we reconcile these two apparently contradictory things ?

Misfortunes are of different kinds.

No, human miseries and misfortunes are always of the same nature; there are sufferings that come from yourself, from circumstances or from the general state of things, that is, you are subject to these sufferings from your birth and none can escape them. They do not always have the same intensity but they are always there. Hence it seems there is a contradiction and yet this is not correct: because for some people it is as if the thing did not exist, even when it exists ! as if it was not, even while it was ! Neither the one nor the other is wholly true, neither the one nor the other is wholly false.

There is a state of human consciousness (it is not yet superhuman, it is truly human) in which the two things may coexist. One may have sufferings and not feel them, be as if they did not exist. That is, a misfortune, a "cross" touches only the outer consciousness, the physical, the mental, the vital, but the psychic — in truth, the psychic is above all suffering. Let us take a very simple example: an illness. A physical disorder brings suffering, at times much suffering, but there are people who are in such a state of consciousness that their physical sufferings do not exist, they are not real for them. It is the same thing with separation; if you love someone and are separated from that

person, you suffer — this is one of the most common of sufferings, it is the ties which are broken — well, in a certain state of consciousness the real link between two beings cannot be broken, for it does not belong to the domain where things break. Therefore one is above what may happen.

But before one reaches a higher state of consciousness, there is a stage where one can develop in oneself the faculty of reason — a clear, precise, logical reason, sufficiently objective in its vision of things. And when one has developed this reason well, all impulses, feelings, desires, all disturbances can be put in the presence of this reason and that makes you reasonable. Most people, when something troubles them, become very unreasonable. When, for example, they are ill, they pass their time saying, "Oh, how ill I am, how frightful it is; is it going to last like that all the time ?" And naturally it gets worse and worse. Or when some misfortune befalls them, they cry out: "It is only to me that these things happen and I was thinking that everything was fine before", and they burst into a fit of tears, a fit of nerves. Well, not to speak of superman, in man himself there is a higher capacity called reason, which is able to look at things calmly, coolly, reasonably. And this reason tells you, "Don't worry, that will improve nothing, you must not grumble, you must accept the thing since it has come." Then you immediately become calm. It is a very good mental training, it develops judgment, vision, objectivity and at the same time it has a very healthy action upon your character. It helps you to avoid the ridiculousness of giving way to your nerves and lets you behave like a reasonable person.

There is one thing very difficult for the mind to do but very important, according to me: you must never allow your mind to judge things and men. To say "this is good, that is bad, this is right, that is wrong, this one has this defect, that one has that bad thing, etc." — this is depreciatory judgment.

For people who exercise their intelligence, the more intelligent they are, the more do they grow aware that they know

nothing at all and that with the mind one can know nothing. One may think in a particular way, judge and see in a particular way, but one is never sure of anything — and never will be sure of anything. One can always say, "perhaps it is like that" or "perhaps it is like this" and so on, indefinitely, because the mind is not an instrument of knowledge.

Above the thoughts, there are pure ideas; thoughts serve to express pure ideas. And Knowledge is well above the domain of pure ideas, as these are well above thought. One must hence know how to climb from thought to pure idea, and pure idea is itself nothing but a translation of Knowledge. And Knowledge can be obtained only by a total identification. So, when you put yourself in your small human mentality, the mentality of the physical consciousness which is at work all the time, which looks at everything, judges everything from the height of its derisive superiority, which says, "That is bad, it should not be like that", you are sure to be always mistaken, without exception. The best is to keep silent and look well at things, and little by little you make notes within yourself and keep the record without pronouncing any judgment. When you are able to keep all that within you, quietly, without agitation and present it very calmly before the highest part of your consciousness, with an attempt to maintain an attentive silence, and wait, then perhaps, slowly, as if coming from a far distance and from a great height, something like a light will manifest and you will know a little more of truth.

But as long as you excite your thoughts and cut them up into little bits, you will never know anything. I shall repeat this to you a hundred times if necessary, but I can assure you that so long as you are not convinced of this you will never come out of your ignorance.

Is there an exact number of pure ideas ?

To know that, you must go and see the Supreme and ask Him !

I am not interested in statistics !

Here is a little story. One of my friends had made a trip to India and was requested to give an account of his travels. An old, very credulous lady was there and she asked him, "In India, do they count the souls ?" He answered, "Yes." "How many are there ?" asked the old lady. He answered, "One only."

25 January 1951

> *"The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depression, of passions and revolt. It can set in motion everything, build up and realise, it can also destroy and mar everything. It seems to be, in the human being, the most difficult part to train. It is a long labour requiring great patience, and it demands a perfect sincerity, for without sincerity one will deceive oneself from the very first step, and all endeavour for progress will go in vain."*
>
> "The Science of Living", *On Education*

It is very difficult to find the borderland between a true need and a desire (the yogic ideal, of course, is never to have any need, and therefore not to want anything), but this essay is written for all men of goodwill who try to know themselves and control themselves. And there we really face a problem which compels an extraordinary sincerity, for the very first way in which the vital meets life is through desire — and yet, there are necessities. But how to know if things are really necessary, not desired ?... For that you must observe yourself very, very attentively, and if there is anything in you which produces something like a small intense vibration, then you may be sure that there lies a desire. For example, you say, "This food is necessary for me" — you believe, you imagine, you think that you need such and such a thing and you find the necessary means to obtain the thing. To know if it is a need or a desire, you must look at yourself very closely and ask yourself, "What will happen if I cannot get the thing ?" Then if the immediate answer is, "Oh, it will be very bad", you may be sure that it is a matter of desire. It is the same for everything. For every problem you draw back, look at yourself and ask, "Let us see, am

I going to have the thing ?" If at that moment something in you jumps up with joy, you may be certain there is a desire. On the other hand, if something tells you, "Oh, I am not going to get it", and you feel very depressed, then again it is a desire.

If the vital is not to deceive you, you must not only be very mindful but your sincerity must also be almost miraculous — it is not to discourage you that I have used the word "miraculous"; on the contrary, it is in order to give you a greater aspiration for sincerity.

> *"With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable."*
>
> "The Science of Living", *On Education*

It is this which is so wonderful. I believe the vital is very conscious of its power and that is why it is important: it has that dynamic energy which makes no difficulty too difficult for it; but it must be on the right side. If it collaborates, everything is wonderful, but it is not easy to get from it this constant collaboration. It is a very good worker, it works very, very well, but in working it seeks always its own satisfaction, it wants to get something from the work, all the pleasure that can be drawn from it, all the advantage that can be had, and when this satisfaction is not given for one reason or another (there may be many reasons), it is not happy, not at all happy: "That's not fair, I work, and I am given nothing in return"; then it sulks, it does not move, it keeps mum, and at times it says, "I do not exist." Then all energy runs out from the body, you get tired, exhausted, you can no longer do anything. And all of a sudden this becomes worse, for I must tell you that the mind is very friendly with the vital — not the reasoning mind but the physical mind is very, very friendly with the vital; so, as soon as the vital begins to say, "I have nothing to do with that, I have been badly treated, I won't have anything to do with it", the mind naturally comes in to encourage it, to explain, give good reasons,

and it is the same old story: "Life is not worth living, people are truly disgusting and all circumstances are against me, it is better to leave it all", and so on. This happens very often, but at times there is a little glimmer of reason somewhere which tells you, "Ah, enough of this comedy !"

But if this becomes very strong and you do not react in time, then you fall into despair: "Really this life is not made for people like me; I would be happier elsewhere, in heaven where everybody is very nice and one can do whatever one wants", etc., whence paradisiac conceptions — indeed I think it is these two accomplices, the mind and the vital, who have invented paradise ! For if life, existence, does not conform to your desires, you begin to lament: "Oh, I have had enough of it, this world is miserable and deceitful, I want to die." Then there is a moment when this situation becomes serious; discouragement changes into revolt and depression into dissatisfaction: I speak of people who are rather ill-natured — there are people who are ill-natured (it is not their fault !) and there are people who are good-natured (it is not their fault either !) but things are like that — well, those who are ill-natured get angry, revolt, want to break and pull down everything: "You will see, they do not do what I want, they will be punished !" Then this becomes a little more serious, because the mind is always there to serve as the accomplice and it begins to have wonderful ideas of revenge — from discouragement you do one kind of stupid thing, from wickedness you do another. The stupidities of discouragement concern you personally, whilst the stupidities of wickedness concern others; and sometimes these latter stupidities are very serious. If you have a little goodwill, it is better at the time when such fits seize you to make it a rule not to stir, telling yourself, "I am not going to move, I shall wait for the storm to pass", for in a few moments one can destroy or ruin months of regular effort.

But here I give you a consolation:

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

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

> *"Progress may be slow, falls may be frequent, but if a courageous will is maintained one is sure to triumph some day and see all difficulties melt and vanish before the radiant consciousness of truth."*
>
> *Ibid.*

If I lay stress here upon defects and difficulties, it is not to discourage you from making an effort but to tell you that you must do things with the necessary courage and precisely not be disheartened because you are not successful at once; but if the aspiration is there in you, if the will is there in you, it is absolutely certain that sooner or later you will succeed. And I am saying this for people who live in very ordinary circumstances, less favourable perhaps than yours, but who can even so learn to know themselves and conquer themselves, master themselves, control themselves. Therefore, if the conditions are favourable you have a much greater chance of succeeding. One thing is always necessary, not to give up the game — for it is a great game and the result is worth the trouble of playing it through.

> *"Lastly, we must, by means of a rational and clear-seeing physical education, make our body strong and supple so that it may become in the material world a fit instrument for the truth-force which wills to manifest through us."*
>
> *Ibid.*

It is much easier to organise the body than the vital, for instance. But the mind and the vital, with the character and temperament they have, what do they not do with this poor slave of a body ! After having ill-treated it, perhaps ruined it (it protests a little, falls ill a little), this is what the two accomplices say: "What a beast is this body, it cannot follow us in our movement !" Unhappily, the body obeys its masters, the mind and the vital, blindly, without any discrimination. The mind comes along with its theories: "You must not eat that, it will harm you, you must not do that, it is bad", and if the mind is not wise and clear-sighted, the poor body suffers the consequences of the orders it receives. I do not speak of the orders it receives from the vital. The mind with its rigid principles and the vital with its excesses and outbursts and passions are quick to

destroy the body's equilibrium and to create a condition of fatigue, exhaustion and illness.

> *"It must be freed from this tyranny; that can be done only through a constant union with the psychic centre of the being."*
>
> "The Science of Living", *On Education*

That is evidently the cure of all ills.

> *"The body has a remarkable capacity of adaptation and endurance. It is fit to do so many more things than one can usually imagine. If instead of the ignorant and despotic masters that govern it, it is ruled by the central truth of the being, one will be surprised at what it is capable of doing."*
>
> *Ibid.*

During the last war, it was proved that the body was capable of enduring such suffering as is normally impossible to endure. You have surely read or heard these stories of war in which the body was made to suffer and endure terrible things, and it withstood all that, it proved that it had almost inexhaustible capacities of endurance. Some people happened to be under conditions that should have killed them; if they survived, it was because they had in them a very strong will to survive and the body obeyed that will.

> *"In this sound and balanced life a new harmony will manifest in the body, reflecting the harmony of the higher regions, which will give it the perfect proportions and the ideal beauty of form."*
>
> *Ibid.*

That is the last stage. If you compare the human body as it

now is with a higher ideal of beauty, obviously very few would pass the examination. In almost everyone there is a sort of unbalance in the proportions; we are so accustomed to it that we do not notice it, but if we look from the standpoint of the higher beauty, it becomes visible; very few bodies would bear comparison with perfect beauty. There are a thousand reasons for this unbalance but only one remedy, to instil into the being this instinct, this sense of true beauty, a supreme beauty which will gradually act on the cells and make the body capable of expressing beauty. This is still a thing which is not known: the body is infinitely more plastic than you believe. You must have surely noticed (perhaps very vaguely) that those who live in an inner peace, in an inner beauty, a light, and perfect goodwill, have an expression which is not quite the same as of people who live in bad thoughts, in the lower part of their nature. When the human being is at his best, above his base animality, he reflects something which is not there when he lives in a state of bestiality.

If one tried to change one's form out of egoism or that famous thing, vanity, naturally, one would not succeed, for it is something deeper which has the power to act; but if one could refrain from having at all times bad will, wicked thoughts, one would see a kind of harmony beginning to express itself gradually in the forms and features, for it is a fact that the body expresses the inner states.

But you forget one thing. If you have in the whole day five or six hours of higher consciousness, you feel that it is already much, and the rest of the time you live more or less like a little animal, you let yourself go, you are driven by circumstances. And you forget completely to approach the Thing which is above, which can prevent you from descending into the lower regions of your nature.

You could get much more from your body if you only took the trouble.

You must not despise it nor scold it too much, for it is not

the culprit; if you follow a suitable method to train and educate your body, you will have an infinitely greater output than you have now. It is quite recently that men have begun to speak of physical culture as an important thing; if you go back a hundred years, it was the privilege of those who had nothing else to do. A hundred years ago it was a luxury. When someone said, "I do not want to send my child to school, he must earn his living", there were many who answered, "No, pardon me, you make a serious mistake, if you do not prepare your child for his adult life, he will be incapable of doing what he should do." People said this about the mind but it was not said about the body. So many children lived in more or less good conditions, with a body which was indeed a difficulty, but it used to be said, "That will get corrected, that will be all right...." With training and patience you can acquire a body with which you can get along in life. Nowadays, people recognise the value of a healthy and balanced life. And I have said that this harmony will be progressive:

> *"This harmony will be progressive, for the truth of the being is never static, it is a continual unfolding of a growing, a more and more global and comprehensive perfection. As soon as the body learns to follow the movement of progressive harmony, it will be possible for it, through a continuous process of transformation, to escape the necessity of disintegration and destruction. Thus the irrevocable law of death will have no reason for existing any more.*
>
> *"...These four attributes of the Truth will spontaneously express themselves in our being. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and a perfect harmony."*
>
> "The Science of Living", *On Education*

This is a thing very little known among mystics and religious people: in each part of the being the Divine manifests Himself differently. In the higher parts He manifests as Power, Love, etc., but in the physical He manifests as Harmony and Beauty.

Hence, the problem of the expression of physical beauty is a spiritual problem.

> *"More than a third of our existence is passed in sleep...."*
>
> "On Dreams", *Words of Long Ago*

Physical sleep therefore well deserves our attention. I said "physical sleep", for we are inclined to believe that the whole of our being goes to sleep when the body is asleep.

> *"It is often said that in sleep men's true nature is revealed."*
>
> *Ibid.*

Their true nature does not mean their deeper nature but their spontaneous nature which is not under control, for the control of the will ceases during sleep. And all that one does not do in the waking state, one does during sleep because the control of the will is removed.

> *"All the desires that have been repressed without being dissolved... try to seek satisfaction while the will is asleep.*
>
> *"And as desires are veritable dynamic centres of formation, they tend to organise in and around us an assemblage of circumstances most favourable to their satisfaction."*
>
> *Ibid.*

In another lesson we spoke of the power of mental formation: the mind shapes entities which have a more or less independent life and try to manifest themselves. Here I do not speak of thought but of desire. Desire belongs to the vital domain but at the core of this desire there is always a thought, and the desire becomes all the more active and dynamic when it holds in itself this power of mental formation and the power of vital reali-

sation. The vital is the centre of dynamism of the being, of active energy, and the two combined make something very strong which has a considerable tendency towards realising itself — besides, everything in the universe tends towards manifestation, and things which are prevented from manifesting lose, by that very fact, their force and capacity. Most of the methods aiming at self-control have indeed made use of repression, of the suppression of movements with the idea that if one continues this suppression long enough, one succeeds in killing the element that is not wanted. This would be quite true if it were a question only of the physical world, but behind the physical world there is the subconscious world and behind the subconscious world there lies the immensity of the Inconscient. And what you do not know is this that unless you destroy within you the desire itself, that is, the seed of the formation, this formation which you are preventing from manifesting is so to say repressed in the subconscient — driven down and repressed right at the bottom — and if you go and search in the subconscient you will find that it is waiting there to do its work. That is why so many people who have for years and years been able to control an unwanted movement are suddenly taken by surprise when this movement rushes up from below with all the greater force the longer it has been repressed. Hence dreams are of great use because this movement of repression exists no longer, the conscious will not being there (for it falls asleep or goes elsewhere) and the desire repressed below leaps up and manifests itself in the form of dreams, so much so that you come to know a good many things about your own nature; that is why it is said that man can discover in sleep and dreams his true nature; it is not his true nature, his deeper nature, which is his psychic nature, but the spontaneous, uncontrolled nature.

> *"Thus is destroyed in a few hours of the night the fruit of many efforts made by our conscious thought during the day....*

we put a problem to ourselves, the problem goes to the higher regions of our being and in the morning we get the answer, the solution, because there, in the depths of our consciousness, we know things which we do not know in our external consciousness.

> *During sleep one has often the impression of entering into a region of light, of higher knowledge, but on waking up one brings back only the impression, the memory. Why ?*

That is because in the ladder of being which climbs from the most external to the highest consciousness, there are gaps, breaks of continuity, and when the consciousness rises, descends and goes up again, it passes through some kind of dark holes where there is nothing. Then it enters into a sleep, a sort of unconsciousness, and wakes up as best it can on the other side and hardly remembers what it has brought back from above. This is what happens very frequently and particularly in the state called *samādhi*.[1] People who enter into samadhi find out that between their active external consciousness and their consciousness in meditation, there lies a blank. Up there, they are almost necessarily conscious — conscious of the state in which they find themselves — but when coming down again towards their body, on the way they enter into a kind of hole where they lose everything — they are unable to bring back the experience with them. Quite a discipline is needed to create in oneself the many steps which enable the consciousness not to forget what it has experienced up there. It is not an impossible discipline but it is extremely long and requires an unshakable patience, for it is as if you wanted to build up in you a being, a body; and for that you require first of all the necessary knowledge, but also such a prolonged persistence and perseverance as would discourage many. But it is altogether indispensable if you want to

[1] Ecstasy or yogic trance.

we put a problem to ourselves, the problem goes to the higher regions of our being and in the morning we get the answer, the solution, because there, in the depths of our consciousness, we know things which we do not know in our external consciousness.

> *During sleep one has often the impression of entering into a region of light, of higher knowledge, but on waking up one brings back only the impression, the memory. Why ?*

That is because in the ladder of being which climbs from the most external to the highest consciousness, there are gaps, breaks of continuity, and when the consciousness rises, descends and goes up again, it passes through some kind of dark holes where there is nothing. Then it enters into a sleep, a sort of unconsciousness, and wakes up as best it can on the other side and hardly remembers what it has brought back from above. This is what happens very frequently and particularly in the state called *samādhi*.[1] People who enter into samadhi find out that between their active external consciousness and their consciousness in meditation, there lies a blank. Up there, they are almost necessarily conscious — conscious of the state in which they find themselves — but when coming down again towards their body, on the way they enter into a kind of hole where they lose everything — they are unable to bring back the experience with them. Quite a discipline is needed to create in oneself the many steps which enable the consciousness not to forget what it has experienced up there. It is not an impossible discipline but it is extremely long and requires an unshakable patience, for it is as if you wanted to build up in you a being, a body; and for that you require first of all the necessary knowledge, but also such a prolonged persistence and perseverance as would discourage many. But it is altogether indispensable if you want to

[1] Ecstasy or yogic trance.

take part in the knowledge of your higher being.

Is it useful to note down one's dreams ?

Yes, for more than a year I applied myself to this kind of self-discipline. I noted down everything — a few words, just a little thing, an impression — and I tried to pass from one memory to another. At first it was not very fruitful, but at the end of about fourteen months I could follow, beginning from the end, all the movements, all the dreams right up to the beginning of the night. That puts you in such a conscious, continuously conscious state that finally I was not sleeping at all. My body lay stretched, deeply asleep, but there was no rest in the consciousness. The result was absolutely wonderful; you become conscious of the different phases of sleep, conscious absolutely of everything that happens there, to the least detail, then nothing can any longer escape your control. But if during the day you have a lot of work and you truly need sleep, I advise you not to try !

In any case, there is one thing altogether indispensable, not to make the least movement when you wake up; you must learn to wake up in a state of complete immobility, otherwise everything disappears.

Has the mind need of rest apart from the physical body and the physical brain ?

Yes, an absolute need. And it is only in silence that the mind can receive the true light from above. I do not think that the mental being is liable to fatigue; if it feels tired, that is rather a reaction of the brain. It is only in silence that it can rise above itself. But from the point of view of sleep and dreams of which we were speaking, there is a very remarkable phenomenon. I have tried it out. If you are able to establish not only silence in your head but also repose in your vital, the stoppage of all the activities of your being, and if coming out of the domain

of forms you enter into what is called Sachchidananda, the supreme consciousness, then with three minutes of that state you can have more rest than in eight hours of sleep. It is not very easy, no.... It is the consciousness absolutely conscious but completely still, in the full original Light. If you get that, if you are able to immobilise everything in you, then your whole being participates in this supreme consciousness and I have well observed that as regards rest (and I mean by rest bodily rest, the repose of the muscles) three minutes of that state were equivalent to eight hours of ordinary sleep.

Does the vital body also need rest ?

Yes. The vital body surrounds the physical body with a kind of envelope which has almost the same density as the vibrations of heat observable when the day is very hot. And it is this which is the intermediary between the subtle body and the most material vital body. It is this which protects the body from all contagion, fatigue, exhaustion and even from accidents. Therefore if this envelope is wholly intact, it protects you from everything, but a little too strong an emotion, a little fatigue, some dissatisfaction or any shock whatsoever is sufficient to scratch it as it were and the slightest scratch allows any kind of intrusion. Medical science also now recognises that if you are in perfect vital equilibrium, you do not catch illness or in any case you have a kind of immunity from contagion. If you have this equilibrium, this inner harmony which keeps the envelope intact, it protects you from everything. There are people who lead quite an ordinary life, who know how to sleep as one should, eat as one should, and their nervous envelope is so intact that they pass through all dangers as though unconcerned. It is a capacity one can cultivate in oneself. If one becomes aware of the weak spot in one's envelope, a few minutes' concentration, a call to the force, an inner peace is sufficient for it to be all right, get cured, and for the untoward thing to vanish.

3 February 1951

> *"What do you want the Yoga for ? To get power ? To attain to peace and calm ? To serve humanity ?*
>
> *"None of these motives is sufficient to show that you are meant for the Path."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (7 April)

The main trouble is that you think with words, but these words are empty of meaning; most of the time they are mere words — you talk of the Divine, you talk of the Supreme, you talk of Yoga, you say many things, but does all that correspond in your head to something concrete ? to a thought, a feeling, a clear idea, an experience ? Or are they simply words ?

It is said that Yoga is the "final goal of life", but what do you expect from this final goal ? Some say it means to know oneself; that is the personal and individual aspect. If it is pushed a little farther it means to be conscious of the truth of one's being: why are you born and what should you do ? And if it is pushed still farther, you may become conscious of your relations with other human beings; and a little farther yet, you may ask what is the role, the aim of humanity in the world ? And yet again, what is the condition of the earth from the psychological standpoint ? What is the universe, what is its goal, its role ? In this way, you move from stage to stage and finally you see the problem in its totality. You must see the thing, the experience behind the words. Here we speak of "Yoga" but elsewhere one would speak differently; some would say, "I am seeking my *raison d'être*", and so on. Those who have a religious bent will say, "I want to find the divine Presence." There are fifty ways of saying the thing but it is the *thing* which is important; you must feel it in your head, in your heart, everywhere. It must be concrete, living, otherwise you cannot advance. You must come out of words and get into action — get into the experience, get into life.

(*Mother turns to a child*) Do you intend to do yoga?

Yes, Mother.

Why do you want to do yoga?

To feel the Presence of the Divine.

And you?

To realise the Divine, and for that one must perfect oneself.

And you, why does yoga interest you?

Because I am able to know myself.

And you?

To do what one feels as the inner truth.

And you, are you doing yoga?

At times.

You are honest, but why at times?...

(*Addressing another child*) Do you have any idea as to what yoga is?

I think it is a way by which...

What is there at the end of the way?

The constant Presence of the Divine.

(*Turning to another child*) In yoga what is it that interests you most ?

I do not understand what yoga is. Is it in concentrating on you ?

It is a good symbol.

Anyway, happily nobody has said that he desired yoga to obtain power. There are countries and people who know vaguely that there is something called yoga, and they begin it with the idea that they will become superior to others, will get a greater power than others and consequently will be able to dominate others — this is the worst reason, the most selfish, that which brings the most harmful consequences. Others who are greatly troubled, who have a very difficult life, who have worries, sorrows, many cares, say, "Oh, I shall find something that will give me peace, tranquillity, and I shall be able to get a little rest." And they rush into yoga thinking they are going to be quite happy and satisfied. Unfortunately, it is not altogether like that. When you begin the yoga for reasons of this kind, you are sure to meet great difficulties on the way. And then there is this great virtue in men's eyes: "philanthropy", "love of humanity"; so many people say, "I am going to do yoga to be able to serve humanity, make the unhappy happy, organise the world in the happiest way for everybody." I say this is not sufficient — I do not say that this is bad in itself, although I have heard an old occultist say wittily: "It won't be so very soon that there will be no more misery in the world, because there are too many people who are happy to live on this misery." It was a witticism but it is not altogether wrong. If there were no misery to soothe, the philanthropist would no longer have any reason for his existence — he is so satisfied with himself, he has so strong an impression that he is not selfish ! I knew such people who would be very unhappy if there were no more misery upon earth ! What would they do if there were no longer any misery to re-

lieve, what would be their activity and what their glorification ? How would they be able to show people "I am not selfish !", and that they are generous, full of kindness ?

> *"Do you want the Yoga for the sake of the Divine ?... If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path.*
>
> *"This is the first thing necessary — aspiration for the Divine."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (7 April)

The first movement of aspiration is this: you have a kind of vague sensation that behind the universe there is something which is worth knowing, which is probably (for you do not yet know it) the only thing worth living for, which can connect you with the Truth; something on which the universe depends but which does not depend upon the universe, something which still escapes your comprehension but which seems to you to be behind all things.... I have said here much more than the majority of people feel about the thing, but this is the beginning of the first aspiration — to know that, not to live in this perpetual falsehood where things are so perverted and artificial, this would be something pleasant; to find something that is worth living for.

> *"The next thing you have to do is to tend this aspiration, to keep it always alert and awake and living."*
>
> *Ibid.*

Instead of telling yourself once in a while, "Oh, yes ! I am thinking of finding the Divine", just when there is something unpleasant, when you are a little disgusted because you feel tired — indeed, there are very many flimsy reasons — all of a sudden you remember that there is such a thing as yoga, something like the Divine to know who can get you out of this flatness of life.

> *"And for that what is required is concentration — concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (7 April)

This is the second step. That is to say, you begin wanting to find and know the Divine and live it. You must feel at the same time that the thing is so precious, so important that your entire life is not sufficient for acquiring it. Then, the first movement is a self-giving; you tell yourself, "I do not want any longer to belong to myself, for the sake of my little personal satisfaction, I wish to belong to this marvellous thing which one must find, must know, must live and for which I aspire."

> *"Concentrate in the heart. Enter into it; go within and deep and far, as far as you can. Gather all the strings of your consciousness that are spread abroad, roll them up and take a plunge and sink down."*
>
> *Ibid.*

Naturally, when I speak of the heart, I do not mean the physical organ, the viscera, but the psychological or psychic centre of the being.

Mother then reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

> *"What is one to do to prepare oneself for the Yoga?"*
>
> *Ibid.*

I replied to the person who put to me this question: "Become conscious first of all." So the person tried to become conscious and a few months later came and told me, "Oh, what a nasty present you gave me! Formerly, in my relations with people,

they all used to seem so nice, I had goodwill, they were so nice towards me, and now, since becoming conscious, I see all kinds of things in myself that are not quite pretty, and at the same time I see in others things that are not at all beautiful !" I answered her, "Quite possible ! If you do not want trouble, it is better not to come out of your ignorance."

The first step therefore is to find out whether one wants to see and know the truth or wants to remain comfortably in one's ignorance.

> *"What is the attitude today of the average man ?... Does he not rise in anger and revolt directly he meets something that partakes of the genuinely divine ? Does he not feel that the Divine means the destruction of his cherished possessions ?"*
>
> *Ibid.*

This means very clearly that so long as you remain in your small individual egoism, you will never be ready to make the gesture, to take the plunge, which will enable you to identify yourself with the Divine.

In this connection I could tell you something: long ago there were people who came here because they thought that joining the Ashram was sufficient to make one immortal. And they aspired much for immortality. Naturally, they were old people who did not see a very long road before them and desired to extend it indefinitely — for that is what men understand by "immortality", an indefinite prolongation of what they are. So, to the first person who made this remark, I replied, "I do not know if everyone can become immortal — probably not — but even among those who have the capacity of becoming immortal, how many are ready to pay the price for it ?" Because the number of things which have to be left behind is so considerable that perhaps half-way they would say, "Ah, no, the price is too much." I remember a painter with whom I had a talk about the possibility

of immortality and who asked me what a new world would be like. I told him things would be, for instance, luminous in themselves and there would no longer be this kind of reflected light which comes here upon earth from the sun. And as I was speaking I saw his face becoming longer, more and more grave; finally he said, "But then how can one do painting without the shadow which brings out the light of things ?..." I told him, "You have given exactly the key to the problem."

There were many people, a very large number, who asked me what the new life would be like and to whom I said, "There will be an interchange of forces, a circulating energy; the structure of the body will be quite different, all these ungainly organs will disappear and be replaced by psychological functions; and the necessity of eating, always eating, will disappear." Once again I saw faces getting longer and longer ! People said, "Oh ! and all the good things we eat, all that will go ?"

These are small instances, there are many others, things more important. The most important, the most difficult thing is to renounce one's ego, for to somebody who is not ready, to renounce his ego is like dying and dying much more than a physical death, for to him the death of the ego is like a dissolution of the being — this is not correct but it begins by giving this sort of impression. To be immortal one must renounce all limitations and the ego is the greatest of limitations; hence if "I" am not immortal, what is the good of that ?

In the same talk someone had asked Mother how all those then present had happened to meet, and Mother had answered:

> *"We have all met in previous lives. Otherwise we would not have come together in this life."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (7 April)

It can be said that it is chance or that it is because we have always been together, and both are equally true. As this lady

liked occultism I told her also, "We have met in a previous life" and that is true, isn't it ? But it is a way of seeing things. Also, "We all belong to the same family", this too is true but not in the way in which human beings look at it.

I also said, "We have worked together through the ages for the victory of the Divine and His manifestation upon earth." This is quite evident, for the universe has been created for that and therefore every part of the universe, whatever it be, works for it, knowingly or unknowingly, but works for it all the same.

5 February 1951

Mother reads the beginning of the talk of 14 April. Having spoken of the dangers of yoga ("If you cannot get rid of ambition, do not touch the thing. It is fire that burns."), Mother speaks of the two methods of yoga:

> *"There are two paths of Yoga, one of* tapasya [*discipline*] *and the other of surrender."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (14 April)

What is surrender?

> *It means that one gives oneself entirely to the Divine.*

Yes, and then what happens? If you give yourself entirely to the Divine, it is He who does the yoga, it is no longer you; hence this is not very difficult; while if you do tapasya, it is you yourself who do the yoga and you carry its whole responsibility — it is there the danger lies. But there are people who prefer to have the whole responsibility, with its dangers, because they have a very independent spirit. They are not perhaps in a great hurry — if they need several lives to succeed, it does not matter to them. But there are others who want to go quicker and be more sure of reaching the goal; well, these give over the whole responsibility to the Divine.

> *"The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free; they rush up and invade the being.... What you should do is to keep the thing away from you [the impulses, particularly the sexual impulses], to disassociate from it, take as little notice of it as possible and, even if you happen to think of it, to remain indifferent and unconcerned."*
>
> *Ibid.*

This is much more difficult than to sit upon a difficulty ! It is much more difficult to stand back from the difficulty, to look at it as something which does not concern you, which does not interest you, does not belong to you, which belongs to the world and not to you — but it is only by doing this that you can succeed. This demands a kind of liberation of spirit and a confidence in your inner being: you must believe that if you take the right attitude, it is the best that will happen to you; but if you are afraid when something unpleasant happens to you, then you can do nothing. You must have this confidence within you, whatever the difficulty, whatever the obstacle. Most of the time, when something unpleasant happens, you say, "Is it going to increase ? What other accident is yet going to happen !" and so on. You must tell yourself, "These things are not mine; they belong to the subconscious world; to be sure I have nothing to do with them and if they come again to seize me, I am going to give a fight." Naturally you will answer that this is easy to say but difficult to do. But if truly you take this attitude of confidence, there is no difficulty that you will not be able to conquer. Anxiety makes the difficulty greater.

Evidently there is one difficulty: in your conscious being something does not want the difficulty, wishes sincerely to overcome it, but there are numberless movements in other parts of your consciousness of which you are not conscious. You say, "I want to be cured of that"; unfortunately it is not sufficient to say "I want", there are other parts of the consciousness which hide themselves so that you may not be busy with them, and when your attention is turned away these parts try to assert themselves. That is why I say and shall always repeat, Be perfectly sincere; do not try to deceive yourself, do not say, "I have done all that I could." If you do not succeed, it means that you do not do all that you can. For, if you truly do "all" that you can, you will surely succeed. If you have any defect which you want to get rid of and which still persists, and you say, "I have done all that I could", you may be sure that you have not done all

that you should have. If you had, you would have triumphed, for the difficulties that come to you are exactly in proportion to your strength — nothing can happen to you which does not belong to your consciousness, and all that belongs to your consciousness you are able to master. Even the things and suggestions that come from outside can touch you only in proportion to the consent of your consciousness, and you are made to be the master of your consciousness. If you say, "I have done all that I could and in spite of everything the thing continues, so I give up", you may be already sure that you have not done what you could. When an error persists "in spite of everything" it means that something hidden in your being springs up suddenly like a Jack-in-the-box and takes the helm of your life. Hence, there is only one thing to do, it is to go hunting for all the little dark corners which lie hidden in you and, if you put just a tiny spark of goodwill on this darkness, it will yield, will vanish, and what appeared to you impossible will become not only possible, practicable, but *it will have been done.* You can in this way in one minute get rid of a difficulty which would have harassed you for years. I absolutely assure you of it. That depends only on one thing: that you truly, sincerely, want to get rid of it. And it is the same for everything, from physical illnesses up to the highest mental difficulties. One part of the consciousness says, "I don't want it", but behind there hides a heap of things which say nothing, do not show themselves, and which just want that things continue as they are — generally out of ignorance; they do not believe that it is necessary to be cured, they believe that everything is for the best in the best of worlds. As the lady with whom I had those conversations used to say, "The trouble begins as soon as you want to change." A great French writer has repeated this and has made out of it his pet theory: "Misery begins when you want to perfect yourself; if you do not wish to perfect yourself, you won't have any misery !" I may tell you that this is absolutely wrong, but there are, all the same, things in you that want absolutely to be left

alone, not to be disturbed in any way: "Oh ! what a nuisance you are, leave us alone !"

> *"The whole world is full of the poison [doubt, hesitation, depression]. You take it in with every breath. If you exchange a few words with an undesirable man or even if such a man merely passes by you, you may catch the contagion from him.... So long as you belong to humanity and so long as you lead the ordinary life, it does not matter much if you mix with the people of the world; but if you want the divine life, you will have to be exceedingly careful about your company and your environment."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (14 April)

To try to solve this problem ascetics used to go away into forests and sit under a tree; there, of course, they had not to fear any contagion from other human beings. But it is very difficult to go to the very end of this resolution, for it quickly gets known that a saint is sitting under a tree in meditation, and immediately everybody rushes there ! Not only does he not escape from the difficulty, but he increases it, for there is not a thing more dangerous than to teach others. You know just a little and you begin to teach others, and you are immediately compelled to say more than you know, because people put questions to you which you cannot answer, unless you are a hero of silence. In the world, those who want to pass themselves off as spiritual teachers — when people come and ask them something they do not know, they invent it. Therefore, if in your inner discipline you begin to pretend, you may be sure of falling into the worst hole — of all things pretence is the most ruinous. In the world you may perhaps pass for what you are not, for people allow themselves to be easily deceived, and that will not lead you to a catastrophe (although if you exaggerate, it always leads to a catastrophe), but in the spiritual world, you don't have to deal

with human beings, you have to deal with the Divine; it is impossible for you to pretend that you are this or that, for the Divine knows better than you, doesn't He ? He knows what you are and it is not what you will say which will influence Him.

In all spiritual disciplines the first thing that you are taught is not to narrate your experiences to others. If you need to clarify your mind, tell your experiences to your spiritual teacher and to no one else, and even before your spiritual teacher you must be very careful. When you present or explain to him what has happened in you, if you observe yourself closely, you will see that there are things in you of which you are not wholly aware; in your experiences often there are gaps, interruptions in the continuity (it is extremely difficult to get at the continuity of consciousness and to follow the movement to the end); then, if you narrate your experience without wanting to add anything whatsoever, without failing in sincerity, even so you put in what is not there. When people come and tell me something, an inner event, they find me at times inattentive, not attaching much importance to what I am being told — it is not that, it is that I listen to what is within, I see what is perfectly exact and the little facts that have been added. And it is because of this that generally I do not encourage these things. I know that people may feel relieved, comforted, if they can tell me what has happened, but then one must come with a wonderfully scientific spirit. A scientist would never tell you, "It is this", "It is that", unless he has made all the possible experiments to have the proof of what he says. And for spiritual things one must follow the same method. Instead of saying, "I did that, things happened like that", one must say, "I had the impression that... things seemed to be like this" and "It looked as if there was a connection between this and that..." and not only as a conversational phrase, but as something which expresses truly a mental state. If you seek for a clarification, you yourself must not explain the thing in advance, for once you have given me the explanation, I have no longer any explanation to give you ! You

bring me flowers, for instance, flowers of all kinds, but you do not arrange them, you tell me, "Here I bring you some flowers, it is for you to make a bouquet out of them." In this way, it is much more easy for me, isn't it ? I can take those that I need and give you the explanation of what's happened ! But if you bring me a ready-made bouquet where I see flowers which are not flowers, which are imitations, I have nothing to tell you, for I need solely things which are so to say "pure". Therefore, remember this advice: I am always ready to listen to you but do not bring to me ready-made things. Give me the exact record of what has happened and even so you may be sure that as soon as there is a mental transcription, the mind always knows how to fill up the holes — it likes things to be logical, continuous; and without your knowing it, quite spontaneously it supplies elements which were missing in your experience. I do not blame anyone, I know that it is a spontaneous phenomenon. One must be extremely attentive in order to be quite exact and precise.

Is it not dangerous to say, "My movements are not mine, I have not to think of them" ?

Yes, evidently, if you say, "I can do nothing, that belongs to Nature, the movement has to follow its natural course", you do exactly what I have told you not to do, you make use of the Divine as a fine cloak to cover the satisfaction of your desires. But the opposite movement, "I am good for nothing because such an idea has crossed my mind" is equally wrong, isn't it ?

Naturally, if an impulse happens to come to you which you do not want, the first thing to do is to will that it does not come again; but if, on the contrary, you do not sincerely want it to disappear, then keep it, but do not try to do yoga. You should not take the path unless you have resolved beforehand to overcome all difficulties. The decision must be sincere and complete. You will notice, besides, as you gradually advance, that what you believed to be complete is not so, what you con-

sidered to be sincere is not so, and then you will progress little by little; but to succeed you must have as total a will for progress as possible. If you have this will and if an impulse seizes you with violence, keep the will firm, your being must not vacillate; you must expect these things to come, but when they come, tell yourself, "Well, they come from below, I do not want them to recur, they are not mine." This is not the same thing as saying, "Let it go, since it is Nature."

There must already be a beginning of realisation in the vital for it to revolt against the impulses that come to it. Most human beings and even those who expect to do yoga say, as soon as the impulse comes, "It is quite all right, there is nothing to do, it is all right." Then, if something in you revolts, if something says, "I don't want it", that is the higher part of your being. What takes the resolution to do yoga is not your body or your vital, not even your mind, it is the higher part of your mind or it is your psychic being. It is that alone which can take the resolution — your body does not know very well what it is all about, your vital looks at the beginning of transformation with some anxiety, the mind with its ideas declares, "This can be done in that way, can be explained like this", and so on. So if you have made a resolution, it comes from the higher part of your being, and it is upon this that you have to take your support, not upon anything else — that is the "I". And it must understand in the end that it is not a personal "I", but universal and divine.

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

I may assure you that the vital, left to itself, will never take the decision to be transformed — it is quite satisfied with itself and, over and above this, being an accomplice of the mind, the mind will furnish it with all possible explanations for whatever it does. People who live in their vital consciousness are, even

when they do not say so, always very satisfied with themselves. They are also very satisfied with all that happens to them and they always say of their impulses, "How interesting it is, how interesting !" So, if you wait for the vital to take the decision, you may have to wait for a long time !

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

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

8 February 1951

> *"The outer being is like a crust. In ordinary people the crust is so hard and thick that they are not conscious of the Divine within them. If once, even for a moment only, the inner being has said, 'I am here and I am yours', then it is as though a bridge has been built and little by little the crust becomes thinner and thinner until the two parts are wholly joined and the inner and the outer become one."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (14 April)

Have you ever thought of unifying your being ? Have you been disturbed, sometimes, to see that now you are one person, at other times another, at one time you want to do one thing, at another time you cannot do it, that you find yourself facing an individuality which you can call *yourself* and yet at the same time there are many parts of this individuality which escape you ?

> *I have not attempted the unification of the different personalities which may be in me, but I have tried to put them facing each other, the good opposite the bad, and I have never found in the good a sufficient dynamism to fight against the bad.*

Have you never thought that your judgment of what is "good" and "bad" was a purely human judgment ? And that it might not necessarily tally with the judgment of the divine Presence within you ? The "bad" things you could not get rid of were probably things not in their place, things not properly balanced, and it would be a great pity if they were eliminated because, perhaps, a part of your energy and of your divine Presence would disappear at the same time. People who do not do yoga

under the direction of a guide follow ordinary moral notions and at times they feel very perplexed because with all their goodwill they do not get the expected result; that happens because generally they wish to approve of their being instead of transforming it and because moral notions are very bad. In the work of unification of the being, you must needs have imagination enough to be able to put the movements you have, the movements you wish to keep, to put them before what you are capable of imagining as most akin to the divine Presence; naturally, at first it is only an imagination quite far from the truth, but it would help you to get out a little from moral narrowness and also from the limitations of your consciousness. For example, you have the idea of putting what you are and what you do before a consciousness which is at once infinite and eternal. These two words do not perhaps make much sense at the beginning, but they compel you to break the limits and to put yourself in front of something which surpasses you so much on every side that its judgment cannot be the same as that of a human mentality. One must begin absolutely like that. If you try to analyse yourself according to moral principles, you may be sure of going contrary to the divine plan. Not that the Divine is amoral, mark that, but this is not a kind of morality that mankind understands at all, it is not the same.

"Ambition has been the undoing of many Yogis....

"A story is told of a Yogi who had attained wonderful powers. He was invited by his disciples to a great dinner. It was served on a big low table. The disciples asked their Master to show his power in some way. He knew he should not, but the seed of ambition was there in him and he thought, 'After all, it is a very innocent thing and it may prove to them that such things are possible and teach them the greatness of God.' So he said, 'Take away the table, but only the table, let the table-cloth remain as it is with all

the dishes upon it.' The disciples cried out, 'Oh, that cannot be done, everything will fall down.' But he insisted and they removed the table from under the cloth. Lo, the miracle! The cloth and all that was upon it remained there just as though the table was underneath. The disciples wondered. But all on a sudden the Master jumped up and rushed out screaming and crying, 'Nevermore shall I have a disciple, nevermore! Woe is me! I have betrayed my God.'"

Questions and Answers 1929 (14 April)

This is a temptation that every teacher meets at each step, for the very simple reason that ordinary humanity, in a general way, not being in personal contact with the divine powers, understands nothing of what an illumined consciousness may be and asks for material proofs. It is on this demand that most religions are established and, for reasons which I may very frankly call "political", they have put at the origin of their religion a more or less considerable number of miracles as having been performed by the founders, and they have thus more or less crudely encouraged among ignorant people the taste, the necessity for seeing what they call "miracles" in order to believe in the divine power of a person. This is an extraordinary ignorance, because it is not at all necessary to have a divine power or consciousness to perform miracles. It is infinitely more easy to perform miracles with the help of small entities of the vital world who are material enough to be in touch with the physical world and act upon it, than to live in the consciousness of the higher regions and to work upon Nature only through the intermediary of all the other domains. It has been repeated over and over again to all human intellects that the proof of a being's divinity is that he can raise the dead, cure maladies, and do many other things of the same kind (except making a fool wise).[1] Well, I

[1] Mother added later: This is a Mohamedan story, I believe. As it was said that Jesus raised the dead, healed the sick, made the dumb speak, gave

guarantee that this is not a proof; it proves only one thing, that these "Masters" are in contact with the powers of the vital world and that with the help of those beings they can perform these miracles, that's all. If one relies upon that to recognise the superiority of a man, one would make a glaring mistake. Naturally, there are other religions which are established on revelations made to their founders. These revelations are more or less happy mental transcriptions of the knowledge they received. This is already of a higher order but it is not yet a proof. And I would finally say, the human demand for proofs is not at all favourable to one's development. Because the true divine power has organised the world according to a certain plan and in this plan there was no question of things happening in an illogical way; otherwise from the very beginning the world would have been illogical and it is not so. Men imagine for the most part one of two things, either that there is a material world to which they belong, that all comes from there, all returns there and all ends there — these are the unbelievers — or, the believers, most of them, that there is something which they call "God" and then the physical world, and that this physical world is the creation of that God who knows what he is doing or does what he wants; and the confusion lies in saying that everything happens by a kind of arbitrariness, natural or supernatural. There are very few people who know that there exists in the universe an infinite number of gradations and that each one of these gradations has its own reality, its own life, its own law, its own determinism, and that the creation did not come about "like that", by an arbitrary will, in an arbitrary way but is a deploying of consciousness and each thing has evolved as a logical result of the preceding one. I am telling you all this as simply as I can, you know, it is a very incomplete expression, but if I wanted to tell you the story exactly as it is, it would be a little difficult to make

---

sight to the blind, one day an idiot was brought to him, to be made intelligent and Jesus ran away ! "Why did you run away ?" he was asked. "I can do everything," he answered, "except give intelligence to an idiot."

you understand. Only my conclusion I would like you to know, (I have already spoken about it several times, more or less in detail), it is this: each one of these numberless regions has its own very logical determinism — everything proceeds from cause to effect; but these worlds, although differentiated, are not separate from each other and, by numerous processes which we may study, the inner or higher worlds are in constant contact with the lower or external worlds and act upon these, so that the determinism of one changes the determinism of the other. If you take the purely material domain, for instance, and if you notice that the material laws, the purely material laws are altered by something all of a sudden, you ought to say that it was a "miracle", because there is a rupture of the determinism of one plane through the intervention of another, but usually we do not call this a miracle. For example, when the human will intervenes and changes something, that seems to you quite natural, because you have been accustomed to it from your childhood; you remember, don't you, the example I gave you the other day: a stone falls according to the law of its own determinism, but you wish to interrupt its fall and you stretch out your hand and catch it; well you ought to call this a "miracle", but you don't because you are used to it (but a rat or a dog would perhaps call it a miracle if they could speak). And note that it is the same for what people call a "miracle"; they speak of a "miracle" because they are absolutely ignorant, unaware of the gradations between the will which wants to express itself and the plane on which it expresses itself. When they have a mental or a vital will, the thing seems quite natural to them, but when it is a question of the will of a higher world — the world of the gods or of a higher entity — which all of a sudden upsets all your little organisation, that seems to you a miracle. But it is a miracle simply because you are unable to follow the gradations by which the phenomenon took place. Therefore, the Supreme Will, that which comes from the very highest region, if you saw it in its logical action, if you were aware of it continually, it

would seem to you altogether natural. You can express this in two ways: either say, "It is quite natural, it is like this that things must happen, it is only an expression of the divine Will", or, each time you see on the material plane an intervention coming from another plane, you ought to say, "It is miraculous !" So I may say with certainty that people who want to see miracles are people who cherish their ignorance ! You understand my logic, don't you ? These people love their ignorance, they insist upon seeing miracles and being astounded ! And that is why people who have done yoga seriously consider it altogether fatal to encourage this tendency; hence it is forbidden.

There is a "miracle" because you do not give people time to see the procedure by which you do things, you do not show them the stages. Thus, some men have reached higher mental regions and do not need to follow step by step all the gradations of thought; they can jump from one idea to a far distant inference without the intermediary links; this is usually called intuition (it is not altogether an "intuition"; it is that the idea, to begin with, is at a great height and from there these people can see while descending the whole totality of things and consequences without passing through all the gradations as ordinary human thought is obliged to do). It is an experience I have had; when I used to speak with Sri Aurobindo, we never had the need to go through intermediary ideas; he said one thing and I saw the far off result; we used to talk always like that, and if a person had happened to be present at our conversations he would have said, "What are they talking about !" But for us, you know, it was as clear as a continuous sentence. You could call that a mental miracle — it was not a miracle, it was simply that Sri Aurobindo had the vision of the totality of mental phenomena and hence we had no need to waste a good deal of time in going through all the gradations. For any person capable of following the line, the thing would have been quite natural and logical; for ignorant people it was a "miracle".

> *"They [powers] have to be used in the same way as they came. They come by union with the Divine. They must be used by the will of the Divine and not for display."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (14 April)

If you use power to show that you possess it, it becomes so full of falsehood and untruth that finally it disappears. But it is not always thus, because, as I said at the beginning, when it concerns a power like the power of healing or the power of changing an altogether external thing — of making an unfavourable circumstance favourable, of finding lost objects, all these countless little "miracles" which are found in all religions — it is much more easy and even more effective to do these "miracles" with the help of the entities of the vital world which are not always recommendable, far from it; and then these beings make fun of you. This begins very well, very brilliantly, and usually finishes very badly.

I know the story of a man who had a few small powers and indulged in all kinds of so-called "spiritualist" practices, and through repeated exercises he had succeeded in coming into conscious contact with what he called a "spirit". This man was doing business; he was a financier and was even a speculator. His relations with his "spirit" were of a very practical kind ! This spirit used to tell him when the stocks and shares would go up and when they would come down; it told him, "Sell this", "Buy that" — it gave him very precise financial particulars. For years he had been listening to his "spirit" and had followed it, and was fantastically successful; he became tremendously rich and naturally boasted a lot about the spirit which "guided" him. He used to tell everybody, "You see, it is really worth while learning how to put oneself in contact with these spirits." But one day he met a man who was a little wiser, who told him, "Take care." He did not listen to him, he was swollen with his power and ambition. And it was then that his "spirit" gave him a last advice,

"Now you can become the richest man in the world. Your ambition will be fulfilled. You have only to follow my direction. Do this: put all that you have into this transaction and you will become the richest man in the world." The stupid fool did not even realise the trap laid for him: for years he had followed his "guide" and succeeded, so he followed the last direction; and he lost everything, to the last penny.

So you see, these are small entities who make fun of you, and to make sure of you they work these little miracles to encourage you, and when they feel that you are well trapped, they play a fine trick upon you and it is all over with you.

We have said that there is only one safety, never to act except in harmony with the divine Will. There is one question: how to know that it is the divine Will which makes you act? I replied to the person who put to me this question (although this person did not agree with me) that it is not difficult to distinguish the voice of the Divine: one cannot make a mistake. You need not be very far on the path to be able to recognise it; you must listen to the still, small peaceful voice which speaks in the silence of your heart.

I forgot one thing: to hear it you must be absolutely sincere, for if you are not sincere, you will begin by deceiving yourself and you will hear nothing at all except the voice of your ego and then you will commit with assurance (thinking that it is the real small voice) the most awful stupidities. But if you are sincere, the way is sure. It is not even a voice, not even a sensation, it is something extremely subtle — a slight indication. When everything goes well, that is, when you do nothing contrary to the divine Will, you will not perhaps have any definite impression, everything will seem to you normal. Of course, you should be eager to know whether you are acting in accordance with the divine Will, that is the first point, naturally, without which you can know nothing at all. But once you are eager and you pay attention, everything seems to you normal, natural, then all of a sudden, you feel a little uneasiness

somewhere in the head, in the heart or even in the stomach — generally one doesn't give it a thought; you may feel it several times in the day but you reject it without giving it any attention; but it is no longer quite the same; then, at that moment, you must stop, no matter what you may be doing, and look, and if you are sincere, you will notice a small black spot (a tiny wicked idea, a tiny false movement, a small arbitrary decision) and that's the source of the uneasiness. You will notice then that the little black spot comes from the ego which is full of preferences; generally it does what it likes; the things it likes are called good and those it does not are called bad — this clouds your judgment. It is difficult to judge under these conditions. If you truly want to know, you must draw back a step and look, and you will know then that it is this small movement of the ego which is the cause of the uneasiness. You will see that it is a tiny thing curled back upon itself; you will have the impression of being in front of something hard which resists or is black. Then with patience, from the height of your consciousness, you must explain to this thing its mistake, and in the end it will disappear. I do not say that you will succeed all at once the very first day, but if you try sincerely, you will always end with success. And if you persevere, you will see that all of a sudden you are relieved of a mass of meanness and ugliness and obscurity which was preventing you from flowering in the light. It is those things which make you shrivel up, prevent you from widening yourself, opening out in a light where you have the impression of being very comfortable. If you make this effort, you will see finally that you are very far from the point where you had begun, the things you did not feel, did not understand, have become clear. If you are resolved, you are sure to succeed.

This is the first step towards unifying yourself, becoming a conscious being who has a central will and acts only according to this will, which will be a constant expression of the divine Will. It is worth trying.

And I may tell you from my personal experience that there

is nothing in the world more interesting. If you begin making this effort you will find that your life is full of interest — you know, of the ordinary life of people at least a third is a kind of dull boredom (I say a third, but for some two-thirds of the day is a dull boredom), and all that gets volatilised! Everything becomes so interesting, the least little thing, the least casual meeting, the least word exchanged, the least thing displaced — everything is full of life and interest.

10 February 1951

> *"You must be able, if you are ready to follow the Divine order, to take up whatever work you are given, even a stupendous work, and leave it the next day with the same quietness with which you took it up and not feel that the responsibility is yours. There should be no attachment — to any object or any mode of life. You must be absolutely free."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (14 April)

I would like someone to tell me what he understands by "be absolutely free", for it is a very important question. I shall tell you why.

Most people confuse liberty with licence. For the ordinary mind, to be free is to have the chance of committing every stupidity that one likes, without anybody intervening. I say one must be "absolutely free", but it is a very dangerous advice unless one understands the meaning of the words. Free from what? — free from attachments, evidently. It is exactly that. It is the story of the Buddha[1] who answers the young man expert in all the arts, "I am an expert in the art of self-control. If men congratulate me or praise me, it leaves me tranquil and indifferent. If they blame me, that leaves me equally tranquil and indifferent."

Try then to question yourself to see to what extent you are above all blame and praise. Not that you must feel so superior to others that what they say seems to you of no importance, it is not that. It is that you have become aware of the general state of ignorance, including yours, and when others believe that something is good, you know "It is not so good as that", and when they believe it is bad you can say, "It is not so bad as that." Everything is completely mixed up and finally nobody can

[1] "Self-Control", *Words of Long Ago*.

judge anybody. Therefore you are completely indifferent to all praise and all blame. And the conclusion would be: so long as the divine consciousness in me or in one whom I have chosen as my Guru does not tell me "this is to be done", "this is not to be done", I am indifferent to what others may tell me. For I think that the divine presence in the one in whom I have put my trust is capable of knowing what is good and what is bad, what is to be done and what is not to be done.

And that is the best way of being free. Let your surrender to the Divine be entire and you will become completely free.

The only way of being truly free is to make your surrender to the Divine entire, without reservation, because then all that binds you, ties you down, chains you, falls away naturally from you and has no longer any importance. If someone comes and blames you, you may say, "On what authority does he blame me, does he know the supreme will ?" And the same thing when you are congratulated. This is not to advise you not to profit by what comes to you from others — I have learnt throughout my life that even a little child can give you a lesson. Not that he is less ignorant than you but he is like a mirror which reflects the image of what you are; he may tell you something which is not true but also may show you something that you did not know. You can hence profit a great deal by it if you receive the lesson without any undesirable reaction.

Every hour of my life I have learnt that one can learn something; but I have never felt bound by the opinion of others, for I consider that there is only one truth in the world which can know something, and this is the Supreme Truth. Then one is quite free. And it is this freedom that I want of you — free from all attachment, all ignorance, all reaction; free from everything except a total surrender to the Divine. This is the way out from all responsibility towards the world. The Divine alone is responsible.

It is not possible, is it, for the surrender to be total

from the very beginning ?

Generally, no. It needs time. But there are instantaneous conversions; to explain all that to you in detail would take too much time. You know perhaps that in all schools of initiation it used to be said that it needed thirty-five years to change one's character ! So you must not expect the thing to be done in a minute.

If one is to be indifferent to everything, why are prizes given to the children ?

You do not expect a school-boy to be a yogi, do you ? I have just said that it needs thirty-five years to attain that and to change one's character.

You see, individual, human authority, like the authority of a father of the family, of a teacher, of the head of a state, is a symbolic thing. They have no real authority but authority is given to them to enable them to fulfil a role in social life as it now is, that is to say, a social life founded upon falsehood and not at all on truth, for truth means unity and society is founded on division. There are people who work out their role, their function, their symbol more or less well — nobody is faultless, all is mixed in this world. But he who takes his role seriously, tries to fill it as honestly as possible, may receive inspirations which enable him to play his part a little more truly than an ordinary man. If the teacher who gives marks kept in mind that he was the representative of the divine truth, if he constantly took sufficient trouble to be in tune with the divine Will as much as this is possible for him, well, that could be very useful; for the ordinary teacher acts according to his personal preferences — what he does not like, what he likes, etc. — and he belongs to the general falsehood, but if at the time of giving marks, the teacher tries sincerely to put himself in harmony with a truth deeper than his small narrow consciousness, he may serve as an

intermediary of this truth and, as such, help his students to become conscious of this truth within themselves.

This is precisely one of the things that I wanted to tell you. Education is a sacerdocy, teaching is a sacerdocy, and to be at the head of a State is a sacerdocy. Then, if the person who fulfils this role aspires to fulfil it in the highest and the most true way, the general condition of the world can become much better. Unfortunately, most people never think about this at all, they fill their role somehow — not to speak of the innumerable people who work only to earn money, but in this case their activity is altogether rotten, naturally. That was my very first basis in forming the Ashram: that the work done here be an offering to the Divine.

Instead of letting oneself go in the stream of one's nature, of one's mood, one must constantly keep in mind this kind of feeling that one is a representative of the Supreme Knowledge, the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Law, and that one must apply it in the most honest, the most sincere way one can; then one makes great progress oneself and can make others also progress. And besides, one will be respected, there will be no more indiscipline in the class, for there is in every human being something that recognises and bows down before true greatness; even the worst criminals are capable of admiring a noble and disinterested act. Therefore when children feel in a teacher, in a school master, this deep aspiration to act according to the truth, they listen to you with an obedience which you would not get if one day you were in a good mood and the next day you were not, which is disastrous for everybody.

> *If one needs thirty-five years to change one's character, how can one make, from now, a total surrender to the Divine ?*

It may go quicker, you know ! All depends on the way that one follows.

You remember, we spoke once of the attitude of the baby cat and that of the baby monkey.[1] If you agree to be like a docile baby cat (there are also baby cats which are very undisciplined, I have seen them), like a docile little child, this may go very fast. Note that it is very easy to say, "Choose the attitude of the baby cat", but it is not so easy to do. You must not believe that adopting the attitude of the baby cat lets you off from all personal effort. Because you are not a baby cat, human beings are not baby cats ! There are in you innumerable elements which are accustomed to trusting only themselves, which want to do their own work, and it is much more difficult to control all these elements than to let oneself go in all circumstances. It is very difficult. First of all, there is always that wonderful work of the mind which likes so very much to observe, criticise, analyse, doubt, try to solve the problem, say, "Is it good thus ?", "Would it not be better like that ?", and so on. So that goes on and on, and where is the baby cat ?... For the baby cat does not think ! It is free from all this and hence it is much easier for it !

Whatever be the way you follow, personal effort is always necessary till the moment of identification. At that moment all effort drops from you like a worn-out robe, you are another person: what was impossible for you becomes not only possible but indispensable, you cannot do otherwise.

