The Real Awakener

Further Lights on the Path

Words of the Mother – 12

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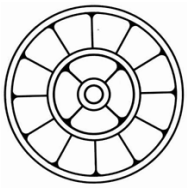

Do not take my words for a teaching. Always they are a force in action, uttered with a definite purpose, and they lose their true power when separated from that purpose.

– The Mother



The One whom we adore as the Mother is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, one and yet so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and far above all she creates.

– Sri Aurobindo

I. Questions and Answers, Jul. – Sep. 1958

1. Can Faith be Increased by Personal Effort*?

"Faith is certainly a gift given to us by the Divine Grace. It is like a door suddenly opening upon an eternal truth, through which we can see it, almost touch it.

As in everything else in the ascent of humanity, there is the necessity – especially at the beginning – of personal effort. It is possible that in some exceptional circumstances, for reasons which completely elude our intelligence, faith may come almost accidentally, quite unexpectedly, almost without ever having been solicited, but most frequently it is an answer to a yearning, a need, an aspiration, something in the being that is seeking and longing, even though not in a very conscious and systematic way. But in any case, when faith has been granted, when one has had this sudden inner illumination, in order to preserve it constantly in the active consciousness individual effort is altogether indispensable. **One must *hold on* to one's faith, *will* one's faith; one must seek it, cultivate it, protect it.****

In the human mind there is a morbid and deplorable habit of doubt, argument, scepticism. *This* is where human effort must be put in: the refusal to admit them, the refusal to listen to them and still more the refusal to follow them. No game is more dangerous than playing mentally with

** The titles marked with an * are from the original. All the unmarked titles in the text are from the Editor.*

*** Bold letters in the text, used here for emphasis, are from the Editor and are not there in the original.*

doubt and scepticism. They are not only enemies, they are terrible pitfalls, and once one falls into them, it becomes tremendously difficult to pull oneself out.

Some people think it is a very great mental elegance to play with ideas, to discuss them, to contradict their faith; they think that this gives them a very superior attitude, that in this way they are above "superstitions" and "ignorance"; but if you listen to suggestions of doubt and scepticism, *then* you fall into the grossest ignorance and stray away from the right path. You enter into confusion, error, a maze of contradictions.... You are not always sure you will be able to get out of it. You go so far away from the inner truth that you lose sight of it and sometimes lose too all possible contact with your soul.

Certainly a personal effort is needed to preserve one's faith, to let it grow within. Later – much later – one day, **looking back, we may see that everything that happened, even what seemed to us the worst, was a Divine Grace to make us advance on the way; and then we become aware that the personal effort too was a grace.** But before reaching that point, one has to advance much, to struggle much, sometimes even to suffer a great deal.

To sit down in inert passivity and say, "If I am to have faith I shall have it, the Divine will give it to me", is an attitude of laziness, of unconsciousness and almost of bad-will.

For the inner flame to burn, one must feed it; one must watch over the fire, throw into it the fuel of all the errors one wants to get rid of, all that delays the progress, all that darkens the path. If one doesn't feed the fire, it smoulders under the ashes of one's unconsciousness and inertia, and

then, not years but lives, centuries will pass before one reaches the goal.

One must watch over one's faith as one watches over the birth of something *infinitely* precious, and protect it very carefully from everything that can impair it.

In the ignorance and darkness of the beginning, faith is the most direct expression of the Divine Power which comes to fight and conquer."[1]

2. Is Religion a Necessity in the Life of the Ordinary Man*?

"**In the life of societies it is a necessity, for it serves as a corrective to collective egoism which, without this control, could take on excessive proportions.**

The level of collective consciousness is always lower than the individual level. It is very noticeable, for example, that when men gather in a group or collect in great numbers, the level of consciousness falls a great deal. The consciousness of crowds is much lower than individual consciousness, and the collective consciousness of society is certainly lower than the consciousness of the individuals constituting it.

There it is a necessity. **In ordinary life, an individual, whether he knows it or not, always has a religion but the object of his religion is sometimes of a very inferior kind.... The god he worships may be the god of success or the god of money or the god of power, or simply a family god: the god of children, the god of the family, the god of the ancestors. There is always a religion. The quality of the religion is very different according to the individual,**

but it is difficult for a human being to live and to go on living, to survive in life without having something like a rudiment of an ideal which serves as the *centre* for his existence. Most of the time he doesn't know it and if he were asked what his ideal is, he would be unable to formulate it; but he has one, vaguely, something that seems to him the most precious thing in life.

For most people, it is security, for instance: living in security, being in conditions where one is sure of being able to go on existing. That is one of the great "aims", one might say, one of the great motives of human effort. There are people for whom comfort is the important thing; for others it is pleasure, amusement.

All that is very low and one would not be inclined to give it the name of an ideal, but it is truly a form of religion, something which may seem to be worth consecrating one's life to.... There are many influences which seek to impose themselves on human beings by using that as a basis. The feeling of insecurity, uncertainty, is a kind of tool, a means used by political or religious groups to influence individuals. They play on these ideas."[2]

"…truly, everyone has his own religion, whether he knows it or not, even when he belongs to the great religions that have a name and a history. It is certain that even if one learns the dogmas by heart and complies with a prescribed ritual, everybody understands and acts in his own way, and only the name of the religion is the same, but this same religion is not the same for all the individuals who think they are practising it. We can say that without some expression of this aspiration for the Unknown and the

highest, human existence would be very difficult. If there were not at the heart of every being the hope of something better – of whatever kind – he would have difficulty in finding the energy needed to go on living.

(*Silence*)

But as very few individuals are capable of thinking freely, it is much easier to join a religion, accept it, adopt it and become a part of that religious collectivity than to formulate one's own cult for oneself. So, apparently, one is this or that, but in fact it is only an appearance."[3]

3. How Can the Faculty of Intuition be Developed*?

"**There are different kinds of intuition, and we carry these capacities within us.** They are always active to some extent but we don't notice them because we don't pay enough attention to what is going on in us.

Behind the emotions, deep within the being, in a consciousness seated somewhere near the level of the solar plexus, there is a sort of prescience, a kind of capacity for foresight, but not in the form of ideas: rather in the form of feelings, almost a perception of sensations. For instance, when one is going to decide to do something, there is sometimes a kind of uneasiness or inner refusal, and usually, if one listens to this deeper indication, one realises that it was justified.

In other cases there is something that urges, indicates, insists – I am not speaking of impulses, you understand, of all the movements which come from the vital and much lower still – indications which are behind the feelings, which come from the affective part

of the being; there too one can receive a fairly sure indication of the thing to be done. These are forms of intuition or of a higher instinct which can be cultivated by observation and also by studying the results. Naturally, it must be done very sincerely, objectively, without prejudice. If one wants to see things in a particular way and at the same time practise this observation, it is all useless. One must do it as if one were looking at what is happening from outside oneself, in someone else.

It is one form of intuition and perhaps the first one that usually manifests.

There is also another form but that one is much more difficult to observe because for those who are accustomed to think, to act by reason – not by impulse but by reason – to reflect before doing anything, there is an extremely swift process from cause to effect in the half-conscious thought which prevents you from seeing the line, the whole line of reasoning and so you don't think that it is a chain of reasoning, and that is quite deceptive. **You have the impression of an intuition but it is not an intuition, it is an extremely rapid subconscious reasoning, which takes up a problem and goes straight to the conclusions. This must not be mistaken for intuition.**

In the ordinary functioning of the brain, intuition is something which suddenly falls like a drop of light. If one has the faculty, the beginning of a faculty of mental vision, it gives the impression of something coming from outside or above, like a little impact of a drop of light in the brain, absolutely independent of all reasoning.

This is perceived more easily when one is able to silence

one's mind, hold it still and attentive, arresting its usual functioning, as if the mind were changed into a kind of mirror turned towards a higher faculty in a sustained and silent attention. That too one can learn to do. One *must* learn to do it, it is a necessary discipline.

When you have a question to solve, whatever it may be, usually you concentrate your attention here (*pointing between the eyebrows*), at the centre just above the eyes, the centre of the conscious will. But then if you do that, you cannot be in contact with intuition. You can be in contact with the source of the will, of effort, even of a certain kind of knowledge, but in the outer, almost material field; whereas, if you want to contact the intuition, you must keep this (*Mother indicates the forehead*) completely immobile. Active thought must be stopped as far as possible and the entire mental faculty must form – at the top of the head and a little further above if possible – a kind of mirror, very quiet, very still, turned upwards, in silent, very concentrated attention. If you succeed, **you can – perhaps not immediately – but you can have the perception of the drops of light falling upon the mirror from a still unknown region and expressing themselves as a conscious thought which has no connection with all the rest of your thought since you have been able to keep it silent. That is the real beginning of the intellectual intuition.**

It is a discipline to be followed. For a long time one may try and not succeed, but **as soon as one succeeds in making a "mirror", still and attentive, one always obtains a result, not necessarily with a precise form of thought but always with the sensations of a light**

coming from above. And then, if one can receive this light coming from above without entering immediately into a whirl of activity, receive it in calm and silence and let it penetrate deep into the being, then after a while it expresses itself either as a luminous thought or as a very precise indication here (*Mother indicates the heart*), in this other centre.

Naturally, **first these two faculties must be developed; then, as soon as there is any result, one must observe the result,** as I said, and see the connection with what is happening, the consequences: see, observe very attentively what has come in, what may have caused a distortion, what one has added by way of more or less conscious reasoning or the intervention of a lower will, also more or less conscious; and **it is by a very deep study – indeed, almost of every moment, in any case daily and very frequent – that one succeeds in developing one's intuition. It takes a long time. It takes a long time and there are ambushes: one can deceive oneself, take for intuitions subconscious wills which try to manifest, indications given by impulses one has refused to receive openly, indeed all sorts of difficulties. One must be prepared for that. But if one persists, one is sure to succeed.**

And there comes a time when one feels a kind of inner guidance, something which is leading one very perceptibly in all that one does. But then, for the guidance to have its maximum power, one must naturally add to it a conscious surrender: one must be sincerely determined to follow the indication given by the higher force. If one does that, then... one saves years of study, one can seize the result extremely

rapidly. If one also does that, the result comes very rapidly. But for that, it must be done with sincerity and... a kind of inner spontaneity. If one wants to try without this surrender, one may succeed – as one can also succeed in developing one's personal will and making it into a very considerable power – but that takes a very long time and one meets many obstacles and the result is very precarious; one must be very persistent, obstinate, persevering, and one is sure to succeed, but only after a great labour.

Make your surrender with a sincere, complete self-giving, and you will go ahead at full speed, you will go much faster – but you must not do this calculatingly, for that spoils everything!"[4]

4. The Power and the Absolute Indispensability of the Capacity of Concentration and Attention

"…whatever you may want to do in life, one thing is absolutely indispensable and at the basis of *everything*, the capacity of concentrating the attention. If you are able to gather together the rays of attention and consciousness on one point and can maintain this concentration with a persistent will, *nothing* can resist it – whatever it may be, from the most material physical development to the highest spiritual one. But this discipline must be followed in a constant and, it may be said, imperturbable way; not that you should always be concentrated on the same thing – that's not what I mean, I mean learning to concentrate.

And materially, for studies, sports, all physical or mental development, it is absolutely indispensable. And the value of an individual is proportionate to the value of his attention.

And from the spiritual point of view it is still more important.

