The Real Awakener

Lights on the Path

Words of the Mother – 4

Price : Rs. 15/-

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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, March 1951

1. Causes of Fear

"There are three reasons. First, an excessive concern about one's security. Next, what one does not know always gives an uneasy feeling which is translated in the consciousness by fear. And above all, one doesn't have the habit of a spontaneous trust in the Divine. If you look into things sufficiently deeply, this is the true reason. There are people who do not even know that That exists, but one could tell them in other words, "You have no faith in your destiny" or "You know nothing about Grace" – anything whatever, you may put it as you like, but the root of the matter is a lack of trust. If one always had the feeling that it is the best that happens in all circumstances, one would not be afraid.

The first movement of fear comes automatically. There was a great scientist who was also a great psychologist (I don't remember his name now); he had developed his inner consciousness but wanted to test it. So he undertook an experiment. He wanted to know if, by means of consciousness, one could control the reflex actions of the body (probably he didn't go far enough to be able to do it, for it can be done; but in any case, for him it was still impossible). Well, he went to the zoological garden, to the place where snakes were kept in a glass cage. There was a particularly aggressive cobra there; when it was not asleep, it was almost always in a fury, for through the glass it could see people and that irritated it terribly. Our scientist went and stood in front of the cage. He knew very well that it was made in such a way that the snake could never break the glass and that he ran no risk of being

attacked. So from there he began to excite the snake by shouts and gestures. The cobra, furious, hurled itself against the glass, and every time it did so the scientist closed his eyes! Our psychologist told himself, "But look here, I know that this snake cannot pass through, why do I close my eyes?" Well, one must recognise that it is difficult to conquer the reaction. It is a sense of protection, and if one feels that one cannot protect oneself, one is afraid. But the movement of fear which is expressed by the eyes fluttering is not a mental or a vital fear: it is a fear in the cells of the body; for it has not been impressed upon them that there is no danger and they do not know how to resist. It is because one has not done yoga, you see. With yoga one can watch with open eyes, one would not close them; but one would not close them because one calls upon something else, and that "something else" is the sense of the divine Presence in oneself which is stronger than everything.

This is the only thing that can cure you of your fear."[1]

2. The Futility of All Metaphysics

"…according to what Sri Aurobindo has felt to be the most total truth, according to this conception of a progressive universe, one is led to say **that at every minute what happens is the best possible for the unfolding of the whole.*** It is absolutely logical. And I believe that all contradictions can arise only from a more or less pronounced tendency towards this or that, for one position or another. All who admit the intrusion of a "sin" or an "error" and the conflict resulting

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

from it between forces which pull back and those which pull forward, may naturally contest the possibility. **But one has to say that for him who is spiritually linked with the supreme Will or the supreme Truth, for him it is necessarily, at every instant, the best that happens for his personal realisation. In all instances it is like that. An unconditional best can be admitted only by one who sees the universe as an unfolding, as the Supreme's self-awareness of Himself.**

(*Silence*)

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

This is incontestable.

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

From the practical point of view, this is evident.

Only, each one takes a position.... I have all the examples here. I have a sample collection of all attitudes and see very

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

There is a state, a state essentially pragmatic, spiritually pragmatic, in which of all human futilities, the most futile is metaphysics."[2] (14-3-1951)

3. The Universe is the Eternal

"Each element of this universe is eternal because the universe *is* the Eternal. Now, in the Eternal it is difficult to speak of a "beginning". Evidently It has always been and It will always be. …

…There are people who speak of Pralaya, I know, but that simply means (excuse me, but one must speak a little lightly, otherwise this becomes insufferable) that one day perhaps the Supreme may feel tired, dissatisfied with the kind of universe He has made and may want to create another! Then, as it is He Himself, He takes everything back into Himself and puts it out again! That is what people call "pralaya", but it changes nothing: all the elements of the universe are eternal and eternally will the combinations be different."[3] (17-3-1951)

4. Mental Formations and the Beings of the Mental World

"Many mental formations try to realise themselves upon earth, but these are generally created by human beings; they then continue to work in the mental world with the intention of influencing the mind of human beings. But the beings of the mental plane proper are generally creators, and because they are creators of form, they are not much concerned with influencing other forms – they are satisfied with expressing themselves through the forms they have made."[4] (19-3-1951)

5. On Consciousness

"*When one is conscious of the different parts of the being, what part is it which is conscious?*

It is probably not always the same. Usually the work of becoming aware ought to be done by the psychic, but it is rarely the psychic. …

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

Sometimes there is no relation among these different

witnesses – there ought to be, but it is not always there. But if there is in the being a will to become perfect, the relation is established quite quickly; one can refer to another and finally, if there is a sufficient sincerity, sufficient concentration, you come to the supreme inner Witness who can judge all things. But generally **it may be said that it is always a part of the mind, more or less enlightened, in a little closer contact with the inner being, which observes and judges.**

What is consciousness?

(*After a silence*) I am trying to choose among several explanations! One, which is a joke, is that consciousness is the opposite of unconsciousness! Another... it is the creative essence of the universe – without consciousness, no universe; for consciousness means objectification. I could also say that consciousness is what "is", because without consciousness nothing is – this is the best reason. Without consciousness no life, no light, no objectification, no creation, no universe.

Perhaps there is in the unmanifest Supreme a consciousness (but when one speaks of these questions one begins to say impossible things); it is said that, to begin with, the Supreme became aware of himself (which would mean that he was not conscious of himself before! that he was in a state we cannot call "conscious"), that his first movement was to become aware of himself and once having become conscious of himself, he projected this consciousness, which formed the creation. At least, this is what old tradition says. Grant that there never was a beginning, for it is a human way of putting it: the "beginning" is the Supreme – the unmanifest Supreme becoming aware of himself. Perhaps he found that this consciousness was not altogether satisfactory (!) and he

projected it, not outside himself for nothing is outside him, but he changed it into an active consciousness so that it would become an objectification of himself. Consequently, it can be said with certitude that Consciousness is the origin of all creation; there you are as exact as you can ever be with words. Consciousness is the origin of all creation – without consciousness, no creation. And what we call "consciousness" is just a far-off contact, without precision and exactness, with the supreme Consciousness. Or if you like, it is the reflection, in a not very exact or pure mirror, of the original Consciousness. **What we call our consciousness is this original Consciousness reflected in a somewhat foggy mirror (sometimes very foggy, sometimes very deformed), a reflection in the individual mirror. Then through this reflection, if we go back slowly to the origin of what is reflected, we can enter into contact with the Consciousness – the True Consciousness. And once we come into contact with the True Consciousness, we become aware that it is the same everywhere, that it is only deformation which divides it; without deformation everything is contained in one and the same Consciousness.** That is, it is only distortion, the reflection in a distorting mirror, which brings about difference and division in the Consciousness, otherwise it is one single Consciousness. But it is only by experience that one can understand these things."[5] (22-3-1951)

6. The Descent of the Divine Love in Matter and the Reality of the Inconscient

"…I am sure that when the Divine Love descended into Matter, this Matter was quite unconscious, it had absolutely

no form; it may even be said that **forms in general are the result of the effort of Love to bring consciousness into Matter.** If one of you (I have my doubts, but still) went down into the Inconscient, what is called the pure Inconscient, you would realise what it is. A stone will seem to you a marvellously conscious object in comparison. You speak disdainfully of a stone because you have just a wee bit more consciousness than it has, but the difference between the consciousness of the stone and the total Inconscient is perhaps greater than that between the stone and you. And the coming out of the Inconscient is due exclusively to the sacrifice of the Divine, to this descent of divine Love into the Inconscient. Consequently, when I said "perhaps in the stone", I could have removed the "perhaps" – I can assert that *even* in the stone it is there. **There would be nothing, neither stone nor metal nor any organisation of atoms without this presence of Divine Love.**

Most people say there is "consciousness" when they begin to think – when one doesn't think one is not conscious. But plants are perfectly conscious and yet they do not think. They have very precise sensations which are the expression of a consciousness, but they do not think. Animals begin to think and their reactions are much more complex. But both plants and animals are conscious. One can be conscious of a sensation without having the least thought.