You must be attentive, silent, must await the inner inspiration, not do anything from external reactions, you must be moved by the light that comes from above, constantly, regularly, must act only under the inspiration of that light and nothing else. Never to think, never to question, never to ask "Should I do this or that ?", but to know, to see, to hear. To act with an inner certitude without questioning and without doubting, because the decision does not come from you, it comes from above.

[1] Sri Ramakrishna used to say that a disciple can choose one of two attitudes: the passive trust of the baby cat which lets itself be carried by its mother (this is the way of surrender, the surest) and the active attitude of the baby monkey which clings to its mother (the way of personal effort).

Well, this may come very soon or one may have to wait perhaps a long time — that depends upon one's previous preparation, upon many things. Till then you must will and will with persistence, and above all never lose patience or courage. If necessary, repeat the same thing a thousand times, knowing that perhaps the thousandth time you will realise the result.

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

"Some persons ask: 'Why has not the Divine come yet ?' Because you are not ready. If a little drop makes you sing and dance and scream, what would happen if the whole thing came down ?

"Therefore do we say to people who have not a strong and firm and capacious basis in the body and the vital and the mind: 'Do not pull', meaning 'do not try to pull at the forces of the Divine, but wait in peace and calmness.' For they would not be able to bear the descent. But to those who possess the necessary basis and foundation, we say, on the contrary, 'Aspire and draw.' For they would be able to receive and yet not be upset by the forces descending from the Divine."

Questions and Answers 1929 (14 April)

Why does the divine force upset people ?

Because it is too strong for them. It is as though you were in the midst of a big cyclone. It happens at times that the wind is so violent that you are not able to stand — you have to lie down and wait till it blows over. Now, the divine forces are a thousand times stronger than a cyclonic wind. If you do not have in you a very wide receptivity, an extremely solid basis of calmness, of equality of soul and inner peace, they come and carry you away like a gale and you cannot resist them. It is the same thing with light; some people get a pain in the eyes when they look at the sun and are obliged to put on dark glasses because sunlight is too strong for them. But this is merely sunlight. When you are able to look at the supramental light, it appears to you so brilliant that sunlight seems like a black stain in comparison. One must have strong eyes and a solid brain to

bear that, one must be well prepared, established in something extremely calm and vast — it is as though one had such a strong basis of tranquillity that when the storm passes, when the light comes with a great intensity, one is able to remain immobile and receive what one can without being knocked over. But there is not one being in a million who can do it. Only those who have had a foretaste of inner experience can know what this means. But even if you enter consciously into the psychic, it is dazzling; and it is within your reach because it is your own psychic being, and yet it is so different from your external consciousness that the first time you enter it consciously, it seems to you truly dazzling, something infinitely more brilliant than the most brilliant sunlight.

The psychic is what may be called "the Divine within the reach of man".

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

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

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

all that becomes so small, so petty; you feel within you a force to break all that.

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

If there is an upsetting when the force descends, does it not mean that the vital is not ready and should it not be forced to be ready ?

How can you force it ? It escapes through your fingers, so to say. Your will thinks it has caught it, and it eludes you. It is difficult to control. And force it to what ? to be ready ?... All that you will be able to get from it is that it will become inert, that is, it will hide in a corner, not stir any longer, and let the storm pass ! because for it the contact with the divine forces is like a storm. And when it sees that the crisis is over, it will react: "Here we are ! Now, it is my turn !"

If you are upset, it means that you have still much work to do upon your vital before it can be ready, it means there is a weakness somewhere. For some, the weakness is in the mind. I knew a boy in France who was a fine musician, he used to play the violin admirably. But his brain was not very big, it was just big enough to help him in his music, nothing more. He used to come to our spiritual meetings and, all of a sudden, he had the experience of the infinite in the finite; it was an absolutely true experience; in the finite individual came the experience of the infinite. But this upset the boy so much that he could make nothing at all of it ! He could not even play his music any longer. The experience had to be stopped because it was too powerful for him. This is an instance where the mind was too weak.

He had the experience, truly, not the idea (ideas are generally something foreign to all men). One must have the experience before the idea; for most men think only with words — if you put two contradictory ideas together, they no longer understand, while the experience is quite possible. So the mind must be a little wide, a little supple and quiet, and instead of feeling immediately that everything you were thinking of is now escaping you, you wait very quietly for something in your head to begin to understand the content of the experience.

There are people — many — who are weak in their vital being. When they have this sensation of infinity, eternity, in their very small person, in their very little strength, it is so different from the impression they have constantly, that they understand nothing whatever. Then they fall sick or they begin to talk deliriously or to shout and dance.

But if you are absolutely sincere and look at yourself clear-sightedly, this cannot happen to you, for an experience which comes inopportunely like that is always the result of some pride or ambition or some lack of balance within, due to having neglected one part of the being for the benefit of another.

Those who think they can advance in yoga by leaving their body completely inert, their vital asleep and their mind in a kind of stupefaction (for often, what they call "silence" is just stupefaction), get completely upset, you may be sure, when an experience comes to them. They lose their head, they do extravagant things or otherwise something very unfortunate happens to them.... One must have a solid well-balanced body, a well-controlled vital and a mind organised, supple, logical; then, if you are in a state of aspiration and you receive an answer, all your being will feel enriched, enlarged, splendid, and you will be perfectly happy and you will not spill your cup because it is too full, like a clumsy fellow who does not know how to hold a full tumbler. It is like that, you see, it is as if you had a small vase there, quite small, which will remain small if you do not take care to make it bigger; then if all of a sudden it is filled

up with something which is too strong, everything overflows !

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

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

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

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

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

Mother reads a comment made by someone during her talk in 1929:

"In the case of some persons who turn to the Divine it happens that every material prop or everything they are fond of is removed from their life. And if they

love someone he also is taken away."

Questions and Answers 1929 (14 April)

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

So often you come across persons who, before they began yoga, had a relatively easy life, and as soon as they come to yoga, all the circumstances to which they were particularly attached break away from them more or less brutally. Then they are troubled; they do not perhaps have the frankness to admit it to themselves, they perhaps take recourse to other thoughts and other words, but it comes to this: "How is it? I am good and I am not treated kindly!"

The entire human notion of justice is there. "You try to become good and what cataclysms befall you! All the things you loved are taken away from you, all the pleasures you have had are taken away from you, all the people whom you loved leave you; it is indeed not worth the trouble to be good and to have made an effort." And if you follow your reasoning far enough, all of a sudden you come upon the canker — so, you wanted to do yoga out of self-interest, you wanted to be good out of self-interest, you thought your situation would be better and you would be given a bonbon for your wisdom! And that does not happen!... Well, this refusal is the best lesson that could ever be given to you. For as long as your aspiration hides a desire and as long as in your heart there is the spirit of bargaining with the Divine, things will come and give you blows till you

wake up to the true consciousness within you which makes no conditions, no bargains. That's all.

> *Since the time I have been doing yoga I find that all my affairs are going better than before. So I conclude...*

Perhaps your aspiration was truly sincere and disinterested. In such a case, things must happen like that.

> *If someone who has been bad and wicked, suddenly decides to change, does he immediately hear the small inner voice which warns every time one does something bad ?*

Everything depends upon the form the reversal, the inner conversion has taken. If the change is sudden, yes, one can immediately become conscious of the small voice, but if it is gradual, the best effects will also be gradual. It depends absolutely on each case, one cannot tell. If a kind of tearing, an illumination takes place, then yes, one has immediately the inner indication. It can even be retrospective. That is, while thinking of certain past acts, one may get a clear vision of what one was compared with what one now is. Besides, each time there is a true change in the being, each time one overcomes a fault, one has the clear vision of a whole set of things which seemed quite natural and which now pass across the screen like a dark spot; you see the origin, the causes and the effects. If you have a precise, exact memory and have for a certain length of time, say a period of ten years, made sincere efforts to transform yourself, to consecrate yourself more and more, and if you could recollect what you were before, you would say, "It is not possible, I was not like that !" And yet you were indeed like that. There is such a distance between what one was before, what seemed quite natural to you before and what seems to you natural now, that

you cannot believe you are the same person. This is the surest indication that you have truly progressed.

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

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

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

Some imagine that the sign of spiritual life is the capacity to sit in a corner and meditate ! That is a very, very common idea. I do not want to be severe, but most people who make much of their capacity for meditation — I do not think they meditate even for one minute out of one hour. Those who medi-

tate truly never speak about it; for them it is quite a natural thing. When it has become a natural thing, without any glory about it, you may begin to tell yourself that you are making progress. Those who talk about it and think that this gives them a superiority over other human beings, you may be sure, are most of the time in a state of complete inertia.

It is very difficult to meditate. There are all kinds of meditations.... You may take an idea and follow it to arrive at a given result — this is an active meditation; people who want to solve a problem or to write, meditate in this way without knowing that they are meditating. Others sit down and try to concentrate on something without following an idea — simply to concentrate on a point in order to intensify one's power of concentration; and this brings about what usually happens when you concentrate upon a point: if you succeed in gathering your capacity for concentration sufficiently upon a point whether mental, vital or physical, at a given moment you pass through and enter into another consciousness. Others still try to drive out from their head all movements, ideas, reflexes, reactions and to arrive at a truly silent tranquillity. This is extremely difficult; there are people who have tried for twenty-five years and not succeeded, for it is somewhat like taking a bull by the horns.

There is another kind of meditation which consists in being as quiet as one can be but without trying to stop all thoughts, for there are thoughts which are purely mechanical and if you try to stop these you will need years, and into the bargain you will not be sure of the result; instead of that you gather together all your consciousness and remain as quiet and peaceful as possible, you detach yourself from external things as though they do not interest you at all, and all of a sudden, you brighten the flame of aspiration and throw into it everything that comes to you so that the flame may rise higher and higher, higher and higher; you identify yourself with it and you go up to the extreme point of your consciousness and aspiration, thinking of nothing else — simply, an aspiration which mounts, mounts,

mounts, without thinking a minute of the result, of what may happen and specially of what may not, and above all without desiring that something may come — simply, the joy of an aspiration which mounts and mounts and mounts, intensifying itself more and more in a constant concentration. And there I may assure you that what happens is the best that can happen. That is, it is the maximum of your possibilities which is realised when you do this. These possibilities may be very different according to individuals. But then all these worries about trying to be silent, going behind appearances, calling a force which answers, waiting for an answer to your questions, all that vanishes like an unreal vapour. And if you succeed in living consciously in this flame, in this column of mounting aspiration, you will see that even if you do not have an immediate result, after a time something will happen.

During the concentration that we have here[1] together, on what should we concentrate ?

Can anyone tell me what this concentration is and why we have it ? It is a very interesting question, it concerns everybody. Can anyone tell me the difference between this concentration and a so-called "ordinary" meditation ? Why do we do it and what happens there ?

We make an offering of all our daily actions.

Yes, this is the individual side. And collectively, what is this concentration for ? (He is on the way, note, he has taken half the first step).

We concentrate on our weak points and aspire for their disappearance.

[1] For a long time meditations used to take place in the Ashram building. Then, as the number of disciples increased and sports gained importance, these meditations were replaced by collective "concentrations" at the Ashram Playground.

That is also an individual aspect.

In the meditations we formerly used to have there [*at the Ashram*[1]], when we had a morning or evening meditation, my work was to unify the consciousness of everyone and lift it as high as I could towards the Divine. Those who were able to feel the movement followed it. This was ordinary meditation with an aspiration and ascent towards the Divine. Here, at the Playground, the work is to unify all who are here, make them open and *bring down* the divine force into them. It is the opposite movement and that is why this concentration cannot replace the other, even as the other cannot replace this one. What happens here is exceptional — in the other meditation [*at the Ashram*] I gathered together the consciousness of all who were present and, with the power of aspiration, lifted it towards the Divine, that is, made each one of you progress a little. Here, on the other hand, I take you as you are; each one of you comes saying, "Here we are with our whole day's activities, we were busy with our body, here it is, we offer to you all our movements, just as they were, just as we are." And my work is to unify all that, make of it a homogeneous mass and, in answer to this offering (which each one can make in his own way), to open every consciousness, widen the receptivity, make a unity of this receptivity and bring down the Force. So at that moment each one of you, if you are very quiet and attentive, will surely receive something. You will not always be aware of it, but you will receive something.

In March 1964, the following question was put to the Mother:

> *And now that you are no longer physically present at the Playground concentrations, what happens ?*

I hope people have made some progress and do not need the physical presence to feel the Help and the Force.

[1] See foot note p. 105.

15 February 1951

Mother reads the beginning of her talk of 21 April 1929 about dreams and visions.

> *Often I have dreams about railways. I often miss the train...*

It is quite symbolical !

> *...because I have too much luggage. I run after it and at times I succeed in catching up with it and jumping into the last coach.*

The train, the ship, and I suppose the aeroplane also are for those who do yoga, symbols of the way and of the Force that leads you — if you lose your time or if you have too much luggage or if you think of it too late, well, you miss the way and you must run hard to catch up.

There are lots of dreams like that which give a very precise indication of the state you are in.

> *When I was in Calcutta, I dreamt that someone dressed in white came to my bedside, holding the flower you have called "New Creation" [the tuberose]. I did not know the meaning of the flower then. It was only after my coming here that I came to know it. The form I saw resembled you.*

Dreams are very interesting, specially if one knows how to use them.

> *What is the nature of a sleep without dreams ?*

If one succeeds in making the mind and vital silent, and in keeping the body well asleep, one can have a very still and quiet sleep, and then, if one can manage to get out of these forms and enter the higher worlds, one may reach the true repose of Sachchidananda.

How is it that one meets and recognises in dream persons whom one is going to meet and recognise later on in ordinary life ?

There are many possibilities. But most often, it is that a communication has been established either on the mental or the vital plane or even on the subtle physical plane and it is this communication which brings about the meeting later — your dream is not only a premonition but also a condition; there is an inner relation close enough to enable you to come into contact in sleep, and circumstances so arrange themselves that you meet physically afterwards. Sometimes it is only a premonition, but then the dream has a special quality — you see someone coming and he does come physically a little later.

Generally it is an already established relation; it is someone whom you meet, whom you frequent, whom you speak to, with whom you live some hours of the night. Then afterwards when you both meet you have the impression that you know each other very well. That's a fact, you already know each other, before having met physically.

Are there not false visions ?

If you narrate something you have not seen, evidently that is a false vision ! Also if you embellish, rearrange, change your vision when you report it, this too becomes a false vision. But if you tell in all simplicity what you have seen, what can there be false about it ? Your interpretation may be false — you may say, "That means this" and you make a big blunder, but what you

have seen, you have seen, and what you have not seen, you have not seen ! This is something which always astounds me !... Have you seen it ? If so, then you have ! The explanation of what you have seen is another matter, but if you have seen something, you have seen it !

This question generally comes from those who have the habit of rearranging a little what they see. They see a tiny thing, perhaps, in a flash, and then willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously they arrange things, they add a little bit, add to it another, they give a little explanation, make the thing coherent and when it has become something that can stand on its own legs, they say, "I had this vision", but it is not at all what they saw.... This is a kind of mental insincerity. It is spontaneous — when the mind sees one thing here, another thing there, yet a third elsewhere, this is very unpleasant for it. It fills up the holes, it says, "this leads to that", "that is the cause of this", and so on, and the mind is very happy because this is logical. What the mind adds in between the points of the vision may happen, by chance, to be true, but it may also be false.

Ask yourself rather whether you have a mind which keeps quiet, which is wholly sincere and objective, which says exactly what it has seen or whether you have one of those minds bubbling with activity which, as soon as it has seen something, adds to it its grain of salt, automatically, and makes out of it a big story; and so you are quite convinced that you have seen all that, but in fact you have not seen it at all. It is in this that one can say that visions are not sincere. But that is not the fault of the vision ! What you have seen, you have seen; it is the fault of the interpretation or simply of the narration which was embellished. I have had admirable examples ! — of people who had seen truly revealing things, but who understood nothing about them. On the spur of the moment they recounted spontaneously what they had seen — in half an hour the story had become a little different, all the "holes" were filled up and finally the story stood well on its legs ! The story was idiotic, it had no sense,

whilst the few points they had seen were magnificent revelations.

(Silence)

The capacity for visions, when it is sincere and spontaneous, can put you in touch with events which you are not capable of knowing in your outer consciousness.... There is a very interesting fact, it is that somewhere in the terrestrial mind, somewhere in the terrestrial vital, somewhere in the subtle physical, one can find an exact, perfect, automatic recording of everything that happens. It is the most formidable memory one could imagine, which misses nothing, forgets nothing, records all. And if you are able to enter into it, you can go backward, you can go forward, and in all directions, and you will have the "memory" of all things — not only of things of the past, but of things to come. For everything is recorded there.

In the mental world, for instance, there is a domain of the physical mind which is related to physical things and keeps the memory of physical happenings upon earth. It is as though you were entering under innumerable vaults, one following another indefinitely, and these vaults are filled with small pigeon-holes, one above another, one above another, with tiny doors. Then if you want to know something and if you are conscious, you look, and you see something like a small point — a shining point; you find that this is what you wish to know and you have only to concentrate there and it opens; and when it opens, there is a sort of an unrolling of something like extremely subtle manuscripts, but if your concentration is sufficiently strong you begin to read as though from a book. And you have the whole story in all its details. There are thousands of these little holes, you know; when you go for a walk there, it is as though you were walking in infinity. And in this way you can find the exact facts about whatever you want to know. But I must tell you that what you find is never what has been reported in history — histories are always planned out; I have never come across

a single "historical" fact which is like history. This is not to discourage you from learning history, but things are like that. Events have been quite different from the way in which they have been reported, and for a very simple reason: the human brain is not capable of recording things with exactitude; history is built upon memories and memories are always vague. If you take, for example, written memories, he who writes chooses the events which have interested him, what he has seen, noticed or known, and that is always only a very small portion of the whole. When the historian narrates, the same thing happens as with dreams where you take one point, then another, then another, and at last you can have an almost exact vision of what has taken place and with a little imagination you fill up the gaps; but historians relate a continuous story; between the events or moments there are gaps which they fill up as best they can or rather as they wish, according to their mental, vital and other preferences. And that comprises the history you are made to learn. The same story, narrated in one language and in another, in one country or in another, you cannot imagine how comic it is! This is particularly true if one of the countries is interested because of its vanity, its prestige. And finally the two pictures presented to you are so different that you could believe that two different things were being spoken about. It is unbelievable. But I have noticed that even for altogether external, concrete facts where there is no question of evaluation, it is still the same thing. No human brain is capable of understanding a thing in its totality; even the most scholarly, the most learned, even the most sincere person does not see a subject — and especially many subjects — totally. He will say what he knows, what he understands, and all that he does not know, all that he does not understand is not there, and this absolutely changes everything.

But if you can acquire this capability of entering into the terrestrial memory, I assure you it is worth the trouble. It is quite different from Yoga; it is not necessary to have a spiritual life for that, you must have a special ability.

For everything — I would repeat it to you eternally if I had the time — for everything, one must be absolutely sincere. If you are not sincere, you will begin by deceiving yourself and all your experiences will be worth nothing at all. But if you are sincere and by discipline (for it is not easy) you succeed in entering this mental memory of the world, you will make discoveries which are really worth the trouble.

17 February 1951

Mother begins with a passage about "false visions" (*Questions and Answers 1929*, 21 April).

> *Is a vision false if the being who appears in the vision pretends to be what it is not ?*

I don't think it is this that people mean when they speak of "false visions". They say "false visions" when they have seen something which they believe does not exist; and the reply I always give them is, "Had you already thought of what you saw ? Had you made an effort to see it ? Was it in your imagination or your wish ? If so, it must be false." What you are now asking is something else: these spirits who pretend to be what they are not in reality, if you believe them, it does not mean that your vision is false, but that the interpretation of your vision is false, that you do not have the necessary discernment to perceive the deception. I had with me for a long time people who said they had seen me (seen me with quite absurd consequences; all sorts of disastrous things happened to them); it was certain forces trying to make them believe it was I. I gave them a very simple means of putting an end to this comedy.

There is also something else: I am called and I answer; but what people see afterwards, the result, is almost always the product of their own mental formation. They want me to do a certain thing and that is what happens. And I verify this, you see, when they come and tell me, "Tonight you came"; as a matter of fact, they had called me and I had gone there, but I compare what really happened with what they saw, and very often there is a very big difference, which comes precisely from the desire they have mixed up with their perception. Then I could say, "Your vision is partly false; the fact that I came is true, but what you made me do, it is you who made me do it !"

> *"What is required of you is not a passive surrender, in which you become like a block, but to put your will at the disposal of the divine Will."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (21 April)

How can one make an offering of one's will ?... Some people, when they offer their will, stop willing ! This is more convenient, but evidently this is not the right way.

How to offer one's will to the Divine when one does not know what the divine Will is ? This is a very interesting problem.

> *Some men think that all that comes to them from outside is the divine Will, and they accept it as such.*

Yes, unfortunately. But all that they do is to accept the collective will or that of the strongest.

> *Should not one offer all one's willed actions to the Divine ? That is, first do the willed actions and then offer them ?*

Perhaps you could first silence your will and wait for the inner voice before acting ! That would be wiser.

You see, we have already found many ways of offering our will to the Divine: first, not to will any longer ! Second, do what everybody wants except oneself ! Third, want no matter what and do no matter what, then, afterwards, offer to the Divine what one has done !

But one can also formulate to oneself one's will and try to pass it before the screen of one's higher ideal, and see what it looks like in front of this ideal, whether it cuts a fine figure or not. If it vacillates, you may be sure there is something there to check up. If, on the other hand, it passes very quietly and without protest, you may risk doing what you wanted and see the result. But here too we are before a very difficult problem....

Those who wish to remain in an inner peace say that everything that happens is the will of God — this is very convenient for being quiet, it is the best way, there is no better; if there is a better way, it is much more difficult. So, if your will is contradicted, you say it is the will of God; you are quiet, you have done what you could and the result is different from what you expected, and you are in peace. (Note that this is not very easy; it is so far quite good, but this is not all.) But it may also be quite possible that your will was contradicted by circumstances and yet it was right. Then the solution is much more difficult. First, how to know that it was right?... If you are quite impartial, quiet, peaceful, and as little egoistic as possible, if you look straight in the face at what has happened and see a sort of contradiction, the impression that a light has gone out and you are in the presence of a falsehood, you remain quite calm, but you see and understand that your will has been contradicted for some unknown reason, though in itself it was not false, that what you had seen was the truth but it did not manifest itself for some reason or other. So you must start on the adventure of discovering the reason why your truth did not manifest itself. This is a problem a little more difficult... but if you expand your vision sufficiently, both in height and wideness, you can immediately see the consequences your will would have had if it had been realised, and the consequences of what would have happened; and if you fling your view far enough, you will be able to see that your will, however true it was, was a partial truth — it was not a collective, general truth, and still less a universal one — and, consequently, if this truth had been realised at that moment, it would have dislocated a certain *ensemble* and many things which form a part of the divine Work (for everything, in fact, is a part of the divine Work, the entire creation, the entire universe): one part of the whole would have been left behind.

People always ask, "But if the Divine is all-powerful, why is it that things have not yet changed?" This is the reason why.

And mark that your idea of what ought to be is so infinitely far off from what will be, that, by this very fact, even if you try to see in the most complete way possible, you will leave behind such a large portion of the universe that it will be almost a linear realisation, and in any case so small, so narrow, that the greater part of the universe will remain unchanged. And even if you have a very vast view of the whole, even if you can conceive of something more total and you go ahead on the path which is ready — for it is with paths as it is with beings, some are ready — without having the patience to wait for others, that is, if you wish to realise something very close to the true Truth in comparison with the present state of the world, what will happen ? — the dislocation of a certain unity, a rupture not only of harmony but of equilibrium, for there will be an entire part of the creation which will not be able to follow. And instead of a complete realisation of the Divine, you will have a small localised realisation, infinitesimal, and nothing will be done of what finally ought to be done.

Consequently, you should not be impatient, should not be disappointed, depressed, discouraged if the truth you have seen is not immediately realised. Naturally, it is not a question of being down-hearted or grieved or in despair if you have made a mistake, for every mistake can be corrected; from the moment you have found it is a mistake, there is an opportunity to work within you, to make progress and be very happy ! But the situation is much more serious and more difficult to overcome when you have seen something true, absolutely, essentially true, and the state of the universe is such that this truth is not yet ripe for realisation. I do not say this happens to many people, but perhaps it may happen to you, and it is then you have to have a great patience, a great understanding, and say to yourself, "It was true, but it was not completely true", that is, it was not a truth in keeping with all the other truths and, above all, not in keeping with the present possibilities; so we tried to realise it too quickly, and because we tried to be too quick it was belied.

But do not say it was false because it was belied; say it was premature, that is all you can say — what you saw was true, but it was premature, and you must, with much patience and perseverance, keep your little truth intact for the moment when it will be possible to realise it.

The final victory is for the most patient.

> *"You say, 'I give my will to the Divine.... Let the divine Will work it out for me.' Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (21 April)

And it is there we have the solution of the problem. You can at every minute make the gift of your will in an aspiration — and an aspiration which formulates itself very simply, not just "Lord, Thy will be done", but "Grant that I may do as well as I can the best thing to do."

You may not know at every moment what is the best thing to do nor how to do it, but you can place your will at the disposal of the Divine to do the best possible, the best thing possible. You will see it will have marvellous results. Do this with consciousness, sincerity and perseverance, and you will find yourself getting along with gigantic strides. It is like that, isn't it ? One must do things with all the ardour of one's soul, with all the strength of one's will; do at every moment the best possible, the best thing possible. What others do is not your concern — this is something I shall never be able to repeat to you often enough.

Never say, "So-and-so does not do this", "So-and-so does something else", "That one does what he should not do" — all this is not your concern. You have been put upon earth, in a physical body, with a definite aim, which is to make this body

as conscious as possible, make it the most perfect and most conscious instrument of the Divine. He has given you a certain amount of substance and of matter in all the domains — mental, vital and physical — in proportion to what He expects from you, and all the circumstances around you are also in proportion to what He expects of you, and those who tell you, "My life is terrible, I lead the most miserable life in the world", are donkeys ! Everyone has a life appropriate to his total development, everyone has experiences which help him in his total development, and everyone has difficulties which help him in his total realisation.

If you look at yourself carefully, you will see that one always carries in oneself the opposite of the virtue one has to realise (I use "virtue" in its widest and highest sense). You have a special aim, a special mission, a special realisation which is your very own, each one individually, and you carry in yourself all the obstacles necessary to make your realisation perfect. Always you will see that within you the shadow and the light are equal: you have an ability, you have also the negation of this ability. But if you discover a very black hole, a thick shadow, be sure there is somewhere in you a great light. It is up to you to know how to use the one to realise the other.

This is a fact very little spoken about, but one of capital importance. And if you observe carefully you will see that it is always thus with everyone. This leads us to statements which are paradoxical but absolutely true; for instance, that the greatest thief can be the most honest man (this is not to encourage you to steal, of course !) and the greatest liar can be the most truthful person. So, do not despair if you find in yourself the greatest weakness, for perhaps it is the sign of the greatest divine strength. Do not say, "I am like that, I can't be otherwise." It is not true. You are "like that" because, precisely, you ought to be the opposite. And all your difficulties are there just that you may learn to transform them into the truth they are hiding.

Once you have understood this, many worries come to an

end and you are very happy, very happy. If one finds one has very black holes, one says, "This shows I can rise very high", if the abyss is very deep, "I can climb very high." It is the same from the universal point of view; to use the Hindu terminology so familiar to you, it is the greatest Asuras who are the greatest beings of Light. And the day these Asuras are converted, they will be the supreme beings of the creation. This is not to encourage you to be asuric, you know, but it is like that — this will widen your minds a little and help you to free yourself from those ideas of opposing good and evil, for if you abide in that category, there is no hope.

If the world was not essentially the opposite of what it has become, there would be no hope. For the hole is so black and so deep, and the inconscience so complete, that if this were not the sign of the total consciousness, well, there would be nothing more to do but pack up one's kit and go away. Men like Shankara, who did not see much further than the end of their nose, said that the world was not worth the trouble of living in, for it was impossible, that it was better to treat it as an illusion and go away, there was nothing to be done with it. I tell you, on the contrary, that it is because the world is very bad, very dark, very ugly, very unconscious, full of misery and suffering, that it can become the supreme Beauty, the supreme Light, the supreme Consciousness and supreme Felicity.

> *"If you are vigilant, if your attention is alert, you will certainly receive... an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (21 April)

When I told you just a while ago that you must aspire with a great ardour to do the best possible, at every moment the best thing possible, you could have asked me, "That is all very well. But how to know?" Well, it is not necessary to know! If you take this attitude with sincerity, you will know at each moment

what you have to do, and it is this which is so wonderful ! According to your sincerity, the inspiration is more and more precise, more and more exact.

> *"Only you must remember that to surrender is to accept whatever is the result of your action, though the result may be quite different from what you expect. On the other hand, if your surrender is passive, you will do nothing and try nothing; you will simply go to sleep and wait for a miracle.*
>
> *"Now to know whether your will or desire is in agreement with the divine Will or not, you must look and see whether you have an answer or have no answer, whether you feel supported or contradicted, not by the mind or the vital or the body, but by that something which is always there deep in the inner being, in your heart."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (21 April)

It is always the same thing, this is our screen before which we must pass everything to know whether one may accept it or whether one is told not to.

> *"The number of hours spent in meditation is no proof of spiritual progress. It is a proof of your progress when you no longer have to make an effort to meditate."*
>
> *Ibid.*

That is, instead of being in a state of tension, instead of making a tremendous effort to silence the inner machine and be able to concentrate your thought upon what you want, when you do it quite simply, naturally, without effort, automatically, and you decide to meditate for some reason or other, what you want to see, learn or know remains in your consciousness and all the

rest disappears as by a miracle; everything falls quiet in you, all your being becomes silent, your nerves are altogether soothed, your consciousness is wholly concentrated — naturally, spontaneously — and you enter with an intense delight into a yet more intense contemplation.

This is the sign that you have succeeded; otherwise it is not the thing.

> *"Then you have rather to make an effort to stop meditating: it becomes difficult to stop meditation, difficult to stop thinking of the Divine, difficult to come down to the ordinary consciousness."*
>
> *Ibid.*

How I wish this would become true for everybody!

You may be engaged in the most active action, for example, in playing basketball, which needs a great deal of movement, and yet not lose the attitude of inner meditation and concentration upon the Divine. And when you get that, you will see that all you do changes its quality; not only will you do it better, but you will do it with an altogether unexpected strength, and at the same time keep your consciousness so high and so pure that nothing will be able to touch you any longer. And note that this can go so far that even if an accident occurs, it will not hurt you. Naturally, this is a peak, but it is a peak to which one can aspire.

Do not fall into the very common error of believing that you must sit in an absolutely quiet corner where nobody passes by, where you are in a classical position and altogether immobile, in order to be able to meditate — it is not true. What is needed is to succeed in meditating under all circumstances, and I call "meditating" not emptying your head but concentrating yourself in a contemplation of the Divine; and if you keep this contemplation within you, all that you do will change its quality — not its appearance, for apparently it will be the same

thing, but its quality. And life will change its quality, and you, you will feel a little different from what you were, with a peace, a certitude, an inner calm, an unchanging force, something which never gives way.

In that state it will be difficult to do you harm — the forces always try, this world is so full of adverse forces which seek to upset everything... but they succeed in a very small measure, only in the measure necessary to force you to make a new progress.

Each time you receive a blow from life, tell yourself immediately, "Ah, I have to make a progress"; then the blow becomes a blessing. Instead of tucking your head between your shoulders, you lift it up with joy and you say, "What is it I have to learn ? I want to know. What is it I have to change ? I want to know." This is what you should do.

The concentration we have here and the meditation we used to have in the past, are they the same ?[1]

No, I told you this the other day, the concentration we have now is the opposite of meditation. In the common meditation we used to have, I tried to unify the consciousness of all who were present and to lift it in an aspiration towards higher regions; it was a movement of ascent, of aspiration — whereas what we do here, in concentration, is a movement of descent. Instead of an aspiration which rises up, what is required is a receptivity which opens so that the Force may enter into you. There are many ways of doing this; each one according to his particular nature should find out the best method. What is asked here is a receptive offering, not of the body or the mind or the vital, of a piece of your being, but of your entire being. No other thing is asked of you, only to *open* yourself; the rest of the work I undertake.

[1] The period of "meditation" in the Ashram was followed by a period of "concentration" at the Playground.

In the meditation there[1] I wanted each one to kindle in himself a flame of aspiration and to rise up as high as possible. Naturally, both are necessary; but the morning meditation, all who had a goodwill could join it at any stage of their development, while here the rule is that only those who really want the perfection of their physical body can come, not those who want to escape from life, escape from themselves, escape from their body to enter into the heights. That is why in the beginning the selection was very strict — it is widening little by little, with profit, I hope. We wanted only those who had truly taken it into their head that they wished to perfect their physical body, who understood that their body had its own value and who sought to perfect it, who wanted to try to make it a receptacle of a higher truth, not an old rag one throws aside saying, "Do not bother me !" On the contrary, to take it up and make of it the best possible instrument, to make it grow, to perfect it as much as it will lend itself to the process.

Isn't the aspiration, the contemplation of which you speak, inconsistent with outer activity ?

No, if there is a contradiction, it is that the concentration is not done in the right way. Indeed the world is in this state of falsehood in which one cannot concentrate within oneself on the divine Presence without losing contact with the external being. I do not say that it is very easy, I have given you this as a somewhat far ideal, but it is quite possible and it has been done, I may assure you, and it takes away nothing from the capacity of not breaking one's neck while running !

[1] See foot note p. 122.

19 February 1951

To be able to enter the "earth-memory" consciously, a discipline is needed.[1] *What discipline ?*

A discipline much more difficult than the discipline of yoga ! It is an occult discipline.

First of all, one must learn to go out of one's body consciously and to enter into another more subtle body; to use one's will to go where one wants to go, never to fear and sometimes to face unexpected and even terrible things; to remain calm, to develop the mind's visual sense, to accustom one's mind to be altogether peaceful and quiet.... You know, the list is long and I could continue like this for hours !

Who among you has had the experience of going out of the body -- going out and knowing about it ? I do not even speak of doing it at will, for that is another stage.

Once I went out of my body but got back into it immediately !

You did not take the opportunity of going for a little walk, did you ? Well, you are not inquisitive !

How can one know that one has gone out of the body ?

You see it immobile on your bed. There are other means of knowing also.

I went out of my body under the effect of chloroform. I saw my body on the table and I witnessed the operation.

[1] See the talk of 15 February 1951.

So too I knew quite a remarkable clairvoyant. One day she had to undergo an operation and she was chloroformed; she went out of her body. Suddenly she began to see what was going on in the minds of the people who were there. She had the habit of talking, even while asleep, and she began to speak out quite aloud: she said that so-and-so had worries, that another had a problem to solve, and that its solution was such and such a thing.

This was an exceptional case — that happens only to gifted persons and there are not many of these. But the number of persons who remain conscious under chloroform is greater than one thinks; but generally, when one wakes up from chloroform one feels pretty uneasy and remembers but vaguely his experiences outside the body. Is there anyone here who has fainted suddenly, as if by accident? You see your body, don't you? and you ask yourself, "But what is it doing there in that ridiculous position?" And you rush back into it! That happened to me once in Paris. I had been treated to a good dinner, and then I went to a conference hall, I believe. There were many people, it was very hot, I was standing there with the good dinner in my stomach, and suddenly I felt ill at ease. I told the person who was with me, "I must go out immediately." Once outside (it was in Trocadero Square) I fainted away completely. I saw my body there, stretched out, and I found it so ridiculous that I rushed into it and I gave it a good scolding, saying, "You must not play such tricks with me!"

Many people faint like this and see themselves. There is one condition for this: the organ of sight in the subtle physical body or in the most material vital must be developed.

I must tell you that this kind of capacity may come spontaneously, without effort — one may be a born clairvoyant. They are not necessarily very intelligent people, their vital consciousness may be mediocre, but they are born clairvoyant. It is not a sign of a great development — it comes from something else, from a capacity of the parents, of past lives, etc. But if you are not born clairvoyant, and if you do not carry in you the other

extreme, I mean a psychic being wholly conscious and fully developed which leads its own independent life in the body, and you want to learn to see and have visions, then it is a very long, very slow discipline and there are very few people who have the necessary patience and endurance to go to the end of the training.

It is interesting but it is not essential, one can do without it. It is the same as with dreams. But if you can develop this capacity, it can make your life more rich, it can make your consciousness progress more quickly.

> *You say there are two categories of people: those who are asked to meditate and those who are not asked. How to know to which category one belongs?*[1]

You are told.

> *So, can we ask you?*

Certainly, I am here for that!

> *At times when one goes out of the body, the body follows the part which goes out.*

You are speaking of a somnambulist? But that is quite another thing. This means that the part which goes out (whether a part of the mind or a part of the vital) is so strongly attached to the body, or rather that the body is so attached to this part, that when this part decides to do something the body follows it

[1] "A discipline in itself is not what we are seeking. What we are seeking is to be concentrated on the Divine in all that we do, at all times, in all our acts and in every movement. There are some here who have been told to meditate; but also there are others who have not been asked to do any meditation at all. But it must not be thought that they are not progressing. They too follow a discipline, but it is of another nature. To work, to act with devotion and an inner consecration is also a spiritual discipline."

Questions and Answers 1929 (21 April)

automatically. In your inner being you decide to do a certain thing and your body is so closely tied to your inner being that without thinking of it, without wanting to do so, without making any effort, it follows and does the same thing. Note that in this matter, the physical body has capacities it would not have in the ordinary waking condition. For instance, it is well known that one can walk in dangerous places where one would find it rather difficult to walk in the waking state. The body follows the consciousness of the inner being and its own consciousness is asleep — for the body has a consciousness. All the parts of the being, including the most material, have an independent consciousness. Hence when you go to sleep dead tired, when your physical body needs rest absolutely, your physical consciousness sleeps, while the consciousness of your subtle physical body or your vital or of your mind does not sleep, it continues its activity; but your physical consciousness is separated from the body, it is asleep in a state of unconsciousness, and then the part which does not sleep, which is active, uses the body without the physical consciousness as intermediary and makes it do things directly. That is how one becomes a somnambulist. According to my experience, the waking consciousness goes to sleep, for some reason or other (usually due to fatigue), but the inner being is awake, and the body is so tied to it that it follows it automatically. That is why you do fantastic things, because you do not see them physically, you see them in a different way.

> *It is said that somnambulism is due to serious preoccupations and cares. Is this true ? Tartini composed a sonata in this state, and when he got up in the morning, he wrote down the whole thing.*

Somnambulism is not always due to preoccupations and cares ! Yes, there are people who write wonderful things when in somnambulism. But Tartini was not a somnambulist — it was in the

dream-state that he wrote sonatas.

The other state is always a little dangerous, always. Unexpected things can happen, an accident to the vital, for instance.

How can one be cured of somnambulism ?

Quite simply, by putting a will upon the body before going to sleep. One becomes a somnambulist because the mind is not developed enough to break the inner ties. For the mind always separates the external being from the deeper consciousness. Little children are quite tied up. I knew children who were quite sincere but could not distinguish whether a thing was going on in their imagination or in reality. For them the inner life was as real as the external life. They were not telling stories, they were not liars; simply the inner life was as real as the external life. There are children who go night after night to the same spot in order to continue the dream they have begun — they are experts in the art of going out of their bodies.

Is it good to leave the body asleep and go out rambling ? Can one go back into the body at any moment one likes ?

It is dangerous if you sleep surrounded by people who may come and shake you up, believing that something has happened to you. But if you are alone and sleep quietly, there is no danger.

One can get back into the body at any time and generally it is much more difficult to remain outside than to get back — as soon as the least thing happens, one rushes back quickly into the body.

If one goes out of the body leaving it on the bed, can someone else enter it ?

That can happen but it is extremely rare, once in a hundred thousand cases.

"Someone" cannot enter — a human being cannot enter the body of another unless he has quite an exceptional and unique occult knowledge and in that case he will not do it.

But if a human being does not enter, at times there are beings of the vital world who do not have a body and want to have one for the fun of the experience, and when they see that someone has gone out of the body (but he must go out very materially) and is not sufficiently protected, they can rush in to take his place. But it is such a rare thing that if you had not put the question I would not have spoken about it. Still it is not an impossibility.

People who have nightmares of this kind should always protect themselves occultly before going out of the body — it can be done in many ways. The simplest way, one which needs no special knowledge is to call the Guru or, if one knows somebody who has the knowledge, to call him in thought or spirit; or to protect oneself by making a kind of wall of protection around oneself (one can do many things, can't one?); this can prevent such beings from entering.

If you have a disposition for exteriorisation and if you follow a yoga, you are always asked to protect your sleep: by some contemplation, a mental movement, any movement — there are many ways of protecting oneself. But I think there is no such danger for you; perhaps not for everybody, but still one would have to be terribly ambitious, terribly insincere for such a thing to happen; one would have to be in relation with truly wicked entities, for, a being who lives in orderliness and truth will never rush into the body of another, that is an act of disorder and it is not done.

Is it the psychic being which goes out or some other part of the being?

If it is the psychic being which goes out, one would not be aware of it, the more so as most of the time it is not within

you ! Very few people carry their psychic being within them because the dwelling-place is not ready. What goes out is sometimes the subtle physical, this is when one sees one's body stretched out — for the physical vision to remain conscious, it must be a very material part of the being which goes out; one must go out very materially in the subtle physical body or in the most material vital. But usually it is the vital which goes out and still more often the mental being; but when it is the mind which goes out one is not aware of it at all, for the mind is like the psychic, it is very rarely within you. If you think of something or somebody, one part of your mind is immediately there — the mind is a vagabond, it roves, it comes and goes, it enters and goes out. There are very few people who have organised their mind sufficiently to keep it within them, close-packed, and prevent it from gadding about.

At times I seem to go out of my body and see it dead.

But that is a mere dream; probably you did not go out of your body at all. There are people who dream they are dead. But that is of no importance.

When one goes out of the body, one must try to rush towards you — I think everybody does that, don't they ?

Not one in a hundred !

If you did that, very interesting things would happen to you. I knew someone in France who used to come to me every evening in order that I might show him some unknown region and take him for a ramble in the vital or mental world, and actually I used to take him there. At times there were others also, at times this person was alone. I showed him how to go out of the body, how to get back into it, how to keep the consciousness, etc., I showed him many places telling him "There you

must take this precaution, here you must do such and such a thing." And this continued for a long time.

I do not mean that no one among you comes to me in the night, but there are very few who do it consciously. Generally (you will tell me if I am wrong, but that is my impression), when you go to sleep and have decided to remember me before going to sleep, it is rather a call than a will to "rush" to me, as you say. You are there on your bed, you want to rest, to have a good sleep, remain in a good consciousness; then you call me rather than have the idea of going out of the body and coming to see me.

"Yoga means union with the Divine, and the union is effected through offering — it is founded on the offering of yourself to the Divine."

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

What is the difference between surrender and offering ?

The two words are almost synonymous: "I make the offering of myself and I surrender myself", but in the gesture of offering there is something more active than in the gesture of surrender. Unfortunately, *soumission*, in French, is not the true word; in English we use "surrender"; between the words "surrender" and "offering" there is hardly any difference. But the French word "soumission" gives the impression of something more passive: you accept, while offering is a giving — a voluntary giving.

What is the exact meaning of the word "consecration ?"

"Consecration" generally has a more mystical sense but this is not absolute. A total consecration signifies a total giving of one's self; hence it is the equivalent of the word "surrender", not of the word *soumission* which always gives the impression that one "accepts" passively. You feel a flame in the word "consecration", a flame even greater than in the word "offering". To consecrate oneself is "to give oneself to an action"; hence, in the yogic sense, it is to give oneself to some divine work with the idea of accomplishing the divine work.

"When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to

the Divine, you have still at every moment to remember it and carry it out in all the details of your existence. You must feel at every step that you belong to the Divine; you must have the constant experience that, in whatever you think or do, it is always the Divine Consciousness that is acting through you. You have no longer anything that you can call your own; you feel everything as coming from the Divine, and you have to offer it back to its source. When you can realise that, then even the smallest thing to which you do not usually pay much attention or care, ceases to be trivial and insignificant; it becomes full of meaning and it opens up a vast horizon beyond."

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

Because the least detail of life and action, each movement of thought, even of sensation, of feeling, which is normally of little importance, becomes different the moment you look at it asking yourself, "Did I think this as an offering to the Divine, did I feel this as an offering to the Divine ?..." If you recall this every moment of your life, the attitude becomes quite different from what it was before. It becomes very wide; it is a chain of innumerable little things each having its own place, whilst formerly you used to let them go by without being aware of them. That widens the field of consciousness. If you take a half-hour of your life and think of it, putting to yourself this question: "Is it a consecration to the Divine ?" you will see that the small things become a big thing and you will have the impression that life becomes rich and luminous.

Identification is the goal of Yoga. Can one say that surrender is the first step and offering the second ?

No, some begin with an offering and end with surrender. It depends upon the character of each one. You may perhaps begin

by having a feeling of inferiority — you are a little crushed by the grandeur of the Divine, and then you feel a little freer and give with joy what you are. This is not always so. Many begin by self-giving; for them the easiest movement is to give themselves. In the beginning the giving is a little indefinite, then one has to make an effort at times to surrender in detail; you can give yourself with much enthusiasm, but when at every step you have to submit to the higher Will, the thing becomes more difficult.

Does not offering imply surrender ?

Not at all. You can give for the joy of giving, without any idea of surrender. In a movement of enthusiasm, when you have glimpsed something infinitely higher than yourself, you can give yourself in an *élan*, but when it is a question of living that every minute, of surrendering oneself every minute to the higher Will and when every minute requires this surrender, it is more difficult. But if by "offering" you mean the integral offering of all your movements, all your activities, that is equivalent to surrender, without implying it necessarily. But then it is no longer a movement made in enthusiasm, it is something which has to be realised in detail. One may say that any movement made in ardour and enthusiasm is relatively easy (that depends upon the intensity of the movement in you), but when it is a question of realising one's aspiration every minute of one's life and in all its details, the enthusiasm recedes a little and one feels the difficulty.

Is there an experience which proves that one is living in the presence of the Divine ?

Once one begins to live in the presence of the Divine, one does not question any longer. It carries its own certitude – – one feels, one knows, and it becomes impossible to question. One lives in

the presence of the Divine and it is for you an absolute fact. Till then you ask, because you do not have the experience, but once you have the experience, it has such an authority that it is indisputable. One who says, "I think I live in the presence of the Divine but I am not sure", has not had the true experience, for as soon as one has the inner shock of this experience, no more questioning is possible. It is like those who ask, "What is the divine Will ?" As long as you have not glimpsed this Will, you cannot know. One may have an idea of it through deduction, inference, etc., but once you have felt the precise contact with the divine Will, this too is not disputable any longer -- you know.

I add, so that there may not be any misunderstanding: all experience has its worth only in the measure of the sincerity of the one who has it. Some are not sincere and fabricate wonderful experiences, and they imagine they have them. I put all that aside, it is not interesting. But for sincere people who have a sincere experience, once you have the experience of the divine presence, the whole world may tell you it is not true, and you will not budge.

If you are not sincere, you may have wonderful experiences, but these have no value either for you or for others. You should distrust your thought a good deal, for the mind is a wonderful constructor and it can give you wonderful experiences solely by its work of formation; but these experiences have no value. It is hence preferable not to know beforehand what is going to happen. For even with a great will to be sincere, the mind fabricates so much and so well that it can present to you a wonderful picture or even play for you a splendid comedy without your being aware of it, by its sheer power of formation, and it is very difficult to find out. Hence one essential condition for having true experiences: leave this machine in quietness; the less it moves, the better it is, and beware of everything it imagines for you.

What is the difference between aspiration and a demand ?

When you have experienced both, you can easily make the distinction. In aspiration there is what I might call an unselfish flame which is not present in desire. Your aspiration is not a turning back upon self — desire is always a turning back upon oneself. From the purely psychological point of view, aspiration is a self-giving, always, while desire is always something which one draws to oneself; aspiration is something which gives itself, not necessarily in the form of thought but in the movement, in the vibration, in the vital impulse.

True aspiration does not come from the head; even when it is formulated by a thought, it springs up like a flame from the heart. I do not know if you have read the articles Sri Aurobindo has written on the Vedas. He explains somewhere that these hymns were not written with the mind; they were not, as one thinks, prayers, but the expression of an aspiration which was an impulse, like a flame coming from the heart (though it is not the "heart" but the psychological centre of the being, to use the exact words). They were not "thought out", words were not set to experiences, the experience came wholly formulated with the precise, exact, inevitable words — they could not be changed. This is the very nature of aspiration: you do not seek to formulate it, it springs up from you like a ready flame. And if there are words (sometimes there aren't any), they cannot be changed: you cannot replace one word by another, every word is just the apt one. When the aspiration is formulated, this is done categorically, absolutely, without any possibility of change. And it is always something that springs up and gives itself, whereas the very nature of desire is to pull things to oneself.

The essential difference between love in aspiration and love in desire is that love in aspiration gives itself entirely and asks nothing in return — it does not claim anything; whereas love in desire gives itself as little as possible, asks as much as possible,

it pulls things to itself and always makes demands.

Aspiration always gives joy, doesn't it ?

Rather a feeling of plenitude — "joy" is a misleading word; a feeling of plenitude, of force, of an inner flame which fills you. Aspiration can give you joy, but a very special joy, which has no excitement in it.

Are the soul and the psychic being one and the same thing ?

That depends on the definition you give to the words. In most religions, and perhaps in most philosophies also, it is the vital being which is called "soul", for it is said that "the soul leaves the body", while it is the vital being which leaves the body. One speaks of "saving the soul", "wicked souls", "redeeming the soul"... but all that applies to the vital being, for the psychic being has no need to be saved ! It does not share the faults of the external person, it is free from all reaction.

When one works and wants to do one's best, one needs much time. But generally we don't have much time, we are in a hurry. How to do one's best when one is in a hurry ?

It is a very interesting subject and I wanted to speak to you about it in detail, one day. Generally when men are in a hurry, they do not do completely what they have to do or they do badly what they do. Well, there is a third way, it is to intensify one's concentration. If you do that you can gain half the time, even from a very short time. Take a very ordinary example: to have your bath and to dress; the time needed varies with people, doesn't it ? but let us say, half an hour is required for doing everything without losing time and without hurrying.

Then, if you are in a hurry, one of two things happens: you don't wash so well or you dress badly! But there is another way — to concentrate one's attention and one's energy, think only of what one is doing and not of anything else, not to make a movement too much, to make the exact movement in the most exact way, and (it is an experience lived, I can speak of it with certitude) you can do in fifteen minutes what you were formerly doing in half an hour, and do it as well, at times even better, without forgetting anything, without leaving out anything, simply by the intensity of the concentration.

And this is the best answer to all those who say, "Oh, if one wants to do things well, one must have time." This is not true. For all that you do -- study, play, work — there is only one solution: to increase one's power of concentration. And when you acquire this concentration, it is no longer tiring. Naturally, in the beginning, it creates a tension, but when you have grown used to it, the tension diminishes, and a moment comes when what fatigues you is to be not thus concentrated, to disperse yourself, allow yourself to be swallowed by all kinds of things, and not to concentrate on what you do. One can succeed in doing things even better and more quickly by the power of concentration. And in this way you can make use of work as a means of growth; otherwise you have this vague idea that work must be done "disinterestedly", but there is a great danger there, for one is very quick to confuse disinterestedness with indifference.

24 February 1951

The other day I said that most of the time people do not have their psychic being within them. I would like to explain this in greater detail.... You must remember that the inner beings are not in the third dimension. If you open up your body you will find only the viscera of the body which are in the third dimension. The inner beings are in another dimension, and when I say that some men do not have their psychic being within them, I do not mean that it is not at the centre of their being, but that their outer consciousness is so small, so limited, so obscure that it is not able to keep a contact, not only conscious but intimate, with the psychic being which extends beyond it in every way; it is so much higher and deeper than the other outer consciousness that there is no relation either of quality or of nature between them. Religions say that you have a divine spark in you — it is well they call it a "spark", for it is so small indeed that it can be placed anywhere in the body without difficulty. But this does not mean that it is in the body: it is within the consciousness in another dimension, and there are beings who have a contact with it, others who haven't. But if you come to the divine Presence in the atom, the image is easier to understand, for there you touch so infinitesimal a domain that you are on the border-line where you can no longer distinguish between two, three, four or five dimensions. If you study modern physics you will understand what I mean. The movements constituting an atom are, in the matter of size, so imperceptible that they cannot be understood with our three-dimensional understanding, the more so as they follow laws which elude completely this three-dimensional idea. So if you take refuge there, you may say that the divine spark is at the centre of each atom and you won't be far from the truth; but I was not speaking of the divine spark, I was speaking of the being, the psychic consciousness, which is another thing. The psychic being is an entity

which has a form; it is organised around a central consciousness and, having a form it has a dimension, but a dimension of another kind than the third dimension of the outer consciousness.

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

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

> *You told me once that one must not ask a child to make a mental effort before the age of seven.*

That is quite different. There it is a question only of the formation of the physical brain which develops slowly, little by little. If you ask of a brain in formation an effort beyond its capacity, you tire it, you overwork it or you make it ill.

> *You say that the psychic being is the same thing as the divine spark...*

No, I never said that — it would be foolish ! The psychic being is organised *around* the divine spark. The divine spark is one, universal, the same everywhere and in everything, one and infinite, of the same kind in all. You cannot say that it is a being — it is *the being*, if you like, but not *a* being. Naturally, if you go back to the origin, you may say that there is only one soul, for the origin of all souls is the same, as the origin of the whole universe is the same, as the origin of the entire creation is the

same. But the psychic being is an individual, personal being with its own experience, its own development, its own growth, its own organisation; only, this organisation is the product of the action of a central divine spark.

But the day an external being (physical, mental, vital) enters into direct and constant contact with the psychic being, one may say in the same way that the *physical* being of this person is organised by the central divine consciousness. The moment you put yourself in contact with it, submit yourself to it, you are organised by it, by the central divine consciousness; one may say that the body is organised by it, but it is a *body*, not a soul. The fact of being organised by this divine spark does not make it a soul.

Is there a psychic being in the atom?

No, it is not yet there. It can be said that there is a possibility of psychic consciousness in Matter — the diffusion of the divine Consciousness had only one object: to make possible an organisation which would be under the direct influence of the Divine. That is why it passes over all the worlds of disorder.[1] It may hence be said that the Origin of the soul is also in the atom, in all the elements constituting the atom, but it is only the Origin.... I must tell you that when it is fully formed, the psychic being has a distinct form which corresponds to our physical form. It is not altogether similar, but it has a definite form. Every psychic being is different from another — they are not all cut out, modelled to one pattern. They are different, each has an individuality, a personality.

[1] At the time of the publication of this talk, Mother added the following note for the sake of precision: "Some parts of the vital are worlds of disorder and the beings inhabiting the vital have no psychic being. The psychic being exists only upon earth, in the physical world. That is why I said in brief that the divine spark, which organises the psychic, passed over the worlds of disorder and manifested itself directly in the physical world to create there this possibility of organisation around the divine spark."

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

> *"Do many remember that they have passed over [to the other side] and are back again ?"*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (28 April)

> *I was seriously ill, unconscious for two hours, and I had the impression that I had gone over to the other side, that I was in a different world. When I came back to myself, I had the impression of having made a long journey in a world quite different from the one where I normally lived.*

It was a partial exteriorisation; it was not a total exteriorisation which indeed causes death. If one goes out entirely, that is, if there is a complete separation from the body and one is really dead, and then one comes back, that causes such an intense suffering that one cannot forget it. It is said that babies cry when they come into the world because the first contact with air makes them cry, but I think it is something else. The re-entry into the body causes a kind of friction, for what goes out has to be something very material if it is to bring about death, something even more material than the subtle physical, and this friction is extremely painful. Otherwise one may be externally unconscious, but one is not dead for all that. It is only when something extremely material goes out of the body and all ties are broken that there is truly "death". And that is why (I believe we are beginning to discover it) people do not die till six or seven days after their death. That is, they are not "dead" as long as the body remains intact, but only when a part of the body begins to decompose. Hence during this period, someone who has the necessary knowledge, power and capacity may "raise" a person in such a state. I believe this explains most of the cases of "miraculous" resurrection.

A person was dead. The doctors massaged the heart and after some time the person revived.

Yes, in that sphere they are beginning to work "miracles" !

> *"When you reach a certain state of consciousness, you remember [passing over to the other side]. It is not so difficult to touch this state partially for a short time; in deep meditation, in a dream or a vision one may have the feeling or the impression that he has lived this life before, had this realisation, known these truths. But this is not a full realisation; to come to that, one must have attained to a permanent consciousness within us which is everlasting and holds together all our existences in past or present or future time."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (28 April)

You must always distrust people who go rambling in some kind of mental or vital domain, and then tell you stories imagining that they remember their past lives. You know the classical example of that well-known lady who narrated her lives from the time she had been a monkey ! I may assure you that it is pure imagination, for it is impossible to remember like that.

This is what happens. Let us take a divine spark which, through attraction, through affinity and selection, gathers around it a beginning of psychic consciousness (this work is already very perceptible in animals — don't think you are exceptional beings, that you alone have a psychic being and the rest of creation hasn't. It begins in the mineral, it is a little more developed in the plant, and in the animal there is a first glimmer of the psychic presence). Then there comes a moment when this psychic being is sufficiently developed to have an independent consciousness and a personal will. And then after innumerable lives more or less individualised, it becomes conscious of itself, of its movements and of the environment it has chosen for its

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

I am going to give you quite a concrete example. Let us take a psychic being that has decided, for some reason or other, to enter the body of a being destined to become king, because there is a whole series of experiences it can have only under those conditions. After having passed through these experiences of a king, it finds that there is a whole domain in which it cannot make a progress due to these very conditions of life where it is. So when it has finished its term upon earth and decides to go away, it decides that in its next life it will take birth in an ordinary environment and in ordinary conditions, neither high nor low, but such that the body which it will take up will be free to do what it likes. For I do not tell you anything new when I say that the life of a king is the life of a slave; a king is obliged to submit to a whole protocol and to all kinds of ceremonies to keep his prestige (it is perhaps very pleasant for vain people, but for a psychic being it is not pleasant, for this deprives it of the possibility of a large number of experiences). So having taken this decision, it carries in itself all the memories

which a royal life can give it and it takes rest for the period it considers necessary (here, I must say that I am speaking of a psychic being exclusively occupied with itself, not one consecrated to a work, because in that case it is the work which decides the future lives and their conditions; I am speaking of a psychic being at work completing its development). Hence it decides that at a certain moment it will take a body. Having already had a number of experiences, it knows that in a certain country, a certain part of the consciousness has developed; in another, another part, and so on; so it chooses the place which offers it easy possibilities of development: the country, the conditions of living, the approximate nature of the parents, and also the condition of the body itself, its physical structure and the qualities it needs for its experiences. It takes rest, then at the required moment, wakes up and projects its consciousness upon earth centralising it in the chosen domain and the chosen conditions — or almost so; there is a small margin you know, for in the psychic consciousness one is too far away from the material physical consciousness to be able to see with a clear vision; it is an approximation. It does not make a mistake about the country or the environment and it sees quite clearly the inner vibrations of the people chosen, but there may happen to be a slight indecision. But if, just at this moment, there is a couple upon earth or rather a woman who has a psychic aspiration herself and, for some reason or other, without knowing why or how, would like to have an exceptional child, answering certain exceptional conditions; if at this moment there is this aspiration upon earth, it creates a vibration, a psychic light which the psychic being sees immediately and, without hesitation it rushes towards it. Then, from that moment (which is the moment of conception), it watches over the formation of the child, so that this formation may be as favourable as possible to the plan it has; consequently its influence is there over the child even before it appears in the physical world.

If all goes well, if there is no accident (accidents can al-

ways happen), if all goes well at the moment the child is about to be born, the psychic force (perhaps not in its totality, but a part of the psychic consciousness) rushes into the being and from its very first cry gives it a push towards the experiences it wants the child to acquire. The result is that even if the parents are not conscious, even if the child in its external consciousness is not quite conscious (a little child does not have the necessary brain for that, it forms slowly, little by little), in spite of that, it will be possible for the psychic influence to direct all the events, all the circumstances of the life of this child till the moment it becomes capable of coming into conscious contact with its psychic being (physically it is generally between the age of four and seven, sometimes sooner, sometimes almost immediately, but in such a case we deal with children who are not "children", who have "supernatural" qualities, as they say — they are not "supernatural", but simply the expression of the presence of the psychic being). But there are people who have not had the chance or rather the good fortune if one may call it that, of meeting someone, physically, who could instruct them. And yet they have the feeling that every step of their existence, every circumstance of their life is arranged by someone conscious, so that they may make the maximum progress. When they need a certain circumstance, it comes; when they need to meet certain people, they come; when they need to read certain books, they find them within their reach. Everything is arranged like that, as if someone was watching over them so that their life may have the maximum possibilities of development. These people may very well say: "But what is a psychic being?", for no one has ever used these words in speaking to them or they have not found anybody who could explain to them all that; but for them often just one meeting is sufficient, just one look, in order to wake up; one word suffices to make them remember: "But I knew all that!"