There is *no* spiritual obstacle which can resist a penetrating power of concentration. For instance, the discovery of the psychic being, union with the inner Divine, opening to the higher spheres, *all* can be obtained by an intense and obstinate power of concentration – but one must learn how to do it.

There is nothing in the human or even in the superhuman field, to which the power of concentration is not the key.

You can be the best athlete, you can be the best student, you can be an artistic, literary or scientific genius, you can be the greatest saint with that faculty. And everyone has in himself a tiny little beginning of it – it is given to everybody, but people do not cultivate it."[5]

5. The Various Kinds of Forces that May be Called up by Using the Planchette and Their Possible Dangers

"…Sometimes there are no forces at all! It is the mental and vital vibrations of the people who use the planchette, and it is their own subconscious ideas which they bring up, ninety-eight times out of a hundred.* If they are in contact with invisible entities, it may be all sorts of things but nothing very advisable!

Almost with certainty it could be said that it is not what

** Later Mother added the following remark: "I say ninety times out of a hundred, for there are exceptions – I know of some – but they are so rare that it is better not to speak about them."*

people think it is, in the sense that most often they try to evoke what they call the "spirit" of a dead person, a relative or a friend or someone they loved and with whom they wish to remain in touch; and besides, they ask them the most foolish questions. Fortunately they don't succeed in disturbing them....

From this point of view one can say that if you had a relation of deep and sincere love with someone who has passed away, left his body, and if you are calm and strong enough yourself, this person may choose to take shelter vitally in your atmosphere – the atmosphere of the one he loves – for a more or less long period. In this case it means that the relation was very close, very intimate, and if you are not altogether materialistic to the point of not having any direct mental perception, you can remain in mental contact with this person, in communication with him. It is a rather exceptional case, for usually if your atmosphere is calm and strong enough to be able to truly serve as a protection, the person who has left his body enters into a deep rest there, and it is not at all good to disturb it; and the best thing you can do is to enfold this person with your love and leave him in peace.

Therefore, even if it were possible to enter into communication with him by this means, which I would call very crude, it would be improper to do so. But usually, people who have the capacity, the faculties required to serve as a shelter for some time, a transitional shelter for those who have gone, do not have this ridiculous idea of disturbing the rest of the one they love by tapping on a planchette... fortunately!

But those who indulge in this exercise, an exercise of unhealthy curiosity, get what they deserve; for the atmosphere we live in is filled with a great number of small vital entities which are born of unsatisfied desires, vital movements of a very low type, also the decomposition of larger beings of the vital world; indeed, it is swarming with them, you see. It is surely a protection that most people do not see what is going on in this vital atmosphere, for it is not especially pleasant; but if they have the presumption to want to come into contact with it and set about trying automatic writing or table-turning or... indeed, anything of this kind, out of an unhealthy curiosity, well, what happens is that one of these small entities or several of them have fun at their expense and collect all the necessary indications from their subconscious mind and then furnish these things to them as clear proofs that they are the person who has been called!"[6]

"…as a rule, it is – oh! most often – it is your own forces, your subconscious mental and vital forces which you put into the planchette – and you make sensational revelations to yourself! One can do many things in this way.... Once I wanted to prove to people that what they were evoking was nothing but themselves; so I had a little fun, simply with a concentration of the will, tapping the furniture, making tables walk and, well!... As for automatic writing, you only have to withdraw your conscious will into yourself, to let your hand go – just like this (*gesture*) – and leave it free, and then the hand will begin to make movements; but there is a little part in you which is interested and would like these movements to make sense and this little part appeals to the subconscious mind which begins to make sensational revelations. Indeed, it is a

booby-trap, all this business, unless one does it scientifically – but then, scientifically, one realises that it leads to nothing, nothing at all except just passing your time in what you consider an interesting way. In some cases vital entities really get hold of you, and there it is dangerous. But fortunately these cases are not very frequent. Then it becomes very dangerous."[7]

"…One can, if one has the knowledge, the control, the power, the ability to go into a certain state of passivity – one can very easily lend one's hand to someone, deliberately, knowing who it is and acting on a higher plane, but that already demands a great consciousness and a great self-mastery, which is not within everybody's reach. One must have quite a considerable inner development to be able to see whom one is dealing with on a particular plane and willingly lend oneself to the experiment with full knowledge of what one is doing and without losing one's control. Not everybody can play with that. But to work the planchette, one only has to delude oneself enough for it to start working!"[8]

6. Why Some People Need to Read Novels

"…People whose minds are insufficiently developed, whose minds are still in a tamasic state and half inert, need to read novels in order to wake up. It is not the sign of a very commendable state or at any rate a very high one. Well, in the field of inner development this corresponds to the same thing. When one is in a very rudimentary state, when one has no intense inner life, one needs to read novels or to create novels for oneself, and then one indulges in experiments of this kind

and believes one is doing very interesting things.... This has the same interest as novels – not even literary novels but cheap romances, those published on the back of newspapers.

Sri Aurobindo told me that some people needed this because their minds were so inert that this shook them and woke them up a little! Well, that is the same thing. Some people may need to do exercises of this kind to awaken their vital a little, which is sleepy and inert and... this gives them a little interest in life. But still, one can't say that these are very valuable occupations. They are pastimes, amusements."[9]

7. Occult Phenomenon, Miracles Cannot Make One Believe in these Things Unless One Carried Them Within Oneself – Had a Spiritual Being Within

"Unless you have a spiritual *being* within you, capable of awakening and living its own life, all these things teach you nothing at all. I knew some people – one of them especially, who was a man of science, intelligent, a man of real ability; he had studied higher science, become an engineer and held an important position; this man was a member of a society known as "spiritualist", which had found a medium who really had quite exceptional abilities. And he used to attend all the *séances* with the idea of learning, to convince himself and have tangible proofs of the existence of an invisible world, the concrete and real existence of an invisible world. He had seen all that could be seen, under the strictest control, in the most scientific way possible – all the tests were provided for, down to the least detail. He told me about the most extraordinary things he had seen; I held in my hand a piece of something resembling the plastic cloth they

make nowadays, which is not woven, a piece of plastic – but in those days there was no plastic, it had not yet been discovered, it was a long time ago – I held it in my hand, a piece, like this, torn, with a small design which was very pretty. He told me how it had happened. When the medium had been put into trance, a person had appeared dressed in a robe of this substance – it was a materialisation; this person had passed in front of him and, like the little brute he was, he had torn off a piece to have a proof, and he kept the piece. The medium screamed – and everything, everything immediately vanished.... But the piece remained in his hand and he gave it to me. I gave it back to him. He had simply shown it to me, I held it in my hand.

So that was something quite concrete, you see, for he still had the piece; he could not tell himself it was a hallucination. Well, in spite of all this, in spite of the most extraordinary stories which could make a whole book, he did not believe *anything*! He could not explain *anything*. And he wondered who was mad, whether it was himself or the others or... This had not helped his knowledge progress even half a step forward.

One cannot believe these things unless one carries them within oneself.

No external proofs you can have will ever give you any knowledge. When you *yourselves* are inwardly developed, are capable of having a direct and inner contact with these things, then you know what they are, but no material proof – material and of this kind – can give you the knowledge if within you you do not have the *being* capable of having this knowledge."[10]

8. All Imaginations have Existence in the Mental World

"…**You cannot imagine anything which doesn't exist in the universe! It is impossible to imagine something that doesn't exist somewhere. The only possibility is that one may not put one's image in its place: either one gives it virtues and qualities it doesn't have, or explains it with some other than the right explanation. But whatever one imagines exists somewhere; the main thing is to know where and to put it in its proper place.**

Of course, if after having imagined that you are in front of a door which is opening, you thought that it was really a physical door inside your body, that would be a mistake! But if you realise that it is the mental form taken by your effort of concentration, this is quite correct. If you go wandering in the mental world, you will see plenty of forms like that, all kinds of forms, which have no material reality but truly exist in the mental world.

You cannot think powerfully of something without your thought taking a form. But if you were to believe that this form was physical, that would obviously be an error, yet it really does exist in the mental world.

Imagination is a power of formation. In fact, people who have no imagination are not formative from the mental point of view, they cannot give a concrete power to their thought. Imagination is a very powerful means of action. For instance, if you have a pain somewhere and if you imagine that you are making the pain disappear or are removing it or destroying it – all kinds of images like that – well, you succeed perfectly."[11]

9. Thought, Idea and the Force Behind the Idea

"…if you are able to concentrate the thought sufficiently and stop it from vacillating, you pass quite naturally from the thought expressed by the words to the *idea* which is behind and which could be expressed in other words, other forms. The characteristic of the idea is the power to clothe itself in many different thoughts. And when you have achieved this, you have already gone much deeper than by merely understanding the words. Naturally, if you continue to concentrate and know how to do it, you can pass from the idea to the luminous force that is behind. Then you enter a much vaster and deeper domain. But that asks for some training. But still, that is the very principle of meditation.

If you are able to go deep enough, you find the Principle and the Force behind the idea, and that gives you the power of realisation. This is how those who take meditation as a means of spiritual development are able to unite with the Principle which is behind things and obtain the power to act on these things from above."[12]

10. Higher Imaginations, Mental Formations and Thought Control

"Imagination is something very complex and manifold – what is vaguely called "imagination".

It can be the capacity for seeing and recording, noting the forms in some mental or other domain. There are artistic, literary, poetic domains, domains of action, scientific domains, all belonging to the mind – not a very high and abstract mind, a mind above the physical mind which, without

our knowing it, pours out constantly through the individual and collective mind to manifest in action.

Some people, through a special faculty, are in contact with these domains, take up one formation or other that is there, draw them to themselves and give them an expression. This power of expression is different in different people, but those who can open themselves to these domains, to *see* things there, to draw these forms towards themselves and express them – either in literature or in painting or music or in action or science – are, according to the degree of their power of expression either very highly talented beings or else geniuses.

There are higher geniuses still. They are people who can open to a higher region, a higher force which, passing through the mental layers, comes and takes a form in a human mind and reveals itself in the world as new truths, new philosophical systems, new spiritual teachings, which are the works and at the same time the actions of the great beings who come to take birth on earth. That is an imagination which can be called "Truth-imagination".

These higher forces, when they come down into the earth-atmosphere, take living, active, powerful forms, spread throughout the world and prepare a new age.

These two kinds of imagination are what could be called higher imaginations.

And now, to come down to a more ordinary level, everyone has in him, in a greater or lesser measure, the power to give form to his mental activity and use this form either in his ordinary activity or to create and realise something. We are all the time, *always*, creating images, creating forms.

We send them into the atmosphere without even knowing that we are doing so – they go roaming about, pass from one person to another, meet companions, sometimes join together and get on happily, sometimes create conflicts, and there are battles; for often, very often, in these mental imaginations there is a small element of will which tries to realise itself, and then everyone tries to send out his formation so that it can act, so that things can happen as he wants and, as everyone does this, it creates a general confusion. **If our eyes were open to the vision of all these forms in the atmosphere, we would see very amazing things: battlefields, waves, onsets, retreats of a *crowd* of small mental entities which are constantly thrown out into the air and always try to realise themselves. All these formations have a common tendency to want to materialise and realise themselves physically, and as they are countless – they are far too many for there to be room enough on earth to manifest them** – they jostle and elbow one another, they try to push back those which do not agree with them or even form armies marching in good order, always to take up the available room both in time and space – it is only a very small space compared with the countless number of creations.