Did material substance exist before the descent of Divine Love?

I don't think it could be said that there was a material substance. The Inconscient... is the Inconscient. I don't know how to explain this to you. **If there is a negation of**

something, it is truly the Inconscient, it is the negation of everything. It has not even the capacity of emptiness. One needs to have descended there to know what it is and explain it. Words cannot describe it. It is the negation of all things because everything begins with consciousness. Without consciousness there is nothing."[6]

7. The Special Significance of the Earth in the Universe

"The formation of the earth as we know it, **this infinitesimal point in the immense universe, was made precisely in order to concentrate the effort of transformation upon one point; it is like a symbolic point created in the universe to make it possible, while working directly upon one point, to radiate it over the entire universe.**

If we want to make the problem a little more comprehensible, it is enough to limit ourselves to the creation and the history of the earth, for it is a good symbol of universal history.

From the astronomical point of view the earth is nothing, it is a very small accident. From the spiritual point of view, it is a symbolic willed formation. And as I have already said, it is only upon earth that this Presence is found, this direct contact with the supreme Origin, this presence of the divine Consciousness hidden in all things.

The other worlds have been organised more or less hierarchically, if one may say so, but the earth has a special formation due to the direct intervention, without any intermediary, of the supreme Consciousness in the Inconscient.

Have the solar fragments the same matter as the earth?

I have taken care to tell you that this radiation was a symbolic creation, and that all action on this special point had its radiation in the whole universe; remember this, instead of beginning to say that the formation of the earth comes from an element projected from the sun or that a nebula must have been scattered giving birth to the sun and all its satellites, etc.

But is it true that there is no difference between solar matter and terrestrial matter? Were the sun and the other worlds of the solar system formed at the same time as the earth?

Necessarily, everything was formed at the same time, the creation was simultaneous, with a special concentration of the Consciousness upon the earth.

Have the beings of the other worlds and planets a psychic being?

No, it is a purely terrestrial phenomenon. Only, there is nothing against the idea that psychic beings may go to the other worlds if it so pleases them. There is no reason to think that one cannot, if one went to another planet, meet psychic beings; it is not impossible; but these would be psychic beings formed upon earth who have become free in their movement, going here and there at will for some reason or other. All knowledge in all traditions, from every part of the earth, says that the psychic formation is a terrestrial formation and that the growth of the psychic being is something that takes place upon earth. But once they are formed and free in their movement, they can go anywhere in the universe, they are not limited in their movement; but their formation and growth belong to the terrestrial life, for reasons of concentration."[7]

8. The Nature of Divine Live

"…You must have worked much on yourself only to be *ready* to aspire to this Love. If you look at yourself very sincerely, very straight, you will see that as soon as you begin to think of Love it is always your little inner tumult which starts whirling. All that aspires in you wants certain vibrations. It is almost impossible, without being far advanced on the yogic path, to separate the vital essence, the vital vibration from your conception of Love. **What I say is founded on an assiduous experience of human beings. Well, for you, in the state in which you are, as you are, if you had a contact with pure divine Love, it would seem to you colder than ice, or so far-off, so high that you would not be able to breathe; it would be like the mountain-top where you would feel frozen and find it difficult to breathe, so very far would it be from what you normally feel. Divine Love, if not clothed with a psychic or vital vibration, is difficult for a human being to perceive.** One can have an impression of grace, of a grace which is something so far, so high, so pure, so impersonal that... yes, one can have the feeling of grace, but it is with difficulty that one feels Love."[8] (24-3-1951)

9. The Indispensability of an Endless Patience and Endurance in Yoga

"You must arm yourself with an endless patience and endurance. You do a thing once, ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times if necessary, but you do it till it gets done. And not done only here and there, but everywhere and everywhere at the same time. This is the great problem one

sets oneself. That is why, to those who come to tell me very light-heartedly, "I want to do yoga", I reply, "Think it over, **one may do the yoga for a number of years without noticing the least result. But if you want to do it, you must persist and persist with such a will that you should be ready to do it for ten lifetimes, a hundred lifetimes if necessary, in order to succeed." I do not say it will be like that, but the *attitude* must** be like that. Nothing must discourage you; for there are all the difficulties of ignorance of the different states of being, to which are added the endless malice and the unbounded cunning of the hostile forces in the world.... They are there, do you know why? They have been tolerated, do you know why? – simply to see how long one can last out and how great is the sincerity in one's action. For everything depends upon your sincerity. If you are truly sincere in your will, nothing will stop you, you will go right to the end, and if it is necessary for you to live a thousand years to do it, you will live a thousand years to do it."[9]

10. All Suffering, All Weaknesses, All Incapabilities are, in the Last Analysis, Insincerities

"All suffering, all weaknesses, all incapabilities are, in the last analysis, insincerities.

There are many places where insincerity may be lodged, and hence it should never be said as so often people say to me, "I am perfectly sincere." It is like those who assure you, "I have never told a lie." **If you were perfectly sincere, you would be the Divine, if you had never told a lie, that is, something that is not true, you would be the Truth!** So, as you are neither the Divine nor the Truth in fact (you are that

in essence but not in fact), you have always a long way to go to reach the Truth and sincerity.

You need not look unhappy because it is like that.

It is like those people in despair who tell you, "Why is the world so frightful?" What is the use of lamenting, since it is like that? The only thing you can do is to work to change it. Naturally, from a speculative point of view one may try to understand, but the human mind is incapable of understanding such things. For the moment it is quite useless. What is useful is to change it. We all agree that the world is detestable, that it is not what it ought to be, and the only thing we have to do is to work to make it otherwise. Consequently, our whole preoccupation should be to find the best means of making it different; and we can understand one thing, it is that the best means (though we do not know it quite well yet), is we ourselves, isn't it? And surely you know yourself better than you know your neighbour – you understand better the consciousness manifested in a human being than that manifested in the stars, for instance. So, after a little hesitation you could say, "After all, the best means is what I am. I don't know very well what I am, but this kind of collection of things that I am, this perhaps is my work, this is perhaps my part of the work, and if I do it as well as I can, perhaps I shall be doing the best I can do." This is a very big beginning, very big. It is not overwhelming, not beyond the limits of your possibilities. You have your work at hand, it is always within your reach, so to say, it is always there for you to attend to it – a field of action proportionate to your strength, but varied enough, complex, vast, deep enough to be interesting. And you explore this unknown world."[10] (26-3-1951)