This is exactly what happens to a psychic being which has reached the last stage of its development. After that, it will no

longer be bound by the necessity of coming upon earth, it will have completed its development and will be able to choose freely either to consecrate itself to the divine Work or go elsewhere, that is, in the higher worlds. But generally, having come to this stage, it remembers all that has happened to it and understands the great necessity of coming to the help of those who are yet struggling in the midst of difficulties. These psychic beings give their whole existence to the divine Work — this is not absolute, inevitable, they choose freely, but ninety times out of a hundred this is what they do.

But in ordinary lives — and by that I mean the life of a certain *élite* of sufficiently well-developed people — the contact between the external being and the psychic is quite intermittent; it is the result of certain experiences or certain inner needs. At that moment the psychic being is "in front", as Sri Aurobindo says, that is, it comes to the surface of the consciousness, it is in direct contact with material circumstances, with forms and words and sounds, etc., for a very short time; so it records all that like a photograph or a cinema, but it is just a minute, a few moments in a lifetime. These moments may repeat themselves several times, but they do not last; and it is this the psychic being remembers; and when you have real psychic memories, sincere, spontaneous, not fabricated by the mind or the vital, that is, purely psychic, exact, your memory is *intermittent*. And it is often very difficult to locate your past lives, to say: "I was this or that." It is only when the psychic experience has taken place at a very important moment of your life and a whole set of circumstances gives you, so to say, the key to the story (dresses, spoken words, customs or an environment giving you the key) that you can say: "Oh ! that life, I have lived it." But if someone comes and narrates to you all his previous lives from the monkey onwards, with a mass of details, you may be sure that he is a humbug !

You spoke of the "chance" of a psychic being

meeting what will be its physical being.

No, I said "accident"; an accident is not a chance.

In life there is always a conflict between opposing forces, and the result of this conflict is not always foreseen except when one is conscious in the highest consciousness. One cannot foresee the result of a conflict with a consciousness which does not go beyond the human consciousness, so one calls it an "accident". It is not chance, it is not even an accident without reason, but an accident caused by reasons which one is not in a condition to foresee.

In a dream, I thought I saw pictures of a former ascetic life.

There is such a strong suggestion here [in India] that to live the spiritual life, one must take up the life of a sannyasin, that this perhaps is the cause of your pictures. In any case, if it was really a previous life, it was not the last one. You have surely had intermediary lives, for rarely is a being born in the same country several times consecutively — it would not be very profitable. If it had been the ascetic life of the time of the first Christians, for instance, you would have noticed certain details: the different colour of your skin, a dress, etc., whereas you probably saw the usual pictures of Indian life.... Everything is possible, of course. The universe is constituted in such a way that all the possibles can be realised there: but, as I said, it is rare for one to be born several times in the same country unless it be to accomplish a special work, with a special end in view; and then it is very rare for one not to know it, for this means that the psychic being is fully formed and has itself chosen to come back to the same country to do a special work or to continue what it had already begun.

Many have had a previous ascetic life, for the collective suggestion is very strong here. It is very rare for a person not to

think that to perfect oneself and to live a spiritual life one must leave the world.

There are also symbolic and premonitory dreams, but very rarely do dreams consist of true memories of past lives, because for that one must dream in one's psychic consciousness and there are not many who are capable of this. One dreams in the mental or vital consciousness but rarely does one dream in the psychic consciousness. That can happen, but it is rare.

At times, there are dreams which one takes for memories, but they are only symbols: what one sees comes from a mental formation which is objectified on an inner screen and which enacts a scene, so to say, in which you are an actor.

Here in India frequently children are born in a village and they give, while very young, precise information about the village where they have lived before, about their parents, etc. Is this true ?

Yes, but generally these are children who have died as children or very young and whose previous life had not fully run out. This can happen.

In what does a psychic being's progress consist ?

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

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

one, for example, who wants to have the experience of nobility — a nobility which makes it impossible for you to act like an ordinary person, which infuses into you a bravery, a courage which may almost be taken for rashness because the attitude, the experience demands that you face danger without showing the least fear. I was telling you a while ago that I would explain to you what one could acquire by entering into the body of a king. A king is an ordinary man, isn't he, like all others, he does not have a special consciousness, but through the necessities of his life, because he is a kind of symbol to his people, there are things he is obliged to do which he could never do if he were an ordinary man. I know this by experience, but I saw this also while looking at photographs which represented a king in actual circumstances: something had happened, which might have been an attempt on his life, but was averted. The photographs showed the king inspecting a regiment; all of a sudden someone had rushed forward, perhaps with a bad intention, perhaps not, for nothing had happened; in any case, the king had remained completely impassive, absolutely calm, the same smile on his lips, without moving the least from the place where he was; and he was quite within sight, an easy target for one who wanted to rush forward and hurt him. For all I know, this king was not a hero, but because he was a king, he could not take to flight! That would have been ignoble. So he remained calm, without stirring, without showing any outward fear. This is an example of what one can learn in the life of a king.

There is also a true story about Queen Elizabeth. She had come to the last days of her life and was extremely ill. But there was trouble in the country and, about questions of taxation, a group of people (merchants, I believe) had formed a delegation to present a petition to her in the name of a party of the people. She lay very ill in her room, so ill that she could hardly stand. But she got up and dressed to receive them. The lady who was attending upon her cried out, "But it is impossible, you will die of this!" The queen answered quietly, "We

shall die afterwards".... This is an example from a whole series of experiences one can have in the life of a king, and it is this which justifies the choice of the psychic being when it takes up this kind of life.

It is memories of this kind which prove the authenticity of the experience; for what generally happens when people tell you about their past lives is this: in these lives there is always a progress, naturally; so they become more and more splendid people in more and more marvellous circumstances ! It is wrong, things never happen like that. The psychic being follows a certain line of existence which develops certain qualities, certain powers, etc., but the psychic being always sees what it lacks and it can choose the opposite line in a future life, a negation, so to say, of this experience in order to have complementary experiences.

26 February 1951

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

> *"In the initial stages of Yoga, is it well for the Sadhaka to read ordinary books?"*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (28 April)

It is a question I have been asked many times. If someone can tell me the effect on him of the reading of ordinary books, it will interest me very much.

Ordinary books tire me.

It is a good sign.

They give rest to the mind and have no effect on me.

No ! The subconscient records everything, and if you have the impression that an ordinary book leaves no effect, it means that you are not conscious of what goes on within you. Each time you read a book in which the consciousness is very low, it strengthens your subconscient and inconscient — it prevents your consciousness from rising upward. It is as if you threw buckets of dirty water on the efforts you had made to purify your subconscient.

It is inevitable, but there are people who are not even aware that their consciousness has fallen very low.

There is a state in which a simple conversation which obliges you to remain on the level of ordinary life gives you a headache, turns your stomach and, if it continues, may give you a fever. I am speaking of course about the gossip-type of conversations. I believe that apart from a few exceptions, everybody

indulges in this exercise and talks of things about which he should keep silent or chatters about other things. It becomes so natural that you are not troubled by it. But if you continue in this way, you hinder your consciousness completely from rising up; you bind yourself with iron chains to the ordinary consciousness and the work in the subconscious is not done or has not even begun. Those who want to rise up have already enough difficulties without looking for encouragements outside.

Naturally, the effort to keep the consciousness at a high level is tiring in the beginning, like the exercises you do to develop your muscles. But you do not give up gymnastics because of that! So mentally also you must do the same thing. You must not allow your mind to stoop low: gossiping degrades you and, if you want to do yoga, you must abstain from it, that's all.

> *"You can read sacred books and yet be far away from the Divine; and you can read the most stupid productions and be in touch with the Divine.... There is a way of consciousness in union with the Divine in which you can enjoy all you read, as you can all you observe.... For there is nothing in the world which has not its ultimate truth and support in the Divine. And if you are not stopped by the appearance, physical or moral or aesthetic... you can reach beauty and delight even through what affects the ordinary sense only as something ugly, poor, painful or discordant."*
>
> *Ibid.*

The state of consciousness of which I speak here is very difficult to attain: it is a discipline which needs years and it is a realisation which is not within everybody's reach. There is, however, an intermediate state through which one has to pass: a state in which one cuts the connection between oneself and all that one does not want to hear or see.

> *"Obviously, what has happened had to happen; it would not have been, if it had not been intended. Even the mistakes that we have committed and the adversities that fell upon us had to be, because there was some necessity in them, some utility for our lives. But in truth these things cannot be explained mentally and should not be. For all that happened was necessary, not for any mental reason, but to lead us to something beyond what the mind imagines. But is there any need to explain after all? The whole universe explains everything at every moment and a particular thing happens because the whole universe is what it is."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (28 April)

The whole universe explains each thing at each moment. That is very important.

> *If one wants to learn a language, is it not necessary to read ordinary books like those of Alexandre Dumas, for instance?*

Yes, if one reads to study the language, to understand how an author expresses himself, it is quite all right. But this should not be made an excuse for reading anything whatever.

> *Haven't imaginary stories any value?*

That depends on the quality of the imagination. If you say that it is a good thing to develop one's imagination, this is true, only you must take care not to develop an untruthful imagination.

> *Do not imaginary stories put you in contact with life, with truth?*

Not always! And what does "contact with truth" mean?

there is a truth in a grain of sand. That means nothing.

Don't you think there are enough ugly things in the world without one's giving a picture of them in books ? This is something which always used to surprise me, even when I was a child — life is so ugly, so full of mean, miserable, even at times repulsive things, what is the use of imagining yet worse things than are already there ? If you imagined something more beautiful, a more beautiful life, that would be worth the trouble. People who take pleasure in writing ugly things show a great poverty of mind — it is always a sign of a poverty of mind. It is infinitely more difficult to tell a story beautiful from beginning to end than to write a story ending with a sensational event or a catastrophe. Many authors, if they had to write a story which ends happily, beautifully, would not be able to do it — they do not have enough imagination for that. Very few stories have an uplifting ending, almost all end in a failure — for a very simple reason, it is much more easy to fall than to rise. It is much more difficult to end one's story on a note of greatness and splendour, to make one's hero a genius seeking to transcend himself, because for that one must be a genius oneself, and this is not given to everybody.

> *When one reads ordinary books, one has the impression of entering into the mind of the author and that is not always pleasant. I have also noticed that when one talks about business or work with an outsider, the conversation can be good and interesting, but as soon as one talks with the same person about his private life, the conversation immediately becomes painful.*

Yes, because work, especially if it is technical work, is the expression of the best in the man, while in his private life he comes down to a lower level, with very few exceptions. So many remarkable scholars, writers, artists who produce remarkable things, once they enter their homes, become detestable hus-

bands, unpleasant fathers, intolerable people for those who are around them. And I am speaking of an *élite*, those who make special studies, discoveries, who run big institutions: outside, they are uncommon people, men of great abilities; back home they become commonplace and often unbearable — they have a nice time, they take rest, relax themselves. And if they begin to amuse themselves, that's the end of it all ! I knew people of great intelligence, admirable artists who, as soon as they began to "relax", became utterly foolish ! They did the most vulgar things, behaved like ill-bred children — they were relaxing. Everything comes from this "need" of relaxation; and what does that mean for most men ? It means, always, coming down to a lower level. They do not know that for a true relaxation one must rise one degree higher, one must rise above oneself. If one goes down, it adds to one's fatigue and brings a stupefaction. Besides, each time one comes down, one increases the load of the subconscient — this huge subconscient load which one must clean and clean if one wants to mount, and which is like fetters on the feet. But it is difficult to teach that, for one must know it oneself before one can teach it to others.

This is never told to children, they are allowed to commit all the stupidities in the world under the pretext that they need relaxation.

It is not by sinking below oneself that one removes fatigue. One must climb the ladder and there one has true rest, because one has the inner peace, the light, the universal energy. And little by little one puts oneself in touch with the truth which is the very reason of one's existence.

If you contact that definitively, it removes completely all fatigue.

When one recognises one's faults, one can't commit them again, can one ?

If one is sincere, no. If you repeat the same errors several times,

you may be sure you are not sincere somewhere. When one recognises one's mistake and yet repeats it, it means that only a superficial part of the consciousness has recognised it and the rest is perfectly satisfied with it and generally justifies it. You may tell yourself without the risk of making a mistake: "If I repeat the same fault, I am not sincere." So try to be sincere.

> *When one speaks to others, one rarely comes to an agreement, for people do not see things in the same way. Or if I see the other's point of view, I cannot accept it.*

That means you are not plastic. You may be sure that if you find a person boring, he will also find you boring. You will never arrive at anything if you do not take the attitude of putting yourself in the place of the other, this is indispensable. When someone tells you something you do not understand, you must not say, "He knows nothing", but you must try to understand. If you want to be quite sincere, even when a child comes and tells you something you do not understand, you must not say, "This child is stupid", but "It is I who am stupid, because I do not understand !"

There are a hundred ways of looking at a problem. If you want to find the solution, you must take up all the elements one after another, rise above them and see how they harmonise.

There is a state of consciousness which may be called "gnostic", in which you are able to see *at the same time* all the theories, all the beliefs, all the ideas men have expressed in their highest consciousness — the most contradictory notions, like the Buddhistic, the Vedantic, the Christian theories, all the philosophical theories, all the expressions of the human mind when it has managed to catch a little corner of the Truth — and in that state, not only do you put each thing in its place, but everything appears to you marvellously true and quite indispensable in order to be able to understand anything at all about anything

whatsoever. There is a state of consciousness... oh, I was going to tell you things you cannot yet understand. I shall give you a simpler example. Anatole France said in one of his books: "So long as men did not try to make the world progress, all went well and everybody was satisfied — no worry about perfecting oneself or perfecting the world, consequently all went well. Therefore the worst thing is to want to make others progress; let them do what they like and don't bother about anything, that will be much more wise." On the contrary, others tell you: "There is a Truth to be attained; the world is in a state of ignorance and one must at all costs, in spite of the difficulty of the way, enlighten man's consciousness and pull him out of his ignorance." But I tell you that there is a state of consciousness in which both the ways of seeing are absolutely equally true. Naturally, if you take only two aspects, it is difficult to see clearly; one must be able to see all the aspects of the truth glimpsed by the human intelligence and... something more. And then, in that state, nothing is absolutely false, nothing is absolutely bad. In that state one is free from all problems, all difficulties, all battles and everything appears to you wonderfully harmonious.

But if you try to imitate this condition mentally — do you understand ? to make a mental imitation of it — you may be sure of doing stupid things; you will be one of those who have a chaos in their head and can say the most contradictory things without even being aware of it.

In that condition there is no contradiction — it is a totality and a totality in which one has the full knowledge of all the truths expressed (which are not sufficient to express the total Truth), in which one knows the respective places of all things, why and of what the universe is formed. Only — I hasten to tell you this — it is not by a personal effort that one reaches this condition; it is not because one tries to obtain it that one obtains it. You *become* that, spontaneously. It is, if you like, the crowning of an absolute mental sincerity, when you no

longer have any partiality, any preference, any attachment to an idea, when you do not even try any longer to know the truth.

You are simply open in the Light, that's all.

I am telling you this, this evening, because what is done, what has been realised by one can be realised by others. It is enough that one body has been able to realise that, one human body, to have the assurance that it *can* be done. You may consider it still very far off, but you can say, "Yes, the gnostic life is certain, because it has begun to be realised."

> *"There is a plane of divine consciousness in which all is known absolutely, and the whole plan of things foreseen and predetermined. That way of seeing lives in the highest reaches of the Supramental; it is the Supreme's own vision. But when we do not possess that consciousness, it is useless to speak in terms that hold good only in that region and are not our present effective way of seeing things. For at a lower level of consciousness nothing is realised or fixed beforehand; all is in the process of making. Here there are no settled facts, there is only the play of possibilities; out of the clash of possibilities is realised the thing that has to happen. On this plane we can choose and select; we can refuse one possibility and accept another; we can follow one path, turn away from another. And that we can do, even though what is actually happening may have been foreseen and predetermined in a higher plane."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (28 April)

The word "predetermined" does not correspond to the reality: the word "pre-existent" would be more correct. The consciousness of an unfolding has a reality, it is not only an appearance.

Imagine the world as a single whole and, in a certain sense, finite, limited but containing potentially innumerable possibilities of which the combinations are so numerous that they are equivalent to an infinite (you must be careful with words, however; I am very much cramped by words, they do not express exactly what I mean). So, the universe is objectified by the Divine Consciousness, by the Supreme, according to certain determined laws of which we shall speak later. The universe is a single whole, in the sense that it *is* the Divine — it does not

contain the whole of the Divine, but it is as though the Divine deployed Himself so as to objectify Himself; that is the *raison d'être* of the manifestation of the universe. It is as if the divine Consciousness wandered into all divine possibilities following a path it had chosen. Imagine then a multitude of possibles of which all the possible combinations are equivalent to an infinite. The divine Consciousness is essentially free — It wanders therein and objectifies Itself. The path traversed is free in the midst of an infinite multiplicity which is at the same time pre-existent and absolutely undetermined according to the action of the free divine Will. It may be conceived that this Will, being free, is able to change the course of the deployment, change the path and, although everything is pre-existent and consequently inevitable, the road, the path is free and absolutely unexpected. These changes of the route, if one may say so, can therefore change the relations between things and circumstances, and consequently the determinism is changed. This change of the circuit is called "the effect of the Grace"; well, through the aid of the Grace, if the Grace decides it, things can change, the course can be different. Things can change their places and instead of following a certain circuit follow another. A circumstance which, according to a particular determinism, should occur at a certain place ahead, for instance, would instead occur behind, and so on. The relations between things consequently change.[1]

At what moment does Time begin? The Consciousness that chooses — is it in Time as soon as the unrolling begins?

[1] Returning to the definition of the word "pre-existent", Mother added the following commentary at the time of the publication of this talk: "*Sat*, that is, absolute Existence, is not in the Manifestation; it exists without being manifested; it is the non-manifest state of existence. There is *Tat* which is the state of non-existence and *Sat* which is the state of existence; and *Tat* naturally is not manifested, but *Sat* also is not manifested: it is only when *Chit-Tapas* comes, the Consciousness-Energy, the Consciousness which realises, that *Sat* manifests itself."

No, Time is a succession; you must be able to conceive that the Supreme Consciousness, before objectifying itself, becomes aware of Itself in Itself. There is a global, total and simultaneous perception and there, there is no Time. Likewise one cannot speak of "Space", for the same reason, because all is simultaneous. It is something more; it corresponds to a state of consciousness subjective rather than objective, for the aim, the motive of creation is objectivisation; but there is a first step in this objectivisation in which there is a plenary consciousness, total and simultaneous, beyond Time and Space, of what will constitute the content of this universe; and there, the universe is pre-existent, but not manifested, and Time begins with objectivisation.

Can it be said that Time begins with the supramental plane ?

It is not the same kind of Time. There is only a beginning of Time and a beginning of form. Time there is of a very different quality. There is a global, static consciousness before arriving at the supramental level, in which everything appears simultaneously — Time is the result of the fact that there is a succession in the organisation of the whole. While the totality you perceive all at once, on the supramental level, is not a static totality — the static totality gives place to another totality which gives the impression of Time. These are inner relations within the Supermind, in the sense that one is not aware of something which happens outside oneself; one is conscious only of something within oneself, internal, but the internal relations vary, and this gives a first impression of Time.

In this state of consciousness one does not have the impression of things being born, passing, disappearing, does one ?

Oh, no ! nothing of the kind.

"The Supreme Consciousness knows everything beforehand, because everything is realised there in her eternity. But for the sake of her play and in order to carry out actually on the physical plane what is foreordained in her own supreme self, she moves here upon earth as if she did not know the whole story; she works as if it was a new and untried thread that she was weaving."

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

If you undertake a work and are told beforehand that all will be useless and you will not be able to do what you want, would you do it ? No, surely not ! Well, it is something like that which happens. Ninety times out of a hundred, what you do does not give the expected result. Not one person in a million would do his work if he were told: "Do this, but the result will not be at all what you want." But in the play of forces many must work for the aggregate of forces, for the totality of forces, although individually this work has no personal utility for the one who does it. So, if the individual had the knowledge that the part he plays in the whole is infinitesimal, he would not play it. But the moment you go above that, when you do things, not with a fixed end in view, but because you know within yourself that this is the thing to be done, whatever the result, then with this kind of detachment you know and see in the higher Consciousness that all action is done exclusively because it has to be done whatever may be the result; and generally you are sufficiently clear-sighted to know, at least vaguely, what will be the result of this action. For knowing it will not change in the least your way of doing it.

Instead of an explanation which goes from below upward, it would be wiser to look for an explanation which comes from above downward and rather to conceive that little by little the Consciousness comes down and as it comes down is obscured, and one no longer understands by what mechanism things are

done — that is what is called a state of ignorance.

> *"In a picture you need a definite scheme of composition and colour; you have to set a limit, to put the whole thing within a fixed framework; but the limit is illusory, the frame is a mere convention. There is a constant continuation of the picture that stretches beyond any particular frame, and each continuation can be drawn in the same conditions in an unending series of frames. Our aim is this or that, we say, but we know that it is only the beginning of another aim beyond it, and that in its turn leads to yet another...."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (28 April)

If I were told that things are going to stop at a certain point, I would find it very boring, so boring that I would not stir!

The only thing which consoles me is that everything continues always, infinitely, that there is always something new to be done.

Whatever be the goal attained, it is only a beginning.

> *What is the difference between "spiritual" and "psychic"?*

It is not the same thing. The psychic is the being organised by the divine Presence and it belongs to the earth — I am not speaking of the universe, only of the earth; it is only upon earth that you will find the psychic being. The rest of the universe is formed in quite a different way.

The universe contains all the domains higher than the physical: there is a global physical comprising the mental, the vital, etc., and all the domains above the mental are domains of a spiritual order, domains which are, for us, domains of the spirit, and it is this "spirit" which little by little, progressively, materialises itself to arrive at Matter as we conceive it. The beings

of the Overmind, for instance, and all the beings of the higher regions have no psychic being — the "angels" have no psychic being. It is only upon earth that the psychic life begins, and it is just the process by which the Divine has awakened material life to the necessity of rejoining its divine origin. Without the psychic, Matter would never have awakened from its inconscience, it would never have aspired for the life of its origin, the spiritual life. Therefore, the psychic being in the human being is the manifestation of spiritual aspiration; but there is a spiritual life independent of the psychic.

Is there a correspondence between the psychic world and the earth ?

But I have already told you that it is only upon earth that the psychic being gets its experiences to individualise itself. Hence there is an almost absolute interdependence between the psychic world and the earth.

What is the most effective means of awakening the psychic being ?

But it is wide awake ! And not only is it awake, but it acts, only you are not aware of it. It appears to you asleep because you don't perceive it !

Fundamentally, without this kind of inner will of the psychic being, I believe human beings would be quite dismal, dull, they would have an altogether animal life. Every gleam of aspiration is always the expression of a psychic influence. Without the presence of the psychic, without the psychic influence, there would never be any sense of progress or any will for progress.

Would there be a sense of beauty ?

Yes. Perhaps not the highest sense of beauty, but in the vital

one finds a complete sense of beauty and harmony. The beauty which is fundamental, profound, universal, constant belongs only to the psychic, but the sense of the beauty of form, of appearance, of colour, the educated, refined vital fully possesses.

And not love ?

That depends on what you mean by "love" ! There would not be divine love there, naturally, but all passions, attractions, desires exist in the vital. Only, the quality of these movements has been completely changed due to the descent and diffusion of the divine Consciousness in Matter. It has awakened the possibility of true love; otherwise, all those things which are taken for love, all passions and attractions and desires — the need of devouring — all that exists very well in the vital. The first form of love in Matter is the need of devouring: one wants to possess, assimilate; and the best way of doing it is to swallow and to digest ! It can be said that the cat is full of love for its kittens when it eats them and the tiger full of love for the lamb it devours !

Is there a sense of beauty in flowers ?

Directly there is organic life, the vital element comes in, and it is this vital element which gives to flowers the sense of beauty. It is not perhaps individualised in the sense we understand it, but it is a sense of the species and the species always tries to realise it. I have noticed a first rudiment of the psychic presence and vibration in vegetable life, and truly this blossoming one calls a flower is the first manifestation of the psychic presence. The psychic is individualised only in man, but it was there before him; but it is not the same kind of individualisation as in man, it is more fluid: it manifests as force, as consciousness rather than as individuality. Take the rose, for example; its great perfection of form, colour, scent expresses an aspiration and a

psychic giving. Look at a rose opening in the morning at the first touch of the sun, it is a magnificent self-giving in aspiration.

Each flower has its special significance, hasn't it ?

Not as we understand it mentally. There is a mental projection when one gives a precise meaning to a flower. It may answer, vibrate to the touch of this projection, accept the meaning, but a flower has no equivalent of the mental consciousness. In the vegetable kingdom there is a beginning of the psychic, but there is no beginning of the mental consciousness. In animals it is different; mental life begins to form and for them things have a meaning. But in flowers it is rather like the movement of a little baby — it is neither a sensation nor a feeling, but something of both; it is a spontaneous movement, a very special vibration. So, if one is in contact with it, if one feels it, one gets an impression which may be translated by a thought. That is how I have given a meaning to flowers and plants — there is a kind of identification with the vibration, a perception of the quality it represents and, little by little, through a kind of approximation (sometimes this comes suddenly, occasionally it takes time), there is a coming together of these vibrations (which are of a vital-emotional order) and the vibration of the mental thought, and if there is a sufficient harmony, one has a direct perception of what the plant may signify.

In some countries (particularly here) certain plants are used as the media for worship, offering, devotion. Certain plants are given on special occasions. And I have often seen that this identification was quite in keeping with the nature of the plant, because spontaneously, without knowing anything, I happened to give the same meaning as that given in religious ceremonies. The vibration was really there in the flower itself.... Did it come from the use that had been made of it or did it come from very far, from somewhere deep down, from a beginning of the psychic life ? It would be difficult to say.

Can it happen that the psychic being does not fall at the place where it wanted to take birth ?

If a psychic being sees from its psychic world a light on the earth, it may rush down there without knowing exactly where it is. Everything is possible. But if the psychic being is very conscious, sufficiently conscious, it will seek the light of aspiration in a precise place, because of the culture, the education it will find there. This happens much more frequently than one believes, especially in somewhat educated circles. An intelligent woman with some artistic or philosophical culture, a beginning of conscious individuality, may aspire that the child she is going to have may be the best possible according to her idea or according to what she has read. Hence it is not so very complicated to find a place. The number of psychic beings born constantly being considerable, if each time exceptional conditions have to be found it would be difficult. Surely, there are instances where the psychic being seems to have fallen headlong and been stunned, but this is bad luck; in such a case it generally requires a long time to wake up. It is bad luck in the sense that it probably lacked a certain power of discrimination, or perhaps it had to face certain forces which thwarted its decision and won a partial victory over it. There are a thousand possibilities, you know. One cannot say that everything goes according to the same plan — every psychic being is different.

> *"There is even a necessity for the existence of the hostile forces. They make your determination stronger, your aspiration clearer.*
>
> *"It is true, however, that they exist because you gave them reason to exist. So long as there is something in you which answers to them, their intervention is perfectly legitimate. If nothing in you responded, if they had no hold upon any part of your nature, they would retire and leave you."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (5 May)

The best way of facing hostile forces is always to aspire, always to remember the Divine. And never to fear.

Mother reads a question asked during the talk in 1929:

> *"Do the hostile forces generally come from outside or inside ?"*
>
> *Ibid.*
>
> *They come from outside the consciousness or the being.*

Where does the being stop ?... What is the difference between outside and inside, if the consciousness is everywhere !

Seekers are always told, "If you want to get rid of something, say that it is outside." This is only an impression, but it is easier to get rid of a difficulty if you have the impression that it is outside you. However, I have just told you the opposite, that if nothing "in you" answers to the hostile forces, they will never attack you. Therefore, what is inside is also outside and what is outside is also inside ! The secret lies in knowing how to place

it just where it is most convenient for the immediate action.

If you have a serious difficulty in your character, for example, the habit of losing your temper, and you decide: "I must not get angry again", it is very difficult, but if on the other hand, you tell yourself: "Anger is something which circulates through the whole world, it is not in me, it belongs to everybody; it wanders about here and there and if I close my door, it will not enter", it is much more easy. If you think: "It is my character, I am born like that", it becomes almost impossible. It is true there is something in your character which answers to this force of anger. All movements, all vibrations are general — they enter, they go out, they move about — but they rush upon you and enter into you only to the extent you leave the door in you open. And if you have, besides, some affinity with these forces, you may get angry without even knowing why. Everything is everywhere and it is arbitrary to draw limits.

I read somewhere, in a book written by a confirmed materialist, that human beings are as though shut in a leather sack and have no contact with other beings. It is a stupidity evidently, but there are people who are helped by it; this idea that they are shut up in a shell and have no contact with others except through this shell, protects them and prevents them from receiving anything whatever from outside. True, it is a stupidity, but some stupidities are at times useful! We said the other day that the mind is not an instrument for knowledge and that in the domain of ideas everything is relative, everything is a way of seeing, everything is a way of living. Every science has its language, every religion its language, every philosophy its language, every activity its own language, and the more you learn these languages, the more do you have the impression of knowing many things. What matters is that you do know all the languages. You must come to the point where all these movements of the mind are for you a play altogether relative — you may play well or ill, but it is all a play. There are people who know how to make use of it, these are the so-called "intelligent" people

and there are those who do not know how to use it, these are the so-called "fools".

> *Things are "in" us to the extent we identify ourselves with them — if we push back the identification, are they outside ?*

This is an altogether subjective way of speaking. To act, you have to make some classifications and it is just for this that the mind is useful: it organises, it puts each thing in its place, it plays the game; and it is this activity which creates the rules of the game and by obeying these rules it can win the game. But true knowledge comes from elsewhere.

> *"Mental faith is not sufficient; it must be completed and enforced by a vital and even a physical faith, a faith of the body. If you can create in yourself an integral force of this kind in all your being, then nothing can resist it; but... you must fix the faith in the very cells of the body. There is, for instance, now abroad the beginning of a knowledge among the scientists that death is not a necessity. But the whole of humanity believes firmly in death.... If this belief could be cast out first from the conscious mind, then from the vital nature and the subconscious physical layers, death would no longer be inevitable."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (5 May)

This is a negative way of looking at the problem. If one believed that immortality was possible, that would be a more active way of seeing; and not only that it is possible but it will be realised later, then one would be strong enough to resist.

> *"A fixed form was needed in order that the organised individual consciousness might have a stable support.*

And yet it is the fixity of the form that made death inevitable."

Questions and Answers 1929 (5 May)

Who will tell me what constitutes an individual ? What is it that gives you the impression that you are a person existing in himself ?

One can say with Descartes: "I think, therefore I am."

Ah, no ! that does not prove that you are individualised.

What is it that gives you the impression that you are an individual ?... When you were ten, you were very different from what you were when you were born, and now you are very different from what you were at ten, aren't you ? The form grows within certain limits and there is a similarity, but even so, it is quite different from what it was at your birth; you may almost say, "It was not I." So much for the physical. Now, take your inner consciousness when you were five and now. Nobody would say it is the same person. And your thoughts, at five and now ? All are different. But in spite of everything, what is it that gives you the impression that it is *the same person* who is thinking ?

Let us take the example of a river following its course: it is never the same water which flows. What is a river ? There is not a drop that ever is the same, no stability is there, then where is the river ? (Some take this example to prove that there is no personality — they are very anxious to prove that there is no personality.) For beings it is the same thing: the consciousness changes, ideas change, sensations change, what then is the being ? Some say that individuality is based upon memory, remembrance: you remember therefore you are an individual being. This is absolutely wrong, for even if you had no memory you would still be an individual being.

The river's bed constitutes the river.

The bed localises the river, but the bed also changes much; which means that all is inconstant, all is fugitive, and this is true. But it is only one part of the truth, it is not the whole. You feel quite clearly that there is something "stable" in you, don't you, but where does this sensation of stability come from ?

> *If I were to place it physically, I would say it is somewhere in the chest. When I say "I am going to do something", it is not the true "I" which speaks. When I say "I think", it is not the true "I" which thinks — the true "I" looks at the thinking, it looks at the thoughts coming. Naturally this is a way of speaking.*

When the vast majority of people say "I", it is a part of them, of their feeling, their body, their thought, indifferently, which speaks; it is something that always changes. Therefore, their "I" is innumerable, or the "I" always varies. What is the constant thing therein ?... The psychic being, evidently. For, to be constant a thing must first be immortal. Otherwise it cannot be constant. Then, it must also be independent of the experiences through which it passes: it cannot be the experiences themselves. Hence, it is certainly not the bed of the river which constitutes the river; the bed is only a circumstance. If the comparison is carried a little farther (besides, comparisons are worthless, people find in them whatever they want), it can be said that the river is a good symbol of life, that what is constant in the river is the species "water". It is not always the same drop of water, but it is always water — without water there would be no river. And what endures in the human being is the species "consciousness". It is because it has a consciousness that it endures. It is not the forms which last, it is the consciousness, the power of binding together all these forms, of passing through all these things, not only keeping a memory of them (memory is something very external), but keeping the same vibration of consciousness.

And that is the great mystery of creation, for it is the same

consciousness, the Consciousness is one. But the very moment this Consciousness manifests itself, exteriorises itself, deploys itself, it divides itself into innumerable fragments for the need of expansion, and each one of these fragmentations has been the beginning, the origin of an individual being. The origin of every individual form is the law of this form or the truth of this form. If there were no law, no truth of each form, there would be no possibility of individualisation. It would be something extending indefinitely; there would be perhaps points of concentration, assemblages, but no individual consciousness. Each form then represents one element in the changing of the One into the many. This multiplicity implies an innumerable quantity of laws, elements of consciousness, truths which spread out into the universe and finally become separate individualities. So the individual being seems constantly to go farther and farther away from its origin by the very necessity of individualisation. But once this individualisation, that is, this awareness of the inner truth is complete, it becomes possible, by an inner identification, to re-establish in the multiplicity the original unity; that is the *raison d'être* of the universe as we perceive it. The universe has been made so that this phenomenon may take place. The Supreme has manifested Himself to Himself so as to become aware of Himself.

In any case, that is the rationale of *this* creation. Let us be satisfied with our universe, let us make the best use possible of our life upon earth and the rest will come in its time.

It is purposely, mind you, that I have not mentioned the ego as one of the causes of the sense of individuality. For the ego being a falsehood and an illusion, the sense of individuality would itself be false and illusory (as Buddha and Shankara affirm), whereas the origin of individualisation being in the Supreme Himself, the ego is only a passing deformation, necessary for the moment, which will disappear when its utility is over, when the Truth-Consciousness will be established.

5 March 1951

Mother reads a passage about natural calamities (*Questions and Answers 1929*, 5 May).

Why do disasters occur ?

> *Because a higher consciousness wants to manifest itself in the world, and man and Nature resist it.*

This is partly true. But I don't think Nature has this feeling. When there is an earthquake, for instance, or a volcano erupts, if there are men staying nearby and these events cause their death, obviously it is for these men a catastrophe, but we could very well imagine that for Nature it is good fun ! We say, "What a terrible wind !" Naturally, for men it is "terrible", but not for Nature. It is a question of proportion, isn't it ? I don't know if it is necessary to bring into the picture a higher force wanting to manifest and a resistance from Nature; it is possible, but not indispensable. It can be understood quite easily that it is the play of Nature with tremendous forces and that for her it is only a diversion; in any case, nothing catastrophic. For the consciousness of Nature or the material consciousness, physical forms and humanity upon earth are like ants. You yourself, when you walk, you do not find it necessary to move out of the way to avoid crushing the ants ! unless you are a stubborn "non-violent" fellow. You walk, and if you crush a few hundred ants, it can't be helped ! Well, it is the same with Nature. She goes on, and if in the course of her march she destroys a few thousand men, it is not of much importance for her, she can make again a few millions ! It is not difficult.

This reminds me of what happened in Paris when I was seventeen or eighteen. There was a "charity bazaar". This charity bazaar was a place where men from all over the world came

to buy and sell all kinds of things, and the proceeds of the sale went to works of charity (it was meant more for amusement than for doing good, but still, charitable works profited by it). All the elegance, all the refinement of high society was gathered there. Now, the bazaar was very beautiful but not solidly built, because it was to last only for three or four days. The roof was of painted tarpaulin which had been suspended. Everything was lighted by electricity; the work was more or less decently done, but naturally with the idea that it was only for a few days. There was a short-circuit, everything began to blaze up; the roof caught fire and suddenly collapsed upon the people. As I said, all the *élite* of society were there — for them, from the human point of view, it was a frightful catastrophe. There were people near the entrance who tried to escape; others, all ablaze, also tried to reach the door and run away. It was a veritable scuffle ! All these elegant, refined people, who usually were so well-mannered, began to fight like street rowdies. There was even a Count of something or other, a very well-known man, a poet, a man of perfect elegance, who carried a silver-knobbed stick, and he was surprised in the act of hitting women on the head with his stick, and trying to push forward ! Indeed, it was a fine sight, something most elegant ! Afterwards, lamentations in society, big funerals and many stories.... Now, a Dominican, a well-known orator, was asked to give a speech over the tombs of the unfortunate who had perished in the fire. He said something to this effect: "It serves you right. You did not live according to the law of God and He has punished you by burning you."

And every time there was a disaster this story was repeated. Naturally many people protested and said, "Here's a God whom we won't have !" But these ideas are quite typical of ordinary humanity.

"Sinning" humanity is altogether a Christian idea, which falsifies our idea of the Divine — a Divine who punishes poor people because it is their misfortune to be born "sinners" would not be very generous ! However...

"...Philosophy has always failed to unveil the secret of things; it is because it has tried to fit the universe into the size of the human mind."

Questions and Answers 1929 (5 May)

"To fit the universe into the size of the human mind", this is precisely what everybody does. And not only do they judge the universe, but they judge the divine principles which have made it and they imagine they are able to know something.

Does "liberty" mean freedom from all attachment ?

It is not only a freedom from all attachment, but a liberation from all bondage to the law of consequences. In the material field there is a determinism which comes from the law of consequences, from the law of cause and effect; hence inner liberation does not free you only from all attachment but from all consequences. As I have told you many a time, by your inner liberation your consciousness rises to a level far above the level which governs the material world and, from this high level, the Force can descend and cancel all the material consequences.

If one realises a certain truth in the higher consciousness but the mind resists, should the mind be forced to accept this new truth ?

If you succeed in forcing it, very well. But it is not so easy. It is not enough to decide to force it for this to happen ! It revolts. And it is not the only one to revolt. Then what are you going to do with this mind in revolt ? Leave it to do what it likes ? Exhaust all that ? It is not a very fine procedure !

The functioning is not the same with everyone. There are people who have a great light in the mind (or think they have it !), they know things, they know how the world and others ought to behave and, moreover, they are sure that they, they

are very far on the road, but when they begin to act they are more stupid than the little street urchin. Why ? Because it is not the mind which has decided, and even if it has decided, it is not the mind which has executed; what has executed does not recognise at all the authority of the mind, but tells it: "Leave me alone, don't bother me ! I act according to my own inspiration !" Then, what are you going to do ? Try to give a lesson to your mind ? You may always try, but it is not sure that you will succeed. It is not an easy problem.... Human nature is very unstable; after having thought in one way, it thinks in another; after having felt in one way, it feels in another, and so on; nothing lasts: the good not longer than the bad; the bad, a little longer than the good ! But anyway, this does not last indefinitely. So, if you have the patience to wait, surely it will change !

But everything returns !

Yes, surely, because in this way nothing will change, it is only the rhythm which will change. It is like those colour-wheels: sometimes one sees one colour, sometimes another, and if one waits long enough one sees the red, blue, white, red, blue, white... indefinitely. There are people who have a pretty little theory like that, which I have often heard; they say that one's vital should never be repressed, it must be allowed to do all it wants, it will get tired and be cured ! This is the height of stupidity ! First, because the vital by its very nature is never satisfied, and if a certain kind of activity becomes insipid, it will double the dose: if its stupidities bore it, it will increase its stupidities and its excesses, and if that tires it, as soon as it has rested it will start again. For it will not be changed. Others say that if you sit upon your vital it will be suppressed and, one day, it will shoot up like a steam-jet... and this is true. Hence, to repress the vital is not a solution. To let it do what it likes is not a solution either, and generally this brings on fairly

serious disorders. There must be a third solution.

To aspire that the light from above may come and purify it ?

Obviously, but the problem remains. You aspire for a change, perhaps for a specific change; but the answer to your aspiration will not come immediately and in the meantime your nature will resist. Things happen like this: at a given moment the nature seems to have yielded and you think you have got the desired result. Your aspiration diminishes in intensity because you think you have the desired result. But the other fellow, who is very cunning and is waiting quietly in his corner, when you are off your guard, he springs up like a jack-in-the-box, and then you must begin all over again.

But if one can tear out completely the root of the thing ?

Ah ! one must not be so sure of that. I have known people who wanted to save the world by reducing it so much that there was no longer a world left ! This is the ascetic way — you want to do away with the problem by doing away with the possibility of the problem. But this will never change anything.

No, there is a method — a sure one — but your method must be very clear-sighted and you must have a wide-awake consciousness of your person and of what goes on there and the way in which things happen. Let us take the instance of a person subject to outbursts of rage and violence. According to one method he would be told: "Get as angry as you like, you will suffer the consequences of your anger and this will cure you." This could be discussed. According to another method he would be told: "Sit upon your anger and it will disappear." This too could be discussed. In any case, you will have to sit upon it all the time, for if ever you should get up for a minute you will

see immediately what happens ! Then, what is to be done ?

You must become more and more conscious. You must observe how the thing happens, by what road the danger approaches, and stand in the way before it can take hold of you. If you want to cure yourself of a defect or a difficulty, there is but one method: to be perfectly vigilant, to have a very alert and vigilant consciousness. First you must see very clearly what you want to do. You must not hesitate, be full of doubt and say, "Is it good to do this or not, does this come into the synthesis or should it not come in ?" You will see that if you trust your mind, it will always shuttle back and forth: it vacillates all the time. If you take a decision it will put before you all the arguments to show you that your decision is not good, and you will be tossed between the "yes" and "no", the black and white, and will arrive at nothing. Hence, first, you must know exactly what you want — know, not mentally, but through concentration, through aspiration and a very conscious will. That is the important point. Afterwards, gradualllly, by observation, by a sustained vigilance, you must realise a sort of method which will be personal to you — it is useless to convince others to adopt the same method as yours, for that won't succeed. Everyone must find his own method, everyone must have his own method, and to the extent you put into practice your method, it will become clearer and clearer, more and more precise. You can correct a certain point, make clear another, etc. So, you start working.... For a while, all will go well. Then, one day, you will find yourself facing an insurmountable difficulty and will tell yourself, "I have done all that and here is everything as bad as before !" Then, in this case, you must, through a yet more sustained concentration, open an inner door in you and bring into this movement a force which was not there formerly, a state of consciousness which was not there before. And there, there will be a power, when your own personal power will be exhausted and no longer effective. When the personal power runs out ordinary people say, "That's good, I can no longer do any-

thing, it is finished." But I tell you that when you find yourself before this wall, it is the beginning of something new. By an obstinate concentration, you must pass over to the other side of the wall and there you will find a new knowledge, a new force, a new power, a new help, and you will be able to work out a new system, a new method which surely will take you very far.

I do not say this to discourage you; only, things happen like that. And the worst of all is to get discouraged when it happens. You must tell yourself, "With the means of transport at my disposal I have reached a certain point, but these means do not allow me to go further. What should I do ?... Sit there and not stir any longer ? — not at all. I must find other means of transport." This will happen quite often, but after a while you will get used to it. You must sit down for a moment, meditate, and then find other means. You must increase your concentration, your aspiration and your trust and with the new help which comes to you, make a new programme, work out other means to replace those you have left behind. This is how one progresses stage by stage.

But you must take great care to apply at each stage, as perfectly as possible, what you have gained or learnt. If you remain in an indrawn state of consciousness and do not apply materially the inner progress, a time will certainly come when you will not be able to move at all, for your outer being, unchanged, will be like a fetter pulling you back and hindering you from advancing. So, the most important point (what everybody says but only a few do) is to put into practice what you know. With that you have a good chance of succeeding, and with perseverance you will certainly get there.

You must never get discouraged when you find yourself before a wall, never say, "Oh ! what shall I do ? It is still there." In this way the difficulty will still be there and still there and still there, till the very end. It is only when you reach the goal that everything will suddenly crumble down.

"The true remembrance of past births may indeed be part of an integral knowledge; but it cannot be got by that way of imaginative fancies. If it is on one side an objective knowledge, on the other it depends largely on personal and subjective experience, and here there is much chance of invention, distortion or false building. To reach the truth of these things, your experiencing consciousness must be pure and limpid, free from any mental interference or any vital interference, liberated from your personal notions and feelings and from your mind's habit of interpreting or explaining in its own way."

Questions and Answers 1929 (5 May)

What should be done to get rid of mental intervention ?

The mind must learn to be silent — remain calm, attentive, without making a noise. If you try to silence your mind directly, it is a hard job, almost impossible; for the most material part of the mind never stops its activity — it goes on and on like a non-stop recording machine. It repeats all that it records and unless there is a switch to stop it, it continues and continues indefinitely. If, on the other hand, you manage to shift your consciousness into a higher domain, above the ordinary mind, this opening to the Light calms the mind, it does not stir any longer, and the mental silence so obtained can become constant. Once you enter into this domain, you may very well never come out of it — the external mind always remains calm.

The only true solution is aspiration for the higher light.

How to persuade the recalcitrant parts of our nature to surrender ?

Try to make them understand, as one does with a child who does not understand, by all kinds of means: pictures, explanations, symbols. Make them understand the necessity of union and harmony with the other parts of the being; reason with them, try to make them conscious of their acts and the consequences of these. Above all, be very patient, do not tire of repeating the same things.

In this work, can the mind be of help ?

Yes, if a part of the mind is fully enlightened, if it is surrendered to the psychic light and has a sense of the truth, the mind can be of great help, it can explain things in the true way.

For past lives, are there any general rules, broad outlines, or is everything possible ?

All depends on the category to which one belongs, and the degree of the psychic being's development. If the psychic being is in an advanced stage, near maturity, the choice before death, about which I spoke to you the other day, is quite real and this choice means that everything is possible; but in other cases, the rebirth takes place almost automatically. The will of the psychic being is not developed and it does not choose. Hence, there are no rules. It depends very much on circumstances, and especially on the line of formation which the psychic being will follow, and that depends on its origin. It is difficult to say. In the matter of sex, that may vary for a long time. As the consciousness grows and gains some unity of action, of consciousness, it can choose to follow one line to the exclusion of another, but before this choice, through innumerable creations you have been undoubtedly of different sexes. That is why perhaps some women have a masculine character, and vice versa, or have tendencies opposite to their sex. But at the time of the "choice" one may decide to belong to the creatrix Consciousness or to the immobile Witness. That depends upon the origin.

Have all psychic beings the same origin ?

This is how things happen. The origin of the psychic life, the divine Presence in Matter is one and the same, that's understood, but there are beings in the higher world who have never taken a body upon earth and who want to act there, have a terrestrial action. So they wait till some psychic beings attain their full development and unite with them to do some work according to their nature. Their consciousness is added to the psychic consciousness upon earth. These are beings who have never taken birth here, beings who materialised themselves more and more as the creation proceeded. They are perhaps the first emanations, beings sent into the universe for special reasons — men call them "gods" or "demi-gods". So, one of these beings may have chosen, for some special reason, a psychic being in formation — he helps it, follows its development and, when this psychic is sufficiently ready and sufficiently strong to be able to support the identification, he unites with it, identifies with it to do some work upon earth. This is not very frequent, but it has happened and still happens. You find stories in ancient traditions about gods incarnating upon earth; some mythologies speak of them. That corresponds to something true. But all psychic beings are not necessarily united with a being of the higher planes.

Then Mother passes on to another question, that of "possession" or the embodiment on earth of beings of the vital world (See *Questions and Answers 1929*, 12 May).

Have these vital beings a psychic being ?

No, I said that the first thing they have to do to incarnate is to drive away the psychic being of the person whom they possess. That may happen from the very birth. There are children who are almost still-born; they are taken to be dead and

suddenly they revive — this means that a vital being has incarnated in them. I have known such cases. This may happen also in the course of an illness: someone is very ill and gradually he lets go the contact with the psychic being, then, in a swoon or some other similar state, he cuts the contact entirely and the vital being rushes into the body. I have known cases of this kind also. Or it may be a slow action: the vital being enters into the atmosphere of the person, goes on influencing him and finally brings about illness, attacks, specially mental illness; then a time comes when the connection with the psychic being is entirely cut and the vital being takes possession of the body. There are cases of people falling very ill and coming out of the illness altogether different from what they were. Very often it is this that happens.

You have said that these beings of the vital world are attracted by the spiritual life. Why ?

They are attracted, but this does not mean that they have decided sincerely to follow the spiritual life. The chief characteristic of these beings is falsehood: their nature is made of deceit. They have a power for illusion; they can take the appearance of divine beings or higher beings, they can appear in a dazzling light, but truly sincere people are not deceived, they immediately feel something that warns them. But if one likes the marvellous, the unexpected, if one loves fantastic things, if one likes to live a romance, one is likely to be easily deceived.

Not long ago there was a historical instance, that of Hitler, who was in contact with a being whom he considered to be the Supreme: this being came and gave him advice, told him all that he had to do. Hitler used to retire into solitude and remain there as long as it was necessary to come into contact with his "guide" and receive from him inspirations which he carried out later very faithfully. This being which Hitler took for the Supreme was quite plainly an Asura, one who is called the "Lord of False-

hood" in occultism, but who proclaimed himself the "Lord of the Nations". He had a shining appearance, he could mislead anybody except one who really had occult knowledge and could see what was there behind the appearance. He would have deceived anybody, he was truly splendid. Generally he used to appear to Hitler wearing a silver cuirass and helmet; a kind of flame came out of his head and there was an atmosphere of dazzling light around him, so dazzling that Hitler could hardly look at him. He used to tell Hitler everything that had to be done — he played with him as with a monkey or a mouse. He had decided clearly to make Hitler commit all possible extravagances till the day he would break his neck, which did happen. But cases like this are frequent, though on a smaller scale, of course.

Hitler was a very good medium, he had great mediumistic capacities, but he lacked intelligence and discrimination. This being could tell him anything whatever and he swallowed it all. It was he who pushed Hitler little by little. And he was doing this as a distraction, he did not take life seriously. For these beings men are very tiny things with whom they play, as a cat plays with a mouse, till finally they eat them up.

Are mentally deranged people possessed ?

Yes, unless there is a physical lesion, a defect in the formation or an accident, a congestion. In all other cases it is always a possession. The proof of it is that if a person is brought to you who is altogether mentally deranged, if he has a lesion, he cannot be cured, while if there is no physical lesion, if it is a possession, then one can cure him. Unfortunately these things happen only to people who like them; there must be in the being much ambition, vanity, combined with much stupidity and a terrible pride — it is on such things that those beings play. I have known cases like that, of persons who were partially possessed, and I succeeded in freeing them from the beings who

possessed them. Naturally they felt some relief, a kind of ease for a time, but it did not last long; almost immediately it wore off and they thought: "Now I have become quite an ordinary creature, whereas before I was an exceptional being !" They used to feel within them an exceptional power, even if it was a power to do evil, and they were satisfied with it. So what did they do ? They called back with all their force the power they had lost ! Of course, the being that had been destroyed could not come back, but as these beings exist in thousands it was replaced by another. I have seen this happen three times consecutively in a case, so much so that in the end I had to tell the person: "I am tired, get rid of it yourself, I am no longer interested !"

In these cases what happens to the psychic being ?

Generally, it goes away.

I must tell you that the beings of the vital world are immortal — they cannot die. They can be destroyed, but it is only the pure spiritual force which can destroy them. For example, in a vital battle (there are people who have a vital fighting power), the experience is always the same: if you fight in the vital world with a vital being, you can crush it, kill it, but it will be reborn always — always they form themselves again. I think herein lies the origin of the legends of hydras or monsters with many heads.

There is only one force in the world which can destroy them categorically, that is, without any chance of return, and it is a force which belongs to the supreme creative Power. It is a force that comes from beyond the supramental world — it is not at the disposal of everybody. It is a luminous force, of a dazzling whiteness, so brilliant that if ordinary eyes looked at it, they would turn blind. A being of the vital world has just to be touched by this light to get dissolved immediately — it is liquefied, like those slugs which melt in water if a little salt is put on them.

Was Rasputin a vital being ?

I have heard the most contradictory things about him — some looked upon him as an incarnate godhead, others as an incarnate devil. I can say nothing, I have had no contact with him.

When Hitler died, did the Lord of Falsehood pass into Stalin ?

It is not altogether like that that things happen, but it is something similar. This being did not wait for Hitler's death, it is there you make a mistake. These beings are not at all tied to a single physical presence. The being in question could very well possess Hitler and at the same time influence many others. Hitler was got rid of because he had behind him a whole nation and a physical power, and if he had succeeded it would have been a disaster for humanity, but there was no deluding oneself about it; it was not sufficient to get rid of him in order to get rid of the force that was behind him — that is not so easy. I must tell you that the origin of these beings is prior to that of the gods; they are the first emanations, the first individual beings of the universe; so they cannot be got rid of so easily, by winning one war.

As long as they are necessary for the universal evolution they will exist. The day they lose their utility, they will be converted or will disappear.

Besides, they know that they are nearing their last hour and that is why they are doing as much damage as they can.

There were four of them. The first one has been converted, another is dissolved into its origin. Two are still living and these two are more ferocious than the others. One is known in occultism as the "Lord of Falsehood", I have told you this, the other is the "Lord of Death". And as long as these two beings exist, there will be difficulties.

"The power of money is at present under the influence or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world. It is because of this influence that you never see money going in any considerable amount to the cause of Truth. Always it goes astray, because it is in the clutch of the hostile forces and is one of the principal means by which they keep their grip upon the earth. The hold of the hostile forces upon money-power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task. Each time that you try to draw a little of this money away from its present custodians, you have to undertake a fierce battle."

Questions and Answers 1929 (12 May)

It is often said in fairy tales that a treasure is guarded by serpents. Is this true ?

Yes, but it is not a physical serpent, it is a vital serpent. The key to the treasures is in the vital world and it is guarded by an immense black serpent — a tremendous serpent, ten times, fifty times larger than an ordinary one. It keeps the gates of the treasure. It is magnificent, black, always erect and awake. I happened once to be standing before it (usually these beings obey me when I give them an order), and I said to it, "Let me pass." It replied, "I would willingly let you pass, but if I do, they will kill me; so I cannot let you pass." I asked, "What must I bring you in order to gain entrance ?" It said, "Oh, only one thing would oblige me to give way to you: if you could become master of the sex impulse in man, if you succeeded in conquering that in humanity, I could no longer resist, I would allow you to pass."

It has not yet allowed me to pass. I must admit that I have not fulfilled the condition, I have not been able to obtain such a mastery of it as to conquer it in all men.

That is quite difficult.

Before cutting one's relations with beings who are linked with a vital entity, one must be sure of their connection. How can one be sure?

Evidently it is difficult to know, unless one has direct vision of the vital, that is to say, unless one is able to see directly into the vital world. I have seen many, many times... that two things may happen, and generally do happen. When, for some reason or other, you do not agree with someone — if there is a conflict of interests, if there has been a quarrel — there is a tendency to say of him, "He is a vital being." One ought to mistrust oneself first, and afterwards what the other says. There is another case, still more interesting: I knew two persons at least who were not only under the vital influence but incarnations of beings of the vital world. Well, it was these very persons who constantly denounced others as possessed by beings of the vital world! So then, it is better not to jump to conclusions. There are instances where ignorance is better than half-knowledge, for if you do not know that you are dealing with a being of the vital world, you can act as you do with an ordinary human being, that is, protect yourself sufficiently, not let yourself go if it is an enemy, be on your guard, have great patience. And afterwards you don't pay any attention to what this man does or does not do to you. Only those who possess a perfected vital being and are completely disinterested can tell you, "This person or that one is a dangerous being."

"The human being is at home and safe in the material body; the body is his protection. There are some who are full of contempt for their bodies and think

that things will be much better and easier after death without them. But in fact the body is your fortress and your shelter. While you are lodged in it the forces of the hostile world find a difficulty in getting any direct hold upon you. What are nightmares? These are your sorties into the vital world. And what is the first thing you try to do when you are in the grip of a nightmare? You rush back into your body and shake yourself into your normal physical consciousness."

Questions and Answers 1929 (12 May)

What becomes of the vital being after death?

It is dissolved. Rarely does it happen otherwise. But if you have had a very strong passion, if you were divided by fixed impulses, the vital being would break up into small pieces. Instead of going off like a vapour or a liquid, it goes off by little bits. Each of these pieces of vital substance is gathered around the central impulse, the central desire, the central passion of that piece, thus creating little entities which don't have a human form but take at times an indefinite form; at times they resemble the body to which the pieces belonged, at other times they take a form expressing the desire they represent. And naturally their sole concern is to satisfy their desire or passion and they search everywhere for the means of self-satisfaction.

Take, for instance, the passion of a miser for his fortune. He dies. His vital being is dissolved, but his passion for his money remains alive. It gathers around itself a certain number of elements to form a living and conscious entity in the vital world. If this man has in his lifetime hidden a treasure somewhere, that entity goes and installs itself just above the place where the treasure is, as if to guard it and stop people from coming near it. But there are sensitive people who, when they know that a treasure is hidden somewhere, feel the presence and say, "The treasure is there." That is the first effect. The other effect is that

the entity, not wanting the treasure to be touched, always brings about some catastrophe to guard its property. It makes those who approach it ill or it causes an accident, even an assassination; any means is good for it; or if the person is very sensitive, it gives him such a fright that he goes mad.

There are also lots of little entities, quite repugnant, in very large numbers, which originate from that wretched sexual desire. If this desire (with its corresponding entities) is not dissolved at the time of death, these entities continue to exist and they come and settle in the atmosphere of sensitive persons to goad them, to egg them on. These entities feed upon the vital force emanated at the time of the act and naturally their only desire is to get as much nourishment as they can. I have seen people enringed by dozens of these beings. It is a very concrete thing.... I don't know if you have heard of Maurice Magre, the writer who had come here. He has said in one of his books that people who have a very strong sexual instinct are surrounded by a swarm of these small beings, who plague them to satisfy themselves, to feed upon the vital force. He knew the thing quite well, he had observed it. To those who are ever so little sensitive, it is very perceptible. Even the people who are tormented very often feel that the impulse comes from outside — it arouses something inside them, but they feel that the excitation comes from outside. And there are hundreds of thousands of them, for unfortunately it is one of the greatest difficulties of mankind, it is a terrible slavery.

In vital nightmares, which part of the being goes out of the body?

Your vital — not the whole of it for that would produce a cataleptic state, but a portion of the vital goes out for a stroll. Some always go to the nastiest places and so have very bad nights — the possibilities in these nightly rambles are innumerable. It may be a very small thing, just a little portion of your

being, but if it is conscious, that is enough to give you a fine little nightmare !

You know, when you sleep, the inner beings are not concentrated upon the body, they go out and become more or less independent — a limited independence, but independence all the same — and they go to dwell in their own domains. The mind more so, for it is hardly held within the body, it is only concentrated but not contained in the body. The vital also goes beyond the body, but it is more concentrated upon the body. The mind however is such a supple substance that it is sufficient to think about a person in order to be with that person, at least partially, mentally. If you think strongly of a place, a part of your mind is there; distance, so to say, does not exist. Of course, to have a mind centralised around the body requires good training. Few people have a mind with a well-defined form: it is like clouds which roll, come and go. Even to have a vital with a form similar to that of your physical body, an analogous form, it must be very much individualised, very much centralised. The mind still more; it must be completely individualised, centralised, organised around the psychic centre in order to have a definite form.