So, individually, this is what happens. Some people do all that without knowing it – perhaps everybody – and they are constantly tossed from one thing to another, and hope, wish, desire, are disappointed, sometimes happy, sometimes in despair, for they don't have any control or mastery over these things. But the beginning of wisdom is to look at ourselves thinking and to see this phenomenon, become aware of this constant projection into the atmosphere of

small *living* entities which are trying to manifest. All this comes out of the mental atmosphere which we carry within ourselves. Once we see and observe, we can begin to sort them out, that is, to push back what is not in conformity with our highest will or aspiration and allow to move towards manifestation only the formations which can help us to progress and develop normally.

This is the control of active thought, and that was what I meant the other day.

How many times you sit and become aware that the thought is beginning to form images for itself, to tell itself a story; and so, when you have become a little expert at it, not only do you see unfolding before you the history of what you would like to happen in life, in your own life, but you can take something away, add a detail, perfect your work, make a really *fine* story in which everything conforms with your highest aspiration. And once you have made a complete harmonious construction, as perfect as you can make it, then you open your hands and let the bird fly away.

If it is well made, it always realises itself in the end. And that is what one doesn't know.

But the thing is realised in the course of time, sometimes long afterwards, when you have forgotten your story, can no longer remember having told it to yourself – you have changed much, are thinking about other things, making other stories, and the first one no longer interests you; and if you are not very attentive, when the result of the first story comes, you are already very far away from it and no longer remember at all that this is the result of your own story....

And that is why it is so important to control yourself, for if within you there are multiple and contradictory wills – not only wills but tendencies, orientations, levels of life – all this causes battles in your life. For example, at your highest level you have fashioned a beautiful story which you send out into the world, but then, perhaps the next day, perhaps on the very same day, perhaps a little later, you have come down to a much more material level, and these things from above seem to you a little... fairylike, unreal; and you begin to make very concrete, very utilitarian formations which are not always very pretty... and these too go out.

I have known people with such opposite sides in their nature, so contradictory, that one day they could make a magnificent, luminous, powerful formation for realisation, and then the next day a defeatist, dark, black formation – a formation of despair – and so both would go out. And I was able to follow in the course of circumstances the beautiful one being realised, and while it was being realised, the dark one demolishing what the first one had done. And that is how it is in the larger lines of life as in its smaller details. And all that because one does not watch oneself thinking, because one believes one is the slave of these contradictory movements, because one says, "Oh! Today I am not feeling well. Oh! Today things seem sad to me", and one says this as if it were an ineluctable fate against which one could do nothing. But if one stands back or ascends a step, one can look at all these things, put them in their place, keep some, destroy or get rid of those one does not want and put all one's imaginative power – what is called imaginative – only in those one wants and which

conform with one's highest aspiration. That is what I call controlling one's imagination.

It is very interesting. When one learns to do it and does it regularly one no longer has time to feel bored.

And instead of being a cork afloat on the waves of the sea and tossed here and there by each wave, defencelessly, one becomes a bird which opens its wings, flies above the waves and goes wherever it wants."[13]

11. The Difference Between True Knowledge and Magic

"What we call "white magic" is a beneficial magic and "black magic" is a harmful magic. But in fact these are mere words, they have no meaning.

Magic?... It is a knowledge that has been reduced to purely material formulas. They are some kind of words or numbers or combinations of words and numbers, which, if they are simply pronounced or written, even by someone who has no inner power, must act. In occultism, this is what corresponds to chemical formulas in science. You see, in science you have chemical formulas for combining certain elements and producing others from them; even if you do not have any mental or vital or even physical power, if you just follow to the letter the formula you have, you obtain the required result – it is enough simply to have a memory. Well, the same thing has been tried in occultism, making combinations of sounds, letters, numbers, words, which, by their inherent qualities, have the power to obtain a certain result. In this way, any fool, if he learns this and does exactly what he is told, obtains – or believes he will obtain – the result he wants. While... let us take the mantra, for instance,

which is a form of occultism; unless the mantra is given by a guru and the guru transmits his occult or spiritual power to you with the mantra, you may repeat your mantra thousands of times, it will have no effect.

That is to say, **in true occultism, one must have the quality, the ability, the inner gift in order to use it, and that is the safeguard. True occultism cannot be practised by any fool. And this is no longer magic – neither white magic nor black nor golden – it is not magic at all, it is a spiritual power which must be acquired by long discipline; and finally, it is given to you only by a divine grace.**

This means that as soon as one draws near the Truth, one is safe from all charlatanism, all pretension and falsehood. Of this I have had numerous and extremely conclusive proofs. And so **someone who has the true occult power possesses at the same time, by the strength of this inner truth, the power to undo any magic, white or black or whatever colour it may be, simply by applying a drop of that truth, one might say. There is nothing that can resist that power. And this is very well known to those who practise magic, for they always take very great care, in all countries but especially in India, never to try out any of their formulas against yogis and saints,** because they know that these formulas which they send out with their little mechanical, very superficial power, will go and strike, like a ball on a wall, the true power that protects one who leads a spiritual life, and quite naturally their formula will rebound and fall back on them.

The yogi or saint doesn't need to do anything, he doesn't

even have to want to protect himself: it is something automatic. He is in a state of consciousness and inner power which automatically protects him from everything that is inferior. Naturally, he can also use his power deliberately to protect others. This rebounding of the bad formation from his atmosphere automatically protects him, but if this bad formation is made against someone he is protecting or simply someone who asks for his help, then he can, by a movement of his own atmosphere, his own aura, surround the person who is exposed to the evil magic spells, and the rebounding process acts in the same way and causes the bad formation to fall back quite naturally on the one who made it. But in this case the conscious will of the yogi or saint or sage is needed. He has to be informed about what has happened and he must decide to intervene.

That is the difference between true knowledge and magic."[14]

12. The Process of the Spiritual Transformation of the Normal Human Mentality

"Everything that happens to us in the spiritual world we always have a tendency to translate mentally; we want to explain it to ourselves, draw conclusions from it, change the experience into a rule of action, profit mentally by what has happened in order to transform the experience into something practically useful. That is what Sri Aurobindo calls "the mind's possession of it". This is done automatically, so to say. Unfortunately, the best part of the experience always escapes; and besides, if one wants to keep it intact, one would have to remain in a state in which the experience

is not mentalised, and if one lives in the outer world this is practically impossible. That is why those who wished to enjoy their spiritual experience without intervention from the mind used to remain in states of trance and to carefully avoid coming down to the level of action. But if one wants to transform life, if one wants the spiritual experience to have an effect on the mind, the vital and the body, on the daily activities, it is indispensable to try to express it mentally and accept the inevitable diminution, until the mind itself is transformed and capable of participating in the experience without deforming it.

What we want to do is still more difficult, for we want the vital also to be transformed and capable of participating in the experience without deforming it, and finally the physical itself, the body, to be transformed by the spiritual action and no longer be an obstacle to the experience.

This transformation is precisely the point that ordinary thought finds most difficult to accept, for it is almost the faculty of thought itself which must be changed. Its whole functioning has to be changed for this transformation to be possible, and we are so used to identifying the faculty with its functioning that we wonder if it is possible to think otherwise than in the way we ordinarily do.

It is possible only when one has had the experience of complete silence in the mental region and when the spiritual force with its light and power descends through the mind and makes it act directly without its following its usual method of analysis, deduction, reasoning. All these faculties which are usually considered the normal activities of the mind, must be stopped, and yet the spiritual Light,

Knowledge and Power must be able to transform them into a channel of direct expression, without using these means to express themselves.

The mind, in its outermost form, is a means of action, an instrument for organisation and execution. It puts concepts in order, relates them to one another, draws conclusions for action from them and gives impulse to this action. This power of organisation and impulse to action can be produced directly by the spiritual force which takes hold of the mental consciousness without these processes of analysis, deduction, reasoning being necessary. In intuition things already happen somewhat in this way; but spiritual intervention is, as it were, a super-intuition, a direct expression of the vision, of the experience, of knowledge by identity."[15]

13. The Mistake Made by Popular Religions

"…Probably no two ways are identical, everyone must find his own. But one must not be mistaken, it is not "finding" by reasoning, it is "finding" by aspiration; it is not by study and analysis, but by the intensity of the aspiration and the sincerity of the inner opening.

When one is truly and exclusively turned to the spiritual Truth, whatever name may be given to it, when all the rest becomes secondary, when that alone is imperative and inevitable, then, *one single moment* of intense, absolute, total concentration is enough to receive the answer.

The experience comes first, in this case, and it is only later, as a consequence and a memory that the formulation becomes clear. In this way one is sure not to make a mistake.

The formulation may be more or less exact, that is of no importance, so long as one doesn't make a dogma out of it.

It is good for you, that is all that is needed. If you want to impose it on others, whatever it may be, even if it is perfect in itself, it becomes false.

That is why religions are always mistaken – always – because they want to standardise the expression of an experience and impose it on everyone as an irrefutable truth. The experience was true, complete in itself, convincing – for the one who had it. The formulation he made of it was excellent – for himself. But to want to impose it on others is a fundamental error which has altogether disastrous consequences, always, which always leads far, very far from the Truth.

That is why all the religions, however beautiful they may be, have always led man to the worst excesses. All the crimes, the horrors perpetrated in the name of religion are among the darkest stains on human history, and simply because of this little initial error: wanting what is true for one individual to be true for the mass or collectivity.

(*Silence*)

The path must be shown and the doors opened but everyone must *follow* the path, pass through the doors and go towards his personal realisation.

The only help one can and should receive is that of the Grace which formulates itself in everyone according to his own need."[16]

* * *

II. Questions and Answers, Oct. – Nov. 1958

1. Moral Perfection – An Indispensable Stage in a Passage From the Mind to the Spirit

"**It is almost impossible to pass from the mental being – even the most perfect and most remarkable – to the true spiritual life without having realised this ideal of moral perfection for a certain period of time, however brief it may be.** Many people try to take a short-cut and want to assert their inner freedom before having overcome all the weaknesses of the outer nature; they are in great danger of deluding themselves. The true spiritual life, complete freedom, is something much higher than the highest moral realisations, but one must take care that this so-called freedom is not an indulgence and a contempt for all rules. One must go higher, always higher, higher; nothing less than what the highest of humanity has achieved.

One must be capable of being spontaneously all that humanity has conceived to be the highest, the most beautiful, the most perfect, the most disinterested, the most comprehensive, the best, before opening one's spiritual wings and looking at all that from above as something which still belongs to the individual self, in order to enter into true spirituality, that which has no limits, which lives in an integral way Infinity and Eternity."[17]

2. The Best Thing to Do to Help Others and the World

"**If one sincerely wants to help others and the world, the best thing one can do is to be oneself what**

one wants others to be – not only as an example, but because one becomes a centre of radiating power which, by the very fact that it exists, compels the rest of the world to transform itself."[18]

3. The Constant Action of the Grace and the World's Opposition to It

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

Even with that, how much time is required for things to change! **What obstinate resistance in this lower nature, what blind and stupid attachment to the animal ways of the being, what a refusal to liberate oneself!**

(Silence)

In the whole manifestation there is an infinite Grace constantly at work to bring the world out of the misery, the obscurity and the stupidity in which it lies. From all time this Grace has been at work, unremitting in its effort, and how many thousands of years were necessary for this world to awaken to the need for something greater, more true, more beautiful.