* * *

II. Questions and Answers, April-May 1951

1. Physical Perfection and Spirituality

"Physical perfection does not at all prove, not in the least, that one has taken one step farther towards spirituality. Physical perfection means that the instrument the force will use – any force whatever – will be sufficiently perfected to be remarkably expressive. But the important point, the essential point is the force which will use the instrument, and it is there that the choice is necessary. If you perfect your body and make of it a remarkable instrument, you must not at all think that because of that you are nearer to the spiritual life. You prepare a remarkable instrument so that this spiritual life may manifest in it, if it manifests itself. But it is for you always to choose what will be manifested. There are people who perfect their body, who build a strong, solid, energetic, agile, capable body, and all this simply to be able to better affirm their ego and the strength of their ego. Others may prepare the body to be sure that when the spiritual light manifests, it will find an instrument capable of doing all that is asked of it. Whatever the work required, the instrument will be so perfected as to be able to do it without difficulty, spontaneously, immediately.... This is to arouse your attention to the most important fact which is the choice of the force you will allow to manifest in your body. Perfect your body, make it a remarkable instrument, but never forget that there is a choice to be made and that this choice ought to be made constantly – one doesn't make it once for all, it must always be renewed. Because, before one reaches the total union, the total expression, there will always be this invasion of external things

which will try to enter you and spoil all the work. So, the necessary, indispensable condition is a constant vigilance. Do not sleep with satisfaction under the pretext that you have once made your choice: "Oh! Now it is all right, everything is all right." In principle everything is all right; in the sincerity of your choice lies also the guarantee of its duration. But for the sincerity to be perfect and the choice unshakable, one must never sleep – I don't mean you must not sleep physically, I mean the consciousness must not sleep!"[11]

2. A Special Feature of this Universe

"The very characteristic of the universe is an infinite multiplicity of laws which altogether, in their totality, reproduce the One. And it is this which is particularly marvellous in the physical world (in man and in the physical world, for it is proper to the terrestrial being), that it can be one of the innumerable elements which in their totality reproduce the One, and yet at the same time have a personal relation with the One – that is to say, contain in itself the consciousness of the One and the relation with the One, and at the same time be an element of the whole. But if the fact of becoming conscious of the One and identifying oneself with it stopped one from being particular, one would cease existing as a personality. This is precisely what the Buddhists and the disciples of Shankara try to realise; they wish to abolish totally their personality, their individuality, abolish the truth of their being, the special law of their being. This is what they consider to be a fusion with the Divine. But this is the negation of this creation. And as I was saying, **the miracle of this creation, as far as the terrestrial individuality goes, is that we may achieve this union, this complete identification with the**

Supreme, the One, and at the same time keep the consciousness of our diversity, of the particular law we have to express. It is more difficult but infinitely more complete, and it is the very truth of this universe. The universe has not been made for anything else but that, to unite these two poles, the two extremes of consciousness. And when they are united, one understands that these two extremes are exactly the same thing – a whole, at once one and innumerable."[12] (17-4-1951)

3. How to Abolish the Ego?

"…First of all, you must want to do it, and there are very few people who want to. And that is exactly what they say, it is this justification of their way of being, "That is the way I am made, I can't do otherwise. And then, if I change this, if I change that or if I do without this thing or if I get rid of that other, I shall no longer exist!" And if one doesn't say this openly, one thinks it. And all these little desires, these little satisfactions, these little reactions, all these small ways of being, one clings to them, clings hard – one sticks to them, one doesn't want to let them go. I have seen hundreds of cases where someone's difficulty had been removed (with a particular power a certain difficulty had been removed), but after a few days he brought it back with enthusiasm. He said, "But without that I do not exist any longer!" I have known people who had been given mental silence almost spontaneously and who, after a day or two, came back frightened: "Have I become an idiot?" – for the mental machine was not working all the time.... You cannot imagine it, you don't know how very difficult it is to separate oneself from this little ego; how much it gets into the way though it is

so small. It takes up so much room while being so microscopic. It is very difficult. One pushes it away in certain very obvious things; for example, if there is something good and someone rushes forward to make sure of having it first, even jostling his neighbour (this happens very frequently in ordinary life), then here one becomes quite aware that this is not very, very elegant, so one begins to suppress these crudities, one makes a big effort – and one becomes highly self-satisfied: "I am not selfish, I give what is good to others, I don't keep it for myself", and one begins to get puffed up. And so **one is filled with a moral egoism which is much worse than physical egoism, for it is conscious of its superiority. And then there are those who have left everything, given up everything, who have left their families, distributed their belongings, gone into solitude, who live an ascetic life, and who are terribly conscious of their superiority, who look down at poor humanity from the height of their spiritual grandeur – and they have, these people, such a formidable ego that unless it is broken into small bits, never, never will they see the Divine.** So it is not such an easy task. It takes a lot of time. And I must tell you that even when the work is done, it must always be begun again.

Physically, we depend upon food to live – unfortunately. For with food, we daily and constantly take in a formidable amount of inconscience, of *tamas*, heaviness, stupidity. One can't do otherwise – unless constantly, without a break, we remain completely aware and, as soon as an element is introduced into our body, we immediately work upon it to extract from it only the light and reject all that may darken our consciousness. This is the origin and rational explanation

of the religious practice of consecrating one's food to God before taking it. When eating one aspires that this food may not be taken for the little human ego but as an offering to the divine consciousness within oneself. In all yogas, all religions, this is encouraged. This is the origin of that practice, of contacting the consciousness behind, precisely to diminish as much as possible the absorption of an inconscience which increases daily, constantly, without one's being aware of it.

Vitally, it is the same thing. You live vitally in the vital world with all the currents of vital force entering, going out, joining and opposing each other, quarrelling and intermingling in your consciousness, and even if you have made a personal effort to purify your vital consciousness, to master in it the desire-being and the little human ego, you are constantly under a sort of obligation to absorb all the contrary vibrations which come from those with whom you live. One can't shut oneself up in an ivory tower, it is yet more difficult vitally than physically, and one takes in all sorts of things; and unless one is constantly wide awake, constantly on one's guard, and has quite an efficient control over all that enters, so as not to admit in one's consciousness unwanted elements, one catches the constant contagion of all desires, all the lower movements, all the small obscure reactions, all the unwanted vibrations which come to us from those around us.

Mentally, it is still worse. **The human mind is a public place open on all sides, and in this public place, things come, go, cross from all directions; and some settle there and these are not always the best. And there, to obtain control over that multitude is the most difficult of all controls.** Try to control the thought coming into your mind,

you will see. Simply, you will see to what a degree you have to be watchful, like a sentinel, with the eyes of the mind wide open, and then keep an extremely clear vision of the ideas which conform to your aspirations and those which do not. **And you must police at every minute that public place where roads from all sides meet, so that all passers-by do not rush in. It is a big job. Then, don't forget that even if you make sincere efforts, it is not in a day, not in a month, not in a year that you will reach the end of all these difficulties. When one begins, one must begin with an unshakable patience. One must say, 'Even if it takes fifty years, even if it takes a hundred years, even if it takes several lives, what I want to accomplish, I shall accomplish.'**

Once you have decided upon this, once you are quite conscious that it is so and that the goal is worth the trouble of a constant and sustained effort, you may begin. Otherwise, after a time you will fall flat; you will get discouraged, you will tell yourself, "Oh! It is very difficult – I do it and then it is undone, I do it again and it is once again undone, and then I do it again and it is perpetually undone.... Then what? When will I get there?" **One must have plenty of patience. The work may be undone a hundred times, you will do it again a hundred and one times; it may be undone a thousand times, you will re-do it a thousand and one times, until finally it is no longer undone. And finally it is no longer undone.**

Only, you see, if one were made all of a piece, it would be very easy, but one is made of many pieces. Then, there is one piece which is ahead, which has worked hard, is

very conscious, altogether awake, and when it is there, all goes well, one does not allow anything to enter, one is on one's guard, and then... one goes to sleep and the next day when one gets up it is another part which is there and one tells oneself, "But where then is all the work I had done?..." And one must begin all over again. Begin all over again until all the parts, one after another, enter the field of consciousness and each one can be changed. And **when you reach your limit, there is a change, you have made progress – afterwards, you must make another, but still that one is made. But it is completely made only when all the pieces of the being are brought like that, one after another, to the front, and upon all without exception you have applied the consciousness, the light, the will and the goal, in such a way that everything changes.**