There are people who spend their life organising their mind. I have known some who had made of their mind a kind of fortress, a huge construction (I am speaking of people who had uncommon mental capacities). They had made of their mind quite a big edifice, very powerful and of such a fixity, with such solid walls that they had lost all contact with the outer mental world: they lived completely within their own construction and all the phenomena of their consciousness were of their own making — they had no longer any contact with the outside mental world. They retained contact with their own vital and their body, in a way, but all the phenomena of their consciousness were lodged within their mental construction — they could no longer get out of it. Well, this happens very strongly to people who seek for a spiritual life through the classical methods of a renunciation

of the material consciousness, a concentration on their inner being and identification with it. If I gave you the names of some, you would be quite astonished. They construct for themselves a conception in which one finds all the gradations of the mind, a construction so solid and so fixed that they become imprisoned within it and when they believe they have reached the supreme Truth, they have only reached the centre of their own mental construction.

And they have all the experiences they used to foresee: the experience of liberation, the experience of going out of the body, the experience of identification with the Supreme, all, all, but all of their own making; this has no contact with the universal reality. Then if someone touches it, if for some reason or other someone has the power to touch it or simply to make a breach in one of the walls, at first they are completely upset, then they come to regard the force that could do this as a force of terrible destruction, a manifestation of a hostile force of the worst kind !

What is a "mental nightmare" ?

When there is a chaos in the brain or a local fever, a particular turmoil in the brain, a brain-fag, or if there is a want of control, you let yourself be possessed by mental formations, this is what happens most often — mental formations which, most often, you yourself have made, besides. And as the control of the rational, waking consciousness has gone, all this begins to dance a saraband in the head, with a kind of raging madness; ideas get entangled, collide, fight, it is truly hallucinating. Then, unless you have the power to bring a great peace into your head, a great tranquillity, a very strong and pure light, well, it is ten times worse than a vital nightmare. The worst of a vital nightmare consists generally in fighting with an enemy who wants to kill you, and you strike him terrible blows, and the blows never hit; you exert all your force, all your energy, and you do not

succeed in touching your adversary. He is there in front of you, he threatens you, he is going to strangle you and you gather all your strength, you try to strike, but nothing touches him. When the struggle is like that, hand to hand, with a being who throws himself upon you, it is particularly painful. That is why you are advised not to go out of the body unless you have the necessary power or the purity. You see, in this kind of nightmare the force you want to use is the "memory" of a physical force; but one may have great physical strength, be a first-class boxer, and yet be completely powerless in the vital world because one does not have the necessary vital power. As for the mental nightmares, that kind of frightful sarabande in the head, one has altogether the impression of going mad.

> *At the time of death, the psychic being goes to take rest, doesn't it? But the vital is stopped in the vital world; does this prevent the psychic from going to rest?*

But the vital does not go to rest nor does the mental being. Generally they are dissolved. It is only if one has followed a yoga throughout his whole life, if one has taken great care to individualise, to centralise the vital and the mental around the psychic being that they remain — that happens once in ten million cases, it is very exceptional. Take the case of a philosopher or a writer who has worked considerably in his brain, tried to organise it; that then persists, but as a *capacity to think*, nothing else. There are these capacities of thinking which persist after death and they try naturally to find another physical brain in which to manifest. It is in this way that the mind of a great thinker may identify itself with another mind and be able to express it.

From the vital point of view, take the case of a great musician who has worked all his life to make his external being a good instrument for music; he has organised this vital power in

his body for playing music; well then, his hands, for instance, are so individualised in their ability to play, that they can persist subtly even after death, with their form, a form analogous to the old physical form. They float in the vital world and are attracted by people who have similar capacities; they try to become identified with them. A person who is sensitive enough, receptive enough, can become identified with these hands and execute wonderful things, profit by all the individualisation of the past life of these hands.

Does the same phenomenon occur in the case of scientists when the results of their work are realised some time after their death?

Yes, in the case of Pierre and Marie Curie, for example, it is certain that the power of work of Pierre Curie passed into his wife at his death.

Men who undertake excavations in the tombs of Egypt often meet with accidents. Why?

They deserve it! When they violate the tombs, you see... There are countless stories of this kind. But that is another phenomenon.

Let me explain: in the physical form is found the "spirit of the form" and this spirit of the form persists for a certain time even when outwardly the person is pronounced dead. And as long as the spirit of the form persists, the body is not destroyed. In ancient Egypt they had this knowledge; they knew that if they prepared the body in a certain way, the spirit of the form would not leave it and the body would not disintegrate. In some cases they have succeeded wonderfully; and if one violates the repose of beings who have remained thus for thousands of years, it is understandable that they may not be very pleased, especially when their repose is violated out of an unhealthy curiosity, legi-

timised in the "cause of science".

In the Musée Guimet in Paris, there are two mummies. Of one practically nothing is left, but in the other the spirit of the form has remained very conscious, conscious to such an extent that one can make contact with the consciousness. Evidently when a bunch of idiots come to stare at you with their blank, saucer-eyes which understand nothing, and say, "Oh, it is like this, it is like that", it cannot give much pleasure.

You see, they begin by committing an outrage: these mummies are enclosed in a box of a particular form according to the person, with all that is necessary to preserve them; now, the box is opened, more or less violently, some wrappings are stripped away here and there to provide a better view.... And considering that it was never ordinary people who were mummified, these were beings who had attained an appreciable inner power or who were of royal birth, people more or less initiated.

There is a mummy which has been the cause of a large number of catastrophes; she was a princess, daughter of a Pharaoh, and secretly at the head of a college of initiation at Thebes.

Well, men are like that....

12 March 1951

In the vital world, forces exist: do mental forms exist in the mental world ?

Yes, there is a concrete mental world and there are mental forms which do not resemble vital forces but have their own law. There are many, innumerable mental forms. They are almost indestructible; one can only say that they change forms and relations, it is something very fluid, and moving all the time.

"...You can understand only what you already know in your own inner self. What strikes you in a book is what you have already experienced deep within you.... The knowledge that seems to come to you from outside is only an occasion for bringing out the knowledge that is within you."

Questions and Answers 1929 (19 May)

Why are certain subjects so very difficult ?

That is due to many things — to the formation of the brain, to atavism, to the early years of education, particularly to atavism. But there is a very interesting phenomenon here: each new idea forms a kind of small convolution in the brain, and that takes time. You see, you are told something which you have never heard before; you listen, but it is incomprehensible, it does not penetrate into your head. But if you hear the same thing a second time, a little later, it makes sense. It is because the shock of the new idea has done a little work in the brain and prepared just what was necessary for understanding. And not only does it build itself up, but it perfects itself. That is why if you read a difficult book, at the end of six months or a year you will understand it infinitely better than at the first reading and, at

times, in a very different way. This work in the brain is done without the participation of your active consciousness. The way the human being is at present constituted, the time factor must always be taken into account.

Is it the brain or the presence of thought that produces the shock ?

No, it is the consciousness. Most people are not aware of it, but it works all the time in everyone.

"We say something that is quite clear, but the way in which it is understood is stupefying ! Each sees in it something else than what was intended or even puts into it something that is quite the contrary of its sense. If you want to understand truly and avoid this kind of error, you must go behind the sound and the movement of the words and learn to listen in silence."

Questions and Answers 1929 (19 May)

How can one learn to listen in silence ?

It is a matter of attention. If you concentrate your attention on what is being said, with the will to understand it correctly, the silence is created spontaneously – it is attention that creates the silence.

Is it possible to get out of the "mental fortress" ?[1]

But there are people who do get out of the fortress ! One can even send an army out of the fortress !

No, it is not the chief of the place who goes out, he clings to his fort: he orders out the soldiers. He values his fortress, for

[1] See the talk of 10 March 1951.

it is that which gives him the impression of existing and of being an individual.

What if one gets rid of the fortress ?

Oh, but you must take care ! You had better not get rid of it unless you are able to live without a fortress — something which is infinitely more difficult to do. What men generally do, with much effort and a good deal of suffering which gives them the impression that they are heroes, is to knock down their fortress... only to enter immediately into another ! That does not make much difference from the standpoint of the Truth, but it gives them the impression of having made a great progress, because the old fortress is razed and they have built up another.

To live without a fortress is extremely difficult — people have the feeling that they are not living, that they are not individualised, that they are floating about. It is extremely difficult to live in something infinitely vast, moving, constantly changing, perpetually in progress, not to be held by anything to which one can cling, saying "I am this; this is my way of thinking." It is very difficult, one must not try it too soon; there are those whose mind gets deranged by it.

What is it that makes the mental construction ?

It is the mental ego which makes the construction and it clings to it desperately.

Are the "I" and the ego the same thing ?

Generally they are.

How does it happen that there are people who think one thing and say another ?

Yes, that often happens. They think one thing and when they begin talking they say just the contrary. If thought controlled the tongue, many stupidities would be avoided. You lose control and speak on impulse any kind of nonsense; it is like a machine which begins talking for the pleasure of talking. That seems like an absurdity, but it is happening all the time; there are very few people who escape this. They say all kinds of things and they ask, "Why did I say all that ?" They do not even know why. I know some who always say what the other wants to hear. The person with whom they are speaking says to himself, "He is going to tell me this or that," or he fears, "I hope he will not tell me that," and the other one, like a little puppet, begins to say it, very calmly without knowing why !

Is it because of a lack of will ?

No, it is a mental deformation. There is not much will in this. If the will intervened, it would become less absurd, perhaps.

No, they are mental movements, the formation of the mind, the mental force which moves all the time, which comes and goes, like a squirrel in a cage which runs round and round and does not know why.

Then, is it a universal play ?

No, not very universal; it exists in humanity, it is very human. How many human beings have a thought of their own ? I am pretty sure there are none in ordinary humanity with its ordinary mental make-up. How many people have a thought as a result of reflection ? Very few, and if they have it, they are considered terribly hard or remarkably intelligent or despotic or authoritative — they are covered with all sorts of compliments ! And that, simply because they have a precise fashion of thinking.

Take any general idea; for example: "Is the world's duration indefinite ?" or "Has it a beginning and an end ?" Who has

a precise thought on this subject ? Or again: "How did the earth begin and how did humanity commence on earth ?" The mind is incapable of resolving this question; it will find itself before an indefinite number of possibilities and will not know how to choose. Then, what does it do, how does it choose ? — by personal preference, the thought that gives it an agreeable, comfortable feeling; it says, "Yes, that must be it." But if you are quite honest and scrupulous and do not allow your preferences to come into play, how will you decide ? It is a subject close enough to humanity for it to take an interest in it, isn't it ? Earth is, after all, its domain. Well, if you read one book, it will tell you one thing; if you read another, it will tell you another. Then the religions with their theories take a hand in the matter and, moreover, they will tell you that such and such an idea is the "absolute Truth" and you *must* believe it, otherwise you will be damned ! You read the scientists — they will tell you scientific things. You read the philosophers — they will tell you philosophical things. You read the spiritualists, they will dish up spirituality for you and... you will be exactly at the same point from which you started. But there are people who like to have a kind of stability in their mind (precisely those who build "fortresses" — they like to be in a fortress very much, it gives them a comfortable sensation), so they make a choice, and if they have sufficient mental strength, they make a choice out of a considerable number of ideas; then they trim it up for you, set up a fine wall by putting each thing in what they consider to be its proper place (that is, there must not be too many contradictions close together lest they clash ! It must make a proper organisation) and they tell you, "Now, I know !" — They know nothing at all !

It is quite interesting, for the more mental activity one has, the more does one indulge in this little game. And there are ideas to which one clings ! hooked on to them as though all life depended upon that ! I have known people who had fixed upon one central idea in their formation and said, "All the rest may

go to pieces, I don't care, but this idea will stand: this is the truth." And when they come to yoga, amusingly enough it is this idea which is constantly battered, all the time ! All events, all circumstances come and strike at it until it begins to totter, and then one fine day they say in despair, "Ah, my idea has gone."

Someone has said rather poetically, "One must know how to lose all to win all." And it is true, especially for the mind, for if you do not know how to lose everything, you can gain nothing.

How did this earth begin ?

Ask the scientists, they will tell you !

If, finally, progress consists in unlearning all that one has learned, what is the use of learning ?

But it is as with gymnastics. You make all kinds of movements to form your body and make it strong, but that does not mean that you are going to spend all your life lifting weights and exercising on parallel bars ! You may continue to do that as a pastime, as a profession, but surely it is not the supreme goal. For the mind it is the same thing. To have a mind capable of progressing, of adapting itself to a new life, of opening itself to higher forces, it must be put through all kinds of gymnastics. That is why children are sent to school, it is not in order that they may remember all that they learn — who remembers what he has learnt ? When they are obliged to teach others, later on, they have to relearn it all, they have forgotten everything. It comes back quickly, but they have forgotten it. But if they had never gone to school, if they had never learned and had to begin everything... well, when you begin to do parallel bars at forty-five, it hurts, doesn't it ? It is the same thing for the brain, it lacks plasticity. Do you know what the best gymnastics is ? It

is to have a daily conversation with a metaphysician because there is nothing concrete there, you cannot concentrate on something that has a form, an objective reality; indeed, everything is carried on exclusively with words in a field of abstraction, it is purely mental gymnastics. And if you can enter into the mental formation of a metaphysician and are able to understand and answer him, it is perfect gymnastics !

(A mathematician disciple:) *The same thing applies to mathematicians, I suppose ?*

Yes.

If at the time of death the vital being is attacked in the vital world by hostile forces or entities, does it not look for a shelter somewhere ?

Yes, it is for this reason that in all countries and in all religions, it is recommended that for a period of at least seven days after someone's death, people should gather and think of him. Because when you think of him with affection (without any inner disorder, without weeping, without any of those distraught passions), if you can be calm, your atmosphere becomes a kind of beacon for him, and when he is attacked by hostile forces (I am speaking of the vital being of course, not the psychic being which goes to take rest), he may feel altogether lost, not know what to do and find himself in great distress; then he sees through affinity the light of those who are thinking of him with affection and he rushes there. It happens almost constantly that a vital formation, a part of the vital being of the dead person (or at times the whole vital if it is well organised) takes shelter in the aura, the atmosphere of the people or the person who loved him. There are people who always carry with them a part of the vital of the person who is gone. That is the real utility of these so-called ceremonies, which otherwise have no sense.

It is preferable to do this without ceremonies. Ceremonies are, if anything, rather harmful, for a very simple reason: When you are busy with a ceremony, you think more about that than about the person. When you are busy with gestures, movements, with the following of a ritual, you think much more of all that than of the person who is dead. Moreover, people perform these ceremonies most of the time for that very reason, for they are almost always in the habit of trying to forget. The fact is that one of the two principal occupations of man is to try to forget what is painful to him, and the other is to try to seek amusement in order to escape boredom. These are the two principal occupations of humanity, that is, humanity spends half of its time in doing nothing true.

And when people get bored (some do not absolutely need to keep busy, or they have the misfortune of being rich) they do silly things ! The origin of all excesses, all human stupidity is "ennui", what is called dullness, the state in which you are like a damp rag: you do not react to anything and are compelled to whip yourself (figuratively) just to make yourself move and get along.

In Nature's economy, moments of respite are given to men to rediscover themselves but they do not know how to make use of them.

When going over the conclusion of this talk, Mother made the following remark (10 March 1965):

I would say many things now...

For instance, when the Lord draws closest to men, to establish a conscious contact with them, it is then that in their folly they commit the grossest stupidities.

This is true, altogether true, it is at the moment when all is silenced in order that man may become conscious of his origin that he, in his folly, in order to distract himself conceives or carries out the worst stupidities.

To distract himself because he is unable to bear the force of the Light ?

Yes.

The pressure is too strong ?

Yes, there are those who are afraid, they are panic-stricken. They cannot bear it so they turn to anything at all to get out of it.

14 March 1951

"When you come to the Divine, you must abandon all mental conceptions; but, instead of doing that, you throw your conceptions upon the Divine and want the Divine to obey them. The only true attitude for a Yogi is to be plastic and ready to obey the Divine command whatever it may be...."

Questions and Answers 1929 (19 May)

What is "plasticity" ?

That which can easily change its form is "plastic". Figuratively, it is suppleness, a capacity of adaptation to circumstances and necessities. When I ask you to be plastic in relation to the Divine, I mean not to resist the Divine with the rigidity of preconceived ideas and fixed principles. I knew a man who declared: "I am wholly consecrated to the Divine, I am ready to do whatever He tells me to do; but I am not at all worried, for I know that He would never tell me to kill anybody !" I answered, "How do you know that ?" He was indignant. This is want of plasticity.

If one is plastic in all circumstances, isn't it a weakness ?

But you are not asked to be plastic to the will of others ! Nobody asked you to be plastic in relation to others. You are asked to be plastic to the divine Will — which is not quite the same thing ! And that requires a great strength because the very first thing that will happen to you is to be exposed to the will of almost everyone around you. If you have a family, you will see the attitude of the family ! The more plastic you are to the divine Will, the more opposition you will meet from the will

of others who are not accustomed to be in contact with that Will.

If everybody expressed the divine Will, there would be no conflict any longer, anywhere, all would be in harmony. That is what one tries to do, but it is not very easy.

But it is difficult to know the divine Will, isn't it?

We have already studied the subject at length. Don't you remember what we said? There are four conditions for knowing the divine Will:

The first essential condition: an absolute sincerity.

Second: To overcome desires and preferences.

Third: To silence the mind and listen.

Fourth: To obey immediately when you receive the order.

If you persist you will perceive the divine Will more and more clearly. But even before you know what it is, you can make an offering of your own will and you will see that all circumstances will be so arranged as to make you do the right thing. But you must not be like that person I knew who used to say, "I always see the divine Will in others." That can land you anywhere, there is nothing more dangerous, for if you think you see the divine Will in others, you are sure to do their will, not the divine Will. There too we can say that not one among many, many human beings acts in accord with the divine Will.

You know the story of the irritable elephant, his mahout, and the man who would not make way for the elephant. Standing in the middle of the road, the man said to the mahout, "The divine Will is in me and the divine Will wants me not to move." The driver, a man of some wit, answered, "But the divine Will in the elephant wants you to move!"

Mother passes on to another question: illnesses. During the talk in 1929 someone asked whether illnesses were not due to microbes

rather than to "adverse forces" or to fluctuations of yoga; Mother answered:

> *"Where does Yoga begin and where does it end? Is not the whole of your life Yoga? The possibilities of illness are always there in your body and around you; you carry within you or there swarm about you the microbes and germs of every disease. How is it that all of a sudden you succumb to an illness which you did not have for years? You will say it is due to a 'depression of the vital force'. But from where does the depression come? It comes from some disharmony in the being, from a lack of receptivity to the divine forces. When you cut yourself off from the energy and light that sustain you, then there is this depression, there is created what medical science calls a 'favourable ground' and something takes advantage of it. It is doubt, gloominess, lack of confidence, a selfish turning back upon yourself that cuts you off from the light and divine energy and gives the attack this advantage. It is this that is the cause of your falling ill and not microbes."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (19 May)

One thing that is now beginning to be recognised by everyone, even by the medical corps, is that hygienic measures, for example, are effective only to the extent that one has confidence in them. Take the case of an epidemic. Many years ago we had a cholera epidemic here — it was bad — but the chief medical officer of the hospital was an energetic man: he decided to vaccinate everybody. When he discharged the vaccinated men, he would tell them, "Now you are vaccinated and nothing will happen to you, but if you were not vaccinated you would be sure to die!" He told them this with great authority. Generally such an epidemic lasts a long time and it is difficult to arrest it, but

in some fifteen days, I think, this doctor succeeded in checking it; in any case, it was done miraculously fast. But he knew very well that the best effect of his vaccination was the confidence it gave to people.

Now, quite recently, they have found something else and I consider it wonderful. They have discovered that for every disease there is a microbe that cures it (call it a microbe if you like, anyway, some sort of germ). But what is so extraordinary is that this "microbe" is extremely contagious, even more contagious than the microbe of the disease. And it generally develops under two conditions: in those who have a sort of natural good humour and energy and in those who have a strong will to get well ! Suddenly they catch the "microbe" and are cured. And what is wonderful is that if there is one who is cured in an epidemic, three more recover immediately. And this "microbe" is found in all who are cured.

But I am going to tell you something: what people take to be a microbe is simply the materialisation of a vibration or a will from another world. When I learned of these medical discoveries, I said to myself, "Truly, science is making progress." One might almost say with greater reason, "Matter is progressing," it is becoming more and more receptive to a higher will. And what is translated in their science as "microbes" will be perceived, if one goes to the root of things, as simply a vibratory mode; and this vibratory mode is the material translation of a higher will. If you can bring this force or this will, this power, this vibration (call it what you will) into certain given circumstances, not only will it act in you, but also through contagion around you.

During the talk in 1929, a disciple asked why we drank filtered water since we did not believe in microbes here. Mother answered:

"Is any one of you pure and strong enough not to be affected by suggestions ? If you drink unfiltered water

and think, 'Now I am drinking impure water', you have every chance of falling sick. And even though such suggestions may not enter through the conscious mind, the whole of your subconscious is there, almost helplessly open to any kind of suggestion.... The normal human condition is a state filled with apprehensions and fears; if you observe your mind deeply for ten minutes, you will find that for nine out of the ten it is full of fears....

And even if by discipline and effort you have liberated your mind and your vital of apprehension and fear, it is more difficult to convince the body."

Questions and Answers 1929 (19 May)

Why is it so difficult to convince the body, when one has succeeded in liberating oneself mentally and vitally ?

Because in the large majority of men, the body receives its inspirations from the subconscient, it is under the influence of the subconscient. All the fears driven out from the active consciousness go and take refuge there and then, naturally, they have to be chased out from the subconscient and uprooted from there.

Why does one feel afraid ?

I suppose it is because one is egoistic.

There are three reasons. First, an excessive concern about one's security. Next, what one does not know always gives an uneasy feeling which is translated in the consciousness by fear. And above all, one doesn't have the habit of a spontaneous trust in the Divine. If you look into things sufficiently deeply, this is the true reason. There are people who do not even know that That exists, but one could tell them in other words, "You have no faith in your destiny" or "You know nothing about Grace"

— anything whatever, you may put it as you like, but the root of the matter is a lack of trust. If one always had the feeling that it is the best that happens in all circumstances, one would not be afraid.

The first movement of fear comes automatically. There was a great scientist who was also a great psychologist (I don't remember his name now); he had developed his inner consciousness but wanted to test it. So he undertook an experiment. He wanted to know if, by means of consciousness, one could control the reflex actions of the body (probably he didn't go far enough to be able to do it, for it can be done; but in any case, for him it was still impossible). Well, he went to the zoological garden, to the place where snakes were kept in a glass cage. There was a particularly aggressive cobra there; when it was not asleep, it was almost always in a fury, for through the glass it could see people and that irritated it terribly. Our scientist went and stood in front of the cage. He knew very well that it was made in such a way that the snake could never break the glass and that he ran no risk of being attacked. So from there he began to excite the snake by shouts and gestures. The cobra, furious, hurled itself against the glass, and every time it did so the scientist closed his eyes! Our psychologist told himself, "But look here, I know that this snake cannot pass through, why do I close my eyes?" Well, one must recognise that it is difficult to conquer the reaction. It is a sense of protection, and if one feels that one cannot protect oneself, one is afraid. But the movement of fear which is expressed by the eyes fluttering is not a mental or a vital fear: it is a fear in the cells of the body; for it has not been impressed upon them that there is no danger and they do not know how to resist. It is because one has not done yoga, you see. With yoga one can watch with open eyes, one would not close them; but one would not close them because one calls upon something else, and that "something else" is the sense of the divine Presence in oneself which is stronger than everything.

This is the only thing that can cure you of your fear.

Years afterwards this talk was followed up by a question from a disciple (19 May 1965):

> *You say, "If one always had the feeling that it is the best that happens in all circumstances, one would not be afraid." Is it really the best that happens in all circumstances ?*

It is the best, given the state of the world — it is not an absolute best.

There are two things: in a total and absolute way, at each moment, it is the best possible for the divine Goal of the whole; and for one who is consciously connected with the divine Will, it is the most favourable for his own divine realisation.

I believe this is the correct explanation.

For the whole, it is always, at every moment, what is most favourable for the divine evolution. And for the elements consciously linked with the Divine, it is the best for the perfection of their union.

Only you must not forget that it is constantly changing, that it is not a static best; it is a best which if preserved would not be the best a moment later. And it is because the human consciousness always has the tendency to preserve statically what it finds good or considers good, that it realises that it is unseizable. It is this effort to preserve which falsifies things.

(*Silence*)

I saw this when I wanted to understand the position of the Buddha who blamed the Manifestation for its impermanence; for him perfection and permanence were one and the same thing. In his contact with the manifested universe he had observed a perpetual change, therefore he concluded that the manifested

world was imperfect and had to disappear. And change (impermanence) does not exist in the Unmanifest, hence the Unmanifest is the true Divine. It was by considering and concentrating on this point, that in fact I saw that his finding was right: the Manifestation is absolutely impermanent, it is a perpetual transformation.

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

That is why some thinkers have postulated that the creation was the result of an error. But one finds all possible concepts: perfect creation, then a "fault" which introduced error; the creation itself as a lower movement which must have an end since it had a beginning; then the Vedic concept, as Sri Aurobindo has explained it, of an unfolding or a progressive and infinite discovery — indefinite and infinite — of the All by Himself.... Naturally, all these, these are human interpretations. For the moment, as long as you express yourself in human terms, it is a human translation. But according to the initial position of the human translator (that is to say, whether it is the position which admits "original sin" or an "accident" in the creation or a supreme conscious Will from the beginning in a progressive unfolding), in the yogic attitude, the conclusions or "descents" are different.... There are Nihilists, Nirvanists, Illusionists; there are all the religions which admit the devil's intervention under one form or another; then there is the pure Vedism which is the eternal unfolding of the Supreme in a progressive objectification. And according to taste, one places himself here, another there or elsewhere, with all the nuances between. But according to what Sri Aurobindo has felt to be the most total truth, according to this conception of a progressive universe, one is led to say that at every minute what happens is the best possible for the

unfolding of the whole. It is absolutely logical. And I believe that all contradictions can arise only from a more or less pronounced tendency towards this or that, for one position or another. All who admit the intrusion of a "sin" or an "error" and the conflict resulting from it between forces which pull back and those which pull forward, may naturally contest the possibility. But one has to say that for him who is spiritually linked with the supreme Will or the supreme Truth, for him it is necessarily, at every instant, the best that happens for his personal realisation. In all instances it is like that. An unconditional best can be admitted only by one who sees the universe as an unrolling, as the Supreme's self-awareness of Himself.

(*Silence*)

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

This is incontestable.

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

From the practical point of view, this is evident.

Only, each one takes a position.... I have all the examples here. I have a sample collection of all attitudes and see very clearly their reactions. I see the same Force — the same, one Force — acting in this sample collection and producing naturally different effects; but these "different" effects, to a deeper

vision, are very superficial: it is only "It pleases them to think in this way, that's all, it just pleases them to think thus." But as a matter of fact, the inner journey, the inner development, the essential vibration is not affected — not at all. One aspires with all his heart for Nirvana, another aspires with all his will for the supramental manifestation, and in both of them the vibratory result is almost the same. And it is a whole mass of vibrations which is prepared more and more to... to receive what must be.

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

17 March 1951

"In the workings of the universe whatever happens is the result of all that has happened before."

Questions and Answers 1929 (26 May)

What do you mean by this ?

The universe is in perpetual movement and it is the unfolding of the supreme Consciousness. So all that happens is conditioned by all that preceded it. The universe continues to be what it is because of what it has been, and what it has been was the result of what it was before. And what it will be... will be the consequence of what it is !

Is the unfolding of the universe continuous or does it stop somewhere ? What is it that gives us the impression of a beginning, of a decision to begin ?

Where does the decision to begin come from ?... (*laughing*) From the Supreme probably, I do not know ! It may be that one day He decided to have a universe of the type we have and He began to objectify himself in order to have a universe.

Each element of this universe is eternal because the universe *is* the Eternal. Now, in the Eternal it is difficult to speak of a "beginning". Evidently It has always been and It will be always. Only, take for example (this is an image, remember, do not make me say things I do not say), take a sphere which is full of infinitesimal things in an incalculable number. If you change the relation of all these elements, well, the number is so great, the possibilities of relations so many that you may easily speak of an infinite, although from a philosophical point of view it is not an infinite; yet from a descriptive point of view one may say that it is infinite. Each element is eternal. All the combina-

tions are infinite, but the same combination never repeats itself twice. Thus the universe is eternally new and yet it is eternally the same.

According to tradition it is said...

Yes, yes, but it is not a question of tradition. There are people who speak of Pralaya,[1] I know, but that simply means (excuse me, but one must speak a little lightly, otherwise this becomes insufferable) that one day perhaps the Supreme may feel tired, dissatisfied with the kind of universe He has made and may want to create another! Then, as it is He Himself, He takes everything back into Himself and puts it out again! That is what people call "pralaya", but it changes nothing: all the elements of the universe are eternal and eternally will the combinations be different.

According to science, our physical world of three dimensions is not infinite: it is bent back upon itself in a space of more than three dimensions. This closed universe of three dimensions is continually expanding and all the objects of the universe are running away from each other at a speed increasing with their distance. If one goes back into the past, one reaches a time when the universe was almost condensed at one point and that would give the key to the constitution of Matter of which the ninety-two elements have never been explained till now. This "condensed point" or "primitive atom" goes back three or four billion years. This is what the Indian tradition calls "the golden egg". But before that? Nothing is known. Quite recently an American scientist has put forth the theory that this movement of infinite expansion will not con-

[1] Pralaya, or the end of the world.

tinue, that a contrary movement will set in and all will be gathered back again.

A universal respiration.

If one could travel with a ray of light coming from the sun to the earth, the departure and arrival would be simultaneous, for the traveller's "proper time" would be stopped.

Light seems to me to be too material for this consciousness of simultaneity.

Evidently when one emerges from form and enters the "frontier" state between form and the Formless, everything is simultaneous, but this is very far from the density of light.

I wonder (it is possible, it is to be seen), but I doubt whether something physical could be capable of giving this simultaneous consciousness of the universe.

Of course, no material object or being can travel at the speed of light, but supposing it to be possible, as the number of light-rays is practically infinite and covers the whole material universe, one would be able to know everything, apprehend everything.

But that would not be a simultaneous integral knowledge of the universe, not even of the earth. For one who remembers the extra-terrestrial light, remembers the movements of the higher light, terrestrial light is slow, as it is dim. But this would already be an expression of something higher.... I don't know.

Light is a very good symbol, but I do not think it to be a total one.

Is light faster than thought ?... You cannot make a concrete experiment with thought. Sound is something very, very slow, but thought is already something quicker than light... perhaps

not. Thought gives the sensation of the instantaneous. Do you perceive thought in the physical body, for example? Do you perceive thought apart from a material quality? It remains to be seen, doesn't it? Let me explain: if you go out of your body, if you go out of the vital world and enter the mental world, all relations are different from what they are for thought when in the body. Compared with the body, thought seems an immediate thing like light, for example, even more than light. But when you have nothing to do with the physical any longer and you enter the mind itself, there are relations which may be rendered by a certain time and certain space which do not exist for the physical consciousness but which exist for the mental consciousness. That then would be, if you like, the explanation of what you were saying, that Time changes; for it is evident that in the universal formation there is an infusion of progressive consciousness which is psychologically translated by a relation with new worlds or new "dimensions".

For example, it is said that for a certain period the terrestrial world was ruled by "overmental" forces and that this rule is going to be transcended, that the world will be governed by supramental forces; well, each time new forces descend upon earth, a change is produced and a change of consciousness must have a corresponding change of movement. You say that the movement of expansion becomes more and more swift; this means that the world is filled with a consciousness which makes the movements of the world more and more rapid. This would be altogether the material transcription of the spiritual phenomenon. The earth is being charged more and more with forces coming from ever higher regions (for our consciousness), which means that they come faster and faster, giving more and more the sense of the instantaneous. What has been discovered is a kind of physical symbolism of this phenomenon which would tend to prove scientifically that the universe is in progress.

The other possibility is that it is a matter of a vibratory movement of inhaling and exhaling — this is quite possible; but

the phenomenon of concentration would not necessarily mean a retrogression; it is simply a passage from one movement to another.

> *The stars are receding from one another at a speed that increases with their distance.... What does this imply ?*

These are images, aren't they ? You can conceive a universe becoming bigger and bigger, but then what is it that will contain this universe ? What would there be beyond this universe ?... Immediately our small human mind conceives of something quite empty and a universe occupying more and more place in this void, which means that there would be a space in this void, which is an absurdity. In fact, one should say, "It is as though", because that is not really what happens, it is only a way of expressing it. To catch hold of a notion ever so little accurate, one must pass from the material to the psychological explanation, and even if you arrive at the psychological, you are still very far from the truth, which is neither psychological nor spatial, but something else which evidently finds it difficult to express itself in our terms. It is a well-known experience: each time one goes into a consciousness beyond our consciousness (I cannot say spatial), our terrestrial consciousness (not even positively terrestrial, but rather individual), each time one has an experience which transcends the individual consciousness, that is to say, transcends the consciousness of the part to enter a consciousness of the Whole, when one wants to translate this experience, one finds all words empty of sense, because language has been formed to translate human experience for the human mind. We have all the necessary words, even with many shades and niceties, to express human experience, since language has been made for that, but what language will you use to explain what is outside all language ? It is extremely difficult. So you say, "It is like this, it is like that", and while you are speaking you realise

that the experience is being so completely distorted that at times you are understood to mean entirely the opposite.

For this reason science is full of paradoxes.

Yes, and all spiritual books which speak of the experiences of another world are always full of paradoxes. They say, "It is like this, it is like that", in an attempt to give you a suppleness which will allow you to understand — but even so you do not understand.

The truth is that these experiences can be communicated only in silence.

And yet, it has been said (and it is a true fact) that these worlds, like the supramental world, are going to express themselves physically. Then what is going to happen ? Will they find new words ? New words must be found for them.... It is difficult, for if new words are found, they have to be explained !

After all, the ancient initiatory systems were good in a way, in the sense that they revealed the Knowledge only to those who had reached a stage where they could receive it directly without the help of words. And I'm afraid it may come to the same thing now — perhaps even one who has this supramental knowledge will never be able to make himself understood by people, unless they themselves become capable of entering into this knowledge. And so the logical result is that people will say, as I have heard it said: "Oh ! it is just as in ordinary life." Precisely because all that is not of the ordinary life completely escapes our perception, it cannot be transmitted by words.

Take a place like this, which is surcharged with certain forces, certain vibrations; these vibrations do not show themselves in visible and tangible things — they can produce changes, but as these changes occur according to a method (as all physical things do), you pass almost logically from one state to another and this logic prevents you from perceiving that there is something here which does not belong to normal life. Well, those who

have no other perception than that of the ordinary mind, who see things working out as they habitually do or seem to do in ordinary life, will tell you, "Oh that, that is quite natural." If they have no other perception than the purely physical perception, if they are not capable of feeling the quality of a vibration (some feel it vaguely, but those who are not even capable of feeling that, who have nothing in them corresponding to that or, if they have something, it is not awakened), they will look at the life here and tell you, "It is like the physical life — you have perhaps some ideas of your own, but there are many who have their own ideas; perhaps you do things in a special way, but there are lots of people who also do things in a special way. After all, it is a life like the one I live." ...And so, it may very well happen that at a given moment the supramental Force manifests, that it is conscious here, that it acts on Matter, but those who do not consciously participate in its vibration are incapable of perceiving it. People say, "When the supramental force manifests, we shall know it quite well. It will be seen" — not necessarily. They will not feel it any more than those people of little sensitivity who may pass through this place, even live here, without feeling that the atmosphere is different from elsewhere — who among you feels it in such a precise way as to be able to affirm it?... You may feel in your heart, in your thought that it is not the same, but it is rather vague, isn't it? But to have this precise perception... listen, as I had when I came from Japan: I was on the boat, at sea, not expecting anything (I was of course busy with the inner life, but I was living physically on the boat), when all of a sudden, abruptly, about two nautical miles from Pondicherry, the quality, I may even say the physical quality of the atmosphere, of the air, changed so much that I knew we were entering the aura of Sri Aurobindo. It was a *physical* experience and I guarantee that whoever has a sufficiently awakened consciousness can feel the same thing.

I had the contrary experience also, the first time that I went out in a car after many many years here. When I reached a little

beyond the lake, I felt all of a sudden that the atmosphere was changing; where there had been plenitude, energy, light and force, all that diminished, diminished... and then... nothing. I was not in a mental or vital consciousness, I was in an absolutely physical consciousness. Well, those who are sensitive in their physical consciousness ought to feel that quite concretely. And I can assure you that the area we call "the Ashram" has a condensation of force which is not at all the same as that of the town, and still less that of the countryside.

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

> *"Mind is one movement, but there are many varieties of the movement, many strata, that touch and even press into each other. At the same time the movement we call mind penetrates into other planes.... Now, there are mental planes that stand high above the vital world and escape its influence; there are no hostile forces or beings there. But there are others — and they are many — that can be touched or penetrated by the vital forces."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (26 May)

Which mental plane are you speaking of ?

Of the physical mind. Certainly not of the higher mind, for there are no adverse forces there. The reference is to the mind that deals with material things.

Are there beings in the mental worlds ?

Yes, many. They are completely independent; they have their own life, their own relations among themselves, as in other worlds. Only for a physical consciousness, time and space are not the same in the vital or the mental worlds as in the physical world. For example, those who are in the physical consciousness have the impression that shiftings in the mind are instantaneous — compared with the higher consciousness they are not instantaneous, but compared with the physical consciousness, they are instantaneous, of an extreme rapidity.

The beings of the mental world also have an individuality of their own, even a form that can be permanent if they choose to keep one. Their form is the expression of their thought and is sufficiently plastic to be able to change with their thought, yet

has a sufficient continuity to enable one to recognise them. If you go out of your body and enter the mental world, you can meet these beings, speak to them, even make an appointment with them for the next time !

Can they exercise their influence on a human being, as the beings of the vital worlds do ?

Many mental formations try to realise themselves upon earth, but these are generally created by human beings; they then continue to work in the mental world with the intention of influencing the mind of human beings. But the beings of the mental plane proper are generally creators, and because they are creators of form, they are not much concerned with influencing other forms — they are satisfied with expressing themselves through the forms they have made.

Is there any difference between the "spiritual" and the "psychic" ? Are they two different planes ?

This subject has given rise to great confusion in human thought. I believe philosophical, yogic and other systems use the word "spiritual" in a very vague and loose way. Whatever is not physical is spiritual ! In comparison with the physical world all other worlds are spiritual ! All thought, all effort which does not tend towards the material life is a spiritual effort. Every tendency which is not strictly human and egoistic is a spiritual tendency. This is a word used to season every dish.

I just read this in Illustration*: "The spiritual activity par excellence is reading and writing. The centre of spiritual life is the National Library."*

It is a cheap spirituality !

Mother first read the passage on the difference between the "psychic" and the "spiritual", then continued:

> *"So long as you have to draw your understanding from forms of words, you are likely to fall into much confusion about the true sense; but if in a silence of your mind you can rise into the world from which ideas descend to take form, at once the real understanding comes....*
>
> *But here in this higher region of the unexpressed mind and its purer altitudes you are free; when you enter there, you go out of yourself and penetrate into a universal mental plane in which each individual mental world is dipping as if into a huge sea. There you can understand entirely what is going on in another and read his mind as if it were your own, because there no separation divides mind from mind. It is only when you unite in that region with others that you can understand them; otherwise you are not attuned, you do not touch...."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (26 May)

It is only in the silence that one can understand. It often happens that two persons speak about a certain subject and all of a sudden, for some reason, both fall silent for a time; then, abruptly, one says a word which corresponds exactly to what the other was thinking. These are people who understand each other in silence. They have followed the same curve, they have come to the same result and one completes the thought of the other. This happens often to those who have lived together a long time and have developed a sort of mental affinity which enables them to truly understand each other behind the words. I have known people who belong to different countries — and you know the mode of thinking is very different according to the country, the manner of relating the sequence of ideas is different, even con-

trary to that of another country — but I have had experiences with persons of very far-removed races who succeeded so well in harmonising mentally with each other that there was this understanding without words.

If one is silent and the other is not, can they understand each other ?

It is possible. Perhaps the one who is silent will understand the other who is not !... But when there is this full accord, even if it is not permanent, when you are with someone and follow a thought far enough to come out of the external agitation, if the other too has followed the same thought, you may find yourselves suddenly agreeing without having spoken or made any effort towards that. Generally the silence comes to both at the same time or almost the same time — it is as though you slid into the silence. Of course, it may happen also that one continues to make a noise in his head, while the other has stopped, but the one who has stopped has a much greater chance of understanding what is happening to the other !

When the class[1] is over, we are asked what you said. Should we tell ?

You may say, "Well, I tried my best, but I am not sure if I have understood, and if I report what she said, I am almost certain to distort her words." In this way you are on the safe side, at ease.

What characterises the substance of the psychic world ?

The substance of the psychic world is a substance proper to it,

[1] Children used to speak of "Mother's class" when they referred to these talks.

with its own psychic characteristics: a sense of immortality, a complete receptivity to the divine influence, an entire submission to this influence by which it is wholly impregnated. It is this exactly which distinguishes the psychic from the other parts of the being. When, for instance, I speak of organising the mind and the vital around the psychic centre, I do not mean that they become psychic; they remain the mind and the vital, but they are organised around the psychic as an army is organised around its leader — it does not become the leader, it obeys him, doesn't it ? Well, it is the same thing here; the vital and the mind are organised around the psychic, they receive orders from the psychic and carry them out as well as they can. But their substance does not become psychic substance as a consequence. They can be under the influence of the psychic and assume its nature more or less but not its substance.

You said that our body can become receptive to forces which are concentrated in certain places or in certain countries. But can we have this physical sensation without a preliminary preparation of the consciousness ? Or is it truly a spontaneous sensation like heat, cold or goose-flesh, for example ?[1]

If it were the result of a thought or a will, it would not be an experience and it would have no value. You understand, I affirm absolutely that any experience that is the result of a thought or preconceived will has no value from the spiritual point of view.

But were you not in a state, so to say, "favourable" to this sensation ?

[1] In the preceding talk Mother had described how on her return from Japan she had all of a sudden physically felt the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo at a distance of two nautical miles from Pondicherry.

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

In fact, for the physical being — note that I say the physical being — to be fully developed, it must have twelve senses. It is one of these senses which gives you the kind of perception I was speaking of. You cannot say that it is taste, smell, hearing, etc., but it is something which gives you a very precise impression of the difference of quality. And it is very precise, as distinct as seeing black and white, it is truly a sense perception.

Generally, when you want to study occultism, the first thing that the Master does is never to speak to you about it, never to explain it to you, precisely because of this ridiculous phenomenon of the mind which begins to "think" about it and brings you "experiences" which have no value: they are mental forma-

tions which make a plaything of you, that is all. They have no reality.

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

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

You say that "time is relative". What does that mean ?

The sense of the length of time depends upon your consciousness. If you are in the ordinary human consciousness, time is measured by the number of years you expect to live. So, what requires, let us say, fifty years to be realised, seems terribly long, for you think, "Fifty years... where will I be in fifty years ?" Even without your being clearly aware of it, it is there in your consciousness. But if simply you look from the point of view of a mental consciousness, of something which lasts like a written work, for instance — a work of truly fine quality can last for hundreds and even thousands of years; so, if you are told, "For your ideas to spread it will take a hundred years", this will not seem to you so very long. And if you succeed in uniting your consciousness with the psychic consciousness, a life is only one moment among so many similar moments which have gone before; and so one life more or less is not of much importance. And if, still further, you unite with the consciousness of eternity, time no longer has any reality.

All is relative.

When one is conscious of the different parts of the being, what part is it which is conscious ?

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

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

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

What is consciousness?

(*After a silence*) I am trying to choose among several explanations! One, which is a joke, is that consciousness is the opposite of unconsciousness! Another... it is the creative essence of the universe — without consciousness, no universe; for consciousness means objectification. I could also say that consciousness is what "is", because without consciousness nothing is — this is the best reason. Without consciousness no life, no light, no objectification, no creation, no universe.

Perhaps there is in the unmanifest Supreme a consciousness (but when one speaks of these questions one begins to say impossible things): it is said that, to begin with, the Supreme became aware of himself (which would mean that he was not

conscious of himself before ! that he was in a state we cannot call "conscious"), that his first movement was to become aware of himself and once having become conscious of himself, he projected this consciousness, which formed the creation. At least, this is what old tradition says. Grant that there never was a beginning, for it is a human way of putting it: the "beginning" is the Supreme -- the unmanifest Supreme becoming aware of himself. Perhaps he found that this consciousness was not altogether satisfactory (!) and he projected it, not outside himself for nothing is outside him, but he changed it into an active consciousness so that it would become an objectification of himself. Consequently, it can be said with certitude that Consciousness is the origin of all creation; there you are as exact as you can ever be with words. Consciousness is the origin of all creation — without consciousness, no creation. And what we call "consciousness" is just a far-off contact, without precision and exactness, with the supreme Consciousness. Or if you like, it is the reflection, in a not very exact or pure mirror, of the original Consciousness. What we call our consciousness is this original Consciousness reflected in a somewhat foggy mirror (sometimes very foggy, sometimes very deformed), a reflection in the individual mirror. Then through this reflection, if we go back slowly to the origin of what is reflected, we can enter into contact with the Consciousness — the True Consciousness. And once we come into contact with the True Consciousness, we become aware that it is the same everywhere, that it is only deformation which divides it; without deformation everything is contained in one and the same Consciousness. That is, it is only distortion, the reflection in a distorting mirror, which brings about difference and division in the Consciousness, otherwise it is one single Consciousness. But it is only by experience that one can understand these things.

What are the twelve senses ?[1]

[1] In the preceding talk Mother spoke of "twelve senses".

We are granted five, aren't we ? In any case, there is one other which, precisely, has a relation with consciousness. I don't know if you have ever been told this, but a person who is blind, for instance, who does not see, can become aware of an object at some distance through a kind of perception which is not touch for he does not feel it, which is not vision for he does not see, but which is a contact — something that enables him to make a contact without hearing, seeing or touching. This is one of the most developed senses apart from those we habitually use. There is another sense, a sort of sense of proximity: when one comes close to a thing, one feels it as if one had contacted it. Another sense, which is also physical, puts you in touch with events at a great distance; it is a physical sense for it belongs to the physical world, it is not purely mental: there is a sensation. Some people have a sort of sensation of contact with what is happening at a very great distance. You must not forget that in the physical consciousness there are several levels; there is a physical vital and a physical mind which are not solely corporeal. Foresight on the material plane is also one of the physical senses.... We have, then, something that sees at a short distance, something that sees at a long distance and something that sees ahead; this already makes three. These are a sort of improvement of the senses we have; as for instance, hearing at a great distance — there are people who can hear noises at a great distance, who can smell at a great distance. It is a kind of perfecting of these senses.

Which sense is used in water-divining ?

The perception is different with each individual. For some, it is as though they saw the water; for others, as though they got the smell of water; and for others yet, it is a kind of intuition from the mental field; but then it is not a physical perception, it is a sort of direct knowledge. There was a man here who used to say he smelt water; he had an instrument, but it was only a pre-

text.... It is like a rod which bends, you know; try as you may to be as passive as possible, you will always make a slight movement when you have the feeling that something is there. I have tried this experiment many times: you give the rod to someone, you ask him to walk; you are silent, the man is silent, quite concentrated; then, suddenly, you think powerfully: "Here there is water" and hop ! the rod makes a little movement — it is quite evident that it is your suggestion. I had thought thus, without having the least idea that there was water there, simply to make an experiment; and in the hand of the dowser the rod came down; he had received the suggestion in his subconscient.

If one is sufficiently quiet, the nerves can receive the vibrations of the water ?

But there was no water ! It was I who had *thought* there was water (there may have been water there, I don't know, I did not tell them to dig and see). But the experiment proves that it was simply my thought which had worked on the fingers holding the rod, and the rod had come down.... You could also tell me that I had thought of water because it was there !

There are animals with very developed senses, aren't there ?

Ah ! yes, there are animals which are much more advanced than we.

I knew an elephant which led us straight to the water when we were tiger-shooting.

Animals have much more perfect senses than those of men. I challenge you to track a man as a dog does, for instance !

This means that in the curve or rather the spiral of evolution, animals (and more so those we call "higher" animals, be-

cause they resemble us more closely) are governed by the spirit of the species which is a highly conscious consciousness. Bees, ants, obey this spirit of the species which is of quite a special quality. And what is called "instinct" in animals is simply obedience to the spirit of the species which always knows what ought and ought not to be done. There are so many examples, you know. You put a cow in a meadow; it roams around, sniffs, and suddenly puts out its tongue and snatches a blade of grass. Then it wanders about again, sniffs and gets another tuft of grass, and so it goes on. Has anyone ever known a cow under these conditions eating poisonous grass ? But shut this poor animal up in a cow-shed, gather and put some grass before it, and the poor creature which has lost its instinct because it now obeys man (excuse me), eats the poisonous grass along with the rest of it. We have already had three such cases here, three cows which died of having eaten poisonous grass. And these unfortunate animals, like all animals, have a kind of respect (which I could call unjustifiable) for the superiority of man — if he puts poisonous grass before the cow and tells it to eat, it eats it ! But left to itself, that is, without anything interfering between it and the spirit of the species, it would never do so. All animals which live close to man lose their instinct because they have a kind of admiration full of devotion for this being who can give them shelter and food without the least difficulty — and a little fear too, for they know that if they don't do what man wants they will be beaten !

It is quite strange, they lose their ability. Dogs, for instance the sheep-dog which lives far away from men with the flocks and has a very independent nature (it comes home from time to time and knows its master well, but often does not see him), if it is bitten by a snake, it will remain in a corner, lick itself and do all that is necessary till it gets cured. The same dog, if it stays with you and is bitten by a snake, dies quietly like man.

I had a very sweet little cat, absolutely civilised, a marvellous cat. It was born in the house and it had the habit all cats

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

To finish my story, if you leave an animal in its normal state, far from man, it obeys the spirit of the species, it has a very sure instinct and it will never commit any stupidities. But if you take it and keep it with you, it loses its instinct, and it is then you who must look after it, for it no longer knows what should or should not be done. I was interested in cats to make an experiment, a sort of inverse metempsychosis, if one can call it that, that is, to see if this could be their last incarnation as

animals, if they were ready to enter a human body in the next life. The experiment succeeded fully, I had three absolutely flagrant instances; they left with a psychic being sufficiently conscious to enter a human body. But this is not what men ordinarily do; what they usually do is to spoil the consciousness or rather the instinct of animals.

24 March 1951

You say, "Love is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very stones...."[1] *If there is love in a stone, how can one see it?*

Perhaps the different elements constituting the stone are coordinated by the spark of love. I am sure that when the Divine Love descended into Matter, this Matter was quite unconscious, it had absolutely no form; it may even be said that forms in general are the result of the effort of Love to bring consciousness into Matter. If one of you (I have my doubts, but still) went down into the Inconscient, what is called the pure Inconscient, you would realise what it is. A stone will seem to you a marvellously conscious object in comparison. You speak disdainfully of a stone because you have just a wee bit more consciousness than it has, but the difference between the consciousness of the stone and the total Inconscient is perhaps greater than that between the stone and you. And the coming out of the Inconscient is due exclusively to the sacrifice of the Divine, to this descent of divine Love into the Inconscient. Consequently, when I said "perhaps in the stone", I could have removed the "perhaps" — I can assert that *even* in the stone it is there. There would be nothing, neither stone nor metal nor any organisation of atoms without this presence of divine Love.

Most people say there is "consciousness" when they begin to think — when one doesn't think one is not conscious. But plants are perfectly conscious and yet they do not think. They have very precise sensations which are the expression of a consciousness, but they do not think. Animals begin to think and their reactions are much more complex. But both plants and animals are conscious. One can be conscious of a sensation without having the least thought.

[1] *Questions and Answers 1929* (2 June).

Did material substance exist before the descent of Divine Love ?

I don't think it could be said that there was a material substance. The Inconscient... it is the Inconscient. I don't know how to explain this to you. If there is a negation of something, it is truly the Inconscient, it is the negation of everything. It has not even the capacity of emptiness. One needs to have descended there to know what it is and explain it. Words cannot describe it. It is the negation of all things because everything begins with consciousness. Without consciousness there is nothing.

Were there any beings before this descent of Love ? Were they conscious ?

There were no terrestrial beings. The terrestrial world, the earth came into existence after the descent into the Inconscient, not before.

The gradual formation of the different stages of being, from the Supreme to the most material region, is subsequent to the Inconscient. When, precisely, the Consciousness "began" its creation (don't take what I say quite literally as though it were a little history of another country, for it is not that, I am trying to make you understand, that's all), the first manifestation of the creative Consciousness was just an emanation of consciousness — of conscious light — and when this emanation separated itself from its origin, the Inconscient was born, through opposition; how to put it ?... yes, really through opposition. Consequently, the birth of the Inconscient is prior to the formation of the world, and it was only when the perception came that the whole universe was going to be created uselessly that there was a call and Divine Love plunged into the Inconscient to change it into consciousness. Therefore, it can be said that the formation of the material worlds as we know them is the result of the descent of the supreme Consciousness into the Incon-

scient. It cannot be said that there was something prior to that, things as we know them in the material world (I apologise for the ambiguity of my words, but you understand one cannot express these things in our usual words).

The formation of the earth as we know it, this infinitesimal point in the immense universe, was made precisely in order to concentrate the effort of transformation upon one point; it is like a symbolic point created in the universe to make it possible, while working directly upon one point, to radiate it over the entire universe.

If we want to make the problem a little more comprehensible, it is enough to limit ourselves to the creation and the history of the earth, for it is a good symbol of universal history.

From the astronomical point of view the earth is nothing, it is a very small accident. From the spiritual point of view, it is a symbolic willed formation. And as I have already said, it is only upon earth that this Presence is found, this direct contact with the supreme Origin, this presence of the divine Consciousness hidden in all things.

The other worlds have been organised more or less hierarchically, if one may say so, but the earth has a special formation due to the direct intervention, without any intermediary, of the supreme Consciousness in the Inconscient.

Have the solar fragments the same matter as the earth ?

I have taken care to tell you that this radiation was a symbolic creation, and that all action on this special point had its radiation in the whole universe; remember this, instead of beginning to say that the formation of the earth comes from an element projected from the sun or that a nebula must have been scattered giving birth to the sun and all its satellites, etc.

But is it true that there is no difference between solar

matter and terrestrial matter? Were the sun and the other worlds of the solar system formed at the same time as the earth?

Necessarily, everything was formed at the same time, the creation was simultaneous, with a special concentration of the Consciousness upon the earth.

Have the beings of the other worlds and planets a psychic being?

No, it is a purely terrestrial phenomenon. Only, there is nothing against the idea that psychic beings may go to the other worlds if it so pleases them. There is no reason to think that one cannot, if one went to another planet, meet psychic beings; it is not impossible; but these would be psychic beings formed upon earth who have become free in their movement, going here and there at will for some reason or other. All knowledge in all traditions, from every part of the earth, says that the psychic formation is a terrestrial formation and that the growth of the psychic being is something that takes place upon earth. But once they are formed and free in their movement, they can go anywhere in the universe, they are not limited in their movement; but their formation and growth belong to the terrestrial life, for reasons of concentration.

Are Divine Love and Grace the same thing?

Essentially, all things are the same. In its essence everything is the same, it is a phenomenon of consciousness; but Love can exist without Grace and Grace can exist without Love. But for the human consciousness all manifestation of Grace is a manifestation of the supreme Love, inevitably. Only it goes beyond human consciousness.

How can one become conscious of Divine Love and an instrument of its expression ?

First, to become conscious of anything whatever, you must will it. And when I say "will it", I don't mean saying one day, "Oh ! I would like it very much", then two days later completely forgetting it.

To will it is a constant, sustained, concentrated aspiration, an almost exclusive occupation of the consciousness. This is the first step. There are many others: a very attentive observation, a very persistent analysis, a very keen discernment of what is pure in the movement and what is not. If you have an imaginative faculty, you may try to imagine and see if your imagination tallies with reality. There are people who believe that it is enough to wake up one day in a particular mood and say, "Ah ! how I wish to be conscious of divine Love, how I wish to manifest divine Love...." Note, I don't know how many millions of times one feels within a little quivering of human instinct and imagines that if one had at one's disposal divine Love, great things could be accomplished, and one says, "I am going to try and find divine Love and we shall see the result." This is the worst possible way. Because, before having even touched the very beginning of realisation you have spoilt the result. You must take up your search with a purity of aspiration and surrender which in themselves are already difficult to acquire. You must have worked much on yourself only to be *ready* to aspire to this Love. If you look at yourself very sincerely, very straight, you will see that as soon as you begin to think of Love it is always your little inner tumult which starts whirling. All that aspires in you wants certain vibrations. It is almost impossible, without being far advanced on the yogic path, to separate the vital essence, the vital vibration from your conception of Love. What I say is founded on an assiduous experience of human beings. Well, for you, in the state in which you are, as you are, if you had a contact with pure divine Love, it would seem to

you colder than ice, or so far-off, so high that you would not be able to breathe; it would be like the mountain-top where you would feel frozen and find it difficult to breathe, so very far would it be from what you normally feel. Divine Love, if not clothed with a psychic or vital vibration, is difficult for a human being to perceive. One can have an impression of grace, of a grace which is something so far, so high, so pure, so impersonal that... yes, one can have the feeling of grace, but it is with difficulty that one feels Love.

But, then, can it be said that the psychic vibration is the vibration of divine Love ?

Each one of you should be able to get into touch with your own psychic being, it is not an inaccessible thing. Your psychic being is there precisely to put you in contact with the divine forces. And if you are in contact with your psychic being, you begin to feel, to have a kind of perception of what divine Love can be. As I have just said, it is not enough that one morning you wake up saying, "Oh ! I would like to be in contact with divine Love", it is not like that. If, through a sustained effort, a deep concentration, a great forgetfulness of self, you succeed in coming into touch with your psychic being, you will never dream of thinking, "Oh ! I would like to be in contact with divine Love" — you are in a state in which everything appears to you to be this divine Love and nothing else. And yet it is only a covering, but a covering of a beautiful texture.

So, divine Love need not be sought and known apart from the psychic being ?

No, find your psychic being and you will understand what divine Love is. Do not try to come into direct contact with divine Love because this will yet again be a vital desire pushing you; you will perhaps not be aware of it, but it will be a vital desire.

You must make an effort to come into touch with your psychic being, to become aware and free in the consciousness of your psychic being, and then, quite naturally, spontaneously, you will know what divine Love is.

> *The fact of being born with a psychic being and upon earth which is a spiritual symbol proves that we have each one of us a great responsibility, doesn't it ?*

Surely. One has a big responsibility, it is to fulfil a special mission that one is born upon earth. Only, naturally, the psychic being must have reached a certain degree of development; otherwise it could be said that it is the whole earth which has the responsibility. The more conscious and individualised one becomes, the more should one have the sense of responsibility. But this is what happens at a given moment; one begins to think that one is here not without reason, without purpose. One realises suddenly that one is here because there is something to be done and this something is not anything egoistic. This seems to me the most logical way of entering upon the path — all of a sudden to realise, "Since I am here, it means that I have a mission to fulfil. Since I have been endowed with a consciousness, it is that I have something to do with that consciousness — what is it ?"

Generally, it seems to me that this is the first question one should put to oneself: "Why am I here ?"

I have seen this in children, even in children of five or six: "Why am I here, why do I live ?" And then to search, with whatever consciousness is available, with a very little bit of consciousness: why am I here, for what reason ?

This seems to me the normal starting-point.

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

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

It is a little paradoxical for the mind.

You have said that after finishing their development psychic beings could go to other worlds; yet, the psychic being belongs exclusively to the earth, doesn't it ?

But the psychic being is not material, it is psychic ! It is not bound to the material world: as soon as it stops living in a body, it goes away to the psychic world which is very far from being a material world.

How can one transform the vital ?

The first step: will. Secondly, sincerity and aspiration. But will and aspiration are almost the same thing, one follows the other. Then, perseverance. Yes, perseverance is necessary in any process, and what is this process ?... First, there must be the ability to observe and discern, the ability to find the vital in oneself, else you will be hard put to it to say: "This comes from the vital, this comes from the mind, this from the body." Everything

will seem to you mixed and indistinct.

After a very sustained observation, you will be able to distinguish between the different parts and recognise the origin of a movement. Quite a long time is necessary for this, but one can go quite fast also, it depends upon people. But once you have found out the different parts ask yourself, "What is there of the vital in this ? What does the vital bring into your consciousness ? In what way does it change your movements; what does it add to them and what take away ? What happens in your consciousness through the intervention of the vital ?" Once you know this, what do you do ?... Then you will need to watch this intervention, observe it, find out in what way it works. For instance, you want to transform your vital. You have a great sincerity in your aspiration and the resolution to go to the very end. You have all that. You start observing and you see that two things can happen (many things can happen) but mainly two.