Everyone can gauge, from the resistance he meets in his own being, the tremendous resistance which the world opposes to the work of the Grace.

And it is only when one understands that *all* external things, all mental constructions, all material efforts are vain, futile, if they are not entirely consecrated to this Light and Force from above, to this Truth which is trying to express

itself, that one is ready to make decisive progress. So **the only truly effective attitude is a perfect, total, fervent giving of our being to That which is above us and which alone has the power to change everything.**

When you open to the Spirit within you it brings you a first foretaste of that higher life which alone is worth living, then comes the will to rise to that, the hope of reaching it, the certitude that this is possible, and finally the strength to make the necessary effort and the resolution to go to the very end.

First one must wake up, then one can conquer."[19]

4. The Best Attitude Towards the Action of Light and Grace in Sadhana

"From the point of view of individual development and for those who are still at the beginning of the path, to know how to remain silent before what one does not understand is one of the things which would help most in the progress – to know how to remain silent, not only externally, without uttering a word, but also to know how to be silent within, so that the mind does not assert its ignorance with its usual presumptuousness, does not try to understand with an instrument that is incapable of understanding, that it may know its own weakness and open simply, quietly, waiting until the time has come for it to receive the light, because only the Light, the true Light, can give it understanding. It is not all that it has learnt nor all that it has observed nor all its so-called experience of life, it is something else which is completely beyond it. And until this something else – which is the expression of the Grace

– manifests within it, if, very quietly, very modestly the mind remains silent and does not try to understand and, above all, to judge, things would go *much* faster.

The noise made by all the words, all the ideas in your head is so deafening that it prevents you from hearing the truth when it wants to manifest.

To learn to be quiet and silent... When you have a problem to solve, instead of turning over in your head all the possibilities, all the consequences, all the possible things one should or should not do, if you remain quiet with an aspiration for goodwill, if possible a need for goodwill, the solution comes very quickly. And as you are silent you are able to hear it.

When you are caught in a difficulty, try this method: instead of becoming agitated, turning over all the ideas and actively seeking solutions, of worrying, fretting, running here and there inside your head – I don't mean externally, for externally you probably have enough common sense not to do that! but inside, in your head – *remain quiet.* And according to your nature, with ardour or peace, with intensity or widening or with all these together, implore the Light and wait for it to come.

In this way the path would be considerably shortened."[20]

5. The Best Way for a Truer Understanding of the Goal of Creation

"What happens most often when one makes the inner effort that's needed to discover one's soul, to unite with it and allow it to govern one's life, is a kind of marvellous enchantment with this discovery, as a result of which the

first instinct is to tell oneself, "Now I have what I need, I have found infinite delight!" and no longer to be concerned with anything else.

In fact this is what has happened to almost all those who have made this discovery, and some of them have even set up this experience as a principle of realisation and said, "When you have done that, everything is done, there is nothing more to do; you have reached the goal and the end of the road."

Indeed, a great courage is necessary to go farther; this soul one discovers must be an intrepid warrior soul which does not at all rest satisfied with its own inner joy while comforting itself for the unhappiness of others with the idea that sooner or later everybody will reach that state and that it is good for others to make the same effort that one has made or, at best, that from this state of inner wisdom one can, with "great benevolence" and "deep compassion" help others to reach it, and that when everybody has attained it, well, that will be the end of the world and that's so much the better for those who don't like suffering!

But... there is a "but". Are you sure that this was the aim and intention of the Supreme when he manifested?

(Silence)

The whole creation, the whole universal manifestation appears at best like a very bad joke if it only comes to this. Why begin at all if it is only to get out of it! What is the use of having struggled so much, suffered so much, of having created something which, at least in its external appearance, is so tragic and

dramatic, if it is simply to teach you how to get out of it – it would have been better not to begin at all.

But if one goes to the very depth of things, if, stripped not only of all egoism but also of the ego, one gives oneself totally, without reserve, so completely and disinterestedly that one becomes capable of understanding the plan of the Lord, then **one knows that it is *not* a bad joke, *not* a tortuous path by which you return, a little battered, to the starting-point; on the contrary, it is to teach the entire creation the delight of being, the beauty of being, the greatness of being, the majesty of a sublime life, and the perpetual growth, perpetually progressive, of that delight, that beauty, that greatness. Then everything has a meaning,** then one no longer regrets having struggled and suffered, one has only the enthusiasm to realise the divine goal, and one plunges headlong into the realisation with the *certitude* of the goal and victory.

But to know that, one must stop being egoistic, being a separate person turned in on oneself and cut off from the supreme origin. That is what must be done: to cast off one's ego. Then one can know the true goal – and this is the only way!

To cast off one's ego, to let it fall off like a useless garment.

The result is worth the efforts that must be made. And then, one is not all alone on the way. One is helped, if one has trust.

If you have had even a second's contact with the Grace – that marvellous Grace which carries you along, speeds

you on the path, even makes you forget that you have to hurry – if you have had only a second's contact with that, then you can strive not to forget. And with the candour of a child, the simplicity of a child for whom there are no complications, give yourself to that Grace and let it do everything.

What is necessary is not to listen to what resists, not to believe what contradicts – to have trust, a real trust, a confidence which makes you give yourself fully without calculating, without bargaining. Trust! The trust that says, 'Do this, do this for me, I leave it to You.'

That is the best way."[21]

6. What is the Role of the Spirit*?

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

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

It might be said that what is called "spirit" is the atmosphere brought into the material world by the Grace so that it may awaken to the consciousness of

its origin and aspire to return to it. It is indeed a kind of atmosphere which liberates, opens the doors, sets the consciousness free. This is what enables the realisation of the truth and gives aspiration its full power of accomplishment.

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

The soul is a kind of individual concentration of this Grace, its individual representative in the human being. The soul is something particular to humanity, it exists only in man. It is like a particular expression of the spirit in the human being. The beings of the other worlds do not have a soul, but they can live in the spirit. One might say that the soul is a delegation of the spirit in mankind, a special help to lead it faster. It is the soul that makes individual progress possible. The spirit, in its original form, has a more general, more collective action.

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

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

In the individual existence, that is what makes all the difference; so long as one just speaks of the spirit and it is something one has read about, whose existence one vaguely knows about, but not a very concrete reality for the consciousness, this means that one is not born into the spirit. And when one is born into the spirit, it becomes something much more concrete, much more living, much more real, much more tangible than the whole material world. And this is what makes the essential difference between beings. When *that* becomes spontaneously real – the true, concrete existence, the atmosphere one can freely breathe – then one knows one has crossed over to the other side. But so long as it is something rather vague and hazy – you have heard about it, you know that it exists, but... it has no concrete reality – well, this means that the new birth has not yet taken place. …"[22]

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III. JNANA (Knowledge), First Period of Commentaries (1958)

1. Knowledge and Wisdom

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

…Knowledge is something that the mind can obtain through much effort, although this is not the true knowledge, but only a mental aspect of knowledge; whereas Wisdom does not at all belong to the mind, which is altogether incapable of obtaining it, because, in fact, it doesn't even know what it is. I repeat, Wisdom is essentially a power of the Spirit and it can arise only with the spiritual consciousness."[23]

2. Speech: Calculated and Inspired

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

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

emotions and the vital reactions which take hold of the tongue and make you say things which you should not say.

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

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

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

in motion, ever moving towards a higher and greater Truth.…"[24]

3. To Be, Know, Say and Do What the Lord Wants You To

"It is an admirable state; it is perfect peace of mind. There is no longer any need to accumulate acquired knowledge, received ideas which have to be memorised; it is no longer necessary to clutter one's brain with thousands and thousands of things in order to have at one's command, when the time comes, the knowledge that is needed to perform an action, to impart a teaching, to solve a problem. The mind is silent, the brain is still, everything is clear, quiet, calm; and at the right moment, by divine Grace a drop of light falls into the consciousness and what needs to be known is known. **Why should one care to remember – why try to retain that knowledge? On the day or at the moment that it is needed one will have it again. At each second one is a blank page on which what must be known will be inscribed – in the peace, the repose, the silence of a perfect receptivity.**

One knows what must be known, one sees what must be seen, and since what must be known and seen comes directly from the Supreme, it is Truth itself; and it completely eludes all notions of reason or folly. What is true is true – that is all. And one has to sink very low to wonder whether it is folly or reason.

Silence and a modest, humble, attentive receptivity; no concern for appearances or even any anxiety to be – one is quite modestly, quite humbly, quite simply the instrument

which of itself is nothing and knows nothing, but is ready to receive everything and transmit everything.

The first condition is self-forgetfulness, a total self-giving, the absence of ego.

And the body says to the Supreme Lord: 'What You want me to be, I shall be; what You want me to know, I shall know; what You want me to do, I shall do.'"[25]

4. The Three Terrible Enemies: Fear, Distrust and Scepticism

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

…To tell the truth, it very seldom happens that those who are ready, who are undoubtedly meant for realisation, do not have, at a certain moment in their lives, even if only for a few seconds, the experience of what this realisation is.

But even those whose destiny is certain have to struggle mightily, resolutely, against this "something" which one seems to take in with the very air one breathes: this fear, this dread of what may happen. And this is so stupid, because, in the final analysis, the destiny of each individual is the same: you are born, you live – more or less satisfactorily – and you die; then you wait for a certain length of time,

and again you are born, you live – more or less satisfactorily – and again you die, and so on indefinitely, until you feel you have had enough of it.

Fear of what? Fear of coming out of the rut? Fear of being free? Fear of no longer being a prisoner?

And then, when you have enough courage to overcome this, when you say, "Come what may! After all, there's not much to lose", then you become wary, you wonder if it is reasonable, if it is true, if all that is not an illusion, if you are not just imagining things, if there is really any substance to it.... And mind you, **this mistrust seems stupid, but you encounter it even in the most intelligent, even in those who have repeatedly had conclusive experiences – it is something that you take in with the food you eat, the air you breathe, your contacts with others; and that is why you can speak of the "tentacles of Nature",* everywhere, in all things, like an octopus stealing in and catching you and binding you.**

Even when you have overcome these two obstacles, when the experiences are so strong that you can no longer doubt, that doubt becomes impossible – like doubting one's own life – then **there remains something awful, petty, dry, corrosive: scepticism. And this is founded on human pride, that is why it lasts so long. You want to think that you are above all these things, "Oh, I am not one to fall into those traps! I am a reasonable man, I see things from a practical point of view; I'm not so easily deceived." It is awful!... It is sordid. But it is dangerous.**

* *The translation the Mother had before her was based on a text which read "tentacles of Nature" instead of "sentinels of Nature".*

Even in moments of greatest enthusiasm, even when one is filled with an exceptional, marvellous experience – it rises from the lowest depths. It is ugly, slimy, disgusting. And yet it rises, and spoils everything.

To conquer it, one must be a mighty warrior. One must struggle against all the obscurities of Nature, against all her tricks, all her temptations. …

…When you have truly had enough of it and want things to be different, then you have the courage, the strength, the capacity to conquer these three terrible enemies: fear, doubt and scepticism. But I repeat, **it is not enough to sit down one fine day, watch yourself be, and struggle with these things inside you once and for all. You have to do it and do it again and again and continue in a way which seems almost endless, to be sure that you have got rid of it all. In reality, you are perhaps never truly rid of it, but there comes a time when inside yourself, you are so different that you can no longer be touched by these things. You can see them, but you see them with a smile,** and at a simple gesture they go away, back to where they came from, perhaps a little changed, perhaps a little less strong, less obstinate, less aggressive – until the time when the Light is so strong that all darkness vanishes. …"[26]

5. True Knowledge (Wisdom) and the Importance of Reason in Life

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

Once again I must repeat that the form of these aphorisms is purposely paradoxical in order to give the mind

a little shock and awaken it enough for it to make an effort to understand. One must not take this aphorism literally. Some people seem worried by the idea that reason must disappear for one to become wise. It is not that, it is not that at all.