This is not to discourage you, but to warn you. I do not want you to say afterwards, "Oh! If I had known it was so difficult, I would not have started." You must know that it is excessively difficult and begin with great firmness and continue to the end, even if the end is a very long way off – there are many things to do. Now, I may tell you that if you do it sincerely, with application and care, it is extremely interesting. Even those whose life is quite monotonous, without interest (there are, you know, poor people who have to do utterly uninteresting work and always the same thing, and always in the same conditions, and whose mind is not sufficiently awakened to be able to find an interest in anything whatever), even those people, if they begin to do this little work upon themselves, of control, of elimination, that is to say, if each element which comes with its ignorance, its unconsciousness, its egoism, is put before the will to change and one remains

awake, compares, observes, studies and slowly acts, that becomes infinitely interesting, one makes marvellous and quite unexpected discoveries. One finds in oneself lots of small hidden folds, little things one had not seen at the beginning; one undertakes a sort of inner chase, goes hunting into small dark corners and tells oneself: "What, I was like that! This was there in me, I am harbouring this little thing!" – sometimes so sordid, so mean, so nasty. And once it has been discovered, how wonderful! One puts the light upon it and it disappears and you no longer have those reactions which made you so sad before, when you used to say, "Oh! I shall never get there." For instance, you take a very simple resolution (apparently very simple): "I shall never tell a lie again." And suddenly, without your knowing why or how, the lie springs up all by itself and you notice it after you have uttered it: "But this is not correct – what I have just said; it was something else I meant to say." So you search, search.... "How did it happen? How did I think like that and speak like that? Who spoke in me, who pushed me?..." You may give yourself quite a satisfactory explanation and say, "It came from outside" or "It was a moment of unconsciousness", and not think any longer about it. And the next time, it begins again. Instead of that, you search: "What can be the motive of one who tells lies?..." and **you push – you push and all of a sudden you discover in a little corner something which wants to justify itself, thrust itself forward or assert its own way of seeing (no matter what, there are a number of reasons), show itself a little different from what it is so that people may have a good opinion of you and think you someone very remarkable.... It was that which spoke in you – not your active consciousness, but what was there and pushed the**

consciousness from behind. When you were not quite on your guard, it made use of your mouth, your tongue, and then there you were! The lie came out. I am giving you this example – there are a million others. And it is extremely interesting. And to the extent one discovers this within oneself and says sincerely, "It must change", one finds that one acquires a sort of inner clear-sightedness, one gradually becomes aware of what goes on in others, and instead of getting angry when they are not quite what one would like them to be, one begins to understand how things happen, how it is that one is "like this", how reactions are produced.... Then, with the indulgence of knowledge, one smiles. **One no longer judges severely, one offers the difficulty in oneself or in others, whatever may be its centre of manifestation, to the divine Consciousness, asking for its transformation.**

* * *

On June 8, 1966, at the time of the publication of this talk, Mother spoke about the same question in terms of her present experience which forms the basis of the "yoga of the body".

Precisely this is what I have been doing for the last two days. The last two days I have spent all my time seeing all this accumulation, oh! heaps of little sordid things which one lives constantly, very tiny sordid things. And so there is only one way – there is only one way, always the same: to offer.

It is almost as though this Supreme Consciousness were putting you in touch with things long forgotten, which belong to the past, which even are or were or seemed to be completely effaced, with which you no longer have any contact, all sorts of little circumstances, which yet are seen in the new

consciousness, in their true place, and make such a poor, miserable, mean, sordid whole of the entire life, the entire general human life. And so, it is a luminous joy of offering all this for transformation, for transfiguration.

Now it has become the very movement of the cellular consciousness. All weaknesses, all responses to adverse suggestions (I mean the smallest things of every minute in the cells), are taken in the same movement of offering (and these come sometimes in waves, to such an extent that the body feels it will swoon before this assault), and then comes a light, so warm, so deep, so powerful, which puts everything back in order, in its place, and opens the way to transformation.

These periods are very difficult periods of the bodily life; one feels that there is now only one thing which decides, the Supreme Will. There is no longer any support – any support, from the support of habit to the support of knowledge and of will, all the supports have vanished – there is only the Supreme.

(*Silence*)

Aspiration in the cellular consciousness for perfect sincerity of consecration.

And the lived experience – lived intensely – that it is only this absolute sincerity of consecration which allows existence.

The least pretension is an alliance with the forces of dissolution and of death.

Well, it is like a song of the cells – but they must not even have the insincerity of watching themselves do it – the song of the cells: 'Thy Will, O Lord, Thy Will.'

And the great habit of depending upon the will of others, the consciousness of others, the reactions of others (of others and of all things), this kind of universal comedy which all play with all and everything plays to everything, ought to be replaced by an absolute, spontaneous sincerity of consecration.

It is evident that this perfection of sincerity is possible only in the most material part of the consciousness.

It is there that one can succeed in being, existing, doing, without watching oneself being, watching oneself existing, watching oneself doing, with an absolute sincerity."[13] (19-4-1951)

4. Spokesmen of Ignorance

"The forces of the Ignorance in the present world always seek people who can express their ignorance in the world. This is not difficult! There are many people ready to say ignorant things, that is, to deny all spiritual realisation, deny the capacity for progress, deny the possibility of realising another life than this existing one, deny that human nature can be changed, and so on; or if you like, ready to affirm that it is impossible to escape from illness, that it is impossible to escape death, impossible to understand; ready to assert that never will the Light and Knowledge be attained, and so on. Those who say these things are the spokesmen of the Ignorance."[14] (21-4-1951)

5. How to Sleep Well?

"Most people do so many things in their sleep that they wake up more tired than before. We have already spoken

about this once. Naturally, if you keep yourself from sleeping, you won't sleep. I always tell those who complain of not being able to sleep, "Meditate then and you will end up by sleeping." It is better to fall asleep while concentrating than "like that", scattered and strewn without knowing even where one is.

To sleep well one must learn how to sleep.

If one is physically very tired, it is better not to go to sleep immediately, otherwise one falls into the inconscient. If one is very tired, one must stretch out on the bed, relax, loosen all the nerves one after another until one becomes like a rumpled cloth in one's bed, as though one had neither bones nor muscles. When one has done that, the same thing must be done in the mind. Relax, do not concentrate on any idea or try to solve a problem or ruminate on impressions, sensations or emotions you had during the day. All that must be allowed to drop off quietly: one gives oneself up, one is indeed like a rag. **When you have succeeded in doing this, there is always a little flame, there – that flame never goes out and you become conscious of it when you have managed this relaxation. And all of a sudden this little flame rises slowly into an aspiration for the divine life, the truth, the consciousness of the Divine, the union with the inner being, it goes higher and higher, it rises, rises, like that, very gently. Then everything gathers there, and if at that moment you fall asleep, you have the best sleep you could possibly have.** I guarantee that if you do this carefully, you are sure to sleep, and also sure that instead of falling into a dark hole you will sleep in light, and when you get up in the morning you will be fresh, fit, content, happy and full of energy for the day."[15]