First, a sort of enthusiasm takes hold of you. You set to work earnestly. In this enthusiasm you think, "I am going to do this and that, I am going to reach my goal immediately, everything is going to be magnificent ! It will see, this vital, how I am going to treat it if it doesn't obey !" And if you look carefully you will see that the vital is saying to itself, "Ah, at last, here's an opportunity !" It accepts, it starts working with all its zeal, all its enthusiasm and... all its impatience.

The second thing may be the very opposite. A sort of uneasiness: "I am not well, how tedious life is, how wearisome everything. How am I going to do all that ? Will I ever reach the goal ? Is it worth while beginning ? Is it at all possible ? Isn't it impossible ?" It is the vital which is not very happy about what is going to be done for it, which does not want anyone to meddle in its affairs, which does not like all that very much. So it suggests depression, discouragement, a lack of faith, doubt — is it really worth the trouble ?

These are the two extremes, and each has its difficulties, its obstacles.

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

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

So we get started on the path. But the road is very long. Many things happen on the way. Suddenly one thinks one has overcome an obstacle; I say "thinks", because though one has

overcome it, it is not totally overcome. I am going to take a very obvious instance, of a very simple observation. Someone has found that his vital is uncontrollable and uncontrolled, that it gets furious for nothing and about nothing. He starts working to teach it not to get carried away, not to flare up, to remain calm and bear the shocks of life without reacting violently. If one does this cheerfully, it goes quite quickly (note this well, it is very important: when you have to deal with your vital take care to keep your good humour, otherwise you will get into trouble). One keeps one's good humour, that is, when one sees the fury rise, one begins to laugh. Instead of being depressed and saying, "Ah ! in spite of all my effort it is beginning all over again", one begins to laugh and says, "Well, well ! one hasn't yet seen the end of it. Look now, aren't you ridiculous, you know quite well that you are being ridiculous ! Is it worthwhile getting angry ?" One gives it this lesson good-humouredly. And really, after a while it doesn't get angry again, it is quiet — and one relaxes one's attention. One thinks the difficulty has been overcome, one thinks a result has at last been reached: "My vital does not trouble me any longer, it does not get angry now, everything is going fine." And the next day, one loses one's temper. It is then one must be careful, it is then one must not say, "Here we are, it's no use, I shall never achieve anything, all my efforts are futile; all this is an illusion, it is impossible." On the contrary, one must say, "I wasn't vigilant enough." One must wait long, very long, before one can say, "Ah ! it is done and finished." Sometimes one must wait for years, many years....

I am not saying this to discourage you, but to give you patience and perseverance — for there is a moment when you do arrive. And note that the vital is a small part of your being — a very important part, we have said that it is the dynamism, the realising energy, it is very important; but it is only a small part. And the mind !... which goes wandering, which must be pulled back by all the strings to be kept quiet ! You think this can be done overnight ? And your body ?... You have a weakness, a

difficulty, sometimes a small chronic illness, nothing much, but still it is a nuisance, isn't it ? You want to get rid of it. You make efforts, you concentrate; you work upon it, establish harmony, and you think it is finished, and then.... Take, for instance, people who have the habit of coughing; they can't control themselves or almost can't. It is not serious but it is bothersome, and there seems to be no reason why it should ever stop. Well, one tells oneself, "I am going to control this." One makes an effort — a yogic effort, not a material one — one brings down consciousness, force, and stops the cough. And one thinks, "The body has forgotten how to cough." And it is a great thing when the body has forgotten, truly one can say, "I am cured." But unfortunately it is not always true, for this goes down into the subconscient and, one day, when the balance of forces is not so well established, when the strength is not the same, it begins again. And one laments, "I believed that it was over ! I had succeeded and told myself, 'It is true that spiritual power has an action upon the body, it is true that something can be done', and there ! it is not true. And yet it was a small thing, and I who want to conquer immortality ! How will I succeed ?... For years I have been free from this small thing and here it is beginning anew !" It is then that you must be careful.

You must arm yourself with an endless patience and endurance. You do a thing once, ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times if necessary, but you do it till it gets done. And not done only here and there, but everywhere and everywhere at the same time. This is the great problem one sets oneself. That is why, to those who come to tell me very light-heartedly, "I want to do yoga", I reply, "Think it over, one may do the yoga for a number of years without noticing the least result. But if you want to do it, you must persist and persist with such a will that you should be ready to do it for ten lifetimes, a hundred lifetimes if necessary, in order to succeed." I do not say it will be like that, but the *attitude* must be like that. Nothing must discourage you; for there are all the difficulties of ignorance of the

different states of being, to which are added the endless malice and the unbounded cunning of the hostile forces in the world.... They are there, do you know why ? They have been tolerated, do you know why ? — simply to see how long one can last out and how great is the sincerity in one's action. For everything depends upon your sincerity. If you are truly sincere in your will, nothing will stop you, you will go right to the end, and if it is necessary for you to live a thousand years to do it, you will live a thousand years to do it.

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

If it seeks to transform itself, it is truly wonderful ! And if it aspires for transformation, it will try to free itself. If the vital is weak, its aspiration will be weak. And mark that weakness is an insincerity, a sort of excuse one gives oneself — not very, very consciously perhaps, but you must be told that the subconscient is a place full of insincerity. And the weakness which says, "I would like it so much, but I can't" is insincerity. Because, if one is sincere, what one cannot do today one will do tomorrow, and what one cannot do tomorrow one will do the day after, and so on, until one can do it. If you understand once for all that the entire universe (or, if you like, our earth, to concentrate the problem) is nothing other than the Divine who has forgotten Himself, where will you find a place for weakness there ? Not in the Divine surely ! Then, in forgetfulness. And if you struggle against forgetfulness you struggle against weakness, and to the extent you draw closer to the Divine your weakness disappears.

And that holds good not only for the mind, but also for the vital and even for the body. All suffering, all weaknesses, all incapabilities are, in the last analysis, insincerities.

There are many places where insincerity may be lodged, and

hence it should never be said as so often people say to me, "I am perfectly sincere." It is like those who assure you, "I have never told a lie." If you were perfectly sincere, you would be the Divine, if you had never told a lie, that is, something that is not true, you would be the Truth! So, as you are neither the Divine nor the Truth in fact (you are that in essence but not in fact), you have always a long way to go to reach the Truth and sincerity.

You need not look unhappy because it is like that.

It is like those people in despair who tell you, "Why is the world so frightful?" What is the use of lamenting, since it is like that? The only thing you can do is to work to change it. Naturally, from a speculative point of view one may try to understand, but the human mind is incapable of understanding such things. For the moment it is quite useless. What is useful is to change it. We all agree that the world is detestable, that it is not what it ought to be, and the only thing we have to do is to work to make it otherwise. Consequently, our whole preoccupation should be to find the best means of making it different; and we can understand one thing, it is that the best means (though we do not know it quite well yet), is we ourselves, isn't it? And surely you know yourself better than you know your neighbour — you understand better the consciousness manifested in a human being than that manifested in the stars, for instance. So, after a little hesitation you could say, "After all, the best means is what I am. I don't know very well what I am, but this kind of collection of things that I am, this perhaps is my work, this is perhaps my part of the work, and if I do it as well as I can, perhaps I shall be doing the best I can do." This is a very big beginning, very big. It is not overwhelming, not beyond the limits of your possibilities. You have your work at hand, it is always within your reach, so to say, it is always there for you to attend to it — a field of action proportionate to your strength, but varied enough, complex, vast, deep enough to be interesting. And you explore this unknown world.

Many people tell you, "But then this is egoism!" — it is egoism if you do it in an egoistic way, for your personal profit, if you try to acquire powers, to become powerful enough to influence others, or if you seek means to make a comfortable life for yourself. Naturally, if you do it in this spirit, it will be egoistic. But the beauty of it is that you will not get anywhere! You will begin by deceiving yourself, you will live in increasing illusions and you will fall back into a greater and greater obscurity. Consequently, things are organised much better than one thinks; if you do your work egoistically (we have said that our field of work is always within our reach) it will come to nothing. And hence the required condition is to do it with an absolute sincerity in your aspiration for the realisation of the divine work. So if you start like that I can assure you that you will have such an interesting journey that even if it takes very long, you will never get tired. But you must do it like that with an intensity of will, with perseverance and that indispensable good humour which smiles at difficulties and laughs at mistakes. Then everything will go well.

What mirror is that which can reflect the Supreme?

Consciousness itself. It is because that is there, without it one would never get anywhere. If the supreme Consciousness were not at the centre of all creation, never could the creation become aware of the Consciousness.

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

The source of sincerity, of will, of perseverance is in the psychic being, but this translates itself differently in different people. Generally it is in the higher part of the mind that this begins to take shape, but for it to be effective at least one part of the

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

Even a fleeting idea in a child, at a certain moment in its childhood when the psychic being is most in front, if it succeeds in penetrating through the outer consciousness and giving the child just an impression of something beautiful which must be realised, it creates a little nucleus and upon this you build your action. There is a vast mass of humanity to whom one would never say, "You must realise the Divine" or "Do yoga to find the Divine." If you observe well you will see that it is a tiny minority to whom this can be said. It means that this minority of beings is "prepared" to do yoga, it is that. It is that there has been a beginning of realisation — a beginning is enough. With others it is perhaps an old thing, an awakening which may come from past lives. But we are speaking of those who are less ready; they are those who have had at a certain moment a flash which has passed through their whole being and created a response, but that suffices. This does not happen to many people. Those ready to do yoga are not many if you compare them with the unconscious human mass. But one thing is certain, the fact that you are all here proves that at the least you have had that

— there are those who are very far on the path (sometimes they have no idea about it), but at the least all of you have had that, that kind of spontaneous integral contact which is like an electric shock, a lightning-flash which goes through you and wakes you up to something: there is something to be realised. It is possible that the experience is not translated into words, only into a flame. That is enough. And it is around this nucleus that one organises oneself, slowly, slowly, progressively. And once it is there it never disappears. It is only if you have made a pact with the adverse forces and make a considerable effort to break the contact and not notice its existence, that you may believe it has disappeared. And yet a single flash suffices for it to come back.

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

"The articles and dogmas of a religion are mind-made things and, if you cling to them and shut yourself up in a code of life made out for you, you do not know and cannot know the truth of the spirit that lies beyond all codes and dogmas, wide and large and free....

"In every religion there are some who have evolved a high spiritual life. But it is not the religion that gave them their spirituality; it is they who have put their spirituality into the religion. Put anywhere else, born into any other cult, they would have found there and lived there the same spiritual life. It is their own capacity, it is some power of their inner being and not the religion they profess that has made them what they are."

Questions and Answers 1929 (9 June)

Are all religions mental constructions ?

All religions were perhaps not that in their beginning, but they have certainly become that with time.

What is the "Little Vehicle" and the "Great Vehicle" ?

These are Buddhist terms. This is the translation of a Pali word, I believe. It is said that the religion of the North is the "Great Vehicle" and the religion of the South the "Little Vehicle". The Little Vehicle abides by quite a strict teaching according to what has been preserved or is believed to have been preserved of the words of the Buddha.

You know the Buddha used to say that there was no God, there was no persistence of the ego, there were no beings of higher worlds who could incarnate here, there were no... He de-

nied almost every possible thing. The religion of the South is like that, it is extremely nihilistic, it says no, no, no to everything; while in the religion of the North, which has been practised in Tibet, and spread from Tibet into China and from China to Japan, one finds the Bodhisattvas (who stand for saints as in all other religions), all the previous Buddhas who are also like some sort of demigods or gods. I don't know if you have ever had a chance to visit a Buddhist temple of the North (I saw them in China and Japan), for you enter halls where there are innumerable statuettes — all the Bodhisattvas, all the disciples of those Bodhisattvas, all the forces of nature deified, indeed you are overwhelmed by the number of gods ! On the other hand, if you go to the South, there is nothing, not a single image. I believe they speak of the "Great Vehicle" because there are lots of things inside, and the "Little Vehicle" because there are few ! I don't know exactly the origin of the two terms.

"Things have an inner value and become real to you only when you have acquired them by the exercise of your free choice, not when they have been imposed upon you. If you want to be sure of your religion, you must choose it; if you want to be sure of your country, you must choose it; if you want to be sure of your family, even that you must choose."

Questions and Answers 1929 (9 June)

What does "choose one's family" mean ?

You have come into the world in a certain milieu, among certain people. When you are quite young, but for a few rare exceptions, what surrounds you seems altogether natural to you, because you are born in its midst and are quite used to it. But when, a little later, a spiritual aspiration wakes up in you, you may quite possibly feel yourself completely ill at ease in the environment where you have lived, if, for instance, the people who

have brought you up don't have the same aspiration or if their ideas are the very opposite of what is developing in you. Instead of saying, "You see, I belong to this family, what shall I do ? I have a mother, a father, brothers, sisters...", you can set out in search (I don't mean necessarily travel), set out in search of spirits who have an affinity with yours, people who have a similar aspiration and, if you have the sincere aspiration to find those who like you are in quest of something, you will always have the occasion to meet them in one way or another, through quite unexpected circumstances; and when you have found one or more people who are in exactly the same state of mind and have the same aspiration, quite naturally there will be created bonds of closeness, intimacy, friendship and, among you, you will form a kind of brotherhood, that is to say, a true family. You are together because you are close to one another, you are together because you have the same aspiration, you are together because you want to create the same goal in life; you understand one another when you speak, you have no need to discuss anything which is said and you live in a kind of inner harmony. This is the true family, this is the family of aspiration, the family of spiritual inclinations.

Now, about the country, this may depend upon all sorts of things, this may depend upon a sort of inner affinity. For instance, if you come to a country and there you find a kind of response, an inner response to your aspiration, you find the surroundings more in conformity with your tastes, your tendencies, you may very well choose to live in this country, which is not necessarily that of your birth; and since you choose that country to live there, you may say, "This is my country." There are people, many people who go and settle elsewhere for very materialistic and uninteresting reasons most of the time, but there are also others who are in search of an environment which suits their inner taste, their aspiration, or who seek lands, ways of living more in keeping with their deeper nature; then they settle down somewhere and don't move again, and when they stay

there for a number of years, they can really feel that this country is theirs, much more than the house or village or city where they were born.

Is the vital distorted from the very birth ?

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

I think I have already spoken about that, I have said what kind of aspiration ought to be there in the parents before the birth; but as I said, this does not happen even once in a hundred thousand instances. The willed conception of a child is extremely rare; mostly it is an accident. Among innumerable parents it is quite a small minority that even simply bothers about what a child could be; they do not even know that what the child will be depends on what they are. It is a very small *élite* which knows this. Most of the time things go as they can; anything at all happens and people don't even realise what is happening. So, in these conditions how do you expect to be born with a vital being sufficiently pure to be of help to you ? One is

born with a slough to clean before one begins to live. And once you have made a good start on the way to the inner transformation and you go down to the subconscient root of the being — that exactly which comes from parents, from atavism — well, you do see what it is ! and all, almost all difficulties are there, there are very few things added to existence after the first years of life. This happens at any odd moment; if you keep bad company or read bad books, the poison may enter you; but there are all the imprints deep-rooted in the subconscient, the dirty habits you have and against which you struggle. For instance, there are people who can't open their mouth without telling a lie, and they don't always do this deliberately (that is the worst of it), or people who can't come in touch with others without quarrelling, all sorts of stupidities — they are there in the subconscient, deeply rooted. Now, when you have a goodwill, externally you do your best to avoid all that, to correct it if possible; you work, you fight; then become aware that this thing always keeps coming up, it comes up from some part which escapes your control. But if you enter this subconscient, if you let your consciousness infiltrate it, and look carefully, gradually you will discover all the sources, all the origins of all your difficulties; then you will begin to understand what your fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers were, and if at a certain moment you are unable to control yourself, you will understand, "I am like that because they were like that."

If you have within you a psychic being sufficiently awake to watch over you, to prepare your path, it can draw towards you things which help you, draw people, books, circumstances, all sorts of little coincidences which come to you as though brought by some benevolent will and give you an indication, a help, a support to take decisions and turn you in the right direction. But once you have taken this decision, once you have decided to find the truth of your being, once you start sincerely on the road, then everything seems to conspire to help you to advance, and if you observe carefully you see gradually the source of

your difficulties: "Ah ! wait a minute, this failing was in my father; oh ! this habit was my mother's; oh ! my grandmother was like this, my grandfather was like that" or it could well be the nurse who took care of you when you were small, or brothers and sisters who played with you, the little friends you met, and you will find that all this was there, in this person or that or the other. But if you continue to be sincere, you find you can cross all this quite calmly, and after a time you cut all the moorings with which you were born, break the chains and go freely on the path.

If you really want to transform your character, it is that you must do. It has always been said that it is impossible to change one's nature; in all books of philosophy, even of yoga, you are told the same story: "You cannot change your character, you are born like that, you are like that." This is absolutely false, I guarantee it is false; but there is something very difficult to do to change your character, because it is not your character which must be changed, it is the character of your antecedents. In them you will not change it (because they have no such intention), but it is in you that it must be changed. It is what they have given you, all the little gifts made to you at your birth — nice gifts — it is this which must be changed. But if you succeed in getting hold of the thread of these things, the true thread, since you have worked upon this with perseverance and sincerity, one fine morning you will be free; all this will fall off from you and you will be able to get a start in life without any burden. Then you will be a new man, living a new life, almost with a new nature. And if you look back you will say, "It is not possible, I was never like that !"

31 March 1951

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

> *"Can all physical ailments be traced to some disorder in the mind?"*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (16 June)

If there is one mental disorder which can bring about all illnesses, it is fear.

But, each man can make his own experiment. If one has a bad throat, this may be due to the fact that the day before one was in a state of depression. Or perhaps one is very unhappy, dissatisfied, one finds everything very bad, and the next day one gets a cold in the head.... Everyone must make his own observations.

> *"Each spot of the body is symbolical of an inner movement; there is there a world of subtle correspondences.... The particular place in the body affected by an illness is an index to the nature of the inner disharmony that has taken place. It points to the origin, it is a sign of the cause of the ailment. It reveals too the nature of the resistance that prevents the whole being from advancing at the same high speed. It indicates the treatment and the cure. If one could perfectly understand where the mistake is, find out what has been unreceptive, open that part and put the force and the light there, it would be possible to re-establish in a moment the harmony that has been disturbed and the illness would immediately go."*
>
> *Ibid.*

Will you explain how each part of the body is symbolical of an inner movement ?

In the ancient schools of initiation there was the practice of saying simply "This is true" or "This is false" to those who already had the knowledge of these things.

Can anyone relate his experience on this subject ? Naturally you must be able to give the correlation between a certain psychological state and a particular part of the body.

Once, I complained to you about some pain and you asked me which part of the body was affected. When I told you which, I did not know about its correspondence with the vital, the mind, etc., yet the pain disappeared.

I don't see any contradiction !... There are two ways of curing an illness spiritually. One consists in putting a force of consciousness and truth on the physical spot which is affected. In this case the effect produced depends naturally on the receptivity of the person. Supposing the person is receptive; the force of consciousness is put upon the affected part and its pressure restores order. Many of you here can tell how Sri Aurobindo cured them. It was like a hand which came and took away the pain. It is as clear as that.

In other cases, if the body lacks receptivity altogether or if its receptivity is insufficient, one sees the inner correspondence with the psychological state which has brought about the illness and acts on that. But if the cause of the illness is refractory, not much can be done. Let us say the origin is vital. The vital absolutely refuses to change, it clings terrifically to the condition in which it is; then that is hopeless. You put the force, and usually it provokes an increase in the illness, produced by the resistance of the vital which did not want to accept anything. I speak of the vital but it can be the mind or something else.

When the action is directly upon the body, that is, on the affected part, it is possible that one is relieved; then, some hours later or even after a few days, the illness returns. This means that the cause has not been changed, that the cause is in the vital and is still there; it is only the effect which has been cured. But if one can act simultaneously upon both the cause and the effect, and the cause is sufficiently receptive to consent to change, then one is completely cured, once for all.

I once had an illness which was almost like an experience. I wanted to get rid of jealousy. The whole night I felt a strong pressure, I had pain all over the body, to the very bones. The next morning I had a stomachache and sent you word with my brother. You told him that if I did not get better in a few hours, you would send the doctor. He forgot to tell me that he had seen you and what you had told him, but I learnt later that it was at the exact moment you had spoken to him that I was cured.

I knew it was that !

How can one increase the receptivity of the body ?

It depends on the part. The method is almost the same for all parts of the being. To begin with, the first condition: to remain as quiet as possible. You may notice that in the different parts of your being, when something comes and you do not receive it, this produces a shrinking — there is something which hardens in the vital, the mind or the body. There is a stiffening and this hurts, one feels a mental, vital or physical pain. So, the first thing is to put one's will and relax this shrinking, as one does a twitching nerve or a cramped muscle; you must learn how to relax, be able to relieve this tension in whatever part of the being it may be.

The method of relaxing the contraction may be different in the mind, the vital or the body, but logically it is the same thing. Once you have relaxed the tension, you see first if the disagreeable effect ceases, which would prove that it was a small momentary resistance, but if the pain continues and if it is indeed necessary to increase the receptivity in order to be able to receive what is helpful, what should be received, you must, after having relaxed this contraction, begin trying to widen yourself — you feel you are widening yourself. There are many methods. Some find it very useful to imagine they are floating on water with a plank under their back. Then they widen themselves, widen, until they become the vast liquid mass. Others make an effort to identify themselves with the sky and the stars, so they widen, widen themselves, identifying themselves more and more with the sky. Others again don't need these pictures; they can become conscious of their consciousness, enlarge their consciousness more and more until it becomes unlimited. One can enlarge it till it becomes vast as the earth and even the universe. When one does that one becomes really receptive. As I have said, it is a question of training. In any case, from an immediate point of view, when something comes and one feels that it is too strong, that it gives a headache, that one can't bear it, the method is just the same, you must act upon the contraction. One can act through thought, by calling the peace, tranquillity (the feeling of peace takes away much of the difficulty) like this: "Peace, peace, peace... tranquillity... calm." Many discomforts, even physical, like all these contractions of the solar plexus, which are so unpleasant and give you at times nausea, the sensation of being suffocated, of not being able to breathe again, can disappear thus. It is the nervous centre which is affected, it gets affected very easily. As soon as there is something which affects the solar plexus, you must say, "Calm... calm... calm", become more and more calm until the tension is destroyed.

In thought also. For instance, you are reading something and come across a thought you don't understand — it is beyond you,

you understand nothing and so in your head it lies like a brick, and if you try to understand, it becomes more and more like a brick, a stiffening, and if you persist it gives you a headache. There is but one thing to do: not to struggle with the words, remain just like this (*gesture: stretched out, immobile*), create a relaxation, simply widen, widen. And don't try to understand, above all, don't try to understand — let it enter like that, quite gently, and relax, relax, and in this relaxing your headache goes away. You no longer think of anything, you wait for a few days and after some days you see from inside: "Oh ! how clear it is ! I understand what I had not understood." It is as easy as that. When you read a book which is beyond you, when you come across sentences which you cannot understand — one feels that there is no correspondence in the head — well, you must do this; one reads the thing once, twice, thrice, then remains calm and makes the mind silent. A fortnight later, one takes up the same passage again and it is clear as daylight. Everything has been organised in the head, the elements of the brain which were wanted for the understanding have been formed, everything has been done gradually and one understands. I knew many people who, when I used to tell them something, argued, — they did not understand anything at all. They were shut up in their mind which could not catch the thought, which threw it out, refused it violently. You have said something, you don't insist; you have said it, that's all; if need be you say it a second time, but you don't insist. A week, a month later, those very people come looking for you and tell you with strong conviction, "But things are like that, you don't understand, things are like that !" It is exactly what you have told them, you know. But they tell you, "I thought about it, now I know, it is this, it is truly this." If you have the misfortune to tell them, "But this is exactly what I had told you", they pull a long face ! and they don't understand any longer.

Illnesses enter through the subtle body, don't they ?

How can they be stopped ?

Ah ! here we are.... If one is very sensitive, very sensitive — one must be very sensitive — the moment they touch the subtle body and try to pass through, one feels it. It is not like something touching the body, it is a sort of feeling. If you are able to perceive it at that moment, you have still the power to say "no", and it goes away. But for this one must be extremely sensitive. However, that develops. All these things can be developed methodically by the will. You can become quite conscious of this envelope, and if you develop it sufficiently, you don't even need to look and see, you feel that something has touched you. I can give you an instance of this, there are many similar ones.

Someone was seeking to establish a constant and conscious contact — absolutely constant and conscious — with the inner Godhead, not only with the psychic being but the divine Presence in the psychic being, and she had decided that she would be like this, that she would busy herself with nothing else, that is to say, whatever she might be doing, her concentration was upon this, and even when she went out walking in the street, her concentration was upon this. She lived in a big city where there was much traffic: buses, tramways, etc., many things, and to cross the street one had to be considerably careful, wide-awake and attentive, otherwise one could get run over, but this person had resolved that she would not come out of her concentration. One day when she was crossing one of the big avenues with all its cars and its tramways, still deep in her concentration, in her inner seeking, she suddenly felt at about an arm's length a little shock, like this; she jumped back and a car passed just by her side. If she had not jumped back she would have been run over.... This is an extreme point, but without going so far one can very easily feel a kind of little discomfort (it is not something which is imposed with a great force), a little uneasiness coming near you from anywhere at all: front,

behind, above, below. If at that moment you are sufficiently alert, you say "no", as though you were cutting off the contact with great strength, and it is finished. If you are not conscious at that moment, the next minute or a few minutes later you get a queer sick feeling inside, a cold in the back, a little uneasiness, the beginning of some disharmony; you feel a maladjustment somewhere, as though the general harmony had been disturbed. Then you must concentrate all the more and with a great strength of will keep the faith that nothing can do you harm, nothing can touch you. This suffices, you can throw off the illness at that moment. But you must do this immediately, you understand, you must not wait five minutes, it must be done at once. If you wait too long and begin to feel really an uneasiness somewhere, and something begins to get quite disturbed, then it is good to sit down, concentrate and call the Force, concentrate it on the place which is getting disturbed, that is to say, which is beginning to become ill. But if you don't do anything at all, an illness indeed gets lodged somewhere; and all this, because you were not sufficiently alert. And sometimes one is obliged to follow the entire curve to find the favourable moment again and get rid of the business. I have said somewhere that in the physical domain all is a question of method — a method is necessary for realising everything. And if the illness has succeeded in touching the physical-physical, well, you must follow the procedure needed to get rid of it. This is what medical science calls "the course of the illness". One can hasten the course with the help of spiritual forces, but all the same the procedure must be followed. There are some four different stages. The very first is instantaneous. The second can be done in some minutes, the third may take several hours and the fourth several days. And then, once the thing is lodged there, all will depend not only on the receptivity of the body but still more on the willingness of the part which is the cause of the disorder. You know, when the thing comes from outside it is in affinity with something inside. If it manages to pass through, to enter

without one's being aware of it, it means there is some affinity somewhere, and the part of the being which has responded must be convinced.

I have known some truly extraordinary instances. If you can at the moment... Wait, take an example which is quite concrete: sunstroke. This upsets you considerably, it is one of the things which makes you most ill — a sunstroke upsets everything, it disturbs the inner functions, it generally causes a congestion in the head and very high fever. So, if this has happened, if it has succeeded in getting through the protection and entering you, well, if you can just go into a quiet place, stretch yourself out flat, go out of your body (naturally, you must learn this; there are people who do this spontaneously, for others a long discipline is necessary), go out of your body, remain above in a way to be able to see the body (you know the phenomenon, seeing one's body when one is outside? this can be done at will, going out of one's body and remaining just above it), the body is stretched out on a bed, a bench, on the ground, anywhere; you are stretched just above it and from there, consciously, you pull the Force from above, and if you are used to doing it, if your aspiration is strong enough, you get the answer; and then, from there, taking care not to re-enter your body, you begin to push these forces into the body, like that, regularly, until you see the body receiving them (for, the first few moments they don't enter, because the body is quite upset by the illness, it is not receptive, it is curled up), you push them gently, gently, quietly, without nervousness, very peacefully, into the body. But you must not be disturbed by anyone. If someone comes along, sees you stretched out and shakes you, it is extremely dangerous. You must do this in quiet conditions, ask people not to disturb you or better shut yourself up where they can't disturb you. But you can concentrate slowly (this takes more or less time — ten minutes, half an hour, one hour, two hours — it depends upon the seriousness of the disorder which has set in), slowly, from above, you concentrate the Force until you see that the body

is receiving, that the Force is entering, the disorder is being set right and there is a relaxation in the body itself. Once that is done you can get back and you are cured. This has been done for a sunstroke, which is a fairly violent thing, and also for typhoid fever, and many other illnesses, as, for instance, for a liver which was suddenly upset somehow (not due to indigestion, but a liver which doesn't function properly for the moment); it may also be cured in the same way. There was a case of cholera which was healed like that. The cholera had just been caught, had entered, but was not yet lodged; it was completely cured. Consequently, when I say that if one masters the spiritual force and knows how to use it, there is no malady which cannot be cured, I don't say it just like that in the air; it is said from experience with the thing. Of course, you will say you don't know how to go out of the body, draw the Force, concentrate it, have all this mastery.... It is not very frequent, but it is not impossible. And one can be sure that if one is helped... In fact, there is a much easier method, it is to call for help.

But the condition in every case --- in every case — whether one does it oneself and depending only on oneself or whether one does it by asking someone to do it for one, the first condition: not to fear and to be calm. If you begin to boil and get fidgety in your body, it is finished, you can do nothing.

For everything — to live the spiritual life, heal sickness — for everything, one must be calm.

You have said: "By Yoga the inner transformation that is in slow constant process in the creation is rendered more intense and rapid, but the pace of the outer transformation remains almost the same as in ordinary life. As a result, the disharmony between the inner and the outer being in one who is doing Yoga tends to be all the greater, unless precautions are taken...."

Questions and Answers 1929 (16 June)

What are these precautions ?

That depends upon people. Each case is different. Individual precautions would be different according to individual reactions, difficulties, resistances. For each one there is a programme to follow which is good only for him. There is no general rule. These things cannot be distributed as one distributes sweets. If someone asks me "What should I do ?" — well that, yes.

What are the causes of accidents ? Are they due to a disequilibrium ?

If one answers deeply... Outwardly there are many causes, but there is a deeper cause which is always there. I said the other day that if the nervous envelope is intact, accidents can be avoided, and even if there is an accident it won't have any consequences. As soon as there is a scratch or a defect in the nervous envelope of the being and according to the nature of this scratch, if one may say so, its place, its character, there will be an accident which will correspond to the diminution of resistance in the envelope. I believe almost everybody is psychologically aware of one thing: that accidents occur when one has a

sort of uncomfortable feeling, when one is not fully conscious and self-possessed, when one feels uneasy. In any case, generally, people have a feeling that they are not fully themselves, not fully aware of what they are doing. If one were fully conscious, the consciousness wide awake, accidents would not occur; one would make just the right gesture, the necessary movement to avoid the accident. Hence, in an almost absolute way, it is a flagging of consciousness. Or quite possibly it may be that the consciousness is fixed in a higher domain; for example, not to speak of spiritual things, a man who is busy solving a mental problem and is very concentrated upon his mental problem, becomes inattentive to physical things, and if he happens to be in a street or in a crowd, his attention fixed upon his problem, he will not make the movement necessary to avoid the accident, and the accident will occur. It is the same for sports, for games; you can observe this easily, there is always a flagging of the consciousness when accidents occur, or a lack of attention, a little absent-mindedness; suddenly one thinks of something else, the attention is drawn elsewhere — one is not fully conscious of what one is doing and the accident happens.

As I was telling you at the beginning, if for some reason or other — for example, lack of sleep, lack of rest or an absorbing preoccupation or all sorts of things which tire you, that is to say, when you are not above them — if the vital envelope is a little damaged, it does not function perfectly and any current of force whatever which passes through is enough to produce an accident. In the final analysis, the accident comes always from that, it is what one may call inattentiveness or a slackening of consciousness. There are days when one feels quite... not exactly uneasy, but as though one were trying to catch something which escapes, one can't hold together, one is as though half-diluted; these are the days of accidents. You must be attentive. Naturally, this is not to tell you to shut yourself up in your room and not to stir out when you feel like that ! This is not what I mean. Rather I mean that you must watch all the more

attentively, be all the more on your guard, not allow, precisely, this inattentiveness, this slackening of consciousness to come in.

> *Are there not accidents which are almost inevitable ? I just read of a case cited by an American who had the gift of clairvoyance. A child was playing on a railway track, it was in danger. Suddenly the witness saw an apparition beside the child and he breathed a sigh of relief, thinking, "The child will be saved." But to his great astonishment the apparition put its hand over the eyes of the child and threw it in some way under the train. This man was much troubled, he could not understand why a being whom he had taken for a higher being would push a child to its death.*

Certainly this may be true, but without having the vision oneself, one can't explain it.

It may be a question of two absolutely different things. Perhaps, indeed, it was its destiny, in the sense that it was the end of the life necessary for its psychic being, it was a death which had been predestined for some reason, because that can happen. Or perhaps it could be an adverse force which he took to be an angel of light, for generally people make this mistake — when they see an apparition they always think it is something heavenly. It is heavenly if you like, but it depends on what heaven it comes from !

It is a strange thing because.... Yes, the moment of unconsciousness, the slackening of consciousness may be translated by this someone putting the hand over the eyes.

One of the most common activities of these intolerable little entities which are in the human physical atmosphere and amuse themselves at men's expense, is to blind you to such an extent that when you look for something, and the thing is staring you in the face, you do not see it ! This happens very often. You search in vain, you turn everything over, you look into all pos-

sible corners, but you don't find the thing. Then you give up the problem and some time later (precisely when "the hand over the eyes" is removed), you come back to the same place and it is exactly there where you have looked, quietly lying there, it had not stirred ! Only you were unconscious, you did not see. This is a very, very frequent amusement of these little entities. They also take pleasure in removing things, then they put them back, but at times they also don't put them back ! They displace them, indeed they have all sorts of little diversions. They are intolerable. Madame Blavatsky made much use of them, but I don't know how she managed to make them so amiable, because generally they are quite unpleasant.

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

The other story is of the days Sri Aurobindo had the habit of walking up and down in his rooms. He used to walk for several hours like that, it was his way of meditating. Only, he wanted to know the time, so a clock had been put in each room to enable him to see the time at any moment. There were three such clocks. One was in the room where I worked; it was, so to say, his starting-point. One day he came and asked, "What time

is it ?" He looked and the clock had stopped. He went into the next room, saying, "I shall see the time there" — the clock had stopped. And it had stopped at the same minute as the other, you understand, with the difference of a few seconds. He went to the third room... the clock had stopped. He continued walking three times like that — all the clocks had stopped ! Then he returned to my room and said, "But this is impossible ! This is a bad joke !" and all the clocks, one after the other, started working again. I saw it myself, you know, it was a charming incident. He was angry, he said, "This is a bad joke !" And all the clocks started going again !

It is said that the material world in its unconsciousness has forgotten the Divine. Has it forgotten Him from the beginning ?

It is concomitant. One cannot say that the material world is the result of obscurity and ignorance; one cannot say either that the obscurity and ignorance are the result of the world of Matter; but the two are concomitant, in the sense that both have exactly the same cause. What we call the material world came into being at the same time as the obscurity and ignorance, they are closely bound, but there is no cause and effect in the sense of a sequence in time. It is concomitant, both the things are the concomitant result of another cause: what has brought about obscurity and ignorance has at one go and at one time brought about the material world as we know it.

"Everything here is followed by the supermind; the mind movements and not less the vital, the material movements, all the play of the universe have for it a very deep interest, but of another kind. It is about the same difference as that between the interest taken in a puppet-play by one who holds the strings and knows what the puppets are to do and the will that moves them and knows that they can do only what it moves them to do, and the interest taken by another who observes the play but sees only what is happening from moment to moment and knows nothing else. The one who follows the play and is outside its secret has a stronger, an eager and passionate interest in what will happen and he gives an excited attention to its unforeseen or dramatic events; the other, who holds the strings and moves the show, is unmoved and tranquil. There is a certain intensity of interest which comes from ignorance and is bound up with illusion, and that must disappear when you are out of the ignorance. The interest that human beings take in things founds itself on the illusion; if that were removed, they would have no interest at all in the play; they would find it dry and dull. That is why all this ignorance, all this illusion has lasted so long; it is because men like it, because they cling to it and its peculiar kind of appeal that it endures."

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

How can interest be founded on illusion ?

So you think you are not in the illusion ? You imagine you are outside the illusion ? In the world as it is now, all is illusion.

It is perhaps an advantage, but you see only the surface of things, at most a very small part — you do not see the depth of things, you do not see the core of things, you do not see the cause of things. Do you know what is going to happen tomorrow ?... You may guess it more or less, telling yourself that it will be like today but you don't know it at all. You do not know what is going to happen tomorrow, still less in a month's time, yet less in a year. And do you know where you were before your birth ? And do you know what will happen to you after your death ?... You take interest in what you do just because you do not know what is going to happen. If you were fully in the know of what is going to happen, I am sure that 999 persons in a 1000 would sit down quietly waiting for it to happen. If you know exactly what is going to take place, all your enthusiasm would evaporate and in most cases you would say, "Have I to do all this to get there ? Ah ! no."

Then illusion is necessary ?

I do not say it is necessary, I say that it is evident, which is not quite the same thing. What is necessary is to change.

One of the great things, you see, is just to be able to do something with as much interest, as much intensity, as much energy, while knowing perfectly what the result will be and even if the result is the opposite of what you seem to expect. This is not easy, but still it is indispensable.

I don't see why it is indispensable.

I am saying that it is indispensable to reach the state in which one can do things, continue to act, while knowing perfectly what the result will be and even if this result is the opposite of what one hopes for. It is this condition of detachment which is indispensable — not being in illusion !

During the 1929 talk someone asked what should be done to effect the cure of an illness, whether one should exercise one's willpower or only live in the confidence that it will be done or rely entirely on the divine Power. Mother replied:

> *"All these are so many ways of doing the same thing....*
>
> *But whatever you ask for or whatever your effort, you must feel, even while trying your best, using knowledge or putting forth power that the result depends upon the Divine Grace."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (23 June)

But first you must will it, I believe that is quite important! There is no *one* method to follow.... I read this and at the same time ask myself how many people would be satisfied to hear this. All the materialism and positivism in the world have been constructed just because people do not want the divine Grace to come in at all. If they are cured they want to say, "It is *I* who cured myself", if they make a progress, they want to think, "It is I who have progressed", if they organise something, they want to proclaim, "It is I who am organising." And many, many of those who try to do otherwise, if they look within themselves, would see how seldom spontaneously, sincerely (not as when one says something because one knows it should be said, or as one thinks something because it is the fashion to think like that but spontaneously, sincerely, with all their heart) they *know* that it is not they who have done the thing, but the divine force. When they have made a progress, when they have changed something in themselves, when they have learnt something, then when is it that spontaneously, without an effort of will, without thinking, without needing to tell oneself, "One ought to think like this", spontaneously one *knows* that without the divine force nothing would have been done? Look into yourself, it is a very interesting thing, very interesting, how many times a day you

think (without even telling yourself), "I have done this", "I have been able to do that", "I succeeded in this", "I failed in that", and when you have made a good effort, when you have obtained a result, you need a little moment for thought, or more, to tell yourself, "If the divine force had not helped me, probably I would not have been able to do it." The spontaneous thing is, "Oh ! I have succeeded", isn't that true ? There is indeed a part of the mind which has been educated, which has learnt, has reflected, understood, which is well-disposed and truly feels that in reality it is like that, but this is only one part of the mind, and it is not always active, sometimes it must be called up, asked its advice, "What is then the best attitude to have ?", "What should I think ?" I believe all who have taken up yoga, if they are sincere, if they reflect for a moment, tell themselves, "I was not aware of it, but if I have succeeded, it was probably because the divine forces were there to help me, otherwise I would not have been able to succeed." This is well understood. But there comes a moment when one knows that one would not have been able to lift a finger if these forces had not been there. That comes later.... But to begin with, how many times, if one thinks, if one quite simply observes oneself, does one catch oneself saying, "It is *I* !" And, then, one congratulates oneself sometimes, one says, "After all I can do something, I am capable !" I am going further: how many people would be capable of doing anything at all if simply deprived of the pleasure of being able to tell themselves, "I have done this, I have realised that, I have made a progress, how well I played this game" ? How many people would be able to sincerely do something if this pleasure were taken away ? I have known individuals whose mind was much more developed than the rest of the being, they had understood very well (almost too well); they sat down to meditate and all their energy was gone, all vitality evaporated into a kind of peace, not unpleasant, but very still. There is no more need to do anything, no longer any need to move, one dreams.... Under a tree, arms crossed, one leaves the Divine to do every-

thing for oneself, including the feeding you if you need it. This is perhaps very well, but this shows that the instrument is not ready; it is not really at the service of the Divine, it is at the service of the ego, and when the ego is taken away, it does nothing any longer. Therefore, so long as one lives in the ego this illusion is necessary to make you act; it is necessary to keep up action until one is completely transformed or, in any case, till the true consciousness is established.

I have said this and I repeat it (*Mother takes up her book*):

> *"Whatever you do, whatever the process you use, and even if you happen to have acquired in it a great skill and power, you must leave the result in the hands of the Divine. Always you may try, but it is for the Divine to give you the fruit of your effort or not to give it. There your personal power stops; if the result comes, it is the Divine Power and not yours that brings it."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (23 June)

Well, it is this idea, which has been taught in almost all religions, that has made men atheistic, so much does it anger them — an anger of revolt: "What ! it is not I !"

And this "I", if you only knew how big it is ! how it occupies the whole place.... It is this which is the base of all materialism.

> *In silent meditation, should not one make oneself completely empty ? But, then, how can it depend on the one who meditates ?*

I think there is a confusion between silence in the mind and the complete emptiness in the being, they are two very different things. Besides, I don't see very well how one can make oneself completely empty — one would not exist any longer !

"To make yourself blank in meditation creates an inner silence; it does not mean that you have become nothing or have become a dead and inert mass. Making yourself an empty vessel, you invite that which shall fill it. It means that you release the stress of your inner consciousness towards realisation. The nature of the consciousness and the degree of its stress determine the forces that you bring into play and whether they shall help and fulfil or fail or even harm and hinder."

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

What does "the degree of its stress" mean ?

Aspiration and will produce a stress in the being. But I say "degree", for there is also the point upon which the stress works. I say "to make yourself blank" is to release the stress of your consciousness towards realisation, towards the goal you want to realise. The "stress" is the pressure upon a point, what is concentrated upon a point and insists that it be done. Consciousness — the consciousness of the being, individual consciousness — puts a pressure upon a point, you see. We may take the example we were just speaking of: you have a chronic illness, a malformation of the body, a physical defect. Then your consciousness, in its aspiration and will puts a more or less constant stress on the thing it wants to realise, what you want to cure. Well, when you make yourself empty within in meditation (this is one form of meditation if you like), this means that you stop this concentration of will: your consciousness becomes neutral for the moment. Its stress is upon this point (it may be on other points, on things more or less concrete or abstract, but the stress is on one point) and when you make yourself empty you withdraw this pressure, this stress, and you remain like a blank page upon which nothing is written. This is what I call "making yourself empty", not to have any active will concentrated upon one

point or another. And so I say the moment you make yourself empty, the stress in effect stops, and yet in your silent aspiration you put yourself in contact with the forces attracted by this stress you usually have, the special point of stress you have normally. That is why I have emphasised the fact that all depends upon the person, because everything depends upon his habitual aspiration, the thing he usually wants to realise, for he is naturally in touch with the forces which will answer his aspiration. So, if for a certain time one stops the activity of this aspiration and remains silently receptive, passive, well, the effect of the habitual aspiration remains and will draw just those forces which ought to answer it.

You have said that the world and the darkness were concomitant. What is the cause of this concomitance ?

The cause... is the light which has become the darkness and the consciousness which has become the inconscience ! How to speak about these things ? You may call this an accident if you like, if that satisfies your mind. It was perhaps, after all, the best thing that could have happened, one can't tell. All depends upon the point of view one takes. There must certainly be a consciousness in which this was foreseen, and if it has not been avoided, it means that it forms part of the programme !... It is a human way of looking at the problem, for things do not happen quite like that in those regions. One may also relate a story which could make a subject, a magnificent drama, but it would be only a story, a way of saying things.

A story is of value only to the extent it can help you to understand things. Ah ! here is an interesting subject.... A story, that is, a way of saying things, is of value only if it can make you understand the thing. A language (which is a kind of story) is of value only to the extent it is capable of putting you in contact with the Reality. Science is a language, Art is a language — all activity is a sort of language, that is, a way of ex-

pression. And the way of expression is of value only in as far as it puts you in contact with what it wants to express. It is a very interesting generalisation, for you can bring into it all the categories you want and you will see that it is true.

It is the same for everything. The way of approaching the universe and the universal truth is also a language and all depends upon the person who uses it, the person to whom the understanding is to be communicated. Whatever may be the way of telling, if you understand, that is all that is necessary. If you do not understand, even if it be the wonder of wonders, the truth of truths, it will have no value for you. This is an essentially pragmatic point of view of the universe; things have value only in so far as they realise that for which they have been made, and the most beautiful philosophies of the world are of no use to those who do not understand them. The most beautiful works of art in the world are quite useless to those whom they do not put on the path of the Truth. And the most perfect yoga in the world is useless to those whom it does not lead to the Realisation. And if you have this sense of relativity, you have finished with all dogmatism, all sectarianism, all that kind of absolutism which leads one always to think that all that has done us good is "the truth" — it is the truth for us, it is not necessarily the truth for our neighbour. And what our neighbour thinks is the truth for him, and when you say, "It is idiotic, it is quite useless", if it helps him to realise the truth, it is excellent, it is the best thing possible for him. And everything, everything on earth is like that. And if you do not want to be altogether narrow, to put on visors and not see farther than the tip of your nose, you must first of all understand this. You must understand that all things in the universe tend towards a goal and that it is to the extent they help to realise this goal that they have a value, and that this value is quite relative; and what is good for one may not be so for another, what is good at one moment may not be so at another and, consequently, every kind of dogmatism is an absurdity.

It is very easy to say, "That, that's true, now I know that it is true and I shall not think otherwise"; this is very easy, and in fact something has suddenly put you in touch with a light, you have had an experience, you have become conscious of yourself, conscious of something which transcends you and is the reality of your being, so for you it is perfect. But do not imagine that you must go from door to door, from city to city, country to country, telling people, "I proclaim the Truth", because what is true for you may not be at all good for another. What you have seen has its truth in itself — everything has its truth in itself — but the true *raison d'être* of this truth is that it has helped you to find yourself, to find the truth of your being, and it may quite possibly not help your neighbour, unless you have a considerable power of persuasion and oblige him to see things as you have seen them yourself, but this is not tremendously valuable.

When you have understood this, you will no longer say, "Why is there such a diversity in the world, why all this multiplicity, why all this confusion, why... ?" It is a confusion simply because you don't understand and things are not in their place. If things were in their place, there would be no confusion. And we come to this, that you cannot take away one atom from this world without dislocating the universe. All that is, was necessary — if it had not been necessary, it would not have been. The whole totality of things is indispensable for realising the Divine. If you took away one of these things, there would be a hole in the realisation. And I am not speaking only of material things, material points, I am speaking of all the depths. So when you say as many do, "Ah ! if that were not there in the world, how fine the world would be", you are displaying your ignorance.

I met in Japan one of the sons of Tolstoy; he was going round the world preaching human unity. He had caught this from his father and was going everywhere in the world preaching human unity. I met him at some friends' place and asked him, "How are you going to realise this human unity ?" Do you

know what reply he gave me ? "Oh ! it is very simple — if everybody spoke the same language, if everybody dressed in the same way, if everybody lived in the same fashion, the whole world would be united !" Then I told him, "That would be a poor world not worth living in." He did not understand me !

7 April 1951

Mother reads a question put to her in 1929 by an English disciple:

> *"If the Divine that is all love is the source of the creation, whence have come all the evils that abound upon earth ?"*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (30 June)

Whence come the evils ?... Who is going to answer me ? A philosophic answer, a scientific answer, a psychological answer and a poetic answer !

> *They come from the same source as ignorance and obscurity.*

A mystic answer, a religious answer. Oh ! you have no imagination !

> *In order that the work on earth may be done perfectly, the evil forces are sent.*

Evil is sent so that one may perfect oneself ? What you say is quite defensible, but this would have terribly shocked the lady who asked me the question, she would have said, "How could God have done that, He who is all love ?... the creation was not well done !"

Someone told me after having read *Genesis*, "God took seven days to do all that, then He said that it was good ! He has a strange opinion !"

> *At a certain time, the great Teresa had to face many calamities. She complained to God, saying, "Why do these things happen to me, who am full of goodwill ?"*

> *Then, it seems, God replied, "It is thus that I treat my friends. It is for this reason that we have so little !"*

Now we touch the source of the difficulty. I don't know if you have understood it, but there is a central fault in the question of that lady, she makes God or the Divine a personality quite independent of his creation. She should have said, "Someone who, having the power of creation, has created a world like this, truly, he must be sadistic", and she would have been right, wouldn't she ?... The question is badly put, because the Divine spoken about here is not the true Divine, it is the Divine of religion — and of a certain kind of religion — but it is not the Divine as He is at all.

> *"All is from the Divine; but the One Consciousness, the Supreme has not created the world directly out of itself; a Power has gone out from it and has descended through many gradations of its workings and passed through many agents. There are many creators or rather 'formateurs', form-makers, who have presided over the creation of the world. They are intermediary agents and I prefer to call them 'formateurs' and not 'creators'; for what they have done is to give the form and turn and nature to matter. There have been many, and some have formed things harmonious and benignant and some have shaped things mischievous and evil. And some too have been distorters rather than builders, for they have interfered and spoiled what was begun well by others."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (30 June)

I would not reply in this way now, it is an altogether "administrative" answer ! It is thus that governments always reply; they say, "It is not I who am responsible, it is my agents." That's not nice, it is better to take the responsibility upon oneself.

Mother continues her reading which begins with a question from the same listener:

> *"Is not this material world of ours very low down in the scale in the system of worlds that form the creation ?"*
>
> *"Ours is the most material world, but it is not necessarily 'low down', at least, not for that reason; if it is low down, it is because it is obscure and ignorant, not because it is material. It is a mistake to make 'matter' a synonym for obscurity and ignorance. And the material world too is not the only world in which we live: it is rather one of many in which we exist simultaneously, and in one way the most important of them all. For this world of matter is the point of concentration of all the worlds; it is the field of concretisation of all the worlds; it is the place where all the worlds will have to manifest. At present it is disharmonious and obscure; but that is only an accident, a false start. One day it will become beautiful, rhythmic, full of light; for that is the consummation for which it was made."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (30 June)

This lady had definitely an altogether Chaldean idea of God, who from nothing made a world (which is badly made, I admit it; if it has been made like that, it was truly badly made) and yet a God who looks at it and says, "I made it on purpose," which crowns the horror of this lady !

Why is there so much misery in the world ? Come along, I ask you for a scientific, a philosophic, a mystical, a religious, a poetic answer....

> *In order to put in a little variety, otherwise it would be too monotonous.*

This is not a poetic answer — you must use many images and symbols for that ! You are like the person who said that if one were not unhappy, one could not be happy, because one would not know what it is to be happy ! As others say, "If there were no shadow, there would be no light. One would not know what light is if all were light"... and so on. So you say that without unhappiness there would be no variety in the world ? It is a rather lugubrious variety, isn't it ?

If everyone were happy the world would be happy.

If everybody entered a beatific state the world would be beatific; as a reason, it is very good. But it is a cure, it is not a cause. You are asked here what *the cause* is. Whence comes the unhappiness if it is not from God — who is, of course, all beneficent and who would never do such a horrible thing !

The world does not exist, it is an illusion of our false consciousness.

Ah ! try telling this to someone who is suffering from liver colic, for instance !

The world has been made, somebody said, to teach the poor to suffer and the rich to give.

That is what I was saying, isn't it (*laughing*), that if there were no misery upon earth what would become of philanthropy ?... If we explore all the fields like this, we shall end up perhaps by understanding that all was necessary, otherwise the world would not have been. This is perhaps one conclusion. No, it is not a conclusion, for it would justify the indefinite perpetuation of what is.

Why is there imperfection, if the world is as it ought to be ?

No one has said that, if so there would be nothing else to do but sit down and not move any more !

We have already granted that the world is not what it ought to be and that we are here to work so that it may become what it ought to be. But to know this one must first know what it ought to be, isn't that so ? That is the problem. What should the world be ?

X: *It ought to be aware of the divine consciousness.*

Y: *No suffering in the world.*

When one makes a construction, one doesn't begin by saying, "I don't want this, I don't want that", else you will never make your construction. You must say what it ought to be, not what it ought not to be. To begin with, what it ought not to be we know already: that is what it is ! We don't need to go very far — such as it is, we don't want it. So, what should it be ?

A garden where one plays an eternal game with the Divine.

This sounds very fine, it is very good — "God is a child playing," Sri Aurobindo has said.[1] It seems this has shocked many people. When we translated this into French and sent it to Europe, there were people who were shocked and said, "Well, He plays at our expense !"

The world ought to be full of love and light.

What light ? What love ?

The divine light.

[1] "What is God, after all ? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden."

Thoughts and Glimpses, Cent. Vol. 16, p. 381

When you say "divine light", what do you understand by it ?

The world ought to be receptive.

Receptive to what ?

It ought to be a constant expression of the divine Will from which it has separated.

So, it is the world which has separated from the Divine. We come to that: the world is miserable because it has separated from the Divine. Here is an answer which is neither philosophic nor poetic nor... We shall call it a practical expression. And how has it managed to separate itself from the Divine, since it *is* the Divine ?... Now it becomes very complicated. We say, don't we, that the world is divine and that it is unhappy because it has separated from the Divine. How has it separated ?

By its ignorance.

Good heavens ! from where then does the ignorance come ? Ignorance of what ? Ignorance of itself ?

Ignorance of its origin.

Yes, that means ignorance of itself ! This is why everyone is told: "Know thyself" — it ought to be that !

Is it the world which is ignorant or is it we ?

Ah ! then I must ask you, "What do you call the world ?" Is it the earth or the universe ?

The universe.

Then, the whole universe is not ignorant — there are parts of the universe which are not ignorant. When you say "we" you identify yourself with the universe or with mankind ? Because this is a very important question. We say the world is unhappy because it has forgotten its origin, that is, its divine origin. You say, child, that we are unhappy because "we" are ignorant — the "we" is men. Consequently, unhappiness has come into the world with men — here is something serious ! That is, with man mind has come upon earth, you see, for man is a mental animal, and with the mind has come misery. The mind is capable of objectifying, and so it finds that such and such a thing is miserable — without the mind there would be no such discovery and no unhappiness. So, there is no unhappiness for animals nor for plants, and yet less for stones. Are we agreed on this: there is no unhappiness for animals, plants and stones ? We say unhappiness has come with the mind which has become conscious of it. Mark that I am trying to lead you to something which is not so stupid, for in the ancient Teaching it was said, "Change your consciousness and what appears to you unfortunate will not so appear to you any longer." The Buddha taught that if you are free from desire, things that seemed to you unfortunate would no longer seem to you unfortunate at all. Therefore, we come to this: it is the thought you have about it which makes you consider this or that thing unfortunate. If you thought an event happy, it would become happy for you; and that is what it is, in fact. In most cases when the thought has accepted that a thing *ought* to be, for whatever reason, it is no longer unhappy; when the thought has not accepted this, it finds this unhappy. So, as long as you are in the field of emotions, of sentiments and thoughts, all this is true. That is, the notion of "unhappiness" has entered the world with the capacity to consider that things were unfortunate. You follow the logic ? Thus, plants do not suffer because they do not know that they suffer and animals do not suffer because they do not know that they suffer. You are sure of it ? Aren't you ?

One sees an expression of pain in their eyes.

It is said you see in others what you have in yourself !

Descartes relates that a lady was beating her dog and saying, "It does not suffer, it has no soul, this is a reflex." Descartes maintains that men alone can feel !

I have always been told that he was an intelligent man !

If unhappiness entered the world with thought, happiness also entered, didn't it ?

Ah ! here is logic ! When there is unhappiness there is happiness... without unhappiness, no happiness. How difficult philosophy is !... Has your Mr. Descartes told us from where the soul of man has come ?

He says it is a creation of God.

The rest of the world is not a creation of God ?

Yes, that also.

Then, suddenly, he bethought himself that it was necessary to put in his creation something that he calls "a soul" and he chose this animal, man, to put it in. Then it becomes very difficult to get out of it.... But we were trying to find out what the world *ought* to be. It is this we must find, for the minute we know what it ought to be, we must start working on this.

It must be open to the Force which wants to manifest.

The misfortune is that it is precisely open to certain forces and manifests them. It is the quality of the Force which matters.

The world as it is manifests forces, it does not exist without a manifestation of forces; but what forces does it manifest ? For the moment it seems to manifest the forces of obscurity, ignorance, disharmony, suffering and all the rest.

It must have discernment.

You mean it should choose the force which is necessary ? Yes, but this is not the transformation of the world, this is for us. It is we who must have discernment to know which force we want to manifest, that's understood. But to come back to our subject, you all agree that in the world we are going to build, there should not be any suffering ? You agree ?... You are not quite sure of it ?... Then you are satisfied with suffering ? I don't know, perhaps it has its purpose. But, you see, as long as one is satisfied with a thing, there are many chances that it stays. We have been told in the more or less sacred scriptures that suffering comes from ignorance; hence if you do not think of getting rid of suffering, it means that you want to keep the ignorance also ? That becomes very difficult. It is like the artist to whom someone spoke of the future world which would be made all of light, and he said, "Then I won't be able to paint any longer" and he was miserable ! Perhaps, indeed, there are many people who cling to their ignorance ?...

It is suffering which makes us conscious of a higher force.

That is true, in many cases it is like that and that is the apparent justification of suffering. If human beings did not suffer, perhaps they would never make any progress. Aspiration is quite lukewarm when one is perfectly satisfied.

Now then, here we are quite muddled up ! Well, this is an exact example of the way the human mind functions; and after that there are people who have caught the tail of something

and are so satisfied with this tail, they say, "I have the truth, and you ought to believe what I tell you, otherwise you will never get out of it." The fact is that in the state of your thought at that moment, anyone at all could come to tell you "I have the truth", and you would be happy to catch on to it to come out of your confusion.... Let's see, we have two minutes, and during those two minutes we won't speak, and all our confusion will disappear. Then we shall disperse. So, do not talk, try to be as silent as possible for two minutes.

(*A meditation follows*)

9 April 1951

Mother reads a passage about art and yoga (*Questions and Answers 1929*, 28 July), then asks:

What is the relation between art and yoga ? Can the artist and the yogi have the same source of inspiration ? (*Mother turns to a disciple:*) Amrita, will you tell us what relation there is between art and yoga ?

> *A beautiful relation.... Art can be a yoga and yoga is an art.*

That's very fine ! I knew someone, an American lady, who said that spirituality was supreme good taste, the best possible good taste. This is quite similar.

> *What do serpents signify in books and in dreams ?*

That depends on the books ! That depends on the dreams ! If you give me an example from a dream I shall tell you what the nature of your serpent was, but just like that, "serpents" is too vague.

> *Why is modern art so ugly ?*

I believe the chief reason is that people have become more and more lazy and do not want to work. They want to produce something before having worked, they want to know before having studied and they want to make a name before having done anything good. So, this is the open door for all sorts of things, as we see.... Naturally, there are exceptions.