Reason must no longer be the summit and the master.

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

That is what this means.

As for the knowledge of which Sri Aurobindo speaks here, it is ordinary knowledge, it is not Knowledge by identity;

it is knowledge that can be acquired by the intellect through thought, through ordinary means.

But once again – and in any case we shall have occasion to return to this when we study the next aphorism – do not be in a hurry to abandon reason in the conviction that you will immediately attain to Wisdom, because you must be ready for Wisdom; otherwise, by abandoning reason, you run a great risk of falling into unreason, which is rather dangerous.

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

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

But neither should people who are very reasonable, very moral according to ordinary social laws, think themselves wise, for their wisdom is an illusion and holds no profound truth.

…True wisdom comes only when the ego disappears, and the ego disappears only when you are ready to abandon yourself completely to the supreme Lord without any personal motive and without any expectation of profit – when you do it because you cannot do otherwise."[27]

6. The Mother on Judging Others

"When something in a person seems to you completely unacceptable or ridiculous – "What! He is like that, he behaves like that, he says things like that, he does things like that" – you should say to yourself, "Well, well, but perhaps I do the same thing without being aware of it. I would do better to look into myself first before criticising him, so as to make sure that I am not doing the very same thing in a slightly different way." If you have the good sense and intelligence to do this each time you are shocked by another person's behaviour, you will realise that in life your relations with others are like a mirror which is presented to you so that you can see more easily and clearly the weaknesses you carry within you.

In a general and almost absolute way anything that shocks you in other people is the very thing you carry in yourself in a more or less veiled, more or less hidden form, though perhaps in a slightly different guise which allows you to delude yourself. And what in yourself seems inoffensive enough, becomes monstrous as soon as you see it in others.

Try to experience this; it will greatly help you to change yourselves. At the same time it will bring a sunny tolerance to your relationships with others, the goodwill which comes from understanding, and it will very often put an end to these completely useless quarrels.

One can live without quarrelling. It seems strange to say this because as things are, it would seem, on the contrary, that life is made for quarrelling in the sense that the main occupation of people who are together is to quarrel, overtly

or covertly. You do not always come to words, you do not always come to blows – fortunately – but you are in a state of perpetual irritation within because you do not find around you the perfection that you would yourself wish to realise, and which you find rather difficult to realise – but you find it entirely natural that others should realise it.

"How can they be like that?..." You forget how difficult you find it in yourself not to be "like that"!

Try, you will see.

Look upon everything with a benevolent smile. **Take all the things which irritate you as a lesson for yourself and your life will be more peaceful and more effective as well, for a great percentage of your energy certainly goes to waste in the irritation you feel when you do not find in others the perfection that you would like to realise in yourself.**

You stop short at the perfection that others should realise and you are seldom conscious of the goal you should be pursuing yourself. If you are conscious of it, well then, begin with the work which is given to *you*, that is to say, realise what you have to do and do not concern yourself with what others do, because, after all, it is not your business. And the best way to the true attitude is simply to say, 'All those around me, all the circumstances of my life, all the people near me, are a mirror held up to me by the Divine Consciousness to show me the progress I must make. Everything that shocks me in others means a work I have to do in myself.'

And perhaps if one carried true perfection in oneself, one would discover it more often in others."[28]

7. Only the Soul Truly Knows

"***What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.***

…How many times have we repeated this: all that comes from the mind is wholly relative. **The more the mind is educated and has applied itself to various disciplines, the more it becomes capable of proving that what it puts forward or what it says is true. One can prove the truth of anything by reasoning, but that does not make it true. It remains an opinion, a prejudice, a knowledge based on appearances which are themselves more than dubious.**

So there seems to be only one way out and that is to go in search of one's soul and to find it. It is there, it does not make a point of hiding itself, it does not play with you just to make things difficult; on the contrary, it makes great efforts to help you find it and to make itself heard. Only, between your soul and your active consciousness there are two characters who are in the habit of making a lot of noise, the mind and the vital. And because they make a lot of noise, while the soul does not, or, rather, makes as little as possible, their noise prevents you from hearing the voice of the soul.…"[29]

8. Only the Like Knows Like

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

It has often been repeated – but except in certain cases very rarely understood – that only like knows like. If this were understood, a great deal of ignorance would vanish.

Only the soul can know the soul, and on each level of being, only the equivalent level can recognise the other. Only the Divine can know the Divine, and because we carry the Divine in ourselves we are capable of seeing Him and recognising Him. But if we try to understand something of the inner life by using our senses and external methods, the result is sure to be total failure and we shall also deceive ourselves totally.

So when you imagine that you can know the secrets of Nature and still remain in a purely physical consciousness, you are entirely deceived. And this habit of demanding concrete, material proofs before accepting the reality of something, is one of the most glaring effects of ignorance. With that attitude any fool imagines that he can sit in judgment on the highest things and deny the most profound experiences.

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

It applies to all judgments of the critical mind and to all scientific methods when they would judge any but purely material phenomena.

The conclusion is always the same: the only true attitude is one of humility, of silent respect before what one does not know, and of inner aspiration to come out of one's ignorance. One of the things which would make humanity progress most would be for it to respect what it does not know, to acknowledge willingly that it does not know and is

therefore unable to judge.

We constantly do just the opposite. We pass final judgments on things of which we have no knowledge whatsoever, and say in a peremptory manner, "This is possible. That is impossible", when we do not even know what it is we are speaking of. And we put on superior airs because we doubt things of which we have never had any knowledge.

Men believe that doubt is a sign of superiority, whereas it is really a sign of inferiority.

Scepticism and doubt are two of the greatest obstacles to progress; they add presumptuousness to ignorance."[30]

9. Physical Culture: The Process of Infusing Consciousness into the Cells of the Body

"Physical culture is the process of infusing consciousness into the cells of the body. One may or may not know it, but it is a fact. When we concentrate to make our muscles move according to our will, when we endeavour to make our limbs more supple, to give them an agility, or a force, or a resistance, or a plasticity which they do not naturally possess, we infuse into the cells of the body a consciousness which was not there before, thus turning it into an increasingly homogeneous and receptive instrument, which progresses in and by its activities. This is the primary importance of physical culture. Of course, that is not the only thing that brings consciousness into the body, but it is something which acts in an overall way, and this is rare. I have already told you several times that the artist infuses a

very great consciousness into his hands, as the intellectual does into his brain. But these are, as it were, local phenomena, whereas the action of physical culture is more general. And when one sees the absolutely marvellous results of this culture, when one observes the extent to which the body is capable of perfecting itself, one understands how useful this can be to the action of the psychic being which has entered into this material substance. For naturally, when it is in possession of an organised and harmonised instrument which is full of strength and suppleness and possibilities, its task is greatly facilitated.

I do not say that people who practise physical culture necessarily do it for this purpose, because very few are aware of this result. But whether they are aware of it or not, this is the result. Moreover, if you are at all sensitive, when you observe the moving body of a person who has practised physical culture in a methodical and rational way, you see a light, a consciousness, a life, which is not there in others.

There are always people with a wholly external view of things who say, "Workers, for example, who have to do hard physical labour and who are compelled by their work to learn to carry heavy weights – they too build up their muscles, and instead of spending their time like aristocrats doing exercises with no useful outward results, they at least produce something." This is ignorance. Because there is an essential difference between the muscles developed through specialised, local and limited use and muscles which have been cultivated deliberately and harmoniously according to an integral programme which leaves no part of the body without work or exercise.

People like workers and peasants, who have a specialised occupation and develop only certain muscles, always end up with occupational deformities. And this in no way helps their psychic progress because, although the whole of life necessarily contributes to the psychic development, it does so in such an unconscious way and so slowly that the poor psychic being must come back again and again and again, indefinitely, to achieve its purpose. Therefore we can say without fear of being mistaken that physical culture is the sadhana of the body and that all sadhana necessarily helps to hasten the achievement of the goal. The more consciously you do it, the quicker and more general the result, but even if you do it blindly, if you can see no further than the tips of your fingers or your feet or your nose, you help the overall development.

Finally, one can say that any discipline that is followed rigorously, sincerely, deliberately, is a considerable help, for it enables life on earth to attain its goal more rapidly and prepares it to receive the new life. To discipline oneself is to hasten the arrival of this new life and the contact with the supramental reality."[31]

10. A Moment's True Contact With the Divine Enlightens More than Centuries of Mental Reasonings

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

Sri Aurobindo is not asking a question, but rather

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

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

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

There is experience. For a simple heart, a sincere and honest nature, a nature which knows that its experience is sincere, that it is not a falsification of desire or of mental ambition, but a spontaneous movement which comes from the soul – the experience is absolutely convincing. It loses its power of conviction when the desire to have an experience, or the ambition to think oneself very superior, becomes mixed with it. If you have that in you, then beware, because desires and ambitions falsify experience. The mind is a formative power, and if you have a very strong desire for something very important and very interesting to happen to you, you can make it happen, at least in the eyes of those who see things superficially. But apart from these cases, if you are honest, sincere, spontaneous, and especially when experiences come to you without any effort on your part to

have them, and as a spontaneous expression of your deeper aspiration, then these experiences carry with them the seal of an absolute authenticity; and even if the whole world tells you that they are nonsense and illusion, it does not change your personal convictions. But naturally, for this, you must not deceive yourself. You must be sincere and honest with a complete inner rectitude.

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

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

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

Indeed, it is only when we have come to the end of these aphorisms that we will be able to understand them; because with each one, Sri Aurobindo places us in an entirely different position with regard to the truth to be discovered. There are innumerable facets. There are innumerable points of view. One can say the most contradictory things without being inconsistent or contradicting oneself. Everything depends on the way in which you look at it. And even once

we have seen everything, from all the points of view accessible to us, around the central Truth, we will still have had only a very small glimpse – the Truth will escape us on all sides at once. But what is remarkable is that once we have had the experience of a single contact with the Divine, a true, spontaneous and sincere experience, at that moment, in that experience, we will know everything, and even more. That is why it is so important to live the little you know in all sincerity in order to make yourself capable of having experiences, and of knowing by experience, not mentally, but because you live these things, because they become a part of your being and consciousness."[32]

11. A Drop of Practice is Better than Oceans of Theories and Mental Resolutions

"To put into practice the little you know is the best way to learn more; it is the most powerful means of advancing on the way – a little bit of really sincere practice. For example, not to do something that you know must not be done. When you have seen a weakness, a disability in your being, you must not allow it to happen again. When, if only for a moment, you have had the vision of what you must be, in an ardent aspiration, you must not – you must never forget to become that.