6. Why the "Way" is Very Difficult and Why the Adverse Forces are Allowed to Harass One?

"…why the adverse forces have the right to interfere, to harass you. But this is precisely the test necessary for your sincerity. **If the way were very easy, everybody would start on the way, and if one could reach the goal without any obstacle and without any effort, everybody would reach the goal, and when one has come to the end, the situation would be the same as when one started, there would be no change. That is, the new world would be exactly what the old has been. It is truly not worth the trouble! Evidently a process of elimination is necessary so that only what is capable of manifesting the new life remains. This is the reason and there is no other, this is the best of reasons. And, you see, it is a tempering, it is the ordeal of fire, only that which can stand it remains absolutely pure; when everything has burnt down, there remains only the little ingot of pure gold. And it is like that. What puts things out very much in all this is the religious idea of fault, sin, redemption. But there is no arbitrary decision! On the contrary, for each one it is the best and most favourable conditions which are given.** We were saying the other day that it is only his friends whom God treats with severity; you thought it was a joke, but it is true. It is only to those who are full of hope, who will pass through this purifying flame, that the conditions for attaining the maximum result are given. And the human mind is made in such a way that you may test this; **when something extremely unpleasant happens to you, you may tell yourself, "Well, this proves I am worth the trouble of being given this**

difficulty, this proves there is something in me which can resist the difficulty", and you will notice that instead of tormenting yourself, you rejoice – you will be so happy and so strong that even the most unpleasant things will seem to you quite charming! This is a very easy experiment to make. Whatever the circumstance, if your mind is accustomed to look at it as something favourable, it will no longer be unpleasant for you. This is quite well known; **as long as the mind refuses to accept a thing, struggles against it, tries to obstruct it, there are torments, difficulties, storms, inner struggles and all suffering. But the minute the mind says, "Good, this is what has to come, it is thus that it must happen", whatever happens, you are content.** There are people who have acquired such control of their mind over their body that they feel nothing; I told you this the other day about certain mystics: if they think the suffering inflicted upon them is going to help them cross the stages in a moment and give them a sort of stepping-stone to attain the Realisation, the goal they have put before them, union with the Divine, they no longer feel the suffering at all. **Their body is as it were galvanised by the mental conception.** This has happened very often, it is a very common experience among those who truly have enthusiasm. And after all, **if one must for some reason or other leave one's body and take a new one, is it not better to make of one's death something magnificent, joyful, enthusiastic, than to make it a disgusting defeat?** Those who cling on, who try by every possible means to delay the end even by a minute or two, who give you an example of frightful anguish, show that they are not conscious of their soul.... After all, it is perhaps a means, isn't it? One can change this accident into a

means; if one is conscious one can make a beautiful thing of it, a very beautiful thing, as of everything. And note, those who do not fear it, who are not anxious, who can die without any sordidness are those who never think about it, who are not haunted all the time by this "horror" facing them which they must escape and which they try to push as far away from them as they can. These, when the occasion comes, can lift their head, smile and say, 'Here I am.'

It is they who have the will to make the best possible use of their life, it is they who say, "I shall remain here as long as it is necessary, to the last second, and I shall not lose one moment to realise my goal"; these, when the necessity comes, put up the best show. Why? – It is very simple, because they live in their ideal, the truth of their ideal; because that is the real thing for them, the very reason of their being, and in all things they can see this ideal, this reason of existence, and never do they come down into the sordidness of material life.

So, the conclusion:

One must never wish for death.

One must never will to die.

One must never be afraid to die.

And in all circumstances one must will to exceed oneself."[16] (23-4-1951)

7. How the Bright Days in Sadhana are Followed by their Opposites for Those Who have Neglected to Clean the Dirty Corners of their Being

"I have known many who, every time they had a fine

aspiration, and their aspiration was very strong and they received an answer to this aspiration, every time, the very same day or at the latest the next day, they had a complete setback of consciousness and were facing the exact opposite of their aspiration. Such things happen almost constantly. Well, these people have developed only the positive side. They make a kind of discipline of aspiration, they ask for help, they try to come into contact with higher forces, they succeed in this, they have experiences; but they have completely neglected cleaning their room; it has remained as dirty as ever, and so, naturally, when the experience has gone, this dirt becomes still more repulsive than before.

One must never neglect to clean one's room, it is very important; inner cleanliness is at least as important as outer cleanliness.

Vivekananda has written (I don't know the original, I have only read the French translation): "One must every morning clean one's soul and one's body, but if you don't have time for both, it is better to clean the soul than clean the body."

How can one know whether the little dirty things have hidden themselves or have gone?

One can always try little experiments. I have said that one must use a torch, a strong light; then one must take a round within one's being. If one is very attentive, one can very easily find these ugly corners. Suppose you have a beautiful experience, that suddenly in answer to your aspiration a great light comes; you feel all flooded with joy, force, light, beauty, and have the impression that you are on the point of being transfigured... and then, it passes away – it always passes away, doesn't it? especially at the beginning –

suddenly, it stops. Then you tell yourself, when you are not vigilant, "There, it came and it has gone! Poor me! It came and has gone, it just gave me a taste of the thing and then let me fall." Well, that's foolish. What you should tell yourself is, "Look, I was not able to keep it, and why was I not able to keep it?" So, you take your torch and go on a round within yourself trying to find a very close relation between the change of consciousness and the movements accompanying the cessation of the experience. And if you are very, very attentive, and make your round very scrupulously, you will find that suddenly some part of the vital or some part of the mind or of the body, something has not kept up, in this sense that mentally, instead of being immobile and attentive, something has begun to ask, "Wait a minute, what is this experience? What does it mean?", begun to try to find an explanation (what it calls an "understanding"). Or maybe in the vital something has begun to enjoy the experience: "How pleasant it is, how I would like it to grow, how good if it were constant, how..." Or something in the physical has said, "Oh! It is a bit hard to endure that, how long am I going to be able to keep it?" It is perhaps not as obvious as all this, but it is a wee bit hidden like this, somewhere. You will always find one of these three things or others analogous. Then, it is there the lantern is needed: where is the weak point? where is the egoism? where is the desire? where is that old dirt we do not want any longer? where is that thing which turns back upon itself instead of giving itself, opening itself, losing itself? which turns back upon itself, tries to take advantage of what has happened, wants to appropriate to itself the fruit of the experience? Or rather which is too weak, too hard, too rigid to be able to follow the movement?... It is that, you are now on the track,

you begin precisely to put the light you have just acquired upon it; it is that you must do, focus the light upon it, turn it in such a way that the thing cannot resist it.

You won't be able to succeed the very first day but you must do it persistently and little by little or perhaps suddenly one day it will vanish. Then you will find out after a time that you are another person.

But if you take the attitude I have already spoken about and throw the blame upon the Grace and the Light, if you say to yourself, "There, it has gone and left me in the lurch", you may be sure that even thirty, forty, fifty years hence you will be still at the same place, you will not have changed. There will always be something which will rise suddenly and eat up your experience. And then, instead of progressing, you will be stuck there marking time because you cannot advance. But if, immediately, you take the opportunity.... **Note, sometimes it hurts a little; if you go and brutally put the light upon the thing which wants to enjoy the experience or wants to get knowledge or control the experience by a mental understanding or is too lazy to make the necessary effort to receive the experience and bear it or to change quickly enough, if you put the will with the light of consciousness upon this thing, with firmness, it may hurt just a little. And you say, "Oh! Not so fast! I need rest, I tired myself uselessly." Then everything has to be begun all over again.** Sometimes days, even months, sometimes years will pass without its coming back. Sometimes, if you are a little more active and intense in your aspiration, it will return sooner. But if you commit the same stupidity again, the same thing will happen – while **if, immediately, you are very**

vigilant and when the mind starts nosing around to understand what is happening you tell it, "Silence, keep quiet", then the experience can continue. When the vital begins to say, "I want lots and lots, more and more", you say, "Quiet, quiet, don't move, calm yourself, don't get excited." Or when the physical being, "Oh! I shall be crushed...." – "A little endurance, if you please; you are a coward, you don't know how to stand the test." If you manage to do this in time, with the necessary calmness, with the necessary determination and will, you will arrive at something. But if you are like that, passive, indolent, fatalistic, and tell yourself, "Now I have surrendered myself, what will happen will happen, we shall see what is going to happen, that's all", then, you understand, I give you fifty years not to change by half a step."[17]

8. Yoga and the Subtleties of Ego

"There is nothing which cannot be a yogic discipline if one does it properly. And if it is not done properly, even tapasya will be of no use and will lead you nowhere. For it is the same thing, if you do your tapasya, all the time observing yourself doing it and telling yourself, "Am I making any progress, is this going to be better, am I going to succeed?", then it is your ego, you know, which becomes more and more enormous and occupies the whole place, and there is no room for anything else. And we said the other day that the spiritual ego is the worst of all, for it is altogether unconscious of its inferiority, it is convinced it is something very superior, if not absolutely divine!