I have known artists who were great artists, who had worked hard and produced remarkable things, classical, that is, not ultra-

modern. But they were not in fashion because, precisely, one had not to be classical. When a brush was put in the hands of an individual who had never touched a brush, and when a brush was put on a palette of colours and the man had never touched a palette before, then if this individual had in front of him a bit of canvas on an easel and he had never done a picture before, naturally he daubed anything at all; he took the colours and threw them in a haphazard way; then everybody cried out "admirable", "marvellous", "it is the expression of your soul", "how well this reveals the truth of things", etc. ! This was the fashion and people who knew nothing were very successful. The poor men who had worked, who knew their art well, were not asked for their pictures any longer; people said, "Oh ! this is old-fashioned, you will never find customers for such things." But, after all, they were hungry, you see, they had to pay their rent and buy their colours and all the rest, and that is costly. Then what could they do ? When they had received rebuffs from the picture-dealers who all told them the same thing, "But try to be modern, my friend; look here, you are behind the times", as they were very hungry, what could they do ?... I knew a painter, a disciple of Gustav Moreau; he was truly a very fine artist, he knew his work quite well, and then... he was starving, he did not know how to make both ends meet and he used to lament. One day, a friend intending to help him, sent a picture-dealer to see him. When the merchant entered his studio, this poor man told himself, "At last ! here's my chance", and he showed him all the best work he had done. The art-dealer made a face, looked around, turned over things and began rummaging in all the corners; and suddenly he found... Ah ! I must explain this to you, you are not familiar with these things: a painter, after his day's work has at times some mixed colours left on his palette; he cannot keep them, they dry up in a day; so he always has with him some pieces of canvas which are not well prepared and which he daubs with what are called "the scrapings of palettes" (with supple knives he scrapes all the co-

lours from the palette and applies them on the canvases) and as there are many mixed colours, this makes unexpected designs. There was in a corner a canvas like that on which he used to put his palette-scrapings. The merchant suddenly falls upon that and exclaims, "Here you are ! my friend, you are a genius, this is a miracle, it is this you should show ! Look at this richness of tones, this variety of forms, and what an imagination !" And this poor man who was starving said shyly, "But sir, these are my palette-scrapings !" And the art-dealer caught hold of him: "Silly fool, this is not to be told !" Then he said, "Give me this, I undertake to sell it. Give me as many of these as you like; ten, twenty, thirty a month, I shall sell them all for you and I shall make you famous." Then, as I told you, his stomach was protesting; he was not happy, but he said, "All right, take it, I shall see." Then the landlord comes to demand his rent; the colour-man comes demanding payment of the old bill; the purse is quite empty, and what is to be done ? So though he did not make pictures with palette-scrapings, he did something which gave the imagination free play, where the forms were not too precise, the colours were all mixed and brilliant, and one could not know overmuch what one was seeing; and as people did not know very much what they saw, those who understood nothing about it exclaimed, "How beautiful it is !" And he supplied this to his art-dealer. He never made a name for himself with his real painting, which was truly very fine (it was really very fine, he was a very good painter), but he won a world reputation with these horrors ! And this was just at the beginning of modern painting, this goes back to the Universal Exhibition of 1900; if I were to tell you his name, you would all recognise it.... Now, of course, they have gone far beyond, they have done much better. However, he had the sense of harmony and beauty and his colours were beautiful. But at present, as soon as there is the least beauty, it won't do at all, it has to be outrageously ugly, then that, that is modern !

The story began with... the man who used to do still-life and

whose plates were never round.... Cézanne ! It was he who began it; he said that if plates were painted round that would not be living; that when one looks at things spontaneously, never does one see plates round: one sees them like this (*gesture*). I don't know why, but he said that it is only the mind that makes us see plates as round, because one knows they are round, otherwise one does not see them round. It is he who began.... He painted a still-life which was truly a very beautiful thing, note that; a very beautiful thing, with an impression of colour and form truly surprising (I could show you reproductions one day, I must be having them, but they are not colour reproductions unfortunately; the beauty is really in the colour). But, of course, his plate was not round. He had friends who told him just this, "But after all, why don't you make your plate round ?" He replied, "My dear fellow, you are altogether mental, you are not an artist, it is because you think that you make your plates round: if you only see, you will do it like this" (*gesture*). It is in accordance with the impression that the plate ought to be painted; it gives you an impact, you translate the impact, and it is this which is truly artistic. It is like this that modern art began. And note that he was right. His plates were not round, but he was right in principle.

What has made art what it is, do you want me to tell you this, psychologically ?... it is photography. Photographers did not know their job and gave you hideous things, frightfully ugly, it was mechanical, it had no soul, it had no art, it was horrible. All the first attempts of photography until... not very long ago, were like that. It is about fifty years ago that it became tolerable, and now with gradual improvement it has become something good; but it must be said that the process is absolutely different. In those days, when your portrait was taken, you sat in a comfortable chair, you had to sit leaning nicely and facing an enormous thing with a black cloth, which opened like this towards you. And the man ordered, "Don't move ! Steady !" That, of course, was the end of the old painting. When the painter

made something life-like, a life-like portrait, his friends said, "Why now, this is photography !"

It must be said that the art of the end of the last century, the art of the Second Empire, was bad. It was an age of businessmen, above all an age of bankers, financiers, and taste, upon my word, had gone very low. I don't believe that businessmen are people necessarily very competent in art, but when they wanted their portrait, they wanted a likeness ! One could not leave out the least detail, it was quite comic: "But you know I have a little wrinkle there, don't forget to put it in !" and the lady who said, "You know, you must make my shoulders quite round", and so on. So the artists made portraits which indeed turned into photography. They were flat, cold, without soul and without vision. I can name a number of artists of that period, it was truly a shame for art. This lasted till about the end of the last century, till about 1875. Afterwards, there started the reaction. Then there was an entire very beautiful period (I don't say this because I myself was painting) but all the artists I then knew were truly artists, they were serious and did admirable things which have remained admirable. It was the period of the impressionists; it was the period of Manet, it was a beautiful period, they did beautiful things. But people tire of beautiful things as they tire of bad ones. So there were those who wanted to found the "Salon d'Automne". They wanted to surpass the others, go more towards the new, towards the truly anti-photographic. And my goodness, they went a little beyond the limit (according to my taste). They began to depreciate Rembrandt — Rembrandt was a dauber, Titian was a dauber, all the great painters of the Italian Renaissance were daubers. You were not to pronounce the name of Raphael, it was a shame. And all the great period of the Italian Renaissance was "not worth very much"; even the works of Leonardo da Vinci; "You know, you must take them and leave them." Then they went a little further; they wanted something entirely new, they became extravagant. And then, from there, there was only one more step to

take for the palette-scrapings and then it was finished.

This is the history of art as I knew it.

Now, to tell you the truth, we are climbing up the curve again. Truly, I think we had gone down to the depths of incoherence, absurdity, nastiness — of the taste for the sordid and ugly, the dirty, the outrageous. We had gone, I believe, to the very bottom.

Are we really going up again?

I think so. Recently I saw some pictures which truly showed something other than ugliness and indecency. It is not yet art, it is very far from being beautiful, but there are signs that we are going up again. You will see, fifty years hence we shall perhaps have beautiful things to see. I felt this some days ago, that truly we had come to the end of the descending curve — we are still very low down, but are beginning to climb up. There is a kind of anguish and there is still a complete lack of understanding of what beauty can and should be, but one finds an aspiration towards something which will not be sordidly material. For a time art had wanted to wallow in the mire, to be what they called "realistic". They had chosen as "real" what was most repulsive in the world, most ugly: all deformities, all filth, all ugliness, all the horrors, all the incoherences of colour and form; well, I believe this is behind us now. I had this feeling very strongly these last few days (not through seeing pictures, for we do not have a chance to see much here, but by "sensing the atmosphere"). And even in the reproductions we are shown, there is some aspiration towards something which would be a little higher. It will need about fifty years; then... Unless there is another war, another catastrophe; because certainly, to a large extent, what is responsible for this taste for the sordid are the wars and the horrors of war. People were compelled to put aside all refined sensibility, the love of harmony, the need for beauty, to be able to undergo all that; otherwise, I believe, they would

really have died of horror. It was so unspeakably foul that it could not be tolerated, so it perverted men's taste everywhere and when the war was over (admitting that it ever ended), they wanted only one thing, to forget, forget, forget. To seek distraction, not to think of all the horror they had suffered. Now there, one goes very low. The whole vital atmosphere is completely vitiated and the physical atmosphere is terribly obscure.

Hence, if we can escape another world war... Because war is there, it has never stopped. It has been there from almost the beginning of this century; it began with China, Turkey, Tripolitania, Morocco — you are following? — the Balkans, it has never stopped, it has become worse, but each time it has become a world war, it has assumed altogether sordid proportions. All you my children, you have been born after the war (I am speaking of the First [World] War), so you do not know much about this, and then you have been born here, in a country which has been truly privileged. But the children born in Europe, latterly, these little ones, who were children of the war, carry something in them which will be very difficult to efface, a kind of horror, a fright. One could not have been mixed up with that without knowing what horror is. The first war was perhaps worse than the second. The second was so atrocious that all was lost.... But the first, oh! I don't know.... The last months I spent in Paris were truly fantastic. And it can't be told. The life in the trenches, for example, is something that cannot be told. The new generations do not know.... But, you see, the children born now will not even know if this was true, all these horrors which are related to them. What happened in the conquered countries, in Czechoslovakia, in Poland, in France — the frightful things, unbelievable, unthinkable, which took place — unless one has been very close by, has seen, one cannot believe it. It was... I was saying the other day that the vital world is a world of horrors; well, all the horrors of the vital world had descended upon earth, and upon earth they are still more horrible than in the vital world, because in the vital world, if you have an inner

power, if you have the knowledge, if you have strength, you act upon them — you act, you can subdue them, you can show yourself stronger. But all your knowledge, all your power, all your strength is nothing in this material world when you are subjected to the horrors of a war. And this acts in the terrestrial atmosphere in such a way that it is very, very difficult to efface it.

Naturally, men are always very anxious to forget. There are already those who have begun to say, "Are you quite sure it was like that?" But those who have gone through that, do not want it to be forgotten; so the places of torture, massacre — hideous places which go beyond all the worst the human imagination can conceive — some of these places have been preserved. You can go and visit the torture-chambers the Germans built in Paris, and they will never be destroyed, I hope, so that those who come and say, "Oh! you know, these things have been exaggerated" (for one does not like to know that such frightful things have happened), could be taken by the hand and told, "Come and see, if you are not afraid."

This forms character. If it is taken in the right way (and I think there are people who have taken it in the right way), this may lead you straight to yoga, straight. That is, one feels such a deep detachment for all things in the world, such a great need to find something else, an imperious need to find something which is truly beautiful, truly fresh, truly good... then, quite naturally, this brings you to a spiritual aspiration. And these horrors have, as it were, divided men: there was a minority which was ready and rose very high, there was a majority which was not ready and went down very low. These wallow in the mud at present, and hence, for the moment, one does not get out of it; and if this continues, we shall go towards another war and this time it will truly be the end of this civilisation — I don't say the end of the world, because nothing can be the end of the world, but the end of this civilisation, that is to say, another will have to be built. You will perhaps tell me that this would

be very well, for this civilisation is in its decline, it is on the way to perish; but after all, there are very beautiful things in it, worthy of being preserved, and it would be a great pity if all this disappeared. But if there is another war, I can tell you that all this will disappear. For men are very intelligent creatures and they have found the means of destroying everything, and they will make use of this, for what's the good of spending billions to find certain bombs, if one might not use them ? What is the use of discovering that one can destroy a city in a few minutes, if it is not for destroying it ! One wants to see the fruit of one's efforts. If there is war, this is what will happen.

There we are, I am telling you things which are not very cheerful, but it is sometimes good to put a little ballast in the head to make one think.

12 April 1951

What is the difference between Japanese art and the art of other countries, like those of Europe, for example?

The art of Japan is a kind of directly mental expression in physical life. The Japanese use the vital world very little. Their art is extremely mentalised; their life is extremely mentalised. It expresses in detail quite precise mental formations. Only, in the physical, they have spontaneously the sense of beauty. For example, a thing one sees very rarely in Europe but constantly, daily in Japan: very simple people, men of the working class or even peasants go for rest or enjoyment to a place where they can see a beautiful landscape. This gives them a much greater joy than going to play cards or indulging in all sorts of distractions as they do in the countries of Europe. They are seen in groups at times, going on the roads or sometimes taking a train or a tram up to a certain point, then walking to a place from where one gets a beautiful view. Then at this place there is a small house which fits very well into the landscape, there is a kind of small platform on which one can sit: one takes a cup of tea and at the same time sees the landscape. For them, this is the supreme enjoyment; they know nothing more pleasant. One can understand this among artists, educated people, quite learned people, but I am speaking of people of the most ordinary class, poor people who like this better than resting or relaxing at home. This is for them the greatest joy.

And in that country, for each season there are known sites. For instance, in autumn leaves become red; they have large numbers of maple-trees (the leaves of the maple turn into all the shades of the most vivid red in autumn, it is absolutely marvellous), so they arrange a place near a temple, for instance, on the top of a hill, and the entire hill is covered with maples.

There is a stairway which climbs straight up, almost like a ladder, from the base to the top, and it is so steep that one cannot see what is at the top, one gets the feeling of a ladder rising to the skies — a stone stairway, very well made, rising steeply and seeming to lose itself in the sky — clouds pass, and both the sides of the hill are covered with maples, and these maples have the most magnificent colours you could ever imagine. Well, an artist who goes there will experience an emotion of absolutely exceptional, marvellous beauty. But one sees very small children, families even, with a baby on the shoulder, going there in groups. In autumn they will go there. In springtime they will go elsewhere.

There is a garden quite close to Tokyo where irises are grown, a garden with very tiny rivulets, and along the rivulets, irises — irises of all possible colours — and it is arranged according to colour, organised in such a way that on entering one is dazzled, there is a blaze of colour from all these flowers standing upright; and there are heaps and heaps of them, as far as the eye can reach. At another time, just at the beginning of spring (it is a slightly early spring there), there are the first cherry-trees. These cherry-trees never give fruit, they are grown only for the flowers. They range from white to pink, to a rather vivid pink. There are long avenues all bordered with cherry-trees, all pink; they are huge trees which have turned all pink. There are entire mountains covered with these cherry-trees, and on the little rivulets bridges have been built which too are all red: you see these bridges of red lacquer among all these pink flowers and, below, a great river flowing and a mountain which seems to scale the sky, and they go to this place in springtime.... For each season there are flowers and for each flower there are gardens.

And people travel by train as easily as one goes from house to house; they have a small packet like this which they carry; in it they have a change of clothes, that's quite enough for them; they wear on the feet rope or fibre sandals; when these get worn

out they throw them away and take others, for it costs nothing at all. All their life is like that. They have paper handkerchiefs, when they have used them they get rid of them, and so on — they don't burden themselves with anything. When they go by train, at the stations small meals are sold in boxes (it is quite clean, quite neat), small meals in boxes of white wood with little chop-sticks for eating; then, as all this has no value, when one has finished, one puts them aside, doesn't bother about them or encumber oneself. They live like that. When they have a garden or a park, they plant trees, and they plant them just at the place where when the tree has grown it will create a landscape, will fit into a landscape. And as they want the tree to have a particular shape, they trim it, cut it, they manage to give it all the shapes they want. You have trees with fantastic forms; they have cut off the unnecessary branches, fostered others, contrived things as they liked. Then you come to a place and you see a house which seems to be altogether a part of the landscape; it has exactly the right colour, it is made of the right materials; it is not like a blow in your face, as are all those European buildings which spoil the whole landscape. It is just there where it should be, hidden under the trees; then you see a creeper and suddenly a wonderful tree: it is there at the right place, it has the right form. I had everything to learn in Japan. For four years, from an artistic point of view, I lived from wonder to wonder.

And in the cities, a city like Tokyo, for example, which is the biggest city in the world, bigger than London, and which extends far, far (now the houses are modernised, the whole centre of the city is very unpleasant, but when I was there, it was still good), in the outlying parts of the city, those which are not business quarters, every house has at the most two storeys and a garden — there is always a garden, there are always one or two trees which are quite lovely. And then, if you go for a walk... it is very difficult to find your way in Tokyo; there are no straight streets with houses on either side according to

the number, and you lose your way easily. Then you go wandering around — always one wanders at random in that country — you go wandering and all of a sudden you turn the corner of a street and come to a kind of paradise: there are magnificent trees, a temple as beautiful as everything else, you see nothing of the city any longer, no more traffic, no tramways; a corner, a corner of trees with magnificent colours, and it is beautiful, beautiful like everything else. You do not know how you have reached there, you seem to have come by luck. And then you turn, you seek your way, you wander off again and go elsewhere. And some days later you want to come back to this very place, but it is impossible, it is as though it had disappeared. And this is so frequent, this is so true that such stories are often told in Japan. Their literature is full of fairy-lore. They tell you a story in which the hero comes suddenly to an enchanted place: he sees fairies, he sees marvellous beings, he spends exquisite hours among flowers, music; all is splendid. The next day he is obliged to leave; it is the law of the place, he goes away. He tries to come back, but never does. He can no longer find the place: it was there, it has disappeared !... And everything in this city, in this country, from beginning to end, gives you the impression of impermanence, of the unexpected, the exceptional. You always come to things you did not expect; you want to find them again and they are lost — they have made something else which is equally charming. From the artistic point of view, the point of view of beauty, I don't think there is a country as beautiful as that.

Now, I ought to say, to complete my picture, that the four years I was there I found a dearth of spirituality as entire as could be. These people have a wonderful morality, live according to quite strict moral rules, they have a mental construction even in the least detail of life: one must eat in a certain way and not another, one must bow in a certain way and not another, one must say certain words but not all; when addressing certain people one must express oneself in a certain way; when

speaking with others, one must express oneself in another. If you go to buy something in a shop, you must say a particular sentence; if you don't say it, you are not served: they look at you quizzically and do not move ! But if you say the word, they wait upon you with full attention and bring, if necessary, a cushion for you to sit upon and a cup of tea to drink. And everything is like that. However, not once do you have the feeling that you are in contact with something other than a marvellously organised mental-physical domain. And what energy they have ! their whole vital being is turned into energy. They have an extraordinary endurance but no direct aspiration: one must obey the rule, one is obliged. If one does not submit oneself to rules there, one may live as Europeans do, who are considered barbarians and looked upon altogether as intruders, but if you want to live a Japanese life among the Japanese you must do as they do, otherwise you make them so unhappy that you can't even have any relation with them. In their house you must live in a particular way, when you meet them you must greet them in a particular way.... I think I have already told you the story of that Japanese who was an intimate friend of ours, and whom I helped to come into contact with his soul — and who ran away. He was in the countryside with us and I had put him in touch with his psychic being; he had the experience, a revelation, the contact, the dazzling inner contact. And the next morning, he was no longer there, he had taken flight ! Later, when I saw him again in town after the holidays, I asked him, "But what happened to you, why did you go away ?" — "Oh ! you understand, I discovered my soul and saw that my soul was more powerful than my faith in the country and the Mikado; I would have had to obey my soul and I would no longer have been a faithful subject of my emperor. I had to go away." There you are ! All this is authentically true.

Why are great artists born at the same time in the same country ?

That depends on the person to whom you put the question. The explanation will be different accordingly. From the point of view of evolution, I think Sri Aurobindo has explained this very clearly in *The Human Cycle.* Evolution, that is to say, culture and civilisation, describes a more or less regular spiral movement around the earth, and the results of one civilisation, it may be said, slowly go to form another; then, when the total development is harmonious, this creates simultaneously the field of action and the actors, in the sense that at the time of the great artistic periods all the conditions were favourable to the development of art, and naturally, the fact that all the circumstances were favourable, attracted the men who could use them. There have been concrete movements like that, great ages like that of the Italian Renaissance or the similar period in France, almost at the same time, when artists from all countries were gathered at the same place because the conditions were favourable to the development of their art. This is one of the reasons — a so-to-say external reason — for the formation of civilisations.

There is another, this is that from an occult point of view it is almost always the same forces and same beings which incarnate during all the ages of artistic beauty upon earth and that, according to occultists, there are cycles of rebirth: beings return, group themselves through affinity at the time of birth; so it happens that regularly, almost all come together for a similar action. Some occultists have studied this question and given very precise numbers based upon the actual facts of the development of the earth: they have said that once in a hundred years, once in a thousand years, once in five thousand years, etc., certain cycles were repeated; that certain great civilisations appeared every five thousand years, and that it was (according to their special knowledge) the same people who came back. This is not quite exact, that is why I am not going into details, but in a sense this is true: it is the same forces which are at work. It is the same forces and they are grouped according to their affinities and, for a reason which may be quite

material or for a mental or cyclic reason, they reunite at a certain place, and in this place there is a new civilisation or a special progress in a civilisation or a kind of effervescence, blossoming, flowering of beauty, as in the great ages in Greece, Egypt, India, Italy, Spain.... Everywhere, in all the countries of the world, there have been more or less beautiful periods.

If you put the question to astrologers, they will explain this to you by the position of the stars; they will say that certain positions of the stars have a certain effect on the earth. But, as I have told you, all these things are "languages", a way of expression, of making oneself understood; the truth is deeper, it is more complex, more complete.

Is the average Indian more advanced spiritually than the average man in other countries, like those of Europe, for instance?

There is an essential difference, but generally if he has not been contaminated by European materialism, when someone speaks to him about spiritual things, he has an opening, he understands. In the countries of the West, if you are in touch with the average man and speak to him of spiritual things, he is absolutely closed up and, into the bargain, if you speak to him of a possibility of relation with higher states of consciousness, he looks at you as though you were mad! If someone renounces the ordinary life to live an ascetic life, they think he is out of his senses!

There is a small minority among those who have kept the religious traditions, which understands, but understands only under the religious form. That is to say, if someone enters a monastry, they understand him more or less. But for the average man (I am not speaking of cultured people), if someone wants to lead a spiritual life independent of all religion, simply setting out in the personal quest of a higher truth, then surely he is ready to be put in a lunatic asylum! It would be better not to speak of it. There are those who have read a little, who are

educated, who may think you a little eccentric, but still they understand what it means; but the ordinary man, no. I am speaking of fifty years ago, of course; now, after the Second [World] War, I don't know, I can't say if this has begun to change. But evidently, the educated classes of Europe are now in search of something higher because their life has been so tragic that they need to lean upon something else; and perhaps their effort is contagious, in a sense, and there are more people than one thinks who are seeking — it is possible. But fifty years ago it was not like that. While here, ordinary people, people of the "lower" classes don't perhaps have any discernment, perhaps they cannot distinguish between the imposter and the sincere man, but it is understood that if somebody comes along in the yellow robe and with the beggar's bowl, he will be given something, he won't be kicked out. If a man did that in Europe (naturally there is no question of the yellow robe), but if he came in sordid clothes, he would be immediately taken to the first police station and arrested for indigence. It is understood that in the so-called civilised countries, if you don't have the minimum money in your pocket, you are a vagabond, and the vagabond has no right to be on the streets, he is put into prison for vagabondage. That is the difference.

Do certain arts express more truth than others ?

This is more or less a mental gymnastic !

There are people who say that certain arts are physical. If you frequent artists, painters, they will tell you that sculpture, oh ! it is laborious, because sculptors work with the very matter, and painting may be considered not much of an intellectual art by a musician. The truth is that in all arts everything depends upon the artist, and what he does depends upon the state of consciousness in which he is. A sculptor may be an extremely spiritual man and his production extremely spiritual also, if he knows how to express his experience. And a poet can be

quite a commonplace materialist if he does not receive his inspiration from a higher state. It is the mind which makes little categories, this is more convenient for it, but that does not resemble the truth very much.

> *You have said that Wagner had an intuition of the occult and that to have spiritual power one must conquer sexuality. In fact, Wagner had the intuition of this victory to be achieved, for in "The Ring of the Nibelungen" there is a treasure hidden at the bottom of a river. Three nymphs guard the treasure and to take it one must renounce all desire for love and woman.*

This is an old tradition in Nordic countries. But in his story it ends badly: the one who had to renounce the love of woman is drowned and it ends with the twilight of the gods.

14 April 1951

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

"Is not surrender the same as sacrifice ?"

Questions and Answers 1929 (4 August)

Who is going to answer ? What is the difference ?

Surrender comes spontaneously.

I congratulate those whose surrender is spontaneous ! It is not so easy. No, that is not the difference.

Sacrifice diminishes the being.

That is true, but why ? One thing is so, so simple — it is the very meaning of the word. To sacrifice means to give up something to which one clings. To sacrifice one's life is to give up one's life to which one clings; otherwise it would not be a sacrifice, it would be a gift. If you use the word "sacrifice", it means it is something which makes you suffer when you give it up. The word "sacrifice" is used at random, that is understood, but I am speaking of the true sense. One can sacrifice only what one holds dear. If one does not cling to it, it is not a sacrifice, it is a gift with all the joy of the giving. Surrender has no value if it is painful, if it is a sacrifice. Surrender must be truly a joyous offering (I am using the word *soumission* in the sense of surrender, but it is not quite surrender — surrender is between *soumission* and *abandon*). One gives up something, surrenders oneself, but without sacrifice.

"In our Yoga there is no room for sacrifice. But

everything depends on the meaning you put in the word. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, a making sacred to the Divine. But in the significance that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is a deprivation, a self-immolation.... When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way."

Ibid.

Why does sacrifice have such a great value in religion ?

Many religions are founded upon the idea of sacrifice; for instance, all the Chaldean religions. The reforms of the Muslim religion also had a very strong tendency towards sacrifice. All the first adepts, the first faithful, paid with their life for changing their religion. In Persia, they were persecuted beyond all telling. There are even many writings in which the joys of sacrifice are praised highly — that is a Chaldean idea. But you should be on your guard; all depends upon the meaning given to the word. It is obvious that for him who sacrifices himself willingly, that is, who gives up his life voluntarily and with joy, it is no longer a sacrifice, by the very definition we have given to the word.

We also speak of the "sacrifice" of the Divine. But I have noticed that this is called "sacrifice" when one understands that if obliged to do it oneself it would be very difficult ! it would give you much pain, it would be very hard (*laughing*) so one speaks of sacrifice, but it is probable that for the Divine it was not painful and he did it willingly, with all the joy of self-giving.

I knew Abdul Baha very well, the successor of Baha Ullah, founder of the Bahai religion; Abdul Baha was his son. He was born in prison and lived in prison till he was forty, I believe. When he came out of prison his father was dead and he began

to preach his father's religion. He told me his story and what had happened in Persia at the beginning of the religion. And I remember him telling me with what intense joy, what a sense of the divine Presence, of the divine Force, these people went to the sacrifice — it can't be called "sacrifice", it was a very joyful gift of their life.... He always spoke to me of someone who was, it appears, a very great poet and who had been arrested as a heretic because he followed the Bahai religion. They wanted to take him away to kill him — or burn or hang or crucify him, I don't know what, the manner of death in vogue at the time — and, because he expressed his faith and said he would be happy to suffer anything for his faith and his God, people devised the plan of fixing small lighted candle-ends on his body, his arms, his shoulders. Naturally the candles melted with the hot wax all over, till the wick of the candle burnt the skin. It seems Abdul Baha was there when this man was tortured and as they came to the spot where he was to be killed, Abdul Baha went up to speak to him affectionately — and he was in an ecstasy of joy. Abdul Baha spoke to him of his sufferings; he replied, "Suffer! it is one of the most beautiful hours of my life...." This cannot be called a sacrifice, can it?

Generally, all those who have suffered tortures for their faith, that is, for their highest thought, their most sublime ideal, have always felt a kind of divine grace helping them and keeping them from suffering. Of course, outsiders call this a "sacrifice" (that is understandable, they have sacrificed their life), but one cannot use the word for what personally concerns them, because for them it was not a sacrifice, it was a joy. All depends on the inner attitude. Now, if for a single moment during the torture they had had the least idea, "Why am I being tortured?" they would have undergone unbearable suffering. A single passing thought suffices.

Almost all events — at least all the important circumstances of human life — may be looked at from two sides: from below or from above. If you see them from below, with the feel-

ings of the ordinary man, you are terrified by the amount of suffering of all those who have preached a new religion or wished to set an example to humanity — they have all suffered, that is, they have all been persecuted by men. Generally speaking, with a very few exceptions, men do not like what is superior to them, and when they meet someone who is far above them (I am saying, apart from some exceptions), that makes them furious. They suffer an almost insurmountable annoyance in meeting something so infinitely higher than what they are. They have only one idea, to destroy it, and in fact that is what they have done. Throughout human history it has been thus. Those who have come with special abilities, a special grace, and have tried to make men come out of their ordinary rut, have been more or less persecuted, martyred, burnt alive, put on the cross.... The situation now is apparently a little better because now slightly more plausible reasons than those of old are needed to burn men — the habit of doing so is no longer there — but the feelings are not very different. The human race, generally, has a sort of rancour against what surpasses it; it feels humiliated, and men do not like to be humiliated.

Sometimes, on waking up, one forgets everything, one forgets where one is. Why ?

It is because you have gone into the inconscient and lost all contact with the consciousness, and this takes a little time to be reestablished. Of course, it may happen that instead of going into the inconscient one goes into the superconscient, but this is not frequent. And the feeling is not the same because, instead of having this negative impression of not knowing who one is or where one is or what is what, one has a positive sensation of having risen into something other than one's ordinary life, of no longer being the same person. But when one has altogether lost contact with one's ordinary consciousness, generally it is that one has slept away and been for a long time in the inconscient.

Then the being is scattered, it is absorbed by this inconscient and all the pieces have to be put together again. Naturally, this is done much more quickly than at the beginning of existence, but the conscious elements have to be gathered up again and a cohesion re-formed to begin to know once more who one is.

Sometimes in dreams one goes into houses, streets, places one has never seen. What does this mean?

There may be many reasons for this. Perhaps it is an exteriorisation: one has come out of the body and gone for a stroll. They may be memories of former lives. Perhaps one has become identified with someone else's consciousness and has the memories of this other person. Perhaps it is a premonition (this is the rarest case, but it may happen): one sees ahead what one will see later.

The other day I spoke to you about those landscapes of Japan; well, almost all — the most beautiful, the most striking ones — I had seen in vision in France; and yet I had not seen any pictures or photographs of Japan, I knew nothing of Japan. And I had seen these landscapes without human beings, nothing but the landscape, quite pure, like that, and it had seemed to me they were visions of a world other than the physical; they seemed to me too beautiful for the physical world, too perfectly beautiful. Particularly I used to see very often those stairs rising straight up into the sky; in my vision there was the impression of climbing straight up, straight up, and as though one could go on climbing, climbing, climbing.... It had struck me, and the first time I saw this in Nature down there, I understood that I had already seen it in France before having known anything about Japan.

There are always many explanations possible and it is very difficult to explain for someone else. For oneself, if one has studied very carefully one's dreams and activities of the night, one can distinguish fine nuances. I was saying I thought I had a

vision of another world — I knew it was something which existed, but I could not imagine there was a country where it existed; this seemed to me impossible, so very beautiful it was. It was the active mind which interfered. But I knew that what I was seeing truly existed, and it was only when I saw these landscapes physically that I realised in fact that I had seen something which existed, but I had seen it with inner eyes (it was the subtle-physical) before seeing it physically. Everyone has certain very small indications, but for that one must be very, very methodical, very scrupulous, very careful in one's observation and not neglect the least signs, and above all not give favourable mental explanations to the experiences one has. For if one wants to explain to oneself (I don't even speak of explaining to others), if one wants to explain the experience to oneself advantageously, to draw satisfaction, one does not understand anything any more. That is, one may mix up the signs without even noticing that they are mixed up. For instance, when one sees somebody in a dream (I am not speaking of dreams in which you see somebody unknown, but of those where you see somebody you know, who comes to see you) there are all sorts of explanations possible. If it is someone living far away from you, in another country, perhaps that person has written a letter to you and the letter is on the way, so you see this person because he has put a formation of himself in his letter, a concentration; you see the person and the next morning you get the letter. This is a very frequent occurrence. If it is a person with a very strong thought-power, he may think of you from very far, from his own country and concentrate his thought, and this concentration takes the form of that person in your consciousness. Perhaps it is that this person is calling you intentionally; deliberately he comes to tell you something or give you a sign, if he is in danger, if he is sick. Suppose he has something important to tell you, he begins to concentrate (he knows how to do it, as everyone does not) and he enters your atmosphere, comes to tell you something special. Now if you are passive and attentive, you re-

ceive the message. And then, two more instances still: someone has exteriorised himself more or less materially in his sleep and has come to see you. And you become conscious of this person because (almost by miracle) you are in a corresponding state of consciousness. And finally, a last instance, this person may be dead and may come to see you after his death (one part of him or almost the whole of his being according to the relation you have with him). Consequently, for someone who is not very, very careful it is very difficult to distinguish these nuances, very difficult. On the other hand, quite often imaginative people will tell you, "Oh ! I saw this person — he is dead." I have heard that I don't know how many times. These are people whose imagination runs freely. It is possible that the person is dead, but not because he has appeared to you !... One must pay great attention to the outer forms things take. There are shades very difficult to distinguish, one must be very, very careful. For oneself, if one is in the habit of studying all this, one can become aware of the differences, but to interpret another's experiences is very difficult, unless he gives you in great detail all that surrounds the dream, the vision: the ideas he had before, the ideas he had later, the state of his health, the feelings he experienced when going to sleep, the activities of the preceding day, indeed, all sorts of things. People who tell you, "Oh ! I had this vision, explain it to me !", that is childishness — unless it is someone whom you have followed very carefully, whom you yourself have taught how to recognise the planes, and whose habits, whose reactions you know; otherwise it is impossible to explain, for there are innumerable explanations for one single thing.

There are some very remarkable instances of exteriorisation. I am going to tell you two incidents about cats which occurred quite a long time ago in France. One happened very long ago, long before the war even. We used to have small meetings every week — quite a small number of friends, three or four, who discussed philosophy, spiritual experiences, etc. There was a young boy, a poet, but one who was rather light-hearted; he was very

intelligent, he was a student in Paris. He used to come regularly to these meetings (they took place on Wednesday evenings) and one evening he did not come. We were surprised; we had met him a few days before and he had said he would come — he did not come. We waited quite a long time, the meeting was over and at the time of leaving I opened the door to let people out (it was at my house that these meetings were held), I opened the door and there before it sat a big dark grey cat which rushed into the room like mad and jumped upon me, like this, mewing desperately. I looked into its eyes and told myself, "Well, these are so-and-so's eyes" (the one who was to come). I said, "Surely something has happened to him." And the next day we learnt that he had been assassinated that night; the next morning he had been found lying strangled on his bed. This is the first story. The other happened long afterwards, at the time of the war — the First [World] War, not the Second — the war of the trenches. There was a young man I knew very well; he was a poet and artist (I have already spoken about him), who had gone to the war. He had enlisted, he was very young; he was an officer. He had given me his photograph (this boy was a student of Sanskrit and knew Sanskrit very well, he liked Buddhism very much; indeed he was much interested in things of the spirit, he was not an ordinary boy, far from it), he had given me his photograph on which there was a sentence in Sanskrit written in his own hand, very well written. I had framed this photograph and put it above a sort of secretaire (a rather high desk with drawers); well, above it I had hung this photograph. And at that time it was very difficult to receive news, one did not know very well what was happening. From time to time we used to receive letters from him, but for a long time there had been nothing, when, one day, I came into my room, and the moment I entered, without any apparent reason the photograph fell from the wall where it had been well fixed, and the glass broke with a great clatter. I felt a little anxious, I said, "There is something wrong." But we had no news. Two or three days later (it was

on the first floor; I lived in a house with one room upstairs, all the rest on the ground-floor, and there was a flight of steps leading to the garden) I opened the entrance door and a big grey cat rushed in — light grey, this time — a magnificent cat, and, just as the other one had done, it flung itself upon me, like this, mewing. I looked into its eyes — it had the eyes of... that boy. And this cat, it turned and turned around me and all the time tugged at my dress and miaowed. I wanted to put it out, but it would not go, it settled down there and did not want to move. The next day it was announced in the papers that this boy had been found dead between two trenches, dead for three days. That is, at the time he must have died his photograph had fallen. The consciousness had left the body completely: he was there abandoned, because they did not always go to see what was happening between the trenches; they could not, you understand; he was found two or three days later; at that time probably he had gone out altogether from his body and wanted definitely to inform me about what had happened and he had found that cat. For cats live in the vital being, they have a very developed vital consciousness and can easily be taken possession of by vital forces.

But these two examples are quite extraordinary, for they both came about almost in the same way, and in both instances the eyes of these cats had completely changed — they had become human eyes.

> *"The spiritual life reveals the one essence in all, but reveals too its infinite diversity; it works for diversity in oneness and for perfection in that diversity."*
>
> *Questions and Answers 1929* (4 August)

This is the very motive of the creation of the universe, that is to say, all are one, all is one in its origin, but each thing, each element, each being has as its mission the revealing of one part of this unity to itself, and it is this particularity which must be developed in everyone, while awakening at the same time the sense of the original unity. This is "to work for unity in diversity". And the perfection in that diversity lies in everyone's being perfectly what he ought to be.

> *You have said: "Men have the impression that their desires are born within; they feel as if they come out of themselves or arise in themselves; but it is a false impression. Desires are waves of the vast sea of the obscure lower nature and they pass from one person to another. Men do not generate desire in themselves, but are invaded by these waves; whoever is open and without defence is caught in them and tossed about."*
>
> *Ibid.*

> *Can the protective envelope also feel the waves of desire, the impulsions from others, etc. ?*

You mean whether the protective envelope of which I spoke from a physical point of view can serve also from a moral, a psychological point of view ? It is not the same envelope, it is another domain. A man may have this subtle-physical envelope quite intact and it may work marvellously to protect him from

all illnesses and accidents, and yet at the same time he may be full of desires, because desires belong to another sphere. Desire is not a physical thing, desire is something vital, and this envelope is more material than the vital: it cannot prevent the vital from entering into contact with the vital world and receiving from there all its impulsions. Naturally he who has mastered himself, who has found his psychic being, who lives constantly in the consciousness of this psychic being, who has established a perfect relation or at least a constant relation with the inner divine Presence is enveloped in an atmosphere of knowledge, light, beauty, purity, which is the best of all protections against desires, but all the same it is possible for desire to intrude if one is not always on one's guard, because we say that it comes from outside. One may have overcome a desire within oneself, and yet it may come from outside as a contagion: but through this envelope of light, knowledge and purity, the desire loses its force and instead of coming like a movement which evokes a blind and immediate response, one perceives what is happening, becomes aware of the force which wants to enter and one can quietly — when it is not wanted — make an inner movement and reject the incoming desire. This is the only true defence: a wakeful consciousness, pure and alert, so to say, which does not sleep, does not let things enter without being aware of them. The worst thing is that people are quite unconscious and that it is only after the contagion has entered that they notice it, and it is a little late to react — it is not impossible, but it is more difficult — while if one sees it coming, if in the surrounding atmosphere it comes making a kind of little black mark, one can chase it off as one would something disagreeable. But the protective envelope on the material plane has no effect in this instance.

This is indeed something very interesting.... I have seen that material things are arranged in such a way at present that one could reach a high degree of perfection of the physical instrument in any field whatever, no matter what may be the degree of inner or psychic development. This was what I thought yester-

day evening about the talkies. It is evidently a great progress in the cinematographic art and it can't be called in itself bad or good. It was that I had always seen only talkies of idiotic, vulgar, crude stories, indeed all the stupidities generally shown in cinemas, and this perfection of the instrument had made the crudity yet more crude, the stupidity yet more stupid, and this kind of impression of degradation yet more strong. But yesterday, when we saw that documentary with the beautiful birds singing.... Those who made this film have taken great pains, one can't imagine how much of effort and work it entails to film birds in their nests without disturbing them, then to record the sound accurately enough to be able to amplify it and make it perceptible to all. It is a very big work they have done there. And it is the same perfecting of the same instrument which permitted the production of the lovely thing we saw yesterday evening and that ignoble thing we saw sometime ago.... This makes us reflect deeply on material things.

Physical perfection does not at all prove, not the least in the world, that one has taken one step farther towards spirituality. Physical perfection means that the instrument the force will use — any force whatever — will be sufficiently perfected to be remarkably expressive. But the important point, the essential point is the force which will use the instrument, and it is there that the choice is necessary. If you perfect your body and make of it a remarkable instrument, you must not at all think that because of that you are nearer to the spiritual life. You prepare a remarkable instrument so that this spiritual life may manifest in it, if it manifests itself. But it is for you always to choose what will be manifested. There are people who perfect their body, who build a strong, solid, energetic, agile, capable body, and all this simply to be able to better affirm their ego and the strength of their ego. Others may prepare the body to be sure that when the spiritual light manifests, it will find an instrument capable of doing all that is asked of it. Whatever the work required, the instrument will be so perfected as to be able to do

it without difficulty, spontaneously, immediately.... This is to arouse your attention to the most important fact which is the choice of the force you will allow to manifest in your body. Perfect your body, make it a remarkable instrument, but never forget that there is a choice to be made and that this choice ought to be made constantly — one doesn't make it once for all, it must always be renewed. Because, before one reaches the total union, the total expression, there will always be this invasion of external things which will try to enter you and spoil all the work. So, the necessary, indispensable condition is a constant vigilance. Do not sleep with satisfaction under the pretext that you have once made your choice: "Oh ! now it is all right, everything is all right." In principle everything is all right; in the sincerity of your choice lies also the guarantee of its duration. But for the sincerity to be perfect and the choice unshakable, one must never sleep — I don't mean you must not sleep physically, I mean the consciousness must not sleep ! And this is an introduction to what I shall read to you next time, a letter Sri Aurobindo wrote quite a long time ago; if I remember rightly, it was in 1928, October 1928. You see, things do not change very quickly.

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

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

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

The law of each being is different, yes, otherwise how would a distinction be made ? — from top to bottom, the nature, appearance, actions, all would be the same. If there were only one law, there would be only one law and every one would repeat

the same thing. There would be no need at all to manifest a universe because it would be one single law. The very characteristic of the universe is an infinite multiplicity of laws which altogether, in their totality, reproduce the One. And it is this which is particularly marvellous in the physical world (in man and in the physical world, for it is proper to the terrestrial being), that it can be one of the innumerable elements which in their totality reproduce the One, and yet at the same time have a personal relation with the One — that is to say, contain in itself the consciousness of the One and the relation with the One, and at the same time be an element of the whole. But if the fact of becoming conscious of the One and identifying oneself with it stopped one from being particular, one would cease existing as a personality. This is precisely what the Buddhists and the disciples of Shankara try to realise; they wish to abolish totally their personality, their individuality, abolish the truth of their being, the special law of their being. This is what they consider as a fusion with the Divine. But this is the negation of this creation. And as I was saying, the miracle of this creation, as far as the terrestrial individuality goes, is that we may achieve this union, this complete identification with the Supreme, the One, and at the same time keep the consciousness of our diversity, of the particular law we have to express. It is more difficult but infinitely more complete, and it is the very truth of this universe. The universe has not been made for anything else but that, to unite these two poles, the two extremes of consciousness. And when they are united, one understands that these two extremes are exactly the same thing — a whole, at once one and innumerable.

But one feels very different from others!

Externally, this is evident.

It is ignorance.

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

You said that if there were a third world war, it would be the end of the present civilisation. Would the terrestrial condition be affected favourably by it or adversely ?

Listen. Would you ask whether a fatal illness is favourable to health or not ? It is exactly that. A civilisation, whatever it may be, is the result of very long efforts to become conscious of oneself, of Nature, and to master this Nature and draw the best possible advantage from it. We were saying a while ago that the training of the physical being consists in preparing an instrument so that the Divine may manifest Himself. A civilisation prepares an instrument so that the Divine may manifest in that instrument. The more slowly, carefully, minutely the civilisation is worked out, and succeeds in conquering the laws of Nature, the more favourable is the instrument to the manifestation of the Divine. That is why we also have this idea of the prolongation of life, it is to be able to perfect the instrument so as to manifest the divine Force which wants to manifest. Otherwise, it would evidently be much easier, as soon as the body became a

little ill or a little old or incapable of reacting as it did when young, to do what one does with an old torn dress — one throws it away and gets another. Unfortunately, it is not like that. All the fruit of the work, all the accumulated effort to become conscious is lost. If, for instance, this civilisation we have built, which in a way has so considerably mastered the forces of Nature, which has succeeded in understanding laws of an altogether unique order and has accumulated so many experiences of all kinds to reach self-understanding and self-expression, if all this disappeared, it would be necessary, naturally, to begin all over again. And then, for a new-born child, how many years of slow and insipid education are needed for its brain to be ready to express even a simple general idea, for its movements to be conscious instead of being absolutely unconscious, how many years ! For a civilisation, how many years would be necessary simply to get back all that is lost ? There have been many civilisations on the earth, there are scientists trying to rediscover what has been, but nobody can say with certitude exactly what was there: the major part of these civilisations is completely lost (I am speaking of civilisations preceding this one which for us is historical). Well, if thousands of years are yet needed to begin another, obviously.... In any case, for our external human consciousness, it is a loss of time. But we are told that the Work to be done, the promised Realisation is going to take place now. It is going to take place now because the framework of this civilisation seems to be favourable as a platform or a base for building up. But if this civilisation is destroyed, upon what are we going to build ? First a foundation platform must be made in order to be able to build. If five or ten thousand years are still needed to make this platform, this proves that it is not now that things will be done — they will be done, that is well understood, they will be done, but... How many lives have you all had ? What do you remember of your past lives ? What is the good of all the efforts you have made in your past lives to perfect yourselves, to try to understand yourselves, to master yourselves

a little, simply to make use of the instrument which has been given to you ? What remains to you of all that ? Will you tell me ? Who here can tell me that he is consciously profiting by the experiences of his past lives — unconsciously there is something which remains but not much — but consciously ?... No one will answer ?

No, precisely, one has the impression that after having lived so long, one is only beginning to know a very little.

Yes, exactly, it is just like that. This is because the farther one goes, the more does one realise that there is everything to understand and everything to learn. And consequently, if one has behind him some sixty years, it is nothing. One would like to have hundreds and hundreds of years before one to be able to do the work. It is like that, you are all little children, you see, so the years seem to you long, because you have not lived much; but you will see, the more one advances, the more does one realise that there is a long road in front, long, very long, and one would not like to have to begin all over again, for it is so much more time lost.

19 April 1951

> *"This yoga can only be done to the end by those who are in total earnest about it and ready to abolish their little human ego and its demands in order to find themselves in the Divine. It cannot be done in a spirit of levity or laxity; the work is too high and difficult, the adverse powers in the lower Nature too ready to take advantage of the least sanction or the smallest opening, the aspiration and tapasya needed too constant and intense. It cannot be done if there is a petulant self-assertion of the ideas of the human mind or wilful indulgence of the demands and instincts and pretensions of the lowest part of the being, commonly justified under the name of human nature."*
>
> Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1310

Everybody knows this; those who do not want to change their way of doing things or their way of being always say, "Oh ! what do you expect, it is human nature." This is what is called a "wilful indulgence". That is to say, instead of becoming conscious that these are weaknesses and difficulties on the way, one justifies these things, saying, "Oh ! it can't be helped, it is human nature." One wants to continue to do what one is doing, without changing, one is full of a wilful indulgence of one's demands. For the lower nature of man always demands things; it says, "These are necessities, these are needs, I can't do without them." Then, the instincts — a sort of instinct for one's own satisfaction — and pretensions: the lower being claims that it has a considerable importance and must be given what is necessary for it, otherwise it won't be able to live; it asserts that it alone is important, and so on. It is all this which creates obstacles, all these obscure, ignorant movements, all these justifications of the old ways of being: those who fly into a temper

and say, "What do you expect, it can't be helped", and everything one does saying, "Oh ! it is human nature", everything one justifies saying, "What can be done, people are like that, there is nothing to be done about it." It is the old idea that we are born with a particular nature and must get adjusted to it, for we cannot change it.

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

When the little ego is abolished, can't one "find oneself in the Divine" directly ?

But one can find oneself in the Divine even before having completely abolished one's little ego, for, to abolish one's little ego is not a little affair !

But how is it to be done ?

How is it to be done ? How to abolish the ego ? — First of all, you must want to do it, and there are very few people who want to. And that is exactly what they say, it is this justification of their way of being, "That is the way I am made, I can't do otherwise. And then, if I change this, if I change that or if I do without this thing or if I get rid of that other, I shall no longer exist !" And if one doesn't say this openly, one thinks it. And all these little desires, these little satisfactions, these little reactions, all these small ways of being, one clings to them, clings hard — one sticks to them, one doesn't want to let them go. I have seen hundreds of cases where someone's difficulty had been removed (with a particular power a certain difficulty had been removed), but after a few days he brought it back with enthusiasm. He said, "But without that I do not exist any longer !" I have known people who had been given mental silence almost

spontaneously and who, after a day or two, came back frightened: "Have I become an idiot ?" — for the mental machine was not working all the time.... You cannot imagine it, you don't know how very difficult it is to separate oneself from this little ego; how much it gets into the way though it is so small. It takes up so much room while being so microscopic. It is very difficult. One pushes it away in certain very obvious things; for example, if there is something good and someone rushes forward to make sure of having it first, even jostling his neighbour (this happens very frequently in ordinary life), then here one becomes quite aware that this is not very, very elegant, so one begins to suppress these crudities, one makes a big effort — and one becomes highly self-satisfied: "I am not selfish, I give what is good to others, I don't keep it for myself", and one begins to get puffed up. And so one is filled with a moral egoism which is much worse than physical egoism, for it is conscious of its superiority. And then there are those who have left everything, given up everything, who have left their families, distributed their belongings, gone into solitude, who live an ascetic life, and who are terribly conscious of their superiority, who look down at poor humanity from the height of their spiritual grandeur — and they have, these people, such a formidable ego that unless it is broken into small bits, never, never will they see the Divine. So it is not such an easy task. It takes a lot of time. And I must tell you that even when the work is done, it must always be begun again.

Physically, we depend upon food to live — unfortunately. For with food, we daily and constantly take in a formidable amount of inconscience, of *tamas*, heaviness, stupidity. One can't do otherwise — unless constantly, without a break, we remain completely aware and, as soon as an element is introduced into our body, we immediately work upon it to extract from it only the light and reject all that may darken our consciousness. This is the origin and rational explanation of the religious practice of consecrating one's food to God before taking it. When eat-

ing one aspires that this food may not be taken for the little human ego but as an offering to the divine consciousness within oneself. In all yogas, all religions, this is encouraged. This is the origin of that practice, of contacting the consciousness behind, precisely to diminish as much as possible the absorption of an inconscience which increases daily, constantly, without one's being aware of it.

Vitally, it is the same thing. You live vitally in the vital world with all the currents of vital force entering, going out, joining and opposing each other, quarrelling and intermingling in your consciousness, and even if you have made a personal effort to purify your vital consciousness, to master in it the desire-being and the little human ego, you are constantly under a sort of obligation to absorb all the contrary vibrations which come from those with whom you live. One can't shut oneself up in an ivory tower, it is yet more difficult vitally than physically, and one takes in all sorts of things; and unless one is constantly wide awake, constantly on one's guard, and has quite an efficient control over all that enters, so as not to admit in one's consciousness unwanted elements, one catches the constant contagion of all desires, all the lower movements, all the small obscure reactions, all the unwanted vibrations which come to us from those around us.

Mentally, it is still worse. The human mind is a public place open on all sides, and in this public place, things come, go, cross from all directions; and some settle there and these are not always the best. And there, to obtain control over that multitude is the most difficult of all controls. Try to control the thought coming into your mind, you will see. Simply, you will see to what a degree you have to be watchful, like a sentinel, with the eyes of the mind wide open, and then keep an extremely clear vision of the ideas which conform to your aspirations and those which do not. And you must police at every minute that public place where roads from all sides meet, so that all passers-by do not rush in. It is a big job. Then, don't forget that even if you

make sincere efforts, it is not in a day, not in a month, not in a year that you will reach the end of all these difficulties. When one begins, one must begin with an unshakable patience. One must say, "Even if it takes fifty years, even if it takes a hundred years, even if it takes several lives, what I want to accomplish, I shall accomplish."

Once you have decided upon this, once you are quite conscious that things are like that and that the goal is worth the trouble of a constant and sustained effort, you may begin. Otherwise, after a time you will fall flat; you will get discouraged, you will tell yourself, "Oh ! it is very difficult — I do it and then it is undone, I do it again and it is once again undone, and then I do it again and it is perpetually undone.... Then what ? When will I get there ?" One must have plenty of patience. The work may be undone a hundred times, you will do it again a hundred and one times; it may be undone a thousand times, you will re-do it a thousand and one times, until finally it is no longer undone. And finally it is no longer undone.

Only, you see, if one were made all of a piece, it would be very easy, but one is made of many pieces. Then, there is one piece which is ahead, which has worked hard, is very conscious, altogether awake, and when it is there, all goes well, one does not allow anything to enter, one is on one's guard, and then... one goes to sleep and the next day when one gets up it is another part which is there and one tells oneself, "But where then is all the work I had done ?..." And one must begin all over again. Begin all over again until all the parts, one after another, enter the field of consciousness and each one can be changed. And when you reach the end of your tether, there is a change, you have made progress — afterwards, you must make another, but still that one is made. But it is completely made only when all the pieces of the being are brought like that, one after another, to the front, and upon all without exception you have impressed the consciousness, the light, the will and the goal, in such a way that everything changes.

This is not to discourage you, but to warn you. I do not want you to say afterwards, "Oh ! if I had known it was so difficult, I would not have started." You must know that it is excessively difficult and begin with great firmness and continue to the end, even if the end is a very long way off — there are many things to do. Now, I may tell you that if you do it sincerely, with application and care, it is extremely interesting. Even those whose life is quite monotonous, without interest (there are, you know, poor people who have to do utterly uninteresting work and always the same thing, and always in the same conditions, and whose mind is not sufficiently awakened to be able to find an interest in anything whatever), even those people, if they begin to do this little work upon themselves, of control, of elimination, that is to say, if each element which comes with its ignorance, its unconsciousness, its egoism, is put before the will to change and one remains awake, compares, observes, studies and slowly acts, that becomes infinitely interesting, one makes marvellous and quite unexpected discoveries. One finds in oneself lots of small hidden folds, little things one had not seen at the beginning; one undertakes a sort of inner chase, goes hunting into small dark corners and tells oneself: "What, I was like that ! this was there in me, I am harbouring this little thing !" — sometimes so sordid, so mean, so nasty. And once it has been discovered, how wonderful ! one puts the light upon it and it disappears and you no longer have those reactions which made you so sad before, when you used to say, "Oh ! I shall never get there." For instance, you take a very simple resolution (apparently very simple): "I shall never tell a lie again." And suddenly, without your knowing why or how, the lie springs up all by itself and you notice it after you have uttered it: "But this is not correct — what I have just said; it was something else I meant to say." So you search, search.... "How did it happen ? How did I think like that and speak like that ? Who spoke in me, who pushed me ?..." You may give yourself quite a satisfactory explanation and say, "It came from outside" or "It was

a moment of unconsciousness", and not think any longer about it. And the next time, it begins again. Instead of that, you search: "What can be the motive of one who tells lies ?..." and you push — you push and all of a sudden you discover in a little corner something which wants to justify itself, thrust itself forward or assert its own way of seeing (no matter what, there are a number of reasons), show itself a little different from what it is so that people may have a good opinion of you and think you someone very remarkable.... It was that which spoke in you — not your active consciousness, but what was there and pushed the consciousness from behind. When you were not quite on your guard, it made use of your mouth, your tongue, and then there you were ! the lie came out. I am giving you this example — there are a million others. And it is extremely interesting. And to the extent one discovers this within oneself and says sincerely, "It must change", one finds that one acquires a sort of inner clear-sightedness, one gradually becomes aware of what goes on in others, and instead of flying into a temper when they are not quite what one would like them to be, one begins to understand how things happen, how it is that one is "like this", how reactions are produced.... Then, with the indulgence of knowledge, one smiles. One no longer judges severely, one offers the difficulty in oneself or in others, whatever may be its centre of manifestation, to the divine Consciousness, asking for its transformation.

On June 8, 1966, at the time of the publication of this talk, Mother spoke about the same question in terms of her present experience which forms the basis of the "yoga of the body".

Precisely this is what I have been doing for the last two days. The last two days I have spent all my time seeing all this accumulation, oh ! heaps of little sordid things which one lives constantly, very tiny sordid things. And so there is only one way

— there is only one way, always the same: to offer.

It is almost as though this Supreme Consciousness were putting you in touch with things long forgotten, which belong to the past, which even are or were or seemed to be completely effaced, with which you no longer have any contact, all sorts of little circumstances, which yet are seen in the new consciousness, in their true place, and make such a poor, miserable, mean, sordid whole of the entire life, the entire general human life. And so, it is a luminous joy of offering all this for transformation, for transfiguration.

Now it has become the very movement of the cellular consciousness. All weaknesses, all responses to adverse suggestions (I mean the smallest things of every minute in the cells), are taken in the same movement of offering (and these come sometimes in waves, to such an extent that the body feels it will swoon before this assault), and then comes a light, so warm, so deep, so powerful, which puts everything back in order, in its place, and opens the way to transformation.

These periods are very difficult periods of the bodily life; one feels that there is now only one thing which decides, the Supreme Will. There is no longer any support — any support, from the support of habit to the support of knowledge and of will, all the supports have vanished — there is only the Supreme.

(*Silence*)

Aspiration in the cellular consciousness for perfect sincerity of consecration.

And the lived experience — lived intensely — that it is only this absolute sincerity of consecration which allows existence.

The least pretension is an alliance with the forces of dissolution and of death.

Well, it is like a song of the cells — but they must not even have the insincerity of watching themselves do it — the song of the cells: "Thy Will, O Lord, Thy Will."

And the great habit of depending upon the will of others, the consciousness of others, the reactions of others (of others and of all things), this kind of universal comedy at which all play to all and everything plays to everything, ought to be replaced by an absolute, spontaneous sincerity of consecration.

It is evident that this perfection of sincerity is possible only in the most material part of the consciousness.

It is there that one can succeed in being, existing, doing, without watching oneself being, watching oneself existing, watching oneself doing, with an absolute sincerity.

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

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

Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1310

Is it the same thing, the same work, to be conscious that the nature must be changed and to master the different parts of the being ?

One precedes the other. First of all one must be conscious, then control, and by continuing the mastery one changes one's character. Changing the character is what comes last. One must control bad habits, the old habits, for a very long time for them to drop off and the character to change.

We may take the example of someone who has frequent depressions. When things are not exactly as he would like them to be, he becomes depressed. So, to begin with, he must become aware of his depression — not only of the depression but of the causes of depression, why he gets depressed so easily. Then, once he has become conscious, he must master the depressions, must stop being depressed even when the cause of depression is there — he must master his depression, stop it from coming. And finally, after this work has been done for a sufficiently long time, the nature loses the habit of having depressions and no longer reacts in the same way, the nature is changed.

What does being "spokesmen of the forces of the Ignorance" mean ?

The forces of the Ignorance in the present world always seek people who can express their ignorance in the world. This is not difficult ! There are many people ready to say ignorant things, that is, to deny all spiritual realisation, deny the capacity for progress, deny the possibility of realising another life than this existing one, deny that human nature can be changed, and so on; or if you like, ready to affirm that it is impossible to escape from illness, that it is impossible to escape death, impossible to understand; ready to assert that never will the Light and Knowledge be attained, and so on. Those who say these things are the spokesmen of the Ignorance. Instead of expressing the forces of Light and Knowledge they serve to express the forces of the Ignorance — is it clear ?

Sri Aurobindo says here, "...The aspiration and tapasya needed [are] too constant..."[1]

Yes, one cannot do the yoga if one does not take it seriously. For one must be very serious to have a constant aspiration and do tapasya. If one is not serious, for five minutes one has an aspiration and for ten hours one hasn't; for one day there is a great urge and for a month nothing, and so on. Well, one can't do yoga in these conditions. It must be a continuous, constant thing which does not flag. If one forgets or slackens, one cannot do yoga.

Should not one be born with a great aspiration ?

No, aspiration is a thing to be developed, educated, like all activities of the being. One may be born with a very slight aspiration and develop it so much that it becomes very great. One may be born with a very small will and develop it and make it strong. It is a ridiculous idea to believe that things come to you like that, through a sort of grace, that if you are not given aspiration, you don't have it — this is not true. It is precisely upon this that Sri Aurobindo has insisted in his letter and in the passage I am going to read to you in a minute. He says you must choose, and the choice is constantly put before you and constantly you must choose, and if you do not choose, well, you will not be able to advance. You must choose; there is no "force like that" which chooses for you, or chance or luck or fate — this is not true. Your will is free, it is deliberately left free and you have to choose. It is you who decide whether to seek the Light or not, whether to be the servitor of the Truth or not — it is you. Or whether to have an aspiration or not, it is you who choose. And even when you are told, "Make your surrender total and the work will be done for you", it is quite all right, but to make your surrender total, every day and at every mo-

[1] *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1310.

ment you must choose to make your surrender total, otherwise you will not do it, it will not get done by itself. It is you who must want to do it. When it is done, all goes well, when you have the Knowledge also, all goes well, and when you are identified with the Divine, all goes even better, but till then you must will, choose and decide. Don't go to sleep lazily, saying, "Oh ! the work will be done for me, I have nothing to do but let myself glide along with the stream." Besides, it is not true, the work is not done by itself, because if the least little thing thwarts your little will, it says, "No, not that !..." Then ?

What is "the lesser truth permissible on the way" ?