Some people are always complaining about their disabilities. But that doesn't lead you very far. If, once, you have truly seen your weaknesses and truly, sincerely understood, seen that you must not be like that – that's the end of complaining. Then there is the daily effort, the building up of the will, the vigilance of every moment – you must

never allow a recognised mistake to renew itself. **To err through ignorance, to err through unconsciousness, is obviously very unfortunate, but it can be put right. Whereas to go on making the same mistake, knowing that it must not be made, is an act of cowardice which we must not permit ourselves.**

To say, "Oh, human nature is like this. Oh, we are in the inconscience. Oh, we are in the ignorance" – all this is laziness and weakness. And behind this laziness and weakness there is a huge bad will. There!

I say this because many people have made this remark to me, many. And it is always a way of justifying oneself: "Oh, we are doing what we can." It is not true. Because if you are sincere, once you have seen – as long as you have not seen, nothing can be said – but the moment you see is the moment when you receive the Grace, and once you have received the Grace, you no longer have the right to forget it."[33]

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IV. JNANA (Knowledge), Second Period of Commentaries (1960 – 61)

1. Visions and Hallucinations

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

For example, to the individual vital plane there corresponds a cosmic vital world. When a human being is sufficiently developed he possesses an individualised vital being with organs of sight, hearing, smell, etc. So a person who has a well-developed vital being can see in the vital world with his vital sight, consciously and with the memory of what he has seen. This is what makes a vision.

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

On the other hand, **Sri Aurobindo tells us that what is termed a hallucination is the reflection in the mind or the physical senses of that which is beyond our mind and our ordinary senses; it is therefore not a direct vision, but a reflected image which is usually not understood or explained.** This character of uncertainty produces an impression of unreality and gives rise to all kinds of superstition. This is also why "serious" people, or people who think themselves serious, do not accord any value to these phenomena and call them hallucinations. And yet, in those who are interested in occult phenomena, **this**

type of perception often precedes the emergence of the capacity of vision which may be in course of formation. But you must guard against mistaking this for true vision. For, I repeat, these phenomena occur most often in a state of almost complete ignorance and are too frequently accompanied by much error and wrong interpretation; not to mention the cases of unscrupulous people, who introduce into the account they give of their experiences many details and particulars not actually there, thus justifying the discredit with which these phenomena are received by rational and thoughtful people.

So we shall reserve the word "vision" for experiences that occur in awareness and sincerity. Nevertheless, **in both cases, in "hallucination" as well as in vision, what is seen does correspond to something quite real, although it is sometimes much deformed in the transcription.**"[34]

2. World is Real, Only Our Normal Perception of it is False

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

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

Sri Aurobindo affirms, on the contrary, that behind all appearances, even the most illusory, there is a truth, a

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

What Sri Aurobindo tells us is: **The world is real, it is only our perception of it that is false.**"[35]

3. Despair – A Sign of Weakness and Inertia

"Despair is never a necessity for progress, it is always a sign of weakness and *tamas*; it often indicates the presence of an adverse force, that is to say, a force that is purposely acting against sadhana.

So, in all circumstances of life you must always be very careful to guard against despair. Besides, **this habit of being sombre, morose, of despairing, does not truly depend on events, but on a lack of faith in the nature. One who has faith, even if only in himself, can face all difficulties, all circumstances, even the most adverse, without discouragement or despair. He fights like a man to the end. Natures that lack faith also lack endurance and courage.**"[36]

4. Reality of Sri Krishna and Vrindavan

"Some say Krishna never lived, he is a myth. They mean on earth; for if Brindavan existed nowhere, the Bhagavat* could not have been written.

* *The story of Krishna, as related in the Bhagavat Purana.*

Does Brindavan exist anywhere else than on earth?

The whole earth and everything it contains is a kind of concentration, a condensation of something which exists in other worlds invisible to the material eye. **Each thing manifested here has its principle, idea or essence somewhere in the subtler regions. This is an indispensable condition for the manifestation.** And the importance of the manifestation will always depend on the origin of the thing manifested.

In the world of the gods there is an ideal and harmonious Brindavan of which the earthly Brindavan is but a deformation and a caricature.

Those who are developed inwardly, either in their senses or in their minds, perceive these realities which are invisible (to the ordinary man) and receive their inspiration from them.

So **the writer or writers of the Bhagavat were certainly in contact with a whole inner world that is well and truly real and existent, where they saw and experienced everything they have described or revealed.**

Whether Krishna existed or not in a human form, living on earth, is only of very secondary importance (except perhaps from an exclusively historical point of view), for **Krishna is a real, living and active being; and his influence has been one of the great factors in the progress and transformation of the earth.**"[37]

5. The Supreme Importance of Things that May Have Never Happened Physically on Earth

"***Sometimes one is led to think that only those things***

really matter which have never happened; for beside them most historic achievements seem almost pale and ineffective.

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

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

That is why, as Sri Aurobindo says, all this makes a rather dismal picture without any deep significance. On the other hand, **in the legendary accounts of things which may never have existed on earth, of events which have not been declared authentic by "official" knowledge, of wonderful individuals whose existence is doubted by the scholars in their dried-up wisdom, we find the crystallisation of all the hopes and aspirations of man, his love of the marvellous, the heroic and the sublime, the description of everything he would like to be and strives to become."**[38]

"There are four very great events in history, the siege of Troy, the life and crucifixion of Christ, the exile of Krishna in Brindavan and the colloquy with Arjuna on the field of

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

…The colloquy at Kurukshetra is the Bhagavad Gita. Sri Aurobindo considers the message of the Gita to be the basis of the great spiritual movement which has led and will lead humanity more and more to its liberation, that is to say, to its escape from falsehood and ignorance, towards the truth. From the time of its first appearance, the Gita has had an immense spiritual action; but with the new interpretation that Sri Aurobindo has given to it, its influence has increased considerably and has become decisive.

They say that the gospels are forgeries and Krishna a creation of the poets. Thank God then for the forgeries and bow down before the inventors."[39]

6. Do Heaven and Hell Exist?*

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

Heaven and Hell are at once real and unreal. They both exist and do not exist.

Human thought is creative; it gives more or less lasting forms to mental, vital and even subtle physical substance. These forms are appearances rather than realities; but for those whose thoughts they are, and still more for those who believe in them, they have a concrete enough existence to

give them an illusion of reality. Thus, for the believers of religions which assert the existence of a hell, a paradise, or various heavens, these places do exist objectively, and when they die they can go there for a longer or shorter period. But still these things are only impermanent mental formations; they carry no eternal truth in themselves.

I have seen the heavens and hells where some people have gone after death, and it is very difficult to make them understand that there is no truth in them. Once it took me more than a year to convince someone that his so-called hell was not hell and to get him out of it.

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

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

There are moments in life when everything around you, people and circumstances, is so obscure, so adverse, so ugly that all hope of a higher realisation seems to vanish. The world seems irremediably doomed to a night of cruel hatred, unconscious and obstinate ignorance and intractable bad will. Then one may say with Sri Aurobindo, "God has assigned to me a place in hell"; and, with him too, in all circumstances, however terrible they may seem, one should dwell in the peaceful joy of total surrender to the Divine and say to the Lord in all sincerity, 'Let Thy will be done.' "[40]

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* *Of the Asuras, hostile beings of the mentalised vital plane.*

7. Why are Indisputable Dogmas the Most Dangerous Ones?*

"***Only those thoughts are true the opposite of which is also true in its own time and application; indisputable dogmas are the most dangerous kind of falsehoods.***

The absolute, infinite, eternal Truth is unthinkable for the mind, which can conceive only what is spatial, temporal, fragmentary and limited.

Thus, **on the mental plane the absolute Truth is divided into innumerable fragmentary and contradictory truths which, in their entirety, strive to reproduce, insofar as possible, the original Truth.**

If one element of this totality is taken separately and affirmed as the only true one, however central or comprehensive it may be, it necessarily becomes a falsehood, since it denies all the rest of the Total Truth.

This is precisely how indisputable dogmas are created and this is why they are the most dangerous kind of falsehood – because each one asserts that it is the sole truth to the exclusion of all other truths which, in their innumerable and complementary totality, express progressively, in the becoming, the infinite, eternal, absolute Truth."[41]

8. What is the Role of Logic and Reason in Our Lives?*

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

The best answer I can give to your question is this

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

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

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

That is why Sri Aurobindo tells us in his aphorism that logic is the worst enemy of Truth, just as the feeling of virtuous superiority is the worst enemy of virtue."[42]

9. How One Can Help to Cure Evil and Ugliness?

"…One may say that there is a kind of hierarchy of collaboration or action: there is a negative help and a positive help.

To begin with, there is a way that might be called negative, the way provided by Buddhism and kindred religions: not to see. First of all, to be in such a state of purity and beauty that you do not perceive ugliness and evil – it is like something that does not touch you because it does not exist in you.

That is the perfection of the negative method. It is quite elementary: never to notice evil, never to speak of the evil in others, not to perpetuate these vibrations by observation, by criticism, by insistence on what is bad. That is what the Buddha taught: each time you speak of an evil, you help to spread it.

This barely touches the problem.

Yet it should be a very general rule. But people who criticise have an answer for that; they say, "If you do not see the evil, you will never be able to cure it. If you leave someone in his ugliness, he will never get out of it." This is not true, but that is how they justify their behaviour. So in this aphorism Sri Aurobindo forestalls these objections: it is not because of ignorance or unconsciousness or indifference that you do not see the evil – you are quite capable of seeing it, even of feeling it, but you refuse to help to spread it by giving it the force of your attention and the support of your consciousness. And for that **you must yourself be above this perception and feeling; you must be able to**

see the evil or the ugliness without suffering from it, without being shocked or disturbed by it. You see it from a height where these things do not exist, but you have the conscious perception of it, you are not affected by it, you are free. This is the first step.

The second step is to be *positively* conscious of the supreme Good and supreme Beauty behind all things, which sustains all things and enables them to exist. When you see Him, you are able to perceive Him behind this mask and this distortion; even this ugliness, this wickedness, this evil is a disguise of Something which is essentially beautiful or good, luminous, pure.

Then comes the *true* collaboration, for when you have this vision, this perception, when you live in this consciousness, it also gives you the power to *draw* That down into the manifestation, to the earth, and to bring It into contact with what now distorts and disguises, so that little by little this distortion and this disguise are transformed by the influence of the Truth that is behind.

Here we are at the very summit of the scale of collaboration.

In this way it is not necessary to introduce the principle of love into the explanation. But if you want to know or understand the nature of the Force or the Power that enables or brings about this transformation – particularly where evil is concerned, but also with ugliness to a certain extent – you see that love is obviously the most potent and integral of all powers – integral in the sense that it applies in all cases. It is even more powerful than the power of purification which dissolves all bad will and which is, as it were, the

master of the adverse forces, but which has not the direct power of transformation. **The power of purification first dissolves in order to allow the transformation afterwards. It destroys one form in order to be able to create a better one, whereas love need not dissolve in order to transform; it possesses the direct power of transformation.** Love is like a flame that changes what is hard into something malleable and even sublimates this malleable thing into a kind of purified vapour – it does not destroy, it transforms.