There we are. When you are at school, you must become

the concentration which tries to catch what the teacher is saying, or the thought which enters you or the knowledge you are given. That is what you must be. **You must not think of yourself but only of what you want to learn. And you will see that your capacities will immediately be doubled.**

What gives most the feeling of inferiority, of limitation, smallness, impotence, is always this turning back upon oneself, this shutting oneself up in the bounds of a microscopic ego. One must widen oneself, open the doors. And the best way is to be able to concentrate upon what one is doing instead of concentrating upon oneself."[18] (26-4-1951)

9. Laziness and Tamas

"…laziness is a kind of tamas, but in laziness there is an ill-will, a refusal to make an effort – while tamas is inertia: one wants to do something, but one can't.

I remember, a long time ago, having been among some young people, and they remarked that when I decided to get up I used to get up with a jump, without any difficulty. They asked me, "How do you do it? We, when we want to get up, have to make an effort of will to be able to do it." They were so surprised! And *I* was surprised by the opposite. I used to tell myself, "How does it happen? When one has decided to get up, one gets up." No, the body was there, like that, and it was necessary to put a will into it, to push this body for it to get up and act. It is like that, this is tamas. Tamas is a purely material thing; it is very rare to have a vital or mental tamas (it may occur but through contagion), I believe it is more a tamas of the nerves or the brain than vital or mental tamas.

But laziness is everywhere, in the physical, the vital, the mind. **Generally lazy people are not always lazy, not in all things. If you propose something that pleases them, amuses them, they are quite ready to make an effort. There is much ill-will in laziness.**"[19]

10. The Most Important Surrender

"The most important surrender is the surrender of your character, your way of being, so that it may change. If you do not surrender your very own nature, never will this nature change. It is this that is most important. You have certain ways of understanding, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of feeling, almost certain ways of progressing, and above all, a special way of looking at life and expecting from it certain things – well, it is this you must surrender. That is, if you truly want to receive the divine Light and transform yourself, it is your whole way of being you must offer – offer by opening it, making it as receptive as possible so that the divine Consciousness which sees how you ought to be, may act directly and change all these movements into movements more true, more in keeping with your own truth. This is infinitely more important than surrendering what one does. It is not what one does (what one does is very important, that's evident) that is the most important thing but what one *is*. Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of consciousness in which it is done that is important. You may work, do disinterested work without any idea of personal profit, work for the joy of working, but if you are not at the same time ready to leave this work, to change the work or change the way of working, if you cling to your own way of

working, your surrender is not complete. You must come to a point when everything is done because you feel within, very clearly, in a more and more imperious way, that it is this which must be done and in this particular way, and that you do it only because of that. You do not do it because of any habit, attachment or preference, nor even any conception, even a preference for the idea that it is the best thing to do – else your surrender is not total. As long as you cling to something, as long as there is something in you which says, "This may change, that may change, but *that*, that will not change", as long as you say about anything at all, "That will not change" (not that it refuses to change, but because you can't think of its changing), your surrender is not complete.

It goes without saying that if in your action, your work, you have in the least this feeling, "I am doing it because I have been told to do it", and there is not a total adherence of the being, and you do not do the work because you feel it must be done and you love doing it; if something holds back, stands apart, separate, **"I was told it had to be done like that so I did it like that", it means there is a great gulf between you and surrender. True surrender is to feel that one wants, one has, this complete inner adherence: you cannot do *but that*, that which you have been given to do, and what you have not been given to do you cannot do.** But at another moment the work may change; at any moment it may be something else, if it is decided that it be something else. It is there that plasticity comes in. That makes a very great difference. It is well understood that those who work are told, "Yes, work, that is your way of surrendering", but it is a beginning. This way has to be progressive."[20] (28-4-1951)

11. Money – An Impersonal Force

"*If one has the power to acquire a lot of money, does this mean that one has a certain control over terrestrial forces?*

This depends upon how one acquires it. If you get it by foul ways, that does not mean that you have a control. But if someone, scrupulously doing his duty, sees that money comes to him, it is evidently because he exercises a control over these forces. **There are people who have the power of attracting money and they haven't the least need to practise dishonesty to get it. Others, even to get a few pennies, must make all sorts of contrivances, more or less clean.** So one cannot say.... We see a rich man and think he must be exercising a control over the forces of money – no, not necessarily. But if a man remains perfectly honest and does what he thinks is his duty without caring to acquire money, and yet money comes to him, evidently he has a certain affinity with those forces."[21]

"*If someone has acquired a lot of money by dishonest means, could some of it be asked for the Divine?*

Sri Aurobindo has answered this question. He says that money in itself is an impersonal force: the way in which you acquire money concerns you alone personally. It may do you great harm, it may harm others also, but it does not in any way change the nature of the money which is an altogether impersonal force: money has no colour, no taste, no psychological consciousness. It is a force. It is like saying that the air breathed out by a scoundrel is more tainted than that breathed out by an honest man – I don't think so. I think the result is the same. One may for reasons of a practical nature refuse money which has been stolen, but that is for altogether

practical reasons, it is not because of divine reasons. This is a purely human idea. One may from a practical point of view say, "Ah! No, the way in which you have acquired this money is disgusting and so I don't want to offer it to the Divine", because one has a human consciousness. But if you take someone (let us suppose the worst) who has killed and acquired money by the murder; if all of a sudden he is seized by terrible scruples and remorse and tells himself, "I have only one thing to do with this money, give it where it can be utilised for the best, in the most impersonal way", it seems to me that this movement is preferable to utilising it for one's own satisfaction. I said that the reasons which could prevent one from receiving ill-gotten money may be reasons of a purely practical kind, but there may also be more profound reasons, of a (I do not want to say moral but) spiritual nature, from the point of view of tapasya; one may tell somebody, "No, you cannot truly acquire merit with this fortune which you have obtained in such a terrible way; what you can do is to restore it", one may feel that a restitution, for instance, will help one to make more progress than simply passing the money on to any work whatever. One may see things in this way – one can't make rules. This is what **I never stop telling you: it is impossible to make a rule. In every case it is different. But you must not think that the money is affected; money as a terrestrial force is not affected by the way in which it is obtained, that can in no way affect it.** Money remains the same, your note remains the same, your piece of gold remains the same, and as it carries its force, its force remains there. It harms only the person who has done wrong, that is evident. Then the question remains: in what state of mind and for what reasons does your dishonest man

want to pass on his money to a work he considers divine? Is it as a measure of safety, through prudence or to lay his heart at rest? Evidently this is not a very good motive and it cannot be encouraged, but if he feels a kind of repentance and regret for what he has done and the feeling that there is but one thing to do and that is precisely to deprive himself of what he has wrongly acquired and utilise it for the general good as much as possible, then there is nothing to say against that. One cannot decide in a general way – it depends upon the instance. Only, if I understand well what you mean, if one knows that a man has acquired money by the most unspeakable means, obviously, it would not be good to go and *ask* him for money for some divine work, because that would be like "redeeming" his way of gaining money. One cannot ask, that is not possible. If, spontaneously, for some reason, he gives it, there is no reason to refuse it. But it is quite impossible to go and ask him for it, because it is as though one legitimised his manner of acquiring money. That makes a great difference.