One cannot at the first shot, immediately, attain the supreme Truth. There are things on the way which are more true than those you know but which are not *the* Truth, and these things are like discoveries one makes: suddenly one has a kind of illumination, one discovers a law, finds a lever, sees a road opening before one; it is not the supreme Truth, not the supreme experience, it is not what comes when one is identified with the Divine, but it is like something which has fallen from there and entered you, and gives you a partial illumination. These partial illuminations are just what he calls "lesser truths".

What is the true meaning of "tapasya" ?

Tapasya is the discipline one imposes upon oneself to arrive at the discovery of the Divine.

Are tapasya and aspiration the same thing ?

No, you can't do tapasya without aspiration. Aspiration is first, the will to attain something. Tapasya is the process — there is indeed a process, a method.

Isn't the lower vital conscious of the work going on in it ?

Then, if it is logical and well-meaning, it ought to admit the presence of the Divine. You understand, it is a vicious circle; it does not want the Divine to be there and it denies Him because it is much troubled that there is this discipline which will oblige it to change, to master itself, check its desires, bow its head instead of always protesting, so it says violently, "There is no Divine." But it may very well know, at the same time, that the work has begun and, consequently, have the proof that the Divine is there. But it will deny Him all the same, it is ill-willed, it uses this argument wilfully to avoid making an effort.

What is the difference between the "old habits" and the "old formations" Sri Aurobindo speaks about ?

It is almost the same thing. Your body, for instance, has certain reactions to cold, heat, hunger, and you are in the habit of having these reactions, and this habit has made a kind of formation in your physical nature, that is, a crease, a fixed crease of the body, and that's how it is. Formations are the result of habits. Similarly, there are "formations" of character; for instance, if you are in the habit of getting angry when things do not please you, the habit makes a sort of inner crease in your nature, and every time a thing doesn't please you, automatically, without any control, you will get angry. This is what is called a "formation", they are habits which have become like a part of your character.

If one is too serious in yoga, doesn't one become obsessed by the difficulty of the task ?

There is a limit to be kept !... But if one chooses one's obsession well, it may be very useful because it is no longer quite

an obsession. For example, one has decided to find the Divine within oneself, and constantly, in every circumstance, whatever happens or whatever one may do, one concentrates in order to enter into contact with the inner Divine. Naturally, first one must have that little thing Sri Aurobindo speaks about, that "lesser truth" which consists in knowing that there is a Divine within one (this is a very good example of the "lesser truth") and once one is sure of it and has the aspiration to find it, if that aspiration becomes constant and the effort to realise it becomes constant, in the eyes of others it looks like an obsession, but this kind of obsession is not bad. It becomes bad only if one loses one's balance. But it must be made quite clear that those who lose their balance with that obsession are only those who were quite ready to lose their balance; any circumstance whatever would have produced the same result and made them lose their balance — it is a defect in the mental structure, it is not the fault of the obsession. And naturally, he who changes a desire into an obsession would be sure to go straight towards imbalance. That is why I say it is important to know the object of the obsession.

Someone has said that he who is capable of pushing his fixed idea to the point of madness will see the light.

If you concentrate on any idea with sufficient obstinacy, you will "go through", as the occultists say, and behind the idea upon which you concentrate, you will find the light. But this is a bit risky.

This means that he who is capable of this kind of concentration will see the light.

Surely. That, surely. If one is capable of this kind of concentration, it is very good, but one must know upon what to concentrate. That is the important point.

How can one know whether the surrender is total or not ?

This does not seem to me difficult. One may try out a little exercise. One may say, "Let me see, I surrender to the Divine, I want Him to decide everything in my life." This is your starting point. A little exercise: the Divine is going to decide that such and such a thing happens, precisely something in contradiction with your feeling. Then one tells oneself, "Well, and if the Divine tells me 'you are going to give that up' " — you will see quite easily, immediately, what the reaction is; if it causes a little prick like this, inside, you may tell yourself, "The surrender is not perfect" — it pricks, it pricks....

"On one side there is the supramental realisation, the overshadowing and descending power of the supramental Divine, the light and force of a far greater Truth than any yet realised on the earth, something therefore beyond what the little human mind and its logic regard as the only permanent realities, something whose nature and way and process of development here it cannot conceive or perceive by its own inadequate instruments or judge by its puerile standards; in spite of all opposition this is pressing down for manifestation in the physical consciousness and the material life. On the other side is this lower vital nature with all its pretentious arrogance, ignorance, obscurity, dullness or incompetent turbulence, standing for its own prolongation, standing against the descent, refusing to believe in any real reality or real possibility of a supramental or superhuman consciousness and creation, or, still more absurd, demanding, if it exists at all, that it should conform to its own little standards, seizing greedily upon everything that seems to disprove it, denying the presence of the Divine, — for it knows

that without that presence the work is impossible, — affirming loudly its own thoughts, judgments, desires, instincts, and, if these are contradicted, avenging itself by casting abroad doubt, denial, disparaging criticism, revolt and disorder. These are the two things now in presence between which every one will have to choose.

"For this opposition, this sterile obstruction and blockade against the descent of the divine Truth cannot last for ever. Every one must come down finally on one side or the other, on the side of the Truth or against it. The supramental realisation cannot coexist with the persistence of the lower Ignorance; it is incompatible with continued satisfaction in a double nature."

Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, pp. 1310-11

If the lower nature is completely ignorant, how can it "choose" ?

It is not absolutely ignorant. Things are not so absolute; it can feel there is something lacking. All depends upon that. Naturally, those who are quite satisfied with themselves as they are — it is not worth the trouble trying to change them, because they don't want it. But in fact, even in the lower nature, it is possible to have a kind of feeling that things could be better. For example, take someone whose health is bad or who is weak, who has desires but is too weak to fulfil them, who has ambitions but no capacity; such a person will perhaps tell himself, "Oh ! if I were better than I am, if I knew a little more, if I were a little stronger, if I understood a little what ought to be done..." Or suppose, for instance, in ordinary life, someone who needs to earn his living and must choose a situation, and the situation offered is not very congenial to him; he is caught in this dilemma: not to have anything to eat or to accept this unpleasant situation: he finds himself facing this problem and says,

"What should I do ?" He does not know, does not understand; but even in his stupidity he will have a sort of impression that it would be better if he could see a little more clearly, could know a little better, could have some elements of foresight. Then this awakens a slight aspiration for progress — it is the beginning of a choice. Someone has said that if there were no ticks to bite the dogs, they would always be in a state of inertia, stretched out on the ground, motionless. Now, these trouble them, they begin to scratch, they move, and this awakens them a little from their tamas. For men, it is the same thing. When they have a small desire which they cannot satisfy, they are a little shaken up: they come out of their inertia and try to find a solution to their problem. It is like that. There is no absolute unconsciousness — there is no absolute ignorance, no absolute night. Behind all unconsciousness, behind all ignorance, behind the night, there is always the supreme Light which is everywhere. The least little thing suffices for a beginning of contact to be established.

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

It refers to all the Teachers who have come to the world. One has said, "I bring Love", another "I bring Peace", another "I bring Liberation", and then, there has been a little change within, something has awakened in the depths of men's consciousness, but externally everything has remained just the same. It is this which makes it a fiasco.

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

[1] *Letters on Yoga*, p. 1306.

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

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

23 April 1951

Mother reads Sri Aurobindo's "The Divine Superman" (Cent. Vol. 17, p. 74).

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

In the last analysis, it is always the same summit — the divine oneness which is behind all things — but everyone will reach his own summit, that is, through his own nature and own way of manifesting the divine unity. This is what we were saying the other day: each one represents a special way of having a relation with the Divine and manifesting the Divine. You don't need to follow another's path! You must follow your own path and it is by this path that you will reach the summit, which is one, but found by your own route. The goal is beyond the summits — the goal is one and beyond the summits — but one may attain this summit each by his own road, climbing his own mountain, not the mountain of another.

> *"Imagine not the way is easy; the way is long, arduous, dangerous, difficult. At every step is an ambush, at every turn a pitfall. A thousand seen or unseen enemies will start up against thee, terrible in subtlety against thy ignorance, formidable in power against thy weakness. And when with pain thou hast destroyed them, other thousands will surge up to take their place."*
>
> Sri Aurobindo, "The Way", Cent. Vol. 17, p. 39

This is to give you courage, courage to act. You must be vigilant and must keep your will, whatever happens. If you put the

two things end to end, you have the complete thing.

How can one remain conscious in the midst of unconsciousness ?

One must be vigilant.

And when asleep ?

One can remain conscious in sleep, we have already explained that ! One must work.

Then one doesn't sleep !

Not at all, one sleeps much better, one has a quiet sleep instead of a restless one. Most people do so many things in their sleep that they wake up more tired than before. We have already spoken about this once. Naturally, if you keep yourself from sleeping, you won't sleep. I always tell those who complain of not being able to sleep, "Meditate then and you will end up by sleeping." It is better to fall asleep while concentrating than "like that", scattered and strewn without knowing even where one is.

To sleep well one must learn how to sleep.

If one is physically very tired, it is better not to go to sleep immediately, otherwise one falls into the inconscient. If one is very tired, one must stretch out on the bed, relax, loosen all the nerves one after another until one becomes like a rumpled cloth in one's bed, as though one had neither bones nor muscles. When one has done that, the same thing must be done in the mind. Relax, do not concentrate on any idea or try to solve a problem or ruminate on impressions, sensations or emotions you had during the day. All that must be allowed to drop off quietly: one gives oneself up, one is indeed like a rag. When you have succeeded in doing this, there is always a little flame, there —

that flame never goes out and you become conscious of it when you have managed this relaxation. And all of a sudden this little flame rises slowly into an aspiration for the divine life, the truth, the consciousness of the Divine, the union with the inner being, it goes higher and higher, it rises, rises, like that, very gently. Then everything gathers there, and if at that moment you fall asleep, you have the best sleep you could possibly have. I guarantee that if you do this carefully, you are sure to sleep, and also sure that instead of falling into a dark hole you will sleep in light, and when you get up in the morning you will be fresh, fit, content, happy and full of energy for the day.

When one is conscious in sleep, does the brain sleep or not ?

When does the brain ever sleep ? When does it sleep ? This is of all things the most difficult. If you succeed in making your brain sleep, it would be wonderful. How it runs on ! That is vagabondage. It is this I meant when I spoke of relaxation in the brain. If you do it really well, your brain enters a silent restfulness and that is wonderful; when you attain that, five minutes of that and you are quite fresh afterwards, you can solve a heap of problems.

If the brain is always working, why don't we remember what has happened during the night ?

Because you have not caught the consciousness at its work. And perhaps because if you remembered what was going on in your brain, you would be horrified ! It is really like a madhouse, all these ideas which clash, all dancing a saraband in the head ! it is as if one were throwing balls in all directions at once. So, if you saw that, you would be a bit troubled.

Sri Aurobindo writes here: "...Few and brief in their

visits are the Bright Ones who are willing or permitted to succour."[1] *Why ?*

One must go and ask them ! But there is a conclusion, the last sentences give a very clear explanation. It is said: "Nay, then, is immortality a plaything to be given lightly to a child, or the divine life a prize without effort or the crown for a weakling ?"[2] This comes back to the question why the adverse forces have the right to interfere, to harass you. But this is precisely the test necessary for your sincerity. If the way were very easy, everybody would start on the way, and if one could reach the goal without any obstacle and without any effort, everybody would reach the goal, and when one has come to the end, the situation would be the same as when one started, there would be no change. That is, the new world would be exactly what the old has been. It is truly not worth the trouble ! Evidently a process of elimination is necessary so that only what is capable of manifesting the new life remains. This is the reason and there is no other, this is the best of reasons. And, you see, it is a tempering, it is the ordeal of fire, only that which can stand it remains absolutely pure; when everything has burnt down, there remains only the little ingot of pure gold. And it is like that. What puts things out very much in all this is the religious idea of fault, sin, redemption. But there is no arbitrary decision ! On the contrary, for each one it is the best and most favourable conditions which are given. We were saying the other day that it is only his friends whom God treats with severity; you thought it was a joke, but it is true. It is only to those who are full of hope, who will pass through this purifying flame, that the conditions for attaining the maximum result are given. And the human mind is made in such a way that you may test this; when something extremely unpleasant happens to you, you may tell yourself, "Well, this proves I am worth the trouble of being given this difficulty, this proves there is something in me which can resist the difficulty",

[1] "The Way", Cent. Vol. 17, p. 40. [2] *Ibid.*

and you will notice that instead of tormenting yourself, you rejoice — you will be so happy and so strong that even the most unpleasant things will seem to you quite charming! This is a very easy experiment to make. Whatever the circumstance, if your mind is accustomed to look at it as something favourable, it will no longer be unpleasant for you. This is quite well known; as long as the mind refuses to accept a thing, struggles against it, tries to obstruct it, there are torments, difficulties, storms, inner struggles and all suffering. But the minute the mind says, "Good, this is what has to come, it is thus that it must happen", whatever happens, you are content. There are people who have acquired such control of their mind over their body that they feel nothing; I told you this the other day about certain mystics: if they think the suffering inflicted upon them is going to help them cross the stages in a moment and give them a sort of stepping-stone to attain the Realisation, the goal they have put before them, union with the Divine, they no longer feel the suffering at all. Their body is as it were galvanised by the mental conception. This has happened very often, it is a very common experience among those who truly have enthusiasm. And after all, if one must for some reason or other leave one's body and take a new one, is it not better to make of one's death something magnificent, joyful, enthusiastic, than to make it a disgusting defeat? Those who cling on, who try by every possible means to delay the end even by a minute or two, who give you an example of frightful anguish, show that they are not conscious of their soul.... After all, it is perhaps a means, isn't it? One can change this accident into a means; if one is conscious one can make a beautiful thing of it, a very beautiful thing, as of everything. And note, those who do not fear it, who are not anxious, who can die without any sordidness are those who never think about it, who are not haunted all the time by this "horror" facing them which they must escape and which they try to push as far away from them as they can. These, when the occasion comes, can lift their head, smile and say, "Here I am."

It is they who have the will to make the best possible use of their life, it is they who say, "I shall remain here as long as it is necessary, to the last second, and I shall not lose one moment to realise my goal"; these, when the necessity comes, put up the best show. Why ? — It is very simple, because they live in their ideal, the truth of their ideal; because that is the real thing for them, the very reason of their being, and in all things they can see this ideal, this reason of existence, and never do they come down into the sordidness of material life.

So, the conclusion:

One must never wish for death.

One must never will to die.

One must never be afraid to die.

And in all circumstances one must will to exceed oneself.

26 April 1951

> *"...Reject too the false and indolent expectation that the divine Power will do even the surrender for you. The Supreme demands your surrender to her, but does not impose it: you are free at every moment, till the irrevocable transformation comes, to deny and to reject the Divine or to recall your self-giving, if you are willing to suffer the spiritual consequence."*
>
> Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 4

What does an "irrevocable transformation" mean ?

The transformation is irrevocable when your consciousness is transformed in such a way that you can no longer go back to your old condition. There is a moment when the change is so complete that it is impossible to become once again what one was before.

Doesn't transformation itself imply that it is irrevocable ?

The transformation may be partial. The transformation Sri Aurobindo speaks about here is a reversal of consciousness: instead of being egoistical and turned towards personal satisfactions, the consciousness is turned towards the Divine in surrender. And he has explained clearly that the surrender could be partial at first — there are parts which surrender and parts which don't. So it is only when the entire being, integrally, in all its movements, has made its surrender, that it is irrevocable. It is an irrevocable transformation of attitude.

What is the difference between the divine Shakti and the divine Power ?

The divine Power is only a part of the divine Shakti; the divine Power is an attribute of the divine Shakti. Sri Aurobindo uses the word divine Shakti, here, in the sense of *chit-tapas*, the creative power, the creative consciousness; consequently, the divine Power is only a part of the Shakti.

> *"An inert passivity is constantly confused with the real surrender, but out of an inert passivity nothing true and powerful can come. It is the inert passivity of physical Nature that leaves it at the mercy of every obscure or undivine influence. A glad and strong and helpful submission is demanded to the working of the Divine Force...."*
>
> Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, pp. 4-5

What is "a glad and strong and helpful submission" ?

Do you know what it means to be happy ? Do you know what it means to be strong ? Do you know what it means to be helpful ? Well, the surrender, that is, the self-giving to the Divine, must be happy, joyful, made gladly; it must be strong, one must not give oneself through weakness and impotence but with an active and strong will. And then the surrender must not remain absolutely indolent: "I have made my surrender, I have nothing more to do in life, I have only to remain still, my surrender is made." And it must be helpful, that is, it must be active — it must undertake the transformation of the being or do some useful work.

> *"Your surrender must be the surrender of a living being, not of an inert automaton or mechanical tool."*
>
> *Ibid.*, p. 4

You may speak, for instance, of the surrender of your watch:

you wind it up and it runs, but this is not a response of conscious collaboration.

> *"The transformation must be integral, and integral therefore the rejection of all that withstands it."*
>
> *Ibid.*

That is well understood. It is not enough to have a positive movement, there must also be the negative movement of rejection. For you cannot attain a stable transformation as long as you harbour in your being elements which oppose it. If you keep obscurities within you, they may for a time remain silent and immobile, so well that you attach no importance to them, and one day they will wake up again and your transformation won't be able to resist them. Not only is the positive movement of self-giving necessary but also the negative movement of rejection of everything in you that opposes this giving. You must not leave things "like that", buried somewhere, in such a way that at the first opportunity they wake up and undo all your work. There are parts of the being which know very well how to do this, there are elements of the vital which are extraordinary from this point of view: they keep quiet, hide in a corner, remain so absolutely silent and motionless that you think they don't exist; so you are no longer on your guard, you are satisfied with your transformation and your surrender, you think everything is going well, and then, suddenly, one fine day, without warning, the thing jumps up like a jack-in-the-box and makes you commit all the stupidities in the world. And it is the stronger for having remained repressed — repressed and closed tight in a corner — it has remained as though buried so as not to draw your attention, it has kept very, very quiet, and the moment you are not expecting it, it springs up and you tell yourself, "Oh ! what was the good of all my transformation ?" That thing was there, and so it happened. It is just like that, these things remain there and hide themselves so well, that if you do not go looking for

them with a well-lit lantern, you will not know they are there till the day they come out and demolish all your work in one minute.

Does this happen even if one has a great aspiration?

The aspiration must be very vigilant.

I have known people (many, not only a few, I mean among those who do yoga), I have known many who, every time they had a fine aspiration, and their aspiration was very strong and they received an answer to this aspiration, every time, the very same day or at the latest the next day, they had a complete set-back of consciousness and were facing the exact opposite of their aspiration. Such things happen almost constantly. Well, these people have developed only the positive side. They make a kind of discipline of aspiration, they ask for help, they try to come into contact with higher forces, they succeed in this, they have experiences; but they have completely neglected cleaning their room; it has remained as dirty as ever, and so, naturally, when the experience has gone, this dirt becomes still more repulsive than before.

One must never neglect to clean one's room, it is very important; inner cleanliness is at least as important as outer cleanliness.

Vivekananda has written (I don't know the original, I have only read the French translation): "One must every morning clean one's soul and one's body, but if you don't have time for both, it is better to clean the soul than clean the body."

How can one know whether the little dirty things have hidden themselves or have gone?

One can always try little experiments. I have said that one must use a torch, a strong light; then one must take a round within one's being. If one is very attentive, one can very easily find

these ugly corners. Suppose you have a beautiful experience, that suddenly in answer to your aspiration a great light comes; you feel all flooded with joy, force, light, beauty, and have the impression that you are on the point of being transfigured... and then, it passes away — it always passes away, doesn't it ? especially at the beginning — suddenly, it stops. Then you tell yourself, when you are not vigilant, "There, it came and it has gone ! Poor me ! it came and has gone, it just gave me a taste of the thing and then let me fall." Well, that's foolish. What you should tell yourself is, "Look, I was not able to keep it, and why was I not able to keep it ?" So, you take your torch and go on a round within yourself trying to find a very close relation between the change of consciousness and the movements accompanying the cessation of the experience. And if you are very, very attentive, and make your round very scrupulously, you will find that suddenly some part of the vital or some part of the mind or of the body, something has not kept up, in this sense that mentally, instead of being immobile and attentive, something has begun to ask, "Wait a minute, what is this experience ? What does it mean ?", begun to try to find an explanation (what it calls an "understanding"). Or maybe in the vital something has begun to enjoy the experience: "How pleasant it is, how I would like it to grow, how good if it were constant, how..." Or something in the physical has said, "Oh ! it is a bit hard to endure that, how long am I going to be able to keep it ?" It is perhaps not as obvious as all this, but it is a wee bit hidden like this, somewhere. You will always find one of these three things or others analogous. Then, it is there the lantern is needed: where is the weak point ? where is the egoism ? where is the desire ? where is that old dirt we do not want any longer ? where is that thing which turns back upon itself instead of giving itself, opening itself, losing itself ? which turns back upon itself, tries to take advantage of what has happened, wants to appropriate to itself the fruit of the experience ? Or rather which is too weak, too hard, too rigid to be able to follow the movement ?... It is that,

you are now on the track, you begin precisely to put the light you have just acquired upon it; it is that you must do, focus the light upon it, turn it in such a way that the thing cannot resist it.

You won't be able to succeed the very first day but you must do it persistently and little by little or perhaps suddenly one day it will vanish. Then you will find out after a time that you are another person.

But if you take the attitude I have already spoken about and throw the blame upon the Grace and the Light, if you say to yourself, "There, it has gone and left me in the lurch", you may be sure that even thirty, forty, fifty years hence you will be still at the same place, you will not have changed. There will always be something which will rise suddenly and eat up your experience. And then, instead of progressing, you will be stuck there marking time because you cannot advance. But if, immediately, you take the opportunity.... Note, sometimes it hurts a little; if you go and brutally put the light upon the thing which wants to enjoy the experience or wants to get knowledge or control the experience by a mental understanding or is too lazy to make the necessary effort to receive the experience and bear it or to change quickly enough, if you put the will with the light of consciousness upon this thing, with firmness, it may hurt just a little. And you say, "Oh ! not so fast ! I need rest, I tired myself uselessly." Then everything has to be begun all over again. Sometimes days, even months, sometimes years will pass without its coming back. Sometimes, if you are a little more active and intense in your aspiration, it will return sooner. But if you commit the same stupidity again, the same thing will happen — while if, immediately, you are very vigilant and when the mind starts nosing around to understand what is happening you tell it, "Silence, keep quiet", then the experience can continue. When the vital begins to say, "I want lots and lots, more and more", you say, "Quiet, quiet, don't move, calm yourself, don't get excited." Or when the physical being, "Oh ! I shall be crushed...." — "A little endurance, if you please; you are a coward, you

don't know how to stand the test." If you manage to do this in time, with the necessary calmness, with the necessary determination and will, you will arrive at something. But if you are like that, passive, indolent, fatalistic, and tell yourself, "Now I have surrendered myself, what will happen will happen, we shall see what is going to happen, that's all", then, you understand, I give you fifty years not to change by half a step.

In the last lesson I told you it was not so easy.... If you want to do it, you must do it properly, otherwise it is not worth the trouble; it is useless to do things by halves, one must do them well.

Of course, there are other roads. One may simply not try to perfect oneself. One may try to forget oneself in an ever more absorbing work, that is, do what one does as a consecration to the Divine, altogether disinterestedly, but with a plenitude, a self-giving, a total self-forgetfulness: no longer thinking about oneself but about what one is doing. You know this, I have already told you this: if you want to do something well, whatever it may be, any kind of work, the least thing, play a game, write a book, do painting or music or run a race, anything at all, if you want to do it well, you must *become* what you are doing and not remain a small person looking at himself doing it; for if one looks at oneself acting, one is... one is still in complicity with the ego. If, in oneself, one succeeds in becoming what one does, it is a great progress. In the least little details, one must learn this. Take a very amusing instance: you want to fill a bottle from another bottle; you concentrate (you may try it as a discipline, as a gymnastic); well, as long as you are the bottle to be filled, the bottle from which one pours, and the movement of pouring, as long as you are only this, all goes well. But if unfortunately you think at a given moment: "Ah ! it is getting on well, I am managing well", the next minute it spills over ! It is the same for everything, for everything. That is why work is a good means of discipline, for if you want to do the work properly, you must *become* the work instead of being someone who

works, otherwise you will never do it well. If you remain "someone who works" and, besides, if your thoughts go vagabonding, then you may be sure that if you are handling fragile things they will break, if you are cooking, you will burn something, or if you are playing a game, you will miss all the balls! It is here, in this, that work is a great discipline. For if truly you want to do it well, this is the only way of doing it.

Take someone who is writing a book, for instance. If he looks at himself writing the book, you can't imagine how dull the book will become; it smells immediately of the small human personality which is there and it loses all its value. When a painter paints a picture, if he observes himself painting the picture, the picture will never be good, it will always be a kind of projection of the painter's personality; it will be without life, without force, without beauty. But if, all of a sudden, he becomes the thing he wants to express, if he becomes the brushes, the painting, the canvas, the subject, the image, the colours, the value, the whole thing, and is entirely inside it and lives it, he will make something magnificent.

For everything, everything, it is the same. There is nothing which cannot be a yogic discipline if one does it properly. And if it is not done properly, even tapasyā will be of no use and will lead you nowhere. For it is the same thing, if you do your tapasya, all the time observing yourself doing it and telling yourself, "Am I making any progress, is this going to be better, am I going to succeed?", then it is your ego, you know, which becomes more and more enormous and occupies the whole place, and there is no room for anything else. And we said the other day that the spiritual ego is the worst of all, for it is altogether unconscious of its inferiority, it is convinced it is something very superior, if not absolutely divine!

There we are. When you are at school, you must become the concentration which tries to catch what the teacher is saying, or the thought which enters you or the knowledge you are given. That is what you must be. You must not think of yourself but

only of what you want to learn. And you will see that your capacities will immediately be doubled.

What gives most the feeling of inferiority, of limitation, smallness, impotence, is always this turning back upon oneself, this shutting oneself up in the bounds of a microscopic ego. One must widen oneself, open the doors. And the best way is to be able to concentrate upon what one is doing instead of concentrating upon oneself.

28 April 1951

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

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 6

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

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

What is "physical tamas" ?

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

Is it the same thing as laziness ?

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

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

I remember, a long time ago, having been among some young people, and they remarked that when I decided to get up I used to get up with a jump, without any difficulty. They asked me, "How do you do it ? We, when we want to get up, have to make an effort of will to be able to do it." They were so surprised ! and *I* was surprised by the opposite. I used to tell myself, "How does it happen ? When one has decided to get up, one gets up." No, the body was there, like that, and it was necessary to put a will into it, to push this body for it to get up and act. It is like that, this is tamas. Tamas is a purely material thing; it is very rare to have a vital or mental tamas (it may occur but through contagion), I believe it is more a tamas of the nerves or the brain than vital or mental tamas. But laziness is everywhere, in the physical, the vital, the mind. Generally lazy people are not always lazy, not in all things. If you propose something that pleases them, amuses them, they are quite ready to make an effort. There is much ill-will in laziness.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of "the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature".[1]

Because the physical consciousness and nature are closed up and rigid — they are shut up in their habits, they don't want to change them, they accept only one regular routine. There is nothing more routine-bound than the body. If you change its habits in the least, it is quite bewildered, it doesn't know any longer what to do, it says, "Excuse me, excuse me ! but that's not how one goes about living."

Those whose vital being is very active and dominating may succeed in awakening the body, and if they have the spirit of adventure (which happens very often, for the vital is an adven-

[1] Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 7.

turous being), the physical obeys, it obeys the impulse, the inner order; then it consents to the change, the novelty, but it is an effort for it. But for the physical being and physical consciousness to be ready to receive the divine impulsion, they must be extremely plastic, because the vital uses coercion, it imposes its will, and the poor body has but to obey, while the Divine just shows the light, gives the consciousness, and so one must obey consciously and willingly — it is a question of collaboration, it is no longer a question of coercion. The physical being and physical consciousness must be very plastic to be able to lend themselves to all the necessary changes, so as to be of one kind one day and another the next, and so on.

Sri Aurobindo speaks here of the "stability of Light, Power, Ananda".[1] But isn't power always dynamic?

Well, there is a static power. How to explain it to you? Look, there is the same difference between static power and dynamic power as between a game of defence and a game of attack; you understand? It is the same thing. Static power is something which can withstand everything, nothing can act upon it, nothing can touch it, nothing can shake it — it is immobile, but it is invincible. Dynamic power is something in action, which at times goes forth and may at times receive blows. That is to say, if you want your dynamic power to be always victorious, it must be supported by a considerable static power, an unshakable base.

I know what you want to say... that a human being becomes aware of power only when it is dynamic; a human being doesn't consider it a power except when it acts; if it doesn't act he does not even notice it, he does not realise the tremendous force which is behind this inaction — at times, even frequently, a force more formidable than the power which acts. But you may try it out in yourself, you will see, it is much more difficult to remain calm, immobile, unshakable before something very un-

[1] *Ibid.*

pleasant — whether it be words or acts levelled against you — infinitely more difficult than to answer with the same violence. Suppose someone insults you; if in the face of these insults, you can remain immobile (not only outwardly, I mean integrally), without being shaken or touched in any way: you are there like a force against which one can do nothing and you do not reply, you do not make a gesture, you do not say a word, all the insults thrown at you leave you absolutely untouched, within and without; you can keep your heart-beats absolutely quiet, you can keep the thoughts in your head quite immobile and calm without their being in the least disturbed, that is, your head does not answer immediately by similar vibrations and your nerves don't feel clenched with the need to return a few blows to relieve themselves; if you can be like that, you have a static power, and it is infinitely more powerful than if you had that kind of force which makes you answer insult by insult, blow by blow and agitation by agitation.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of "the rejection of... stupidity, doubt, disbelief".[1] If one rejects stupidity does one become intelligent?

Do you mean whether one can get rid of stupidity? Yes, there is a way. It is not easy, but there is a way. I have known people who were extremely stupid, truly stupid; well, these people succeeded through aspiration — an aspiration which was not formulated, had not even the power to express itself in words — succeeded in coming into contact with their psychic being. It was not a constant contact, it was momentary, at times very fugitive. But while they were in contact with their psychic being, they became remarkably intelligent, they said wonderful things. I knew a girl who had no education, nothing, truly stupid; people said, "There is nothing to be done about it, it is not possible." Well, when she was in contact with her psychic being,

[1] Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 7.

she understood the profoundest things and made astounding remarks. But when the contact stopped she became stupid once again. It was not something permanent, it was only the contact that took away her stupidity. So, it is a difficult cure, that is, one must establish the contact with one's psychic being and keep it always.

There is a Muslim legend like that about Christ. You know the story: Christ healed the sick, made the lame walk, the blind see and even raised the dead. Seeing all these miracles, someone went up to Christ and said, "Oh ! I have a very interesting case to put before you.... Yes, I have a son who is stupid." Christ opened his eyes wide and ran away ! It seems that was the only thing he could not do ! This is a joke, of course, and the thing is difficult, but it is possible.

> *"The Divine... is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yoga Maya...."*[1]

Yes, he is veiled by the consciousness of material Nature. There is the consciousness in its origin which does not veil the Divine but expresses him. There is the consciousness in its outer form which veils him. Some say this is willed, that it is to allow the game to be played; that the Divine hides himself behind material Nature to compel all conscious beings to find Him. That is an opinion... people say many things.

One of the great difficulties for most philosophies is that they have never recognised or studied the different planes of existence, the different regions of the being. They have the Supreme and then the Creation and then that's all, nothing between the two. This makes explanations very difficult.... All explanations, in the last analysis, are simply languages — there are languages which make understanding easier and others which make it more difficult. And some of these theories make the understanding of things very difficult — while if you recognise

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

and study and become aware of the different intermediary states between the most material Nature and the Supreme Origin, if you recognise and become conscious of all the intermediary regions, of all the inner states of being and all the outer regions, that can explain many problems. We have already studied this in connection with determinisms. If you say that the determinism is absolute and remain there, you understand nothing; it is quite obvious that all the events of life give you the lie; or else the problem is so complicated that you can't get hold of it. But if you understand that there are a large number of determinisms acting upon each other, interpenetrating, changing the action of one determinism by the action of another, then the problem becomes comprehensible. It is the same thing for explaining the action of the Divine in the universe. If you take a central creative Force or a central creative Consciousness or a central immobile Witness, and then the universe, only that, nothing between the two, you cannot understand. There are people who have used this in such a naive way ! They have made a Creator God and then his creatures. So all the problems come up. He has made the world, with what ? Some tell you it is from the dust, but what is it, this dust ? What was it doing before it was used to make a world ?... Or from nothing ! A universe was created out of nothing — that is foolish ! it is very awkward for a logical mind. And over and above all that, you are told that He did this consciously, deliberately, and when he had finished he exclaimed, "Look, it is very good." Then, those who are in the universe reply, "We don't find it so good. It is perhaps very good for you but not for us." These are naive conceptions. They are simply ignorant and naive conceptions which make the problem of the universe absolutely incomprehensible. And all these explanations are inadmissible for a mind which is ever so slightly awakened. That is why you are told, "Don't try to understand, you will never understand." But that is mental laziness, it is the mind's bad will. You see, one feels within oneself that, because one has this kind of power of thought-activity, this aspiration to

find a light, a solution, it must correspond to something, otherwise... otherwise, truly (I think I have written this somewhere), if the universe were reduced to that simple notion, well, it would be the most sinister of farces and I should very well understand those who have declared, "Run away, get out of it as fast as possible." Unfortunately, I don't see how they would be able to get out of it, for there is nothing else — how can you get out of something which alone exists ? So, one enters a vicious circle, one turns round and round and this leads quite naturally to mental despair. But when one has the key — there are one or two keys, but there is one which opens all the doors — when one has the key, one follows one's road and little by little understands *the* Thing.

What is the difference between consciousness and physical Nature ?

Tell me, is your body absolutely conscious, conscious of itself, conscious of its functioning ? No, then what is it ? It can only be physical Nature. And if there is a physical Nature which is not conscious, it means that physical Nature and consciousness are not the same thing. Physical Nature includes everything that is physical: your body belongs to physical Nature, mountains, stones, the sky, water, fire... all this belongs to physical Nature. But your physical Nature contains a consciousness, it is animated by a consciousness, though it is not entirely conscious. And precisely because it is not entirely conscious, it can be inert, tamasic, "unconscious". Otherwise all would be conscious, stones also would be conscious (I don't know how far they are so, but it is to a very small extent compared with human consciousness).

Does not surrender consist in offering one's work like a good servant ?

Work is a good discipline. But it is not this idea, it is not the idea

of a passive, unconscious and almost involuntary submission. It is not that. It does not lie only in work.

The most important surrender is the surrender of your character, your way of being, so that it may change. If you do not surrender your very own nature, never will this nature change. It is this that is most important. You have certain ways of understanding, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of feeling, almost certain ways of progressing, and above all, a special way of looking at life and expecting from it certain things — well, it is this you must surrender. That is, if you truly want to receive the divine Light and transform yourself, it is your whole way of being you must offer — offer by opening it, making it as receptive as possible so that the divine Consciousness which sees how you ought to be, may act directly and change all these movements into movements more true, more in keeping with your real truth. This is infinitely more important than surrendering what one does. It is not what one does (what one does is very important, that's evident) that is the most important thing but what one *is*. Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of consciousness in which it is done that is important. You may work, do disinterested work without any idea of personal profit, work for the joy of working, but if you are not at the same time ready to leave this work, to change the work or change the way of working, if you cling to your own way of working, your surrender is not complete. You must come to a point when everything is done because you feel within, very clearly, in a more and more imperious way, that it is this which must be done and in this particular way, and that you do it only because of that. You do not do it because of any habit, attachment or preference, nor even any conception, even a preference for the idea that it is the best thing to do — else your surrender is not total. As long as you cling to something, as long as there is something in you which says, "This may change, that may change, but *that*, that will not change", as long as you say about anything at all, "That will not change" (not

that it refuses to change, but because you can't think of its changing), your surrender is not complete.

It goes without saying that if in your action, your work, you have in the least this feeling, "I am doing it because I have been told to do it", and there is not a total adherence of the being, and you do not do the work because you feel it must be done and you love doing it; if something holds back, stands apart, separate, "I was told it had to be done like that so I did it like that", it means there is a great gulf between you and surrender. True surrender is to feel that one wants, one has, this complete inner adherence: you cannot do *but that*, that which you have been given to do, and what you have not been given to do you cannot do. But at another moment the work may change; at any moment it may be something else, if it is decided that it be something else. It is there that plasticity comes in. That makes a very great difference. It is well understood that those who work are told, "Yes, work, that is your way of surrendering", but it is a beginning. This way has to be progressive. It is only a beginning, do you understand ?

3 May 1951

"Money is the visible sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on earth works on the vital and physical planes and is indispensable to the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and its true action it belongs to the Divine. But like other powers of the Divine it is delegated here and in the ignorance of the lower Nature can be usurped for the uses of the ego or held by Asuric influences and perverted to their purpose. This is indeed one of the three forces — power, wealth, sex — that have the strongest attraction for the human ego and the Asura and are most generally misheld and misused by those who retain them.... For this reason most spiritual disciplines... proclaim poverty and bareness of life as the only spiritual condition. But this is an error; it leaves the power in the hands of the hostile forces. To reconquer it for the Divine to whom it belongs and use it divinely for the divine life is the supramental way for the sadhaka."

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, pp. 11-12

How can one know if one's way of using money is in accordance with the divine Will ?

One must first know what the divine Will is. But there is a surer way — to surrender money for the divine work, if one is not sure oneself. "Divinely" means at the service of the Divine — it means not to use money for one's own satisfaction but to place it at the Divine's service.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of "a weak bondage to the habits that the possession of riches creates".

Ibid., p. 14

When you are rich and have a lot of money to spend, generally you spend it on things you find pleasant, and you become habituated to these things, attached to these things, and if one day the money is gone, you miss it, you are unhappy, you are miserable and feel all lost because you no longer have what you were in the habit of having. It is a bondage, a weak attachment. He who is quite detached, when he lives in the midst of these things, it is well with him; when these things are gone, it is well also; he is totally indifferent to both. That is the right attitude: when it is there he uses it, when it is not he does without it. And for his inner consciousness this makes no difference. That surprises you, but it is like that.

If one has the power to acquire a lot of money, does this mean that one has a certain control over terrestrial forces ?

This depends upon how one acquires it. If you get it by foul ways, that does not mean that you have a control. But if someone, scrupulously doing his duty, sees that money comes to him, it is evidently because he exercises a control over these forces. There are people who have the power of attracting money and they haven't the least need to practise dishonesty to get it. Others, even to get a few pennies, must make all sorts of contrivances, more or less clean. So one cannot say.... We see a rich man and think he must be exercising a control over the forces of money — no, not necessarily. But if a man remains perfectly honest and does what he thinks is his duty without caring to acquire money, and yet money comes to him, evidently he has a certain affinity with those forces.

It is said, "One cannot make a heap without making a hole", one cannot enrich oneself without impoverishing someone else. Is this true ?

This is not quite correct. If one produces something, instead of an impoverishment it is an enrichment; simply one puts into circulation in the world something else having a value equivalent to that of money. But to say that one cannot make a heap without making a hole is all right for those who speculate, who do business on the Stock Exchange or in finance — there it is true. It is impossible to have a financial success in affairs of pure speculation without its being detrimental to another. But it is limited to this. Otherwise a producer does not make a hole if he heaps up money in exchange for what he produces. Surely there is the question of the value of the production, but if the production is truly an acquisition for the general human wealth, it does not make a hole, it increases this wealth. And in another way, not only in the material field, the same thing holds for art, for literature or science, for any production at all.

> *When I was doing business (Export-Import), I always had the feeling of robbing my neighbour.*

This is living at the expense of others, because one multiplies the middlemen. Naturally, it is perhaps convenient, practical, but from the general point of view, and above all in the way it is practised, it is living at the expense of the producer and the consumers. One becomes an agent, not at all with the idea of rendering service (because there is not one in a million who has this idea), but because it is an easy way of earning money without making any effort. But of course, among the ways of making money without any effort, there are others much worse than that ! they are countless.

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

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

This does not mean, however, that one is obliged to get out of the conditions of one's life: it is the inner attitude which must be totally changed. One may do what one is in the habit of doing, but do it with quite a different attitude. I don't say it is necessary to give up everything in life and go away into solitude, to an ashram necessarily, to do yoga. Now, it is true that if one does yoga in the world and in worldly circumstances, it is more difficult, but it is also more complete. Because, every minute one must face problems which do not present themselves

to someone who has left everything and gone into solitude; for such a one these problems are reduced to a minimum — while in life one meets all sorts of difficulties, beginning with the incomprehension of those around you with whom you have to deal; one must be ready for that, be armed with patience, and a great indifference. But in yoga one should no longer care for what people think or say; it is an absolutely indispensable starting-point. You must be absolutely immune to what the world may say or think of you and to the way it treats you. People's understanding must be something quite immaterial to you and should not even slightly touch you. That is why it is generally much more difficult to remain in one's usual surroundings and do yoga than to leave everything and go into solitude; it is much more difficult, but we are not here to do easy things — easy things we leave to those who do not think of transformation.

If someone has acquired a lot of money by dishonest means, could some of it be asked for the Divine ?

Sri Aurobindo has answered this question. He says that money in itself is an impersonal force: the way in which you acquire money concerns you alone personally. It may do you great harm, it may harm others also, but it does not in any way change the nature of the money which is an altogether impersonal force: money has no colour, no taste, no psychological consciousness. It is a force. It is like saying that the air breathed out by a scoundrel is more tainted than that breathed out by an honest man — I don't think so. I think the result is the same. One may for reasons of a practical nature refuse money which has been stolen, but that is for altogether practical reasons, it is not because of divine reasons. This is a purely human idea. One may from a practical point of view say, "Ah ! no, the way in which you have acquired this money is disgusting and so I don't want to offer it to the Divine", because one has a human consciousness. But if you take someone (let us suppose the worst) who has killed

and acquired money by the murder; if all of a sudden he is seized by terrible scruples and remorse and tells himself, "I have only one thing to do with this money, give it where it can be utilised for the best, in the most impersonal way", it seems to me that this movement is preferable to utilising it for one's own satisfaction. I said that the reasons which could prevent one from receiving ill-gotten money may be reasons of a purely practical kind, but there may also be more profound reasons, of a (I do not want to say moral but) spiritual nature, from the point of view of tapasya; one may tell somebody, "No, you cannot truly acquire merit with this fortune which you have obtained in such a terrible way: what you can do is to restore it", one may feel that a restitution, for instance, will help to make more progress than simply passing the money on to any work whatever. One may see things in this way — one can't make rules. This is what I never stop telling you: it is impossible to make a rule. In every case it is different. But you must not think that the money is affected; money as a terrestrial force is not affected by the way in which it is obtained, that can in no way affect it. Money remains the same, your note remains the same, your piece of gold remains the same, and as it carries its force, its force remains there. It harms only the person who has done wrong, that is evident. Then the question remains: in what state of mind and for what reasons does your dishonest man want to pass on his money to a work he considers divine? Is it as a measure of safety, through prudence or to lay his heart at rest? Evidently this is not a very good motive and it cannot be encouraged, but if he feels a kind of repentance and regret for what he has done and the feeling that there is but one thing to do and that is precisely to deprive himself of what he has wrongly acquired and utilise it for the general good as much as possible, then there is nothing to say against that. One cannot decide in a general way — it depends upon the instance. Only, if I understand well what you mean, if one knows that a man has acquired money by the most unnamable means, obviously, it

would not be good to go and *ask* him for money for some divine work, because that would be like "rehabilitating" his way of gaining money. One cannot ask, that is not possible. If, spontaneously, for some reason, he gives it, there is no reason to refuse it. But it is quite impossible to go and ask him for it, because it is as though one legitimised his manner of acquiring money. That makes a great difference.

And generally, in these cases, those who go and ask money from rascals use means of intimidation: they frighten them, not physically but about their future life, about what may happen to them, they give them a fright. It is not very nice. These are procedures one ought not to use.

Besides money, what are the other divine powers "delegated" here on earth ?

All. All the divine powers are manifested here and deformed here — light, life, love, force — all — harmony, ananda — all, all, there is nothing which is not divine in its origin and which does not exist here under a completely distorted, travestied form. The other day we had spoken at length about the way in which divine Love is deformed in its manifestation here, it is the same thing.

How can money be reconquered for the Mother ?

Ah !... There is a hint here. Three things are interdependent (Sri Aurobindo says here): power, money and sex. I believe the three are interdependent and that all three have to be conquered to be sure of having any one — when you want to conquer one you must have the other two. Unless one has mastered these three things, desire for power, desire for money and desire for sex, one cannot truly possess any of them firmly and surely. What gives so great an importance to money in the world as it is today is not so much money itself, for apart from a few fools

who heap up money and are happy because they can heap it up and count it, generally money is desired and acquired for the satisfactions it brings. And this is almost reciprocal: each of these three things not only has its own value in the world of desires, but leans upon the other two. I have related to you that vision, that big black serpent which kept watch over the riches of the world, terrestrial wealth — he demanded the mastery of the sex-impulse. Because, according to certain theories, the very need of power has its end in this satisfaction, and if one mastered that, if one abolished that from human consciousness, much of the need for power and desire for money would disappear automatically. Evidently, these are the three great obstacles in the terrestrial human life and, unless they are conquered, there is scarcely a chance for humanity to change.

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

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

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

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

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

5 May 1951

"If you want to be a true doer of divine works, your first aim must be to be totally free from all desire and self-regarding ego."

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 15

Sometimes we go to the bazaar to buy our things. Is that good ?

One cannot make general rules. This depends on the spirit in which you make your purchases. It is said that you should have no desires — if this is not a desire, it is all right. You understand, there is no movement, no action which in itself is good or bad; it depends absolutely on the spirit in which it is done. If, for instance, you are in a state of total indifference about what you have and what you do not (it is a condition a little difficult to realise, but after all, one can attain it — a state of detachment: "If I have it, I have it; if I don't, I don't"), there comes a moment when, if your state is quite sincere and you really need something (it must not be a fancy or a desire or a caprice but a true need), automatically the thing comes to you. Since I have been here — it is a long time, isn't it ? — I have known people who have never asked me for anything; I don't even think (naturally there are always weaknesses in human nature), but I don't even think they have had a violent desire for anything at all, but when it was a need, automatically it came to them. Suddenly the idea would come to me, "Ah ! this must be given to so-and-so", and if it was not directly through me, in some way, quite unexpectedly, the thing came to them. On the other hand, if one is preoccupied with one's needs (I don't want even to speak of desires, for that is quite another thing), but if one is preoccupied with one's needs, if one thinks of them, tells oneself, "Truly I must have this", it is not often

that it comes to you; so you are obliged to do something to satisfy yourself and, if you have the means, to go and buy the thing. Now there are people who always take their desires for their needs, that... we do not speak of these, they form the great majority. They are convinced that without this or that one cannot live: "It is impossible, one can't live without that.... I shall fall ill or something very unpleasant will happen to me or I shall not be able to do my work. It is impossible, if I don't have this I can't do my work." So, the first step for these people is to try a small experiment (if they are sincere): "Well, I won't have this thing and we are going to see what happens." This is a very interesting experiment. And I can guarantee that 999 times out of a thousand, after a few days one asks oneself, "But why the devil did I think I had such a great need of this thing, I can do without it very well!" There you are. And like this, little by little, one makes progress.

It is a question of training — educating oneself. The sooner one begins, the easier it is. When one begins very young, it becomes very easy, for one gets accustomed to one's inner reactions and so can act with wisdom and discernment — whereas for those who are accustomed from their childhood to take all their desires for needs or necessities, and have flung themselves into them with passionate zeal, the road is much more difficult, because first they must acquire discernment and distinguish a desire from what it is not; and sometimes this is very difficult, it is so mixed up that it can hardly be perceived.

But after all, I believe one doesn't need much. Once, I remember, four of us had gone on a walking tour across the mountains of France. We had started from one town and had to reach another. It was about an eight or ten days' journey across the mountain. Naturally, each of us carried a bag slung across our back, for one needs a few things. But then, before starting we had a little discussion to find out what things we really needed, what was quite indispensable. And always we came to this: "Let us see, that thing we can manage in this way"

and everything was reduced to so little.... I knew a Danish painter who used to say, "Do you know, when I travel, I need only one thing, a tooth-brush." But somebody replied, "But no, if you don't have a brush, you can rub with your finger !"

> *Before undertaking any action one tries to know whether the impulse comes from the Mother or not, but generally one doesn't have enough discernment to know it and yet one acts. Can one know from the result of the action whether it came from the Mother or not ?*

One does not have the discernment because one does not care to have it ! Listen, I don't think there is a single instance in which one does not find within oneself something very clear, but you must sincerely want to know — we always come back to the same thing — you must sincerely want it. The first condition is not to begin thinking about the subject and building all sorts of ideas: opposing ideas, possibilities, and entering into a formidable mental activity. First of all, you must put the problem as though you were putting it to someone else, then keep silent, remain like that, immobile. And then, after a little while you will see that at least three different things may happen, sometimes more. Take the case of an intellectual, one who acts in accordance with the indications of his head. He has put the problem and he waits. Well, if he is indeed attentive, he will notice that there is (the chronological order is not absolute, it may come in a different order) at first (what is most prominent in an intellectual) a certain idea: "If I do that in this way, it will be all right; it must be like that", that is to say, a mental construction. A second thing which is a kind of impulse: "That will have to be done. That is good, it must be done." Then a third which does not make any noise at all, does not try to impose itself on the others, but has the tranquillity of a certitude — not very active, not giving a shock, not pushing to

action, but something that knows and is very quiet, very still. This will not contradict the others, will not come and say, "No, that's wrong"; it says simply, "See, it is like this", that's all, and then it does not insist. The majority of men are not silent enough or attentive enough to be aware of it, for it makes no noise. But I assure you it is there in everybody and if one is truly sincere and succeeds in being truly quiet, one will become aware of it. The thinking part begins to argue, "But after all, this thing will have this consequence and that thing will have that consequence, and if one does this..." and this, and that... and its noise begins again. The other (the vital) will say, "Yes, it *must* be done like that, it *must* be done, you don't understand, it *must*, it is indispensable." There ! then you will know. And according to your nature you will choose either the vital impulse or the mental leading, but very seldom do you say quite calmly, "Good, it is this I am going to do, whatever happens", and even if you don't like it very much. But it is always there. I am sure that it is there even in the murderer before he kills, you understand, but his outer being makes such a lot of noise that it never even occurs to him to listen. But it is always there, always there. In every circumstance, there is in the depth of every being, just this little (one can't call it "voice", for it makes no sound) this little indication of the divine Grace, and sometimes to obey it requires a tremendous effort, for all the rest of the being opposes it violently, one part with the conviction that what it thinks is true, another with all the power, the strength of its desire. But don't tell me that one can't know, for that is not true. One can know. But one does not always know what is necessary, and sometimes, if one knows what is to be done, well, one finds some excuse or other for not doing it. One tells oneself, "Oh ! I am not so sure, after all, of this inner indication; it does not assert itself with sufficient force for me to trust it." But if you were quite indifferent, that is, if you had no desire, either mental or vital or physical desire, you would know with certainty that it is that which must be done and nothing else. What comes

and gets in the way is preference — preferences and desires. Every day one may have hundreds and hundreds of examples. When people begin to say, "Truly I don't know what to do", it always means that they have a preference. But as here in the Ashram they know there is something else and as at times they have been a little attentive, they have a vague sensation that it is not quite that: "It is not quite that, I don't feel quite at ease." Besides, you were saying a while ago that it is the result which gives you the indication; it has even been said (it has been written in books) that one judges the divine Will by the results ! all that succeeds has been willed by the Divine; all that doesn't, well, He has not willed it ! This is yet again one of those stupidities big as a mountain. It is a mental simplification of the problem, which is quite comic. That's not it. If one can have an indication (in proportion to one's sincerity), it is uneasiness, a little uneasiness — not a great uneasiness, just a little uneasiness.

Here, you know, you have another means, quite simple (I don't know why you do not use it, because it is quite elementary); you imagine I am in front of you and then ask yourself, "Would I do this before Mother, without difficulty, without any effort, without something holding me back ?" That will never deceive you. If you are sincere you will know immediately. That would stop many people on the verge of folly.

> *It sometimes happens that when one is playing one does not remember the Divine, then suddenly one remembers and has the feeling that something breaks and one no longer plays well. Why ?*

Because everything is upset. That's the problem ! So you think that when you are playing and do not remember, you play well ! No, it is not quite that. It is that you do something with a certain concentration — work or play — and you are concentrated, but you have not developed the habit of mixing the remembrance of the Divine with the concentration (which is not

difficult, but anyway, you do not have the habit) and then, suddenly the remembrance comes; then two things may happen: either the concentration is broken because you make an abrupt movement to seize the new attitude entering the consciousness, or else you feel a little remorse, a regret, a disquiet: "Oh ! I did not remember"; that suffices, it upsets all you have done. For you change conditions completely. It is not the fact of remembering which makes you no longer play well, it is the fact of having disturbed your concentration. If you could remember without disturbing the concentration (which is not difficult), you would not only play well but would play better.

And then, you may also take another attitude. When you are playing and suddenly become aware that something is going wrong — you are making mistakes, are inattentive, sometimes opposing currents come across what you are doing — if you develop the habit, automatically at this moment, of calling as by a mantra, of repeating a word, that has an extraordinary effect. You choose your mantra; or rather, one day it comes to you spontaneously in a moment of difficulty. At a time when things are very difficult, when you have a sort of anguish, anxiety, when you don't know what is going to happen, suddenly this springs up in you, the word springs up in you. For each one it may be different. But if you mark this and each time you face a difficulty you repeat it, it becomes irresistible. For instance, if you feel you are about to fall ill, if you feel you are doing badly what you are doing, if you feel something evil is going to attack you, then.... But it must be a spontaneity in the being, it must spring up from you without your needing to think about it: you choose your mantra because it is a spontaneous expression of your aspiration; it may be one word, two or three words, a sentence, that depends on each one, but it must be a sound which awakens in you a certain condition. Then, when you have that, I assure you that you can pass through everything without difficulty. Even in the face of a real, veritable danger, an attack, for instance, by someone who wants to kill you, if, without

getting excited, without being perturbed, you quietly repeat your mantra, one can do nothing to you. Naturally, you must truly be master of yourself; one part of the being must not be trembling there like a leaf; no, you must do it entirely, sincerely, then it is all-powerful. The best is when the word comes to you spontaneously: you call in a moment of great difficulty (mental, vital, physical, emotional, whatever it may be) and suddenly that springs up in you, two or three words, like magical words. You must remember these and form the habit of repeating them in moments when difficulties come. If you form the habit, one day it will come to you spontaneously: when the difficulty comes, at the same time the mantra will come. Then you will see that the results are wonderful. But it must not be an artificial thing or something you arbitrarily decide: "I shall use those words"; nor should somebody else tell you, "Oh ! you know, this is very good" — it is perhaps very good for him but not for everyone.

> *"Your only object in action shall be to serve, to receive, to fulfil, to become a manifesting instrument of the Divine Shakti in her works."*
>
> Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 15

When you act your only object is to serve, that is, instead of acting for your personal good, you act with the feeling of serving, of receiving the Divine Force, not from outside (you must not at all believe in that) but from within you, of opening yourself to the Divine Force which will use you for its action, and of fulfilling what that Force wants you to fulfil. There is no place there for egoism. It is not a matter of giving one thing and receiving another in exchange, it is not that; it is not a question of receiving from outside.

There are disciplines which make it a rule (we don't like rules, for they are always arbitrary and artificial) that one should receive absolutely nothing from anybody except the Divine or the Guru who represents the Divine. Some people would not

receive even a fruit from anybody because it does not come from the Guru. That is an exaggeration — this depends on circumstances, on conditions, and it also depends very much on the attitude one takes oneself, it depends on many things, it would take very long to explain — but there is one thing you must learn, never to rely on anyone or anything whatever except the Divine. For if you lean upon anyone for support, that support will break, you may be sure of that. From the minute you start doing yoga (I always speak of those who do yoga, I do not speak about ordinary life), for those who do yoga, to depend upon someone else is like wanting to transform that person into a representative of the Divine Force; now you may be sure there is not one in a hundred millions who can carry the weight: he will break immediately. So never take the attitude of hoping for support, help, comfort from anyone except the Divine. That is absolute; I have never, not once, met anyone who tried to cling to something to find a support there (someone doing yoga or who has been put into touch with yoga) and who was not deceived — it breaks, it stops, one loses one's support. Then one says, "Life is difficult" — it is not difficult but one must know what one is doing. Never seek a support elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek satisfaction elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek the satisfaction of your needs in anyone else except the Divine — never, for anything at all. All your needs can be satisfied only by the Divine. All your weaknesses can be borne and healed only by the Divine. He alone is capable of giving you what you need in everything, always, and if you try to find any satisfaction or support or help or joy or... Heaven knows what, in anyone else, you will always fall on your nose one day, and that always hurts, sometimes even hurts very much.

7 May 1951

Mother reads the first part of Chapter 6 of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

What is a "hierarchy" ?

It is a grouping organised in order of merit. For instance, you have a chief at the centre and you may have four persons around him, and around these four, 8, then 12, 24, 36, 48, 124, and so on, each with his special mission, his special work, his particular authority, and all referring in an ascending order to the centre. That is a hierarchy. In governments they try to form hierarchies, but these are untrue, they are arbitrary and not worth anything. But in all ancient initiations there were hierarchies which were expressions of individual merit — individual powers and merits — having always at their centre the representative of the Supreme and the Shakti; sometimes having only the Supreme, depending on the religions. But the groups were always organised in that way, that is, with a growing number of individuals, each one having to refer to the officer immediately above him. For instance, the 124 had to refer to the 48, the 48 had to refer to the 24, the 24 refer to the 12, the 12 to the 8, and so on. That is a hierarchy. The word is used in a very imprecise and vague way. They speak of a hierarchy and think it is the men who govern and have subordinates. But the true hierarchy is an occult hierarchy, and this occult hierarchy had as its purpose the manifesting, the expressing of a more profound hierarchy which is a hierarchy of the invisible worlds.

What is the "transcendent Mother" ?

Don't you know that there are three principles: the transcendent, the universal and the individual or personal ? No ? — the tran-

scendent which is above creation, at the origin of creation; the universal which is the creation, and the individual which is self-explanatory. There is a transcendent Divine, a universal Divine and an individual Divine. That is, one may put oneself in contact with the divine Consciousness within oneself, in the universe and, beyond all forms, in the transcendent. So these three aspects are also the three aspects of the divine Mother: transcendent, universal and individual.... Do you know the flower I have called "Transformation" ?[1] Yes. You know it has four petals; well, these four petals are arranged like a cross: one at the top which represents the transcendent, two on each side: the universal, and one at the bottom: the individual.

The petal at the top is divided into two.

Exactly, the transcendent is one and two (or dual) at the same time. This flower is almost perfect in its form. This was the original meaning of the cross also, but that was not as perfect as the flower, for it was one, two, and three. It was not so good — the flower is perfect.

The divine Mother is the divine Shakti, that is, the creative Force. She is identified with the cosmos. How can she have a transcendent aspect ?

But perhaps the divine Mother was there before the creation ! She must certainly have existed before the creation, for she cannot be her own product. If it is she who has created, she must have existed before the creation, otherwise she could never have created.

She existed in the Supreme, then, before the creation ?

"In" the Supreme.... It is a little difficult to speak of "within"

[1] The flower of the Cork-oak of India (Millingtonia hortensis).

and "without" when one is outside all forms ! If you like, say that she is a movement of the Supreme (if that makes you understand better) or an action of the Supreme or a state of the Supreme, a mode... You may say what you like, what most gives you an understanding of the thing. You see, the human mind likes to cut things into little bits.... I am going to tell you a little story meant for children. The Supreme, having decided to create a universe, took a certain inner attitude which corresponded with the inner manifestation (unexpressed) of the divine Mother, the supreme Shakti. At the same time, he did this with the intention of its being the mode of creation of the universe he wanted to create, the creative power of the universe. Hence, first of all, he had to conceive the possibility of the divine Mother in order that this divine Mother could conceive the possibility of the universe. You are following ? I tell you once again that it is not quite like that, but after all, it is meant for childish minds. So, we may very well say that there is a transcendent Divine Mother, that is, independent of her creation.. She may have been conceived, formed (whatever you like) for the creation, with the purpose of creation, but she had to exist before the creation to be able to create, else how could she have created ? That is the transcendent aspect, and note that this transcendent aspect is permanent. We speak as though things had unfolded in time at a date which could be fixed: the first of January 0000, for the beginning of the world, but it is not quite like that ! There is constantly a transcendent, constantly a universal, constantly an individual, and the transcendent, universal and individual are co-existent. That is, if you enter into a certain state of consciousness, you can at any moment be in contact with the transcendent Shakti, and you can also, with another movement, be in contact with the universal Shakti, and be in contact with the individual Shakti, and all this simultaneously — that does not unfold itself in time, it is we who move in time as we speak, otherwise we cannot express ourselves. We may experience it but we can express it only by saying one word after another (un-

fortunately, one cannot say all the words at the same time; if one could say them all at the same time, that would be a little more like the truth).