In its essence, in its origin, love is like a flame, a white flame which overcomes *all* resistances. You can experience this yourself: **whatever the difficulty in your being, whatever the burden of accumulated error, ignorance, incapacity and bad will, a single *second* of this pure, essential, supreme love dissolves it as in an all-powerful flame; a single moment and a whole past can disappear; a single instant in which you *touch* it in its essence and a whole burden is consumed.**

And it is very easy to explain how a person who has this experience can spread it, can act on others; because to have the experience you must touch the one, supreme Essence of the whole manifestation, the Origin and the Essence, the Source and the Reality of all that is; and at once you enter the realm of Unity – there is no longer any separation of individuals, there is only one single vibration that can be repeated indefinitely in external form.*

* *Later the disciple asked Mother: "Is it one single vibration which* can be repeated *indefinitely or which* is repeated *indefinitely?" Mother answered: "I meant several things at the same time. This single vibration is static everywhere, but when one realises it consciously, one has the power of making it active wherever one directs it; that is to say, one doesn't*

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

And when the day comes for the manifestation of supreme love, for the crystallised, concentrated descent of

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move anything, but the stress of the consciousness makes it active wherever one directs one's consciousness."

supreme love, that will truly be the hour of transformation. For nothing will be able to resist That.

But since it is all-powerful, some receptivity must be prepared on earth so that the effects are not shattering. Sri Aurobindo has explained this in one of his letters. Someone asked him, "Why does it not come immediately?" He answered something like this: if divine love were to manifest in its essence upon earth, it would be like a bombshell; because the earth is neither supple nor receptive enough to be able to widen itself to the dimensions of this love. It not only needs to open, but to widen itself and to become more supple – Matter is still too rigid. And even the substance of the physical consciousness – not only the most material Matter, but the substance of the physical consciousness – is too rigid."[43]

10. There is No Sin That is Potentially Not Our Sin

"***To hate the sinner is the worst sin, for it is hating God; yet he who commits it glories in his superior virtue.***

When we enter into a certain state of consciousness, we see clearly that we are capable of anything and that in fact there is not a single "sin" that is not potentially our sin. Is this impression correct? And yet we revolt against and feel an aversion for certain things: there is always something somewhere which we cannot accept. Why?

What is the true attitude, the effective attitude in face of evil?

There is not a single sin that is not our sin.... You have this experience when for some reason or other – depending on the case – you come into contact with the universal state of consciousness – not in its limitless essence, but on any

level of Matter. There is an atomic consciousness; there is a purely material consciousness; and there is, even more, a general psychological consciousness. When by going within, by a kind of withdrawal from the ego, you come into contact with this zone of consciousness, let us say, a terrestrial or collective human psychological zone – there is a difference, "collective human" is restrictive, whereas "terrestrial" includes many animal movements, even plant movements; but as in the present case the moral notion of guilt, sin, evil belongs exclusively to the human consciousness, we will say simply the collective human psychological consciousness – when you come into contact with that through this identification, naturally you feel or see or know that you are capable of any human movement anywhere. It is to some extent a truth-consciousness – this egoistic sense of what belongs and does not belong to you, of what you can do and cannot do, disappears at that time; **you become aware that the fundamental structure of the human consciousness is such that any human being is capable of doing anything at all.** And since you are in a truth-consciousness, at the same time you have the feeling that judgments or aversions, or rejection, are absurd. *Everything* is potentially there. And if certain currents of force – which you usually cannot trace; you see them come and go, but as a rule their origin and direction are unknown – if any one of these currents enters into you, it can make you do anything.

If you could always remain in this state of consciousness, after some time – provided you maintained within you the flame of Agni, the flame of purification and progress – you would be able not only to prevent these movements from taking an active form in you and expressing

themselves materially, but also to act on the very nature of the movement and transform it. But, of course, unless you have attained a very high degree of realisation, it will be practically impossible to maintain this state of consciousness for long. Almost immediately you fall back into the egoistic consciousness of the separate self. And then all the difficulties come back: the disgust, the revolt against certain things, the horror they arouse in you, etc.

It is probable – it is even certain – that **until you are yourself completely transformed, these movements of disgust and revolt are needed so that you can do *in yourself* what has to be done to shut the door. For after all, the problem is not to allow them to manifest themselves.**"[44]

11. The View From the Summit: All is Exactly As It Should be

"In another aphorism Sri Aurobindo says – I no longer remember his exact words – that sin is merely something which is not in its right place. In this perpetual Becoming nothing ever repeats itself, and there are things that disappear, so to speak, into the past; and when their disappearance becomes necessary these things become, for our very limited consciousness, bad and repulsive. And we revolt against them because their time is over. But if we had the overall view, if we could contain within ourselves the past, the present and the future all at once – as it is somewhere above – we would see the relativity of these things and that it is above all the progressive Force of evolution that gives us the will to reject; and that wherever they are in their right place, they are quite acceptable. Only, it is practically impossible to have this experience unless you have the total vision, that is to say,

the vision that belongs to the Supreme alone! Therefore you must first of all identify yourself with the Supreme; then, afterwards, with this identification, you can return to a sufficiently exteriorised consciousness and see things as they are. But that is the principle, and to the extent that you are capable of realising it, you reach a state of consciousness where you can look at everything with a smile of total certitude that everything is as it should be.

Naturally, people who do not think deeply enough will say, "Ah, but if we saw that everything is as it should be, nothing would move!" No, you cannot prevent things from moving! Even for a fraction of a second they do not stop moving. It is a continuous, total transformation, a movement that never ceases. And because it is difficult for us to feel like this, it is possible for us to imagine that if we were to enter into certain states of consciousness, things would not change. But even if we were to enter into an apparently total inertia, things would continue to change and so would we!

Basically, disgust, revolt, anger, all these movements of violence are necessarily movements of ignorance and limitation, with all the weakness that limitation represents. Revolt is a weakness – it is the feeling of an impotent will. You will – or you think you will – you feel, you see that things are not as they should be and you revolt against whatever does not agree with what you see. But **if you were all-powerful, if your will and your vision were all-powerful, there would be no occasion for you to revolt, you would always see that all things are as they should be. If we go to the highest level and unite with the**

consciousness of the supreme Will, we see, at every second, at every moment of the universe, that all is exactly as it should be, exactly as the Supreme wills it. That is omnipotence. And all movements of violence become not only unnecessary but utterly ridiculous.

Therefore there is only one solution: to unite ourselves by aspiration, concentration, interiorisation and identification with the supreme Will. And that is both omnipotence and perfect freedom at the same time. And that is the only omnipotence and the only freedom; everything else is an approximation. You may be on the way, but it is not the entire thing. So if you experience this, you realise that **with this supreme freedom and supreme power there is also a total peace and a serenity that never fails. Therefore, if you feel something which is not that, a revolt, a disgust, something which you cannot accept, it means that *in you* there is a part which has not been touched by the transformation, something which has kept the old consciousness, something which is still on the path – that is all.**"[45]

12. How Does One Deceive Oneself?

"…there are two ways of deceiving oneself, which are very different. For example, you may very well be shocked by certain things, not for personal reasons, but precisely in your goodwill and eagerness to serve the Divine, when you see people behaving badly, being selfish, unfaithful and treacherous. There is a stage where you have overcome these things and no longer allow them to manifest in yourself, but to the extent that you are linked to the ordinary

consciousness, the ordinary point of view, the ordinary life, the ordinary way of thinking, they are still possible, they exist latently because they are the reverse of the qualities that you are striving to attain. And this opposition still exists – until you rise above it and no longer have either the quality or the defect. **So long as you have the virtue, its opposite is always latent in you; it is only when you are above both the virtue and the defect that it disappears.**

So this kind of indignation that you feel comes from the fact that you are not altogether above it; you are at the stage where you thoroughly disapprove and could not do it yourself. Up to that point there is nothing to say, unless you give a violent outer expression to your indignation. If anger intervenes, it is because there is a complete contradiction between the feeling you want to have and how you react to others. Because **anger is a deformation of the vital power, an obscure and wholly unregenerated vital, a vital that is still subject to all the ordinary actions and reactions. When this vital power is used by an ignorant and egoistic individual will and this will meets with opposition from other individual wills around it, this power, under the pressure of opposition, changes into anger and tries to obtain by violence what cannot be achieved solely by the pressure of the force itself.**

Besides, anger, like every other kind of violence, is always a sign of weakness, impotence and incapacity.

And here self-deception comes solely from the approval given to it or the flattering epithet attached to it – because anger can only be something blind, ignorant and asuric, that is to say, contrary to the light.

But this is still the best case.

There is another one. There are people who without knowing it – or because *they want* to ignore it – always follow their personal interest, their preferences, their attachments, their conceptions; people who are not wholly consecrated to the Divine and who make use of moral and yogic ideas to conceal their personal impulses. But these people are deceiving themselves doubly; not only do they deceive themselves in their external activities, in their relation with others, but they also deceive themselves in their own personal movement; **instead of serving the Divine, they serve their own egoism. And this happens constantly, constantly! They serve their own personality, their own egoism, while pretending to serve God. Then it is no longer even self-deception, it is hypocrisy.**

This mental habit of always endowing everything with a very favourable appearance, of giving a favourable explanation to all movements – sometimes it is rather subtle, but sometimes it is so crude that nobody is deceived except oneself. It is a habit of excusing oneself, the habit of giving a favourable mental excuse, a favourable mental explanation to everything one does, to everything one says, to everything one feels. For example, those who have no self-control and slap someone's face in great indignation would call that an almost divine wrath!

It is amazing, amazing – this power of self-deception, the mind's skill in finding an admirable justification for any ignorance, any stupidity whatsoever.

This is not an experience that comes only now and then. It is something which you can observe from minute to minute. And you usually see it much more easily in others! But if you look at yourself closely, you catch yourself a thousand times a day, looking at yourself just a little indulgently: "Oh! But it is *not the same thing*." Besides, it is never the same for you as it is for your neighbour!"[46]

13. The Mother's Occult Memory of An Earthly Paradise and the True Interpretation of the Bible's Story About Paradise and the Serpent

"From the historical point of view (I am not speaking from the psychological but from the historical point of view), if I base myself on my memories – only I cannot prove it; nothing can be proved, and I do not think there is any truly historical proof, that is to say, one which has been preserved, or at any rate none has yet been found – but according to what I remember, there was certainly a moment in earth's history when there existed a kind of earthly paradise, in the sense that it was a perfectly harmonious and natural life; that is to say, the manifestation of the mind was in accord, was *still* in complete accord with the ascending march of Nature and totally harmonious, without perversion or distortion. This was the first stage of mind's manifestation in material forms.

How long did it last? It is difficult to say. But for man it was a life that was like a kind of outflowering of animal life. I have a memory of a life in which the body was perfectly adapted to its natural environment and the climate adapted to the needs of the body, the body to the needs of the climate. Life was wholly spontaneous and natural, just as a

more luminous and more conscious animal life would be; but there were none of the complications and distortions that the mind brought in later in the course of its development. I have the memory of that life – I had it, I relived it when I became conscious of the life of the earth as a whole. But I cannot say how long it lasted nor what area it covered. I do not know. I can only remember the condition, the state, what material Nature was like, what the human form and the human consciousness were like at that time and this kind of harmony with all the other elements on earth – harmony with animal life, and such a great harmony with plant life. There was a kind of spontaneous knowledge of how to use the things of Nature, of the properties of plants, of fruits and everything vegetable Nature could provide. No aggressiveness, no fear, no contradictions nor frictions and no perversions at all – the mind was pure, simple, luminous, uncomplicated.

It is only with the progress of evolution, the march of evolution, when the mind began to develop in itself, *for itself*, that all the complications and distortions began. So that the story of Genesis which seems so childish contains some truth. In the old traditions like that of Genesis, each letter* stood for a specific knowledge, it was a graphic summary of the traditional knowledge of that time. But apart from that, even the symbolic story had a reality in the sense that there truly was a period of life on earth – the first manifestation of mentalised matter in human forms – which was still in complete harmony with all that preceded it. It was only later...