And generally, in these cases, those who go and ask money from rascals use means of intimidation: they frighten them, not physically but about their future life, about what may happen to them, they give them a fright. It is not very nice. These are procedures one ought not to use."[22] (3-5-1951)

12. Rely Solely on the Divine

"**…there is one thing you must learn, never to rely on anyone or anything whatever except the Divine. For if you lean upon anyone for support, that support will break, you may be sure of that.** From the minute you start doing yoga (I always speak of those who do yoga, I do not speak about

ordinary life), for those who do yoga, to depend upon someone else is like wanting to transform that person into a representative of the Divine Force; now you may be sure there is not one in a hundred millions who can carry the weight: he will break immediately. So never take the attitude of hoping for support, help, comfort from anyone except the Divine. That is absolute; I have never, not once, met anyone who tried to cling to something to find a support there (someone doing yoga or who has been put into touch with yoga) and who was not deceived – it breaks, it stops, one loses one's support. Then one says, "Life is difficult" – it is not difficult but one must know what one is doing. Never seek a support elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek satisfaction elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek the satisfaction of your needs in anyone else except the Divine – never, for anything at all. All your needs can be satisfied only by the Divine. All your weaknesses can be borne and healed only by the Divine. He alone is capable of giving you what you need in everything, always, and if you try to find any satisfaction or support or help or joy or... heaven knows what, in anyone else, you will always fall on your nose one day, and that always hurts, sometimes even hurts very much."[23] (5-5-1951)

13. Love and Beauty and Mahalakshmi

"'*Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi.... Where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come.'*

Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother, p. 31*

When the surroundings, circumstances, atmosphere, the way of living and above all the inner attitude are altogether of a low kind, vulgar, gross, egoistic, sordid, love is reluctant to come, that is, it always hesitates to manifest itself and generally does not stay long. A home of beauty must be given for Beauty to stay. I am not speaking of external things – a real house, real furniture and all that – I am speaking of an inner attitude, of something within which is beautiful, noble, harmonious, unselfish. There Love has a chance to come and stay. But when, as soon as it tries to manifest, it is immediately mixed with such low and ugly things, it does not remain, it goes away. This is what Sri Aurobindo says: it is "reluctant to be born" – it could be said that it immediately regrets being born. Men always complain that love does not stay with them but it is entirely their fault. They give this love such a sordid life, mixed with a heap of horrors and such vulgarity, things so base, so selfish, so dirty, that the poor thing cannot stay. If they don't succeed in killing it altogether, they make it utterly sick. So the only thing it can do is to take flight. People always complain that love is impermanent and passing. To tell the truth, they should be very grateful that it manifested in them in spite of the sordidness of the house they gave it."[24]

14. Consciousness in Hands

"..I have told you this I don't know how many times, I have explained it hundreds of times and you still ask this question? I have told you that no matter what you want to do, the first thing is to put consciousness in the cells of your hand. If you want to play, if you want to work, if you want to do anything at all with your hand, unless you push consciousness

into the cells of your hand you will never do anything good – how many times have I told you that? And this is felt. You feel it. You can acquire it. All sorts of exercises may be done to make the hand conscious and there comes a moment when it becomes so conscious that you can leave it to do things; it does them by itself without your little mind having to intervene."[25]

15. Who is a Poor Man?

"A poor man is a man having no qualities, no force, no strength, no generosity. He is also a miserable, unhappy man. Moreover, **one is unhappy only when one is not generous – if one has a generous nature which gives of itself without reckoning, one is never unhappy.** It is those who are coiled up on themselves and who always want to draw things towards themselves, who see things and the world only through themselves – it is these who are unhappy. But when one gives oneself generously, without reckoning, one is never unhappy, never. It is he who wants to take who is unhappy; he who gives himself is never so."[26] (12-5-1951)

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III. Questions and Answers, March-April 1953

1. Sincerity

"Sincerity is perhaps the most difficult of all things and perhaps it is also the most effective.

If you have perfect sincerity, you are sure of victory. It is infinitely difficult. **Sincerity consists in making all the elements of the being, all the movements (whether outer or inner), all the parts of the being, all of them, have one single will to belong to the Divine, to live only for the Divine, to will only what the Divine wills, to express only the divine Will, to have no other source of energy than that of the Divine.**

And you find that there is not a day, not an hour, not a minute when you do not need to intensify, rectify your sincerity – a total refusal to deceive the Divine."[27] (25-3-1953)

2. Ambition – A Canker That Can Hide Long

"It is an image, as of a fine mango, very beautiful to look at, and when one opens it, there is a worm inside. That is because the fly laid an egg before the fruit was formed; outside there is no trace. **Everything seems candid, disinterested. But within, right at the bottom, there is a great ambition, the desire to have an exceptional position, to be respected by everybody... that is, the ego. This is the canker, it remains very quiet, but it is there. When the power comes, instead of realising that one is nothing, does not deserve anything and that all that one has to do is to remain as passive as possible, one deceives oneself, feels the need of others taking note of it also. It is this I call the canker.**

It eats up all that is inside and leaves the appearance intact."[28]

3. The Necessity and the Process of Establishing Homogeneity in the Being

"Don't you know what a homogeneous thing is, made up of all similar parts? That means the whole being must be under the same influence, same consciousness, same tendency, same will. We are formed of all kinds of different pieces. They become active one after another. According to the part that is active, one is quite another person, becomes almost another personality. For instance, one had an aspiration at first, felt that everything existed only for the Divine, then something happens, somebody comes along, one has to do something, and everything disappears. One tries to recall the experience, not even the memory of the experience remains. One is completely under another influence, one wonders how this could have happened. There are examples of double, triple, quadruple personalities, altogether unconscious of themselves.... But it is not about this I am speaking; I am speaking about something which has happened to all of you: you have had an experience, and for some time you have felt, understood that this experience was the only thing that was important, that had an absolute value – half an hour later you try to recall it, it is like a smoke that vanishes. The experience has disappeared. And yet half an hour ago it was there and so powerful.... It is because one is made of all kinds of different things. The body is like a bag with pebbles and pearls all mixed up, and it is only the bag which keeps all that together. This is not a homogeneous, uniform consciousness but a heterogeneous one.

You can be a different person at different moments in your life. I know people who took decisions, had a strong will, knew what they wanted and prepared to do it. Then there was a little reversal in the being; another part came up and spoilt all the work in ten minutes. What had been accomplished in two months was all undone. When the first part comes back it is in dismay, it says: "What!..." Then the whole work has to be started again, slowly. Hence it is evident that it is very important to become aware of the psychic being; one must have a kind of signpost or a mirror in which all things are reflected and show themselves as they truly are. And then, according to what they are, one puts them in one place or another; one begins to explain, to organise. That takes time. The same part comes back three or four times and every part that comes up says: "Put me in the first place; what the others do is not important, not at all important, it is I who will decide, for I am the most important." I am sure that if you look at yourself, you will see that there's not one among you who has not had the experience. You want to become conscious, to have goodwill, you have understood, your aspiration is shining – all is brilliant, illuminated; but all of a sudden something happens, a useless conversation, some unfortunate reading, and that upsets everything. Then one thinks that it was an illusion one lived in, that all things were seen from a certain angle.