Finally, all that is said, all that has been said, all that will be said, is always only an extremely clumsy and limited way of expressing something which may be lived but which cannot be described. And there is a moment, when one lives the thing, in which one sees that the same thing can be expressed almost with the same exactness or the same truth in religious language, mystical language, philosophic language and materialistic language and that from the point of view of the lived truth, it makes very little difference. It is only when one is in the mental consciousness that one thing seems true to you and another does not seem true; but all these are only ways of expression. The experience carries in itself its absolute, but words cannot describe it — one may choose one language or another to express oneself, and with just a very little precaution, one can always say something approaching the Truth in all instances.

I am telling you this not to throw you into confusion but simply to let you understand that there is a considerable difference between the truth of experience and the way of expressing it, whatever it may be, even the best.

11 May 1951

Mother reads the passage about Mahakali (pp. 28-30) from *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

Are the stories told about the image of Mahakali true ?

What stories ? Hundreds of stories are told, my child. Which stories are you speaking of ? Which Mahakali ? The images made of her, the statues ? This is the human way of seeing things. She is not like that.

I believe I have already told you once that there are the original beings in their higher reality and these are of a particular kind; then, as they manifest in more and more material regions, nearer and nearer the earth, they assume different forms and also multiply in a strange way. If you like, the beings Sri Aurobindo speaks of here belong to regions quite close to the Supermind, they are still in quite a clear and conscious contact with the supramental origin. These beings manifest also in what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind and there the form becomes as it were more marked, a little more precise and at the same time reduced in power and capacity. Then, from the Overmind they come down into the human mind, the terrestrial mind and there... Take for instance this poor Mahakali; you have a multitude of Kalis, one more horrible than another; some are absolutely terrifying and horrifying, and they sometimes become quite repulsive beings who are exclusively human formations, that is, the outer form is given by human imagination, by the human mind's capacity of formation. There may be within that a vague reflection of the force of Mahakali, but it is so diminished, deformed, dwarfed, brought within the range of human consciousness, that truly she can very well deny that it is she ! I have seen all possible horrors by way of images representing Mahakali.

Of the images we won't speak. If great artists have made them perhaps some beauty is still left, but as they are generally daubers, nothing remains. As for the images (statues or pictures) which have to be installed in a temple, a religious ceremony is performed, and if the priest or the assistant is a man with occult powers, even limited ones, he can, with his aspiration and through the ritual, bring a supraterrestrial consciousness into these forms. That is the principle; you are told, "This is not a piece of wood, this is not a stone, this is not a picture; there is within it a force which the religious ritual has brought down and to this you may speak." This is right, but the nature of the priest must be known, his occult knowledge and also the forces with which he has an affinity. So, there may be many things in there.... There is "something" (unless it is a stupid ignoramus who has performed the ceremony, one who has no power at all, has brought down nothing, made only a show — but this is rather rare; I can't say it happens frequently, it is quite rare), generally there is something, but then the nature, the quality of this something, you know... this varies infinitely and it is sometimes a little disturbing. I gave the example of Mahakali, because the conception of Mahakali in the human consciousness is specially horrible. When one goes to other divinities like Mahasaraswati, for instance, to whom all kinds of artistic, literary and other capacities are ascribed, it is no longer so terrible. But Mahakali particularly... Their conception of power, force, warlike energy is so terrible that what they bring down is indeed a little dangerous for those who worship it. I have heard innumerable stories since my coming to India. I have been put in touch with innumerable images and have known many people who had in their homes a Kali they worshipped and to whom, sometimes, quite dreadful things had happened. I always put them on their guard. I told them, "Don't think at all that Mahakali is responsible for your misfortunes, for she is not responsible for them. But it is likely that the Kali you have in your home must be harbouring some vindictive being, probably one

very jealous, extremely wilful and with a very strong spirit of vengeance, and as you have faith and as it is generally a vital power, there may be truly dangerous consequences." I have known people who, after having had all kinds of unfortunate experiences, have taken the statue of Mahakali and thrown it into the Ganges. If at the same time they could acquire a certain freedom of spirit, all the damage would disappear, but some of them are so frightened of what they have done that the bad effects continue.

These things should never be touched unless one has at least the first elements of occult knowledge. Unfortunately, in religions — all religions, not only here but everywhere — knowledge is never given to the faithful. Sometimes the priests have it (I don't say always), but when they have it they take good care not to give it to the faithful, for that would deprive them of their authority and power, and that really is the evil behind all religious institutions.

Anyway, this is a digression. Let us come back to our subject. In the earth atmosphere there is indeed a Kali who deals with earthly things and is somewhat, one cannot say independent, yet not quite the expression of Mahakali; but she is altogether obedient to her and has her major qualities. They are diminished in power and efficacy, but they exist, and the beauty of her nature is there. Perhaps some of you have had relations with that Mahakali. She does not avenge herself, she never does harm to those who love her, she does not strike with epidemics the countries which do not show her sufficient respect and consideration. But she likes violence, she likes war and her justice is crushing.

Now, another question.

> *What is the difference between an Avatar and a Vibhuti ?*

We said the other day that "Vibhutis" are aspects, qualities

(what are called in occultism emanations) of a being. They are like certain forces, powers, qualities, attributes which are put in contact with an outer form — a physical form, for instance — and which manifest themselves through this form. This may be a human form. The Avatar (at least when understood in the true sense) is the incarnation upon earth of the supreme Truth. Now, many meanings are given to this word. There is even a word *avatar* in French which has a very special meaning ! It is said that an adventurer has many *avatars*, that is, he changes his appearance, personality, occupation.... But originally (as it is said in the Gita, for example) when the Supreme decides to manifest himself upon earth for a particular reason and takes an earthly body, it is said that he is an Avatar. He may take many successive bodies according to the needs and circumstances, but it is always what could be called the "central being" which takes an earthly body. That is what is called an Avatar. I thought you knew that. Sri Aurobindo has explained this in many places.

> *"Imperial Maheshwari is seated in the wideness above the thinking mind and will...."*[1] *Is there a plane of will, as there is a mental plane, a vital plane, etc. ?*

I have explained that to you in connection with Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda exists at the very origin of the worlds, but there is a Sachchidananda behind all the other states of being. You could make a diagram (though that does not explain much, it is quite an erroneous idea, but it makes things more easily understandable), you arrange the states of being according to a scale. Then, you have the earth below and the Supreme above (it is not at all like that, I hasten to tell you ! but anyway, it is easy to understand), you put the earth at the bottom and the Supreme at the top, and you divide that into lots of little parts each of which represents a state of being; that makes a kind of

[1] Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 26.

ladder. And then, you have as though behind it, behind your ladder, something which supports it, against which it leans. It is not a wall but it is something which supports your ladder. And that is precisely the first principle of the universal form. In Hindu terminology it is called "Sachchidananda". It is there, everything leans upon that; without that nothing could exist. It is that which upholds and allows existence. Then, if you enter a certain state of consciousness and find yourself, for instance, in the higher mind (for generally it is more easily there that this happens; you have started from the physical and climbed slowly, rung by rung, as far as the higher mind), but instead of continuing your ascent on the ladder you enter into a kind of interiorisation and try to go out of the form, you pass into a kind of silence outside the form. You pass in between the bars of your ladder and enter straight into Sachchidananda which supports everything from behind. And then you can have mentally the experience of Sachchidananda. I have known people who had it and thought they had reached the heights of the Supreme. For there is a similarity in the experience, a very great likeness, only it is limited to the mind, the mind alone participates in it. Well, for the will it is the same thing. Instead of being the support of the ladder it is a kind of force, a very powerful current which passes through all these states, starting from above — it is the supreme Will — and coming down into the physical manifestation. Hence, if you get into affinity with this vibration or this force, you can enter "the state of will"; that is, whatever state of being you may find yourself in — physical, vital, mental, etc. — if you enter a certain state of consciousness and force, you come into contact with this power of will: it penetrates into you and you can use it for any purpose. If your reception is free from all egoism, if you are pure, completely surrendered and accept only what comes from the Divine, and if you don't mix anything with it, neither egoism nor desires nor limitations... well, it is a state a bit difficult to attain, but if you attain it, you receive this force of will in its original state, pure (for it

comes down pure, it is only in its reception that it gets deformed), then, instead of being your will it becomes an expression of the divine Will. And this happens *without your leaving the physical body* — you can receive the force of the divine Will without leaving the physical. Only, you see, you must not change it and deform it, spoil it in the receiving. When you feel within you a kind of indomitable energy to realise something, when you tell yourself, "I shall do this whatever the cost, I shall go to the end and shall use all *my* will" (for you always say *my* will), well, you cannot be in that state unless you have come into contact with this current of will-force. Only, with your little personal reaction, naturally you deform it and use it all wrongly, and then you come into conflict with other elements. But if you are truly a yogi, you receive the current and nothing can stop the *élan* of your action, even physically.

There are other things like that, other states, other forces, there are many of these. Fundamentally, if one studies very attentively, one perceives that there is nothing in the individual being which is not the expression or the deformation or diminution, reduction and lessening of something which has its origin in the Supreme and is of a universal nature. So, you see, all these ideas of "pulling", "calling", are not quite right. Essentially, the only thing one should do is to prepare oneself, make oneself worthy of this contact and, when one has had it, not deform it. And this excludes nobody. Even a very small child can, at certain moments in his life, come into touch with one of these great universal forces of divine origin, and use it for its childish needs. Unfortunately, there are added to it so many limitations, so much egoism, ignorance, stupidity, that it is often completely disfigured. It cannot be recognised, it is unrecognisable. But the origin of the force is the same, and that is why when one attains a certain state of consciousness, one perceives that if these forces were not there, one would be nothing, would not exist. And instead of saying with the usual self-complacency, "I do this, I do not do that, I have decided that, I want that

thing, I shall succeed...", all this goes away from you in such a way that you can never again think like that; it seems to you so ridiculous — so ridiculous. As soon as the little "I" comes in, that means a deformation, a limitation, a degradation. In fact, all that you do not value comes with your "I" — you remove the "I" and all that disappears at the same time.

12 May 1951

> *"Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi.... Where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come."*
>
> Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, p. 31

When the surroundings, circumstances, atmosphere, the way of living and above all the inner attitude are altogether of a low kind, vulgar, gross, egoistic, sordid, love is reluctant to come, that is, it always hesitates to manifest itself and generally does not stay long. A home of beauty must be given for Beauty to stay. I am not speaking of external things — a real house, real furniture and all that — I am speaking of an inner attitude, of something within which is beautiful, noble, harmonious, unselfish. There Love has a chance to come and stay. But when, as soon as it tries to manifest, it is immediately mixed with such low and ugly things, it does not remain, it goes away. This is what Sri Aurobindo says: it is "reluctant to be born" — it could be said that it immediately regrets being born. Men always complain that love does not stay with them but it is entirely their fault. They give this love such a sordid life, mixed with a heap of horrors and such vulgarity, things so base, so selfish, so dirty, that the poor thing cannot stay. If they don't succeed in killing it altogether, they make it utterly sick. So the only thing it can do is to take flight. People always complain that love is impermanent and passing. To tell the truth, they should be very grateful that it manifested in them in spite of the sordidness of the house they gave it.

"Mahasaraswati is the Mother's Power of Work and

her spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature.... Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker."

Ibid., p. 33

In the order of manifestation, she was the last. And in her special nature, in the quality of her vibration, she is very close to... even a little child. She likes young people, children, things in the making, which have a long way before them to be transformed and perfected. She likes the activities of the young. She is the youngest in nature and the last to manifest.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of a "conscious hand"; what does that mean ?

What ! I have told you this I don't know how many times, I have explained it hundreds of times and you still ask this question ? I have told you that no matter what you want to do, the first thing is to put consciousness in the cells of your hand. If you want to play, if you want to work, if you want to do anything at all with your hand, unless you push consciousness into the cells of your hand you will never do anything good — how many times have I told you that ? And this is felt. You feel it. You can acquire it. All sorts of exercises may be done to make the hand conscious and there comes a moment when it becomes so conscious that you can leave it to do things; it does them by itself without your little mind having to intervene.

Sri Aurobindo says here about Mahalakshmi: "All that is poor... repels her advent" ?

Ibid., p. 31

Yes, poor, without generosity, without ardour, without amplitude, without inner richness; all that is dry, cold, doubled upon itself, prevents the coming of Mahalakshmi. It is not a question of real money, you know! An extremely rich man may be terribly poor from Mahalakshmi's point of view. And a very poor man may be very rich if his heart is generous.

When we say "a poor man — un homme pauvre", what is the exact meaning of "poor man" ?

A poor man is a man having no qualities, no force, no strength, no generosity. He is also a miserable, unhappy man. Moreover, one is unhappy only when one is not generous — if one has a generous nature which gives of itself without reckoning, one is never unhappy. It is those who are doubled up on themselves and who always want to draw things towards themselves, who see things and the world only through themselves — it is these who are unhappy. But when one gives oneself generously, without reckoning, one is never unhappy, never. It is he who wants to take that is unhappy; he who gives himself is never so.

> *"Chance can only be the opposite of order and harmony. There is only one true harmony and that is the supramental — the reign of Truth, the expression of the Divine Law. In the Supermind, therefore, chance has no place. But in the lower Nature, the supreme Truth is obscured: hence there is an absence of that divine unity of purpose and action which alone can constitute order. Lacking this unity, the domain of the lower Nature is governed by what we may call chance — that is to say, it is a field in which various conflicting forces intermix, having no single definite aim."*
>
> "Chance", *Questions and Answers 1929-31*

> *If chance is the expression of disorder in the lower worlds, still there are "happy" chances which are not necessarily the expression of a disorder, aren't there ?*

Happy for whom ? For generally in this world as we see it, what is happy for one is unhappy for another; what is happy in one case is unhappy in another, and that too is an expression of disorder. I don't say that necessarily it is a chance occurrence which makes you unhappy, I say that it does not correspond to the order of truths, which is very different. One may be very happy in the midst of disorder ! There are many who are perfectly satisfied with their disorder and would not like to change it.

> *A happy chance may come from a set of circumstances which harm nobody.*

We do not see it harming anyone or anything simply because we do not have sufficient data. We cannot judge circumstances, for we do not know the world. What do we know about it ? Our

vision is so short and so limited. Just think, a man can never know what lies beyond his hundred and twenty years, at the maximum, and I am putting a very big limit, and I count the first years of his existence, though generally he does not remember what has happened then. What does one know about the world in so short a time ? and about the consequences of things ? Nothing at all. And even granting that one can remember sufficiently well to know the result or antecedent of a so-called "chance", it is altogether a local knowledge. What does one know about what is happening at the antipodes or in a million other places on the earth at the same moment ? We know nothing about it. And as we know that all that happens is linked, that all things are closely linked, consciously, that there cannot be a vibration in one place without there being its consequences in another, how can we tell whether our chance is not harmful to someone, though it be favourable for us ? I think it is impossible to form a judgment... how shall I put it ? a correct judgment about things, for one does not know what is going on in the world. We do not know the whole, we know nothing of the play of forces. And we say that chance is the result of a play of forces; only, instead of being the expression of divine harmony, it is the expression of conflicting wills. These wills are not all necessarily bad or hostile but they are always ignorant. Each one tries to realise his own will and the victory is to the strongest — the strongest is not necessarily the best in this field. When one thing is realised, how many others could have been realised, which were not, because this one was realised ? And all these things, we do not know. We cannot compare what is with what could have been.... No, I have not said anywhere that chance was necessarily the work of hostile forces, but it is certainly the work of ignorant forces.

From a scientific point of view chance is considered as something without a cause or as the result of a number of small causes which intervene and are more

or less independent of each other, giving rise to the notion of disorder. But how to know whether a thing, an event, etc. is due to chance or not ? The word "chance" is rather a way of speaking, isn't it ?

But that is exactly what I am saying ! I never said that chance did not have a cause. You say that a thing is due to "chance" because you cannot discern all the causes which have brought about that thing. But one who is in contact with the divine truth can know very well if it came from there or not — quite easily.

But for one who can follow causes and effects...

Excuse me, we have given a definition, we have said that unless an event is the result of the intervention of the divine Will expressed without mixture, it is a question of what we call "chance".

Then in the ordinary world many things are due to chance.

But of course, I have not said anything else ! In the ordinary world all is the reign of chance, except, from time to time, something of which the cause is indiscernible to the crowd but discernible to one who is in touch with the divine Will. That alone escapes chance — this does not happen very, very often, so it is not too risky to say that all things in this world happen through chance.

We are here then by chance ?

One cannot generalise. Nor can one ask personal questions. So we shall say vaguely that for some it is a chance event, but for others it is a divine Will.

Even in the ordinary world it is not only chance which acts. Thus for the molecules of hot gas there are two movements which seem to be superimposed: a disorderly movement and a combined movement. Probably we may then say that the happenings of the ordinary world are a mixture of these two movements: a disorderly movement and a concerted movement which aims at a fixed goal ?

You have found that all by yourself !

You have said in the same talk: "Peace has been given to you several times and often you lost it...."

"Chance", *Questions and Answers 1929-31*

Yes, how many times has peace been given to you and how many times have you lost it ? Innumerable times, I have said. Divine peace, not only ordinary peace (because, for ordinary peace, I believe you may go a round of the world several times without finding it) but divine peace has been given to you and every time you have lost it. Why ? Because something in you refuses to give up its petty selfish routine.

But divine peace is always there, isn't it ? It is not "given" ?

You must not forget that when I said that, we were a small group of twelve to sixteen, gathering regularly, and it was to these I was speaking. I never thought I would be reading this to more than fifty people, never. But I said this positively to those who were there, in that little group, those to whom I had given this peace innumerable times, and every time they had lost it. That is what I mean, it was something altogether particular. Now, generally speaking, for those who are here, one may say as you do that peace is constantly given (as also consciousness,

force, knowledge) to a certain extent, as much as the mind is able to receive it. So it can no longer be said that it is "lost"; but one becomes aware of it, then unaware, and again aware, then again unaware; quite simply for a reason similar to the one I have given (for it is always true, whether there are sixteen or eighteen or a hundred and fifty or seven hundred, the reason is almost the same) — that even when you are well-intentioned there is something in the being which clings desperately to its habits. People imagine that if something has changed in their little outer habits, they have made a great progress; they tell you, "But don't you see ? I travel, I change my environment, change circumstances and I adapt myself very well." All that means nothing at all. It is the inner habits, the inner reactions, the inner way of seeing, the way of thinking, of directing one's action, it is this which refuses to change, which finds it so difficult to change.

When you speak of "giving peace" do you refer to a special gift or to something general ?

It is special, it is something put upon you, with insistence, and then, for some seconds or some minutes, or even some hours, you feel it. You feel suddenly filled with peace, force, light — sometimes even with yet more precious things: knowledge, consciousness, love. And then, it disappears. Then you say, "Oh ! truly, these divine forces are not generous. They make you taste the thing to see how good it is, then take it away from you so that you may desire it all the more !" This is the usual conclusion.

Yet we know the causes which prevent us from keeping the given peace and we try to get rid of these obstacles.

And so you enter into a terrible battle and lose the peace still

more !... You mean that when one loses the contact and makes an effort, one manages to get rid of the obstacle ? That happens only when you are truly an Al sadhak ! There are not many who do that. Those who do it I must congratulate, for they will go very fast. But there are not many who know the cause — I have told you that — ninety-nine times out of a hundred it is the poor Divine who is guilty: it is He who has given and then withdrawn what He gave; He is quite whimsical. He makes you taste of the wonderful fruit like that, then He takes it away from you, and then when He gets it into his head He gives it back to you.... Indeed, He is quite a fanciful personage !

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

Ah ! that, that is the work for each one. That is what I told you the other day, I read to you what Sri Aurobindo has written: "Do not harbour the indolent illusion that you will be given the aspiration and the work will be done for you." The aspiration must come from you and the abolition of the ego also. You are helped, you are supported; every time you take a step forward you will feel there is something which gives you all that is necessary to enable you to take the step, but it is you who must walk, no one will take you on his back and carry you.... Abolish the ego first, that's a wonderful programme ! Once the ego is abolished, there will be nothing more to do, all the work will be over, for it is precisely the ego which impedes you from being in touch with the Divine. Once the ego is gone, quite simply you will be like that, in a beatific union with the Divine, and all the work will be over. But generally, one does not begin by the end. In any case, what I have just told you holds good: to abolish the ego is your work. You will be helped, but you must walk on your own feet. Do not at all hope that someone is going to carry you on his back and that you will have nothing to do except let yourself be carried.

Index

Abdul Baha 316 ff.
Accidents
  causes 272 ff.
  chance and 148
  immunity from 121
  subtle-physical and 268
  vital body: protection of 63, 273
  witnesses 11
Action
  aim of 390
  attitude in 279-280
  doing the best possible 117, 119
  doing with interest 278
  ego and 281
  field of: individual consciousness 253 ff.
  free and imposed 32, 33
  fulfilling one's role 93
  judging 38 ff.
  meditation and action, 123
  rule of 13
  self-forgetfulness in 363
  surrender in 373
  without preference or desire 1, 12, 163, 388
Angels 165
Anger 170, 179
Animals
  mental life 167, 240
  psychic in 26-27, 28
  senses developed 236 ff.
  spirit of the species 237
  vanity of 29-30
Art
  curve of 302
  impressionist 301
  Japanese 306 ff.
  modern 297 ff., 302
  modern, beginning of 299
  photography and 300
  realism 302
  Renaissance 301
  Second Empire: its art 301
  truth in 313
  war, effect of 302-303
Artists
  Cézanne 300
  great artists of the same period 311
  Manet 301
  Moreau, Gustav: his disciple 298
  private lives of 156
  true 364
Ascetic
  avoids contagion of men 75
  egoism 334
  past life 148
  way: suppressing the problem 179, 382
Ashram
  Sri Aurobindo's expectation from Ashramites 383, 411
  attitudes, sample collection of 215-216
  basis of its creation 93
  idea of "immortality" 69
  meditation in 106
  members of 255-256, 408
  reactions in 388
  surcharged with force and vibrations 222 ff.
Aspiration
  bargaining and 101
  best form of meditation 104 ff.
  cells, in the 339
  constant 2, 34
  desire and 101, 136
  development of 343
  Divine Love: to become conscious of 244 ff.
  Divine Will: to feel 2
  doing one's best 117, 119
  first movement of 67
  pressure on the outer crust 100, 282
  response to 98, 99
  spiritual 165, 304
  suffering and 295
  tapasya and 343, 344
  technique and 42
  vigilant 180, 335, 360, 362
  will and 117, 254, 282-283

Astrology 312
Asuras
  the greatest beings of light 119, 188
  the Lord of Falsehood 185 ff.
  see Forces
Atavism 261
Atom
  idea of another dimension 139
  presence of the Divine in the 139, 240
  psychic in the 141
Attitude
  baby-cat 94
  changing oneself 253 ff.
  experiences, towards 361
  in games 388-389
  inner 403
  mental; with Guru 76-77, 91
  offering, in 133
Sri Aurobindo
  aura felt by the Mother 223, 230
  conversations with the Mother 85
  cures illnesses 264
  cures Kiki, Mother's cat 238
  expects from us, what he 383
  on choice: extract from a letter 327, 341 ff., 343, 347 ff.
  on God: a child 291
  on "new edition of the old fiasco" 349
  on personal effort 411
  story of clocks 275
  style: poetic terms 10
    sentences 367 fn.
  "The Divine Superman" 351
  The Human Cycle 311
  The Mother 403 ff.
  theory of creation 214
  "The Way" 351
  Thoughts and Glimpses 291
  transformation envisaged by him 18
  "transformation, irrevocable" 357
  Veda, articles on 136
  Yoga, his 333
Authority
  human, a symbol 92
Avatar
  Vibhuti and 398-399

B

Balance
  evil: disbalance 40
  obsession and 346
  of forces 251
  perfection and 14-16, 24
Beauty
  home of 403
  imagining beautiful life 155
  Japanese life and 306 ff.
  modern art and 297, 299
  periods of artistic beauty 311 ff.
  physical 55-57
  sense of, in the vital 165-166
  true 166
Beings
  of higher worlds 165, 184, 396
  see Overmind; Vital
Blavatsky, Madame 275
Body
  avatar and vibhuti 398-399
  cells 212, 339
  conscious hands 404
  correspondence with inner movements 264
  curing by descent of consciousness 251
  curing by different means 266-271
  death *see* Death
  endurance 54, 251
  exteriorisation, total 142
  fainting 125
  food 334
  formation by psychic being 144-145
  going out of the 127-128, 220, 270
  habits of 345, 367
  illness *see* Illness
  inner states, expressed by 55
  mental control 355
  obedient 79
  physical beauty 55-57
  physical perfection: goal of 123, 326 ff.
  physical training, value of 56
  realisation by one body 159
  receptivity 265 ff.
  reflexes: experiments 212
  senses: twelve in developed being 230, 235

slave of mind and vital 53
somnambulism 126 ff.
spirit of the form: mummy 195 ff.
subconscient: influence 211, 251
subtle, and illness 268
transformation of 18
value 123
vital and 264, 368
yoga of the body 338-340
Books
elevating ending 155
ordinary 152
reading to study a language 154
understanding a book 198 ff.
viewpoints in 202
Boredom 89
origin of all stupidities 205
Brain
ballast in 305
comprehension, phenomenon of 111, 198, 267
formation of 140, 198
making supple 203 ff.
sense-functioning and 11
sleep, in state of 353
Buddha
Buddhistic realisation 328
Buddhistic terms 257-258
on desire 382-383
on individuality, an illusion 174
on self-control 90
standpoint of 213-214
teaching of 293
Bulletin, purpose of 7

C

Cat
attitude of baby-cat 94
Kiki, Mother's cat 237 ff.
lives in the vital: cases of exteriorisation 323
Mother's observation 27 ff.
Catastrophes 44, 175 ff.
Egyptian tombs and 197
vital being causes 192
Cells
cellular consciousness 339
experience in 255
fear in 212
song of the 339
Ceremony
installation of idols 397
utility: after death 204 ff.
Chance 148, 406-408
Change *see* Transformation
Character
anger, rejecting 170
changing it 5, 92, 118, 262, 342
defect: overcoming a 178 ff.
forming 304
habits, old 345
revealed in sleep 60
Child
aspiration for exceptional 145, 168, 260
brain: before the age of seven 140
eyes of 26
first cry 140, 142
fourteen, till age of 6
inner life and imagination 128
inner truth 26
learning from 91
little children and energy 4
obedience 93
psychic in 140, 146, 246
qualities to cultivate 24-26, 28
remembering past lives 149
understanding the child 157
war-children 303
young people and Mahasaraswati 404
Choice
Sri Aurobindo's letter on 348
choosing what to manifest 326-327
constant 343
double life and 378
preference, without 1, 327
psychic's 145
Christ
day of birth 6
Muslim story about 82 fn., 370
Cinema
perfection of instrument 326
Civilisation
great periods 311-312
prepares physical instruments 329-330
present 304-305

Index

Clairvoyance 125 ff., 274
Cleanliness
  inner and outer 360
Collectivity
  collective concentration 105, 106
  inferior to individual 36
  interdependence of individual and 382
Commerce 376-377
Concentration
  attention, perfect 5, 199, 364-365
  illness, rejecting 269, 282
  intellectual and other 4
  intensifying of 100, 105, 137 ff.
  listening in silence 199, 208
  meditating: concentrating 104, 121
  meditation and 7-8, 121 ff.
  opening, inner, and 8-9, 180
  passing behind the idea 346
  playground 105 ff., 122
  remembrance of the Divine and 121, 388-389
Confidence
  eliminating fear 211
  inner certitude 73, 94, 134
Consciousness
  being and 233
  brain and 198
  cells, in 339, 404
  change of 18, 97, 99-100, 220, 293
  creatrix 10, 174, 234, 241
  definition and explanation 233 ff.
  deflection: accident 272-273
  Divine Consciousness 160 ff., 247
  energy, realising 161 fn.
  global 162
  gnostic 157-158
  immobile and serene 1, 10
  imprisoned, feels 97, 100
  inconscience 241
  individual 172 ff., 404
  inner and higher 9, 18
  instrument and 40-41
  mirror 254
  "one" 12, 234
  physical: habits 367-368
  physical Nature and 372
  progressive 220
  psychic 232
  reflects the Supreme 254
  reversal of 19, 357
  somnambulism and 126 ff.
  spirit of the species 237
  thought and 240
  transcendental 221
  true 1-2, 234
  true self 36
  wakefulness, constant 327
  witness 233
Consciousness: on becoming conscious
  attentive observation 35
  exercise for becoming conscious 38-39, 88
  faults, getting rid of 74, 88, 180, 360-361
  of Divine Love 244 ff.
  of surrounding atmosphere 222 ff.
  of the origin of one's movements 38 ff., 248, 335
  of the parts of the being 34, 179 ff., 233, 336
  self-mastery, for 2, 34, 37, 39, 74
  sleep, in state of 352-353
Consciousness: states of
  gaps in ladder of being 61
  levels of consciousness 152 ff.
  levels of physical consciousness 235
  parts of which one is not conscious 73, 336
  union with the Divine 153, 401
Consecration 132 ff., 339, 363
Control
  physical, vital, mental 335-336
  repression 59
  self-control 1, 34, 90, 262
  vital: controlling anger 250
Conversion 92, 102, 103
Country
  atmosphere 223, 230
  history of a 111
  inner affinity 259
  mental affinity between different peoples 227
  see Egypt; Europe; India; Japan
Courage 53, 351
Creation
  consciousness at origin 234
  impermanence 213-214

of material worlds 241 ff.
of universe 162, 220, 370-371
reason for its existence 161, 173 ff.
simultaneous: but earth is special 243
story of creation 394
theories of 214
time and 162, 220, 394
Cross 44-45, 317-318, 393
Culture 311

D

Death 23, 171 ff.
alliance with 339
attitude towards 355-356
exteriorisation: stories of cats 321 ff.
exteriorisation total 142
Lord of 188
seeing someone after his death 321
vital: after death 191, 204
Depression
egoism and 10
energy lost 10
mastering 342
progress and 116
revolt through 52
vital reaction 248-249
Descartes 172, 294
Desire
action and 1-2
aspiration and 136 ff.
death, after 191
defense against 325
deforms 12, 113, 293
help and obstacle 3, 349
need and 49, 332, 384-385
not physical 325
obsession and 346
preference and 1, 12, 388
vibration of 382-383
vital 58, 191
Detachment 163, 304, 383, 384
Determinism
influence of will of Divine Grace 160-161
law of consequence 177
of each plane 83 ff., 371
Difficulties
aspiration to overcome 180, 383
atavistic 261
makes Mantra spring up 389-390
ordeal of fire 354
persisting in error 74, 333
proportionate to individual consciousness 44, 74
raison d'être of 118
rejecting 170, 337-338
standing back from 73 ff.
vital 248 ff.
Dimensions 19, 139 ff., 220
Discernment 50, 244, 295, 385, 386-387
Discipline 5, 124, 126, 153, 343-344, 363, 372
Divine
all-powerful 115
cloak, using Divine as a 77
creation: manifestation of the One 174, 217, 328
creation: to become aware of Himself 174, 234
creation: to objectify Himself 160 ff.
descent of Love 241 ff.
evil and the 288
finding the Divine 68
forgotten Himself 252
God, and the Truth 2
guilty 411
morality of the Divine 81, 176
pleasing the Divine 17
Presence 20, 26, 81
principles: transcendent, universal, individual 392-393
realising the 255
religion, the Divine of 289
sacrifice of the Divine 240, 316
sole support 339, 391
veiled by material nature 370
way of working of 115-116, 354, 368
Will, Divine, knowing the 2
Dogma 25, 284
Dreams
children's 128, 149
different kinds 57, 60
explanations 319 ff.
fear in dreams 60
meeting unknown people 108
musical compositions 127
nightmares 129, 192-194

noting dreams 59, 62
remembrance of past lives 148 ff.
seeing places, people, trains, etc. 107, 108, 319 ff.
seeing the Mother 113
sleep, dreamless 107-108
symbols 107, 149

E

Earth
concentration of consciousness 220, 243
earth-memory 110-112, 124
existence and its reason 242
new forces 220
place for psychic progress 144, 165
responsibility of 246
story of 22
symbolic point 242
Education
endless 331
idea of evil 23-24
learning: necessary to unlearn 203
of oneself 385
psychic and 26
sacerdotal 93
school: Ashram school 3, 24 ff.
school: what should be done there 3, 364-365
understanding difficult subjects 198
Effort
constant 346
endurance to change 251, 336
gives joy 31-33
personal 94, 367-368
Ego
abolishing 333, 411
deforms 401-402
egoistic illness 10
individual deformation 401-402
individuality: not due to ego 174
living in the 280-281
mental construction 200
renouncing 70
spiritual 364
watching oneself 361-362
Egoism
different kinds of 334
hindrance to supramental manifestation 383
individual 66
work on one's own self: different from 254, 411
Egypt
feast of light 6
great ages of 312
violation of tombs 196 ff.
Elizabeth I 150
Elite 147, 156
Endurance 54, 251
Energy
effort without calculation 32-33
exchange of energies 6, 33
in the new world 70
receiving and spending 4-5
terrestrial, contacting 10
Enthusiasm 248 ff.
Entities
gentle 275
intolerable in physical atmosphere 274 ff.
miracles with help of vital entities 83, 86 ff.
vital: after death 191 ff.
Envelope
protective 63, 273, 324-325
subtle-physical and psychological 324-325
vital 63, 273
Equality 90
of soul, basis of receptivity 96, 97
Equilibrium 14-16, 24, 63
Error 74, 214-215
Eternity
impression of beginning 217
time is relative 232, 394
Europe
buildings in 308
great ages 311 ff.
war, effect of 303
Europeans 306, 312-313
Evil 23-24, 40, 287
Evolution
in cycles 311

Experience
consciousness to understand 234
Divine Presence 134-135
evaluation of 229-230
inner and outer change 349-350
mental constructions 194
mental, of Sachchidananda 400
narrating experiences 76 ff.
seeing behind words 64
silencing the mind 62, 182, 231
transcendental: untranslatable 221-222
truth of experience 395
Exteriorisation 124, 126, 127 ff., 142, 195, 220, 270, 321 ff.
Eyes
hand on the eyes 273
mirror of soul 26
subtle-physical 320

F

Fairies
gentle entities 275
treasure in fairy-tales 189 ff.
Falsehood 23-24
Lord of 185 ff.
vital beings and 185
Family 70-71, 259, 262
see Parents
Fear
cause of 211-212
cells, in 212
cure of 213
illness caused by 263
in dreams 60
light, pressure: fear of 206
Flame, inner 100, 105, 132, 136, 137, 352, 354
Flowers
sense of beauty: rose 166
significance of 167
"transformation" 393
Food
amount of inconscience 334
Force(s)
adverse: the right to test 354
curing oneself 266-267
Divine: accomplishes all 379-380
Divine: upsets people 96, 98
exchange of forces 35 ff.
hostile: how to face 169
hostile: reason for 188, 252
money: impersonal 379
new 220
opening to forces 294 ff.
play of 163, 407
Freedom *see* Liberation; Liberty
Free Will 161, 343

G

Games
accidents in games 273
aspiration and technique 41-42
basketball: attitude of inner meditation 121
concentration and remembrance of the Divine 388-389
playing to win 10, 42
Generosity
generous heart: a richness 405
material and moral 30
Genius 40, 155
Gnostic Consciousness 157-158
Goal 164, 181, 213, 351, 356, 390
God
ideas of 176, 289
incarnate: demi-gods 184
see Divine
Good
good and evil 25, 80, 119
ideas of what is good 101
Gossip 152-153, 201
Grace 161, 177, 243, 279 ff., 317, 387
Greece 312
Guide
Guru: calling the 129
Guru: receiving from 390-391
Guru: says what is to be done 91
Guru: telling one's experience 76 ff.
inner 25
true 25

H

Habits 261, 342, 345, 367, 376, 410
Hands, conscious 404

Harmony 57, 166, 208, 403
Hierarchy 392
History
  and earth-memory 110-111
  of the earth 242
Hitler 185 ff., 188
Honesty 379-380
Hostile forces *see* Forces
Humour, sense of 250, 254

I

Ideal 114
Ideas 47, 85, 99, 202, 346
Identification 133, 174, 328-329, 363
Ignorance
  definition of 164
  difficulties of 251
  elements unwilling to change 74, 332
  general 90
  getting out of 69
  material world and 276
  misery and 292
  spokesmen of 342
Illness
  caused by fear 263
  curing: by faith 209-210
  curing: spiritually 74, 264, 266-271, 282
  curing: with the help of microbes 210
  Mantra and 389
  rejecting from subtle body 267-269
  resistance of vital body 63
  sunstroke, curing 270
  vital being, possession by 185
Illusion 277 ff., 383
Imagination 81, 154-155
Immortality 69, 171
Impulses 77-78, 387
Inconscience 119, 240, 241, 283
India
  great ages 312
  Indian compared with European 312-313
  number of souls in 48
  plants used for adoration 167
  privileged 303
Individual
  definition of 172, 327-328
  individual path 351
  infinitesimal role 163
  limited conception 115-116
  mission 118, 324
  origin of 174
  parts 80
  psychic and 173
Individualisation 36, 149, 174, 195
Inertia 349, 366-367
Infinite
  combinations in universe 217
  experience of the Infinite 98
Influences 36, 37
Initiation
  change of character 92
  hierarchies 392
  revelation of knowledge 222, 264
  schools of 197
Insincerity 109, 252 ff.
Inspiration 94
Instinct
  lower nature 332
  psychic in animals 28
  spirit of the species 237 ff.
Instruments 40-41, 195 ff., 325-326, 329
Intuition 85, 235

J

Japan
  art 306 ff.
  gardens and landscapes 306 ff.
  literature 309
  manners and peoples 309-310
  visions of the Mother 319 ff.
Joy
  of aspiration 105, 137
  of conversion 103
  of effort 31
  of self-giving 134, 316-317
  of work 373
Judgment
  abstaining from 3
  correct 11
  human, of good and evil 80 ff.
  judging oneself in the light of the ideal 38 ff.

of things and men 46 ff., 117
of the universe 117, 177
reconciling opposites 12
results, by 388
Justice
divine 91
human notion of 101

K

Kali 397-398
Karma *see* Determinism
King, experiences of 144, 150
Knowledge
contrary ideas harmonised 158
ideas and 47
knowing by identity 12, 158, 364
knowing oneself 34 ff., 292
limited, of the world 407
of truth 3, 387
reality surpasses metaphysics 215-216
thoughts and 47
understanding a difficult subject 198
understanding correctly 198
vista of 331

L

Language
explanations in final analysis 221, 370
of outer being 366 fn.
science: each has its language 170, 312
value of 283 ff.
Law of being 327
Laziness
tamas and 366-367
Learning 331
from a small child 91
Legends 187
Liberation
from bondage to law of consequences 177
from family atavism 262
people who seek 350
Liberty
licence and true liberty 90 ff., 177
Lies
influence of atmosphere 37
telling lies 261, 337-338
Life
aim gives joy 31
aim of 117-118
birth: responsibility 246
changing its quality 121-122
circumstances and possibility 213
enlarges and illumines itself 133
exchange of forces 35-36
gnostic 159
ideal of 356
interest in 89
new 70
past 71, 151, 183, 255
past: effort 329-330
past: remembrance and choice 143 ff., 147, 151, 183
private life and work 155-156
prolonging 331
reason of existence 356
science of living 34 ff.
Light
consciousness, higher, and 79
everywhere 349
feast of 6
inner 38-39
in the new world 70
opening the way to transformation 339
shadow and light 70, 118
simultaneity of knowledge 219
supramental 96
symbol 219
Love
born reluctantly 403
divine: becoming conscious of 244 ff.
grace and 243
in aspiration and desire 136
in the stone 240
maternal: in animals and men 27
matter: love in 166, 241
true 166

M

Madness 186, 194 ff.
Magre, Maurice 192

Index

Man
- aim on earth 117-118
- animals and 237
- animal, beautiful 32-33
- boredom: stupidities 89, 205
- cannot bear anything higher 206, 318
- changing oneself to change the world 253
- diversity of individual expression 327 ff.
- élite 147, 156
- greatness, recognised by criminal 93
- higher beings have their cross 44-45
- human authority, a symbol 92
- "human nature" 332
- lives in illusion 277 ff.
- made of many pieces 336
- mental fortress, shut up in 193, 199 ff., 202
- new man, becoming a 262
- obstacles necessary for perfect realisation 118
- perfection of 16
- personal value: true modesty 29
- power, becoming aware of 368-369
- protective envelope 324-325
- shut up in a sack 170
- understanding in silence 227
- understanding others 157
- universe: reduced to his size 177

Manifestation
- consciousness and instrument 40-41, 195 ff., 326
- deformation of divine powers 381
- impermanence 213
- individual 351
- perfection in 214
- variety in 329

Mantra 136, 389-390

Materialism
- basis of 279, 281, 312
- perfection in physical life 7, 325-326

Matter
- Divine Love in 240
- formation of material worlds 164, 276, 283
- love in 166, 241
- makes progress 210
- psychic's role 164-165
- supramental force acting on 223

Medicine
- makes progress 209, 210
- medical science on perfect balance 63
- wonders of 143

Meditation
- Ashram: in 106, 122 ff.
- concentration and 7-8, 104, 120 ff.
- different kinds of 104 ff.
- Samadhi, entering into 61
- spiritual life: not a sign of 103-104
- void, complete 281 ff.

Memory 110, 172, 173

Metaphysics 216

Metempsychosis 238-239

Mind
- analysing 94
- becoming aware 232
- beings of the mind 225 ff.
- confusion of 201, 295-296
- control: difficult to 335
- death, after 195
- derangement of 186 ff., 200
- ego, mental 200
- energy, paralysed by 6
- exercises to widen it 43 ff.
- experiences and 231
- exteriorisation 130
- fabricates 135, 231
- formation, power of 58
- gaps filled by 77, 109
- gilds everything 38
- help, its power to 183
- higher: from idea to consequence 85
- individualised 193, 195
- instrument of action 3
- Japanese life and art 306
- judging, not capable of 46, 224
- knowledge, not an instrument of 47, 170 ff., 224
- memory 110, 111
- mental affinity 227
- mental construction 193 ff., 200
- mental forms having their own laws 198
- mental fortress 193, 199 ff., 202
- mental insincerity 109, 135

mental intervention 182
mental nightmare 193 ff.
opening 18 ff.
organises 171
physical 50, 182, 225
playing a comedy 135
play of 170 ff., 201
possession 186 ff., 194
psychic, organised around 195
public place 335
receptivity: comprehension 265 ff.
rest, need of 62
Sachchidananda, experience of 400
silencing the mind 62, 182, 231
terrestrial mind 110-111
thought 201
time in mental consciousness 232
training the 203
unreliable 178, 180
vital and 178
weakness in 98, 346
Miracles 82 ff., 143
Misery 3, 40, 74, 289 ff., 405
Misfortune *see* Unhappiness
Modesty 29
Money 375-381
treasure guarded by serpent 189, 382
Morality 80-81
of the Divine 81, 176
truth and 11
Mother
divine, Shakti 393-394
Mahakali and Kali 396-398
Mahalakshmi 403, 405
Mahasaraswati 403-404
"of dreams" 1, 10
transcendental 392-394
Mother: her personal or spiritual experiences
Abdul Baha 316-317
Ashram: in the 215-216, 384
atmosphere, changing 223
Sri Aurobindo: aura at two marine miles 223, 230
Sri Aurobindo: incidents 85, 238, 275
books, on 152-155
cats 27-28, 238
"Charity Bazar", story of 175 ff.
concentration at the playground 105 ff., 122
conscious of nights 62
dreams, recording 62
dreams, visions, seeing Mother in 113
experiences, explanation of 76-77
exteriorisation: story of cats 321 ff.
fainted on the Trocadero Square 125
fairy-like beings, helpful 275
flowers, significance of 167
games 42
going to her at night 130 ff.
human unity: Tolstoy's son 283
images of Kali 397
immortality, on 69-70
Japan 308 ff.
learning, on 91
lion, story of a 30
listens within 76
meditation at the Ashram 105 ff., 122
mental suggestions 236
metempsychosis, inverse 238
musician-boy, story of 98
necessities, on 385-386
peace, gift of 409-410
plasticity 207
possessed people, on 186 ff.
psychic contact given to a Japanese 310
repose in Sachchidananda 63
serpent guarding world-riches 189, 382
Shankara, on 119
sleep, conscious 62
stupidity, on 369
subtle-physical body and accidents 268
tamas, on 367
visions of Japanese landscapes 319 ff.
water-divining 236
yoga of the body 339
Mother: stories told by her
accident avoided 268
an artist and modern art 298 ff.
clairvoyant under chloroform 125
elephant and mahout 208

epidemic in Pondicherry 209
financier-speculator 86
Muslim story about Christ 82 fn.
on the number of souls in India 48
scientist on reflexes 212
Mummy 195 ff.
Musician
hands of 194
Tartini 127
Wagner 314
Mythology 184
legends 187

N

Nature
catastrophes 175
civilisation and 329
economy 205
movements of 22-23
perfection and 15-16
physical; and consciousness 372
Needs 49, 332, 384-385

O

Obsession 346
Occultism 124, 130, 230, 314, 397-398
clairvoyance 125
Offering
means of transformation 339, 373
receptivity of the whole being 122
self-giving, first movement of aspiration 67
surrender and consecration 132 ff.
will, offering the 114, 208
work as: basis in Ashram 93
Organisation
around the psychic centre 40, 195, 229
Overmind 165, 220, 396

P

Paradise 51
Paradoxes 118, 222
Parents
authority is a symbol 92
children, relation with 27-28
choice of developed psychic being 145
conception 260
Patience 95, 117, 183, 251, 336
Peace
action on body 266
inner, for receiving Force 63, 97
receiving it: why lost 409-410
Perception, objective 12, 222-223, 230, 235
Perfection 14, 24, 214, 233, 326, 329
Persecution
chambers of torture 304
horrors of First World War 304
of new path-finders 317-318
religions in Persia 316 ff.
Perseverance 53-54, 88, 95, 117, 181, 247, 251
psychic origin 254
Pessimism 22
Philanthropy 66, 290
Philosophy 216, 370
philosopher 195
Photography 300
Plants
consciousness 240
flowers and plants: sense of beauty, significance 166 ff.
in Japan 306-307
psychic in plants 26
vanity in 29
Plasticity
Divine Will: plastic to 207
of physical consciousness and nature 368, 374
understanding and 157
Possession: cases of 185 ff.
Possibilities 78
best possible happens 213, 214 ff.
Power
divine powers delegated 381
exhaustion of personal 180
idea of Mahakali's power 397
money, sex, and 381-382
possession of 86
Shakti, Divine 358
static and dynamic 368-369
Supreme: destroys vital being 187
vibrations, mastery over 383

Pralaya
  destruction of universe 23 fn.
  explanation of tradition 218
Preference 1-3, 202, 208, 388
Presence
  Divine 20, 81, 325
  Divine: in child, plant, animal 26
  divine spark: presence in atom 140-141
  earth, on 242
  experience of 134-135, 212, 325
  inner witness 233
Pressure 206
Pretence 75, 339
Pride *see* Ego; Vanity
Priest: occult knowledge 397
Problems 1, 61, 386
Progress
  blows from life 122
  change of being 102-103, 116
  change of consciousness 336
  changing vital's crises 52
  detachment, cultivating 304, 383, 384
  effort to 7 ff.
  guided by psychic being 146, 151, 165
  ideal, progress in light of 38-39
  infinite possibilities 78
  inner, applying materially 23-24, 181
  learning 203
  perfection and 14-16
  perpetual 200
  psychic being and 149, 165
  suffering helps 295, 355
  will to 78
Protection 129, 325
Psychic
  awakened: draws things which help 146, 149, 165, 261
  beauty, love 165-166
  being 140, 141
  beings, higher, and 184
  body and soul: inner preparation 95
  choice in reincarnation 145 ff., 148, 168, 183, 259
  communion: to understand Divine Love 244-245
  conscious 146, 168
  consciousness around divine spark 140, 149
  constant factor 173
  contact: cures stupidity 369
  contact: experience of a Japanese 310
  contact with 146 ff., 245 ff.
  dazzling when entered consciously 97
  development: sense of responsibility 246
  development: through lives 144, 146, 243
  divine spark and psychic 139 ff., 184
  dreams, psychic 149
  earth, upon 164 ff.
  few carry it within them 130, 139
  flowers, in 166 ff.
  formation, line of 183
  incarnation: aspiration of the mother 145, 168
  inner light 40
  love 165-166
  material world: no link with 247
  Matter, in 141, 165, 184
  mind and 27
  opening of psychic centre 20
  organisation around psychic centre 40, 229
  origin of 140 ff., 184
  possession by vital being 187
  Presence, divine, in 26
  progress 149, 165
  rebirth, cycles of 311
  relation with, established 325
  remembrance of past lives 143 ff., 147, 151
  sincerity, origin of 254
  soul: psychic and vital 137
  spiritual and 164 ff.
  suffering, above 45
  suffocation, sense of 97, 100
  terrestrial phenomenon 164-165, 243
  vibrations 245
  vision 20-21
  vital being drives out psychic 184 ff.
  will, inner, of 165
  witness 233
  work, divine: consecration to 147
  world 228-229

R

Ramakrishna 94 fn.
Rasputin 188
Realisation 16, 330, 355
  partial 116
Reality
  inner 25-26
  see Truth
Reason 46-47
Rebirth *see* Psychic; Reincarnation
Receptivity
  emptiness in oneself 283
  force and 96, 210
  increasing it 265 ff.
  Matter becomes receptive 210
  offering entire being 122, 400
Reincarnation 145 ff., 148, 168, 311
Relativity 232, 284
Relaxation 156, 205, 250, 265, 352-353
Religion
  divine's spark 139
  dogma 25
  food, consecration of 334-335
  hierarchy 392
  images in a temple 397
  knowledge not given to laity 398
  mental constructions 257
  miracles, revelations 82 ff.
  persecutions 316-318
  sacrifice in 316
  teachers 318, 349
Renaissance: Italian 301, 311
Repose
  climbing the ladder 156
  in Sachchidananda 63, 108
Repression 59, 60
Responsibility 72, 91, 246
Resurrection, miraculous 142
Revolt, in despair 52
Rules 13, 380, 384

S

Sachchidananda
  mental experience 399-400
  repose in this state 63, 108
  Sat-tat-cit-tapas 161 fn.
  upholds all the planes 400
Sacrifice
  basis of religions 316 ff.
  compared with surrender 315 ff.
  of the Divine 240, 316
Sadhak 411
Samadhi, trance 61
School, Ashram 3, 24 ff.
Science
  language, each has its 170, 283-284
  modern physics: atom 139
  of living 34, 327
  scientific spirit in spiritual things 76
  see Medicine
Scientist
  the Curies 195
Self, truth of being 36
Self-giving 68, 132 ff., 245, 358, 363
Senses
  animals, senses of 236 ff.
  function of organs 11-12
  twelve senses 230, 235 ff.
Serpent
  guarding a treasure 189, 382
  reflexes, human 212
Sex
  choice in reincarnation 183
  money and sex: the serpent 189, 382
  power, money, and 381-382
  sexual entities in atmosphere 192
  spiritual power and 314
Shankara
  illusory sense of individuality 174
  negation of this creation 119, 328
Silence
  listening in 199, 208
  means of communicating experience 222
  meditation 104
  mental 62, 182, 208, 231, 281, 333
  understanding in 227
Sincerity
  absolute, of consecration 208, 339
  attack, recognising its cause 52
  difficulties and 74
  divine voice, hearing the 87
  fault, recognising a 52, 116, 156-157, 360-361
  looking at oneself clear-sightedly 88, 99, 338, 388

mental 109, 158
perfect 17, 327, 340
precision of inspiration 120
psychic source 254
test of 354
true sincerity leads to the goal 74, 252
value of experience 135
Sleep
conscious, becoming 62
dreamless 107-108
Inconscient, going into the 318 ff.
learning to sleep 63, 108, 352-353
Mother: going to her 130-131
nightmare 129, 192
problem solved 61
protection in 129
qualities of sleep 60 ff.
repose in Sachchidananda 63, 108
Society 92
Somnambulism 126 ff.
Soul
eyes, mirror of 26
see Psychic
Space 162, 221
Sphinx, of eternity 1
Spirit 164
Spiritualism 86
Spirituality
healing, spiritual 266-271
psychic and spiritual 164 ff.
signs of entering the path 103
term employed vaguely 226
Stalin 188
Story, value of a 154-155, 283
Stupidity
boredom: origin of 89, 205
curing oneself of it 369
different kinds 51, 170, 201
judging the Divine Will 388
Lord's contact, and 205
relaxation and 156
Subconscient
atavism 261
effect of books read 152
effect of gossiping 152-153
increasing one's load 156
influence on the body 211
place of insincerity 252
suggestions in 236
suppressed desires 59
things rooted there 261
Subtle-physical 110, 125, 230
Success 15
Suffering
attitude, inner 317-318, 355
insincerity 252
proportionate to capacity 44-45
raison d'être 295
Superconscient
sleep 318
solves problems 60
Supermind
force, feeling the 223-224
Overmind domination, replacing 220
receiving it 96, 383
Supramental knowledge, understanding 222
Supramental light 96
time on this plane 162
Surrender
attitude of baby-cat 94
choosing to make it 244, 343-344
discipline and surrender 72
happy, strong and useful 358
liberty, true 91
nature, surrendering one's 183, 373-374
offering and consecration 132 ff.
sacrifice and 315 ff.
self-giving 68
total 91, 343-344, 347, 357
Symbolism, physical 220

T

Tamas
food and 334
how to come out of it 349
laziness and 366-367
Tapasya
danger of 72
definition 344
right way of doing 364
surrender and 72
see Discipline

Teacher
inspiration and knowledge 41
mission of 3
representing the Truth 92 ff.
spiritual teacher 75, 82
Technique
consciousness and 42
Teresa, Saint 287
Thesis
antithesis and synthesis 44
Thought
analysing 94
body, compared with 219-220
consciousness and 240
controlling 335
enlarging to understand 265 ff.
ideas and true knowledge 47, 202
light and 219
suggestion and 236
thinking and speaking 201
with words 99
Time
changes with the plane 220
creation and 161-162
prolongation of life-time 331
relative 232
succession 161
Supermind plane, time on 162
transcendence and time 394
Tradition
ancient, of seven universes 23 fn.
creation 234
gods incarnating on earth 184
Nordic 314
pralaya 218
psychic: terrestrial formation 243
Tranquility
static power in 368-369
see Peace
Transcendence 393-394
Transformation
Sri Aurobindo on "irrevocable transformation" 357
change and 102, 336, 349-350
changing one's way of being 121-122, 253, 262, 333, 373
changing the world 253
constant 214
elements which do not wish to change 73-74, 410
integral: positive and negative movement 358-359
knowing and changing oneself 39, 77-78, 118, 338
personal and collective 382-383
physical 18
progress, inner, and 181
vital: process of 180, 247 ff.
weaknesses, searching for 252, 337, 361-362
Trust *see* Confidence
Truth
arriving at 284-285
aspect of That 2
attitude for understanding 49
explanation, beyond all 221
knowledge of 3, 20-21, 158
"lesser Truth" 344
morality and truth 11
order of truths 406
partial and true 116
supreme 91
surpasses thought 215

U

Unhappiness 45, 289-290, 293, 405
Unification 80 ff., 88, 106
Unity
diversity and 324, 328
human: Tolstoy's son 285
original 324, 329
Universe
all things indispensable 285
beyond the universe 221
conceptions of 214, 371
consciousness, unfolding of 174, 217, 220
constitution of 164
Divine, the, and 160 ff.
expanding 220-221
explains each thing 154
infinite gradations 83 ff.
motive of 161, 324
multiplicity and unity 327-329
new, eternally 218

origin of 23 fn.
possibilities realised 148
raison d'être of 161, 174
seven created universes 23 fn.

V

Vanity
egoism 39
plants and animals 29
vital: full of 52
Veda
conception of creation 214
hymns 136
Vibhuti
and Avatar 398-399
Vibrations
acting upon 383
Ashram 216, 222 ff.
atmosphere of a place 223, 230
consequences of 407
influence of others 27, 36
psychic: in flowers 167
undesirable 335, 383
vital; and Divine Love 244
Vision
apparition which brings about accident 274
clairvoyance 125
contact with unknown events 110
false 108 ff., 113
seeing objectively 12, 13
seeing with subtle eyes 319
universal 22
Vital
active and dominating 367
battle 187, 194 ff.
beauty, love, in 165-166
beings 185, 187, 190
beings: incarnations 184 ff.
beings: no psychic 141 fn.
beings: recognising them 190
centre of dynamism 50, 59, 250
change, decision to 78 ff.
collaboration 50 ff.
death, vital after 191, 195, 204
deformed from birth 260
demands of 332
energy, realising 250
entities, miracles with help of 83, 86 ff.
envelope; protects 63, 273
equilibrium 63
exteriorisation: vital beings 129 ff.
hides in a corner 98, 359-360
image of Kali 397
intensity of will 254-255
letting it go and suppressing it 178
lower: troubled by discipline 345
mind and 50 ff.
nightmare 129, 192, 194 ff.
origin of illness 263
possession 185 ff.
purification: difficulty 52, 335
realisation in 78
refined 166
repression 178, 359
sincerity of discernment 50
soul and psychic 137
transformation 179 ff., 247 ff.
vibrations 244, 382-383
vital body can protect 63, 273
war, effect of 303-305
weaknesses 98, 99, 252, 332, 361
will and 254-255
world of horrors 303-304
worlds of disorder 141 fn.
Vivekananda
cleansing one's soul 360

W

War
effect on the world 303-305
effects, unfavourable, of 329
First World War 303-304, 322
Water
divining faculty 235-236
Weakness
Divine heals 391
insincerity 252
justified 332, 338
search for 361-362
Will
action of supreme Will 84, 408
change, will to 77 ff., 337, 350, 356

Divine, knowing the 2
free 343
intensity of 254
offering the 113, 117, 208
power and will 5
state of will 400-401
submitting each detail to higher Will 133
Supreme: deciding 339
Will, Divine
acting in accordance with 87 ff., 114, 117
contact with 135, 215
changes determinism 84, 160-161, 408
feeling it 2, 115
judging it 388
plastic to 207
recognising it: conditions for 208
Witness 233
Words
awkward and limited expression 160, 221-222, 395
experience seen behind 64
Hymns of the Veda 136
Mantra 389-390
thinking with words 99, 204
understanding behind words 227 ff.
Word as Speech 201, 367 fn., 395
see Falsehood; Gossip
Work
attitude in 33, 163, 215
basis of Ashram 93
changing the attitude in 373-374
conscious hands 404
development, means of 138
discipline, good 364, 372
identification: to work well 363
inner meditation and 121
instrument and 326
joy of 373
result and 163
Work, Divine
developed psychic being consecrated to it 147
everything a part of 115
World
badly made 288 ff.
chance, reign of 408
changing the 253
diversity 285
Divine, separated from the 288, 292
frightful: not to lament but to change it 253
illusion 277 ff.
misery 3, 40, 292 ff.
new 70
opposite of what it can become 119
other worlds 242
war, effect of 303-305
what it should be 291
worlds, invisible 392
Writers
Anatole France: one of his ideas 158
imagination: a quality 154-155
Maurice Magre 192
writing a book well 364

Y

Yoga
abstaining from gossiping 152-153
advancing, conditions for 99
approaches: power, peace, etc. 64, 66
attitude in action 133, 279-280
attitude, necessary 93-95
classical methods 193 ff.
decision to do yoga 78
detachment, state of 163, 304, 383, 384
discipline, yogic 343-344, 364
goal of 64
immunity from others' opinions 379
interest in doing 101
leaning on the Divine alone 339, 391
losing all to gain all 203, 247
manifestation: different explanations 180
miracles 82 ff.
moral notions 81, 101
offering food 335
personal method 180 ff.
precautions to take 272
prepared to do yoga 103, 255

preparing to do yoga 67, 68, 401
ready for the path: signs 97, 246
seeing with open eyes 212, 338
seriousness in 343, 345-346
stages in 181
surrender and tapasya 72
symbolism of dreams 107, 149
transformation 333
war: can lead to yoga 303-305
work 93, 132, 364, 372-373
world, without leaving the 378-379
"yoga of the body" 338-339