* *Of the Hebrew alphabet.*

And the symbol of the tree of knowledge represents the kind of knowledge which is no longer divine, the material knowledge that comes from the sense of division and which started spoiling everything. How long did this period last? Because in my memory too it was like an almost immortal life, and it seems that it was an accident of evolution that made it necessary for forms to disintegrate... for progress. So I cannot say how long it lasted. And where? **According to certain impressions – but they are only impressions – it would seem that it was in the vicinity of... I do not know exactly whether it was on this side of Ceylon and India or on the other (*Mother points to the Indian* Ocean, first to the west of Ceylon and India and then to the east, *between Ceylon and Java*), but it was certainly a place which no longer exists, which has probably been swallowed up by the sea. I have a very clear vision of this place and a very clear awareness of this life and its forms, but I cannot give any material details. To tell the truth, when I relived these moments I was not curious about details.** One is in a different state of mind and one has no curiosity about these material details; everything changes into psychological factors. And it was... it was something so simple, so luminous, so harmonious, beyond all our preoccupations – precisely beyond all these preoccupations with time and place. It was a spontaneous, extremely beautiful life, and so close to Nature, like a natural flowering of the animal life. And there were no oppositions, no contradictions, or anything like that – everything happened in the best way possible.

(*Silence*)

Repeatedly, in different circumstances, several times, I

have had the same memory. It was not exactly the same scene or the same images, because it was not something that I saw, it was *a life* that I was living. For some time, by night or by day, in a certain state of trance I went back to a life that I had lived and had the full consciousness that it was the outflowering of the human form on earth – the first human forms capable of embodying the divine Being. It was that. It was the first time I could manifest in an earthly form, in a particular form, in an individual form – not a "general" life but an individual form – that is to say, the first time that the Being above and the being below were joined by the mentalisation of this material substance. I lived this several times, but always in similar surroundings and with a very similar feeling of *such* joyful simplicity, without complexity, without problems, without all these questions; there was nothing, absolutely nothing of the kind! It was an outflowering of the joy of living, simply that, in universal love and harmony – flowers, minerals, animals: all were in harmony.

It was only long afterwards – but this is a personal impression – long afterwards that things went wrong. Probably because some mental crystallisations were necessary, inevitable for the general evolution, so that the mind might be prepared to move on to something else. This is where... Faugh! It is like falling into a hole, into ugliness, into obscurity; everything becomes so dark afterwards, so ugly, so difficult, so painful, it is really – it really feels like a fall.

(*Silence*)

I knew an occultist who used to say that it was not –

how to put it? – inevitable. In the total freedom of the manifestation it is the deliberate separation from the Origin that is the cause of all disorder. But how to explain it? Our words are so poor that we cannot speak of these things. We can say that it was "inevitable" because it happened; but if we go outside the creation, we can conceive – or we could have conceived – of a creation in which this disorder would not have happened. Sri Aurobindo also said practically the same thing, that it was a kind of "accident", if you like, but an "accident" which has given the manifestation a much greater and much more complete perfection than if it had never occurred. But this still belongs to the realm of speculation and these speculations are useless, to say the least. In any case, the experience, the feeling is this: a... (*Mother indicates an abrupt fall*) oh! all of a sudden.

For the earth it probably happened like that, all of a sudden: a kind of ascent, then a fall. But the earth is only a very small point of concentration. For the universe it is something else.

(*Silence*)

So the memory of that time is preserved somewhere, in the earth's memory, in the region where all the memories of the earth are recorded, and those who are able to communicate with this memory can say that the earthly paradise still exists somewhere; but I know nothing about it, I do not see.

What about the story of the serpent? Why does the serpent have such an evil reputation?

The Christians say that it is the spirit of Evil.

(*Silence*)

But all this is a misunderstanding.

The occultist I spoke of used to say that **the true interpretation of the Bible story about Paradise and the serpent is that man wanted to rise from a state of animal divinity – like the animals – to a state of conscious divinity through the development of the mind – and that is what the symbol means when it is said that they ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. And the serpent – he always used to say that it was iridescent, that is to say, it was all the colours of the rainbow – it was not at all the spirit of Evil, it was the evolutionary force, the force,** the power of evolution, and of course it was the power of evolution that had made them taste of the fruit of knowledge.

And so, according to him, **Jehovah was the chief of the Asuras, the supreme Asura, the egoistic god who wanted to dominate everything and have everything under his control. And once he had taken the position of supreme lord in relation to earthly realisation, of course he was not pleased that man should make this mental progress, for it would bring him a knowledge that enabled him not to obey any longer! This made him furious! For it would enable man to become a god by the evolutionary power of consciousness. And that is why they were driven out of Paradise.**

There is a good deal of truth in that, a good deal.

And Sri Aurobindo fully agreed. He said the same thing. It is the evolutionary power – the power of the mind – that led man towards knowledge, a separative knowledge. And it is a fact that man became conscious of himself with

the sense of good and evil. But, of course, that spoiled everything and he could not stay there. He was driven out by his own consciousness. He could no longer stay there.

But were they driven out by Jehovah or by their own consciousness?

It is just two different ways of saying the same thing.

According to me, all these old Scriptures and these old traditions have different levels of meaning (*Mother makes a gesture to show the different levels*); and according to the period, the people, the needs, one symbol or another has been selected and used. But there comes a time – when you transcend all these things and see them from what Sri Aurobindo calls "the other hemisphere" – when you become aware that these are merely ways of speaking to establish a contact – a kind of bridge or link between the lower way of seeing and the higher way of knowing.

And people who argue and say, "Oh, no! it is like this; it is like that" – there comes a time when it seems so funny, so funny! And just that, the spontaneous retort of so many people, "Oh, that is impossible" – the word itself is so funny! For the slightest, I might even say, the most elementary intellectual development enables you to realise that you could not even think of it if it were not possible.

(*Silence*)

Oh! If we could only find that again, but how?

Really, they have spoilt the earth, they have spoilt it – they have spoilt the atmosphere, they have spoilt everything! And now, for the atmosphere to come back to what it should be – oh! we have a long way to go, and above all

psychologically. But even the very structure of matter (*Mother feels the air around her*), with their bombs and experiments, oh, they have made a mess of it all!... They have really made a mess of matter.

Probably – no, not probably – it is quite certain that it was necessary to knead it, to churn it, to prepare it so that it can receive *this*, the new thing which is not yet manifested.

It was very simple, very harmonious, very luminous, but not complex enough. And this complexity has spoilt everything, but it will bring a realisation that is *infinitely* more conscious – infinitely. And so when the earth again becomes so harmonious, simple, luminous, pure – simple, pure, purely divine – and with this complexity, then we shall be able to do something."[47]

14. Idols Have Presence in Them

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

But people in Europe do not have this inner sense, not at all. For them everything is like a surface – not even that, just a thin outer film with nothing behind – so they cannot

feel it. And yet **it is a fact that the presence is there; it is an absolutely real fact, I guarantee it.**"[48]

15. No Religion Can Ever be Founded on Sri Aurobindo's Writings

"You only have to read all that Sri Aurobindo has written to know that it is impossible to base a religion on his works, because he presents each problem, each question in all its aspects, showing the truth contained in each way of seeing things, and he explains that in order to attain the Truth you must realise a synthesis which goes beyond all mental notions and emerge into a transcendence beyond thought.

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

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

But men are so foolish that they can change anything into a religion, so great is their need of a fixed framework for their narrow thought and limited action. They do not feel secure unless they can assert this is true and that is not; but such an assertion becomes impossible for anyone who has read and understood what Sri Aurobindo has written.

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

Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, April 1961, p. 169

Religion and Yoga do not belong to the same plane of being and spiritual life can exist in all its purity only when it is free from all mental dogma."[49]

16. Nothing Withers You More Than Reasonable People!

"We are told that there is a state of consciousness, when we rise above, when we are able to go beyond both the aspect of Nothingness or Nirvana and the aspect of Existence – **there is the Nirvana aspect and the Existence aspect, the two simultaneous and complementary aspects of the Supreme – where all things exist eternally and simultaneously; so one can conceive – God knows! This may well be another stupidity** – one can conceive of a certain number of things passing into Non-Being, and that to our consciousness would be a disappearance or a destruction.

Is that possible? I do not know. You would have to ask the Lord, but usually He does not answer such questions. He smiles!

There comes a time when really one can no longer say anything: one has the feeling that whatever one says, even if it isn't absolutely inane, is not far short of it, and that it would actually be better to keep quiet. That is the difficulty. In some of these aphorisms you feel that he has suddenly caught hold of something above and beyond everything that can be thought – so what can one say?

(Silence)

Naturally, when one comes down here again, one can – oh, one can say many things!

As a joke – one can always joke, but one hesitates to do so because people take your jokes so seriously – one could very well say, without being completely wrong, that **one sometimes learns much more by listening to a madman or a fool than by listening to a reasonable man. I am quite sure of it. There is nothing that withers you more than reasonable people.**"[50]

17. Cruelty and Sin

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

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

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

But at the origin there is still the problem that has never been solved: "Why has it become like this? Why this distortion? Why has it all been perverted?" Behind, there are beautiful things, very intense, infinitely more powerful than what we can even bear, wonderful things, but why has all that become so frightful here? This is what came to me immediately when I read this aphorism.

The concept of sin is something that I do not

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

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

As for the idea that things are not in their place, I understood it even when I was a child. It was only later that I was given the explanation by the person who taught me occultism, for, in his cosmogonic system, he explained the successive *pralayas** of the various universes by saying that with each universe an aspect of the Supreme would manifest itself, that each universe was built on one aspect of the Supreme and that one after another they had all returned into the Supreme. He enumerated all the aspects that were manifested successively and with what logic! It was extraordinary – I have kept it somewhere, I forget where. And he said that this time, it was – I do not remember exactly what number in the series – but **it would be the universe which would not be withdrawn again, which would follow a progressive course of becoming that would be, so to say, indefinite. And this universe represented equilibrium, not static but progressive**

* *Pralaya: the end or destruction of a universe.*

equilibrium, that is to say, each thing in its place, exactly, each vibration, each movement in its place. The further down one goes, the more each form, each activity, each thing is exactly in its place in relation to the whole.

I was extremely interested, because later **Sri Aurobindo said the same thing, that nothing is bad, it is just that things are not in their place – their place not only in space but also in time; their place in the universe,** beginning with the worlds, the stars, etc., each thing exactly in its place. And so, when each thing is exactly in its place, from the most stupendous to the most microscopic, the whole will express the Supreme progressively, without any need of being withdrawn to be emanated again. On this Sri Aurobindo based the fact that in this creation, in this universe, the perfection of a divine world – what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind – will be able to manifest. **Equilibrium is the essential law of this creation and this is why perfection can be realised in the manifestation.**"[51]

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42. *CWM 10, Pages 67-68*
43. *CWM 10, Pages 71-74*
44. *CWM 10, Pages 75-76*
45. *CWM 10, Pages 76-78*
46. *CWM 10, Pages 80-82*
47. *CWM 10, Pages 89-95*
48. *CWM 10, Pages 95-96*
49. *CWM 10, Pages 96-97*
50. *CWM 10, Pages 100-01*
51. *CWM 10, Pages 106-08*

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