This is life. One stumbles and falls at the first occasion. One tells oneself: "Oh! One can't always be so serious", and when the other part returns, once again, one repents bitterly: "I was a fool, I have wasted my time, now I must begin again...." At times there is one part that's ill-humoured, in revolt, full of worries, and another which is progressive, full of surrender.

All that, one after the other.

There is but one remedy: that signpost must always be there, a mirror well placed in one's feelings, impulses, all one's sensations. One sees them in this mirror. There are some which are not very beautiful or pleasant to look at; there are others which are beautiful, pleasant, and must be kept. This one does a hundred times a day if necessary. And it is very interesting. One draws a kind of big circle around the psychic mirror and arranges all the elements around it. If there is something that is not all right, it casts a sort of grey shadow upon the mirror: this element must be shifted, organised. It must be spoken to, made to understand, one must come out of that darkness. If you do that, you never get bored. When people are not kind, when one has a cold in the head, when one doesn't know one's lessons, and so on, one begins to look into this mirror. It is very interesting, one sees the canker. "I thought I was sincere!" – not at all.

Not a thing happens in life which is not interesting. This mirror is very, very well made. Do that for two years, three, four years, at times one must do it for twenty years. Then at the end of a few years, look back, turn your gaze upon what you were three years ago: "How I have changed!... Was I like that?..." It is very entertaining. "I could speak like that? I could talk like that, think like that?... But I was indeed stupid! How I have changed!" It's very interesting, isn't it?"[29] (1-4-1953)

4. On Philanthropy and the Idea of Serving Humanity

"**…I see only one solution: if you want to help humanity, there is only one thing to do, it is to take yourself as completely as possible and offer yourself to**

the Divine. That is the solution. Because in this way, at least the material reality which you represent will be able to grow a little more like the Divine.

We are told that the Divine is in all things. Why don't things change? Because the Divine does not get a response, everything does not respond to the Divine. One must search the depths of the consciousness to see this. What do you want to do to serve humanity? Give food to the poor? – You can feed millions of them. That will not be a solution, this problem will remain the same. Give new and better living conditions to men? – The Divine is in them, how is it that things don't change? The Divine must know better than you the condition of humanity. What are you? You represent only a little bit of consciousness and a little bit of matter, it is that you call "myself". If you want to help humanity, the world or the universe, the only thing to do is to give that little bit entirely to the Divine. Why is the world not divine?... It is evident that the world is not in order. So the only solution to the problem is to give what belongs to you. Give it totally, entirely to the Divine; not only for yourself but for humanity, for the universe. There is no better solution. How do you want to help humanity? You don't even know what it needs. Perhaps you know still less what power you are serving. How can you change anything without indeed having changed yourself?

In any case, you are not powerful enough to do it. How do you expect to help another if you do not have a higher consciousness than he? It is such a childish idea! It is children who say: "I am opening a boarding-house, I am going to build a crèche, give soup to the poor, preach this knowledge, spread this religion...." It is only because you consider yourself better

than others, think you know better than they what they should be or do. That's what it is, serving humanity. You want to continue all that? It has not changed things much. It is not to help humanity that one opens a hospital or a school.

All the same it has helped, hasn't it? If all the schools were abolished...

I don't think that humanity is happier than it was before nor that there has been a great improvement. All this mostly gives you the feeling "I am something." That's what I call ambition.

If these very people who are ready to give money for schools were told that there was a divine Work to be done, that the Divine has decided to do it in this particular way, even if they are convinced that it is indeed the Divine's Work, they refuse to give anything, for this is not a recognised form of beneficence – one doesn't have the satisfaction of having done something good! This is what I call ambition. I had instances of people who could give lakhs of rupees to open a hospital, for that gives them the satisfaction of doing something great, noble, generous. They glorify themselves, that's what I call ambition.

I knew a humorist who used to say: "It won't be so soon that the kingdom of God will come, for those poor philanthropists – what would remain for them? If humanity suffered no longer, the philanthropists would be without work." It is difficult to come out of that. However, **it is a fact that never will the world come out of the state in which it is unless it gives itself up to the Divine. All the virtues – you may glorify them – increase your self-satisfaction, that is, your ego; they do not help you truly**

to become aware of the Divine. It is the generous and wise people of this world who are the most difficult to convert. They are very satisfied with their life. A poor fellow who has done all sorts of stupid things all his life feels immediately sorry and says: "I am nothing, can do nothing. Make of me what You want." Such a one is more right and much closer to the Divine than one who is wise and full of his wisdom and vanity. He sees himself as he is.

The generous and wise man who has done much for humanity is too self-satisfied to have the least idea of changing. It is usually these people who say: "If indeed I had created the world, I wouldn't have made it like this, I would have created it much better than that", and they try to set right what the Divine has done badly! According to their picture, all this is stupid and useless.... It is not with that attitude that you can belong to the Divine. There will always be between you and Him the conscious ego of one's own intellectual superiority which judges the Divine and is sure of never being mistaken. For they are convinced that if they had made the world, they would not have committed all the stupidities that God has perpetrated. And all this comes from pride, vanity, self-conceit; and there is exactly the seed of that in people who want to serve humanity.

What are they going to give to humanity? Nothing at all! Even if they gave every drop of their blood, all the ideas in their head, all the money in their pocket, that could not change one individual, who is but a second of time in eternity. They believe they can serve eternity? There are even beings higher than man who have come, have brought the light, given their life, and that has not changed things much. So how can a little

man, a microscopic being, truly help? It is pride. The argument given is: "If everyone did his best, all would go well." I don't think so and, even, it is impossible. In a certain way, each thing in the universe does its best. But that best doesn't come to anything at all. Unless everything changes, nothing will change. It is this best that must change. In the place of ignorance must be born knowledge and power and consciousness, otherwise we shall always turn in a circle around the same stupidity.

You may open millions of hospitals, that will not prevent people getting ill. On the contrary, they will have every facility and encouragement to fall ill. We are steeped in ideas of this kind. This puts your conscience at rest: "I have come to the world, I must help others." One tells oneself: "How disinterested I am! I am going to help humanity." All this is nothing but egoism.

In fact, the first human being that concerns you is yourself. You want to diminish suffering, but unless you can change the capacity of suffering into a certitude of being happy, the world will not change. It will always be the same, we turn in a circle – one civilisation follows another, one catastrophe another; but the thing does not change, for there is something missing, something not there, that is the consciousness. That's all.

At least, that's my opinion. I am giving it to you for what it is worth. If you want to build hospitals, schools, you may do so; if that makes you happy, so much the better for you. It has not much importance. When I saw the film *Monsieur Vincent*, I was very interested. He found out that when he fed ten poor men, a thousand came along. That was what Colbert told him: "It seems you create them, your poor ones, by feeding them!" And it is not altogether false. However! **If it is your destiny**

to found schools and give instruction, to care for the sick, to open hospitals, it is good, do it. But you must not take that very seriously. It is something grandiose you are doing for your own pleasure. Say: "I am doing it because it gives me pleasure." But do not speak of yoga. It is not yoga you are doing. You believe you are doing something great, that's all, and it is for your personal satisfaction."[30] (8-4-1953)

5. Divine's Dealings With Human Beings

"You think that the Divine has a small human judgment! You must not project human ideas upon the Divine.

If you are not sincere, what happens is that your own consciousness is veiled. Take, for example, a man who tells lies; his consciousness gets veiled and after a while, he can no longer distinguish falsehood from truth. He sees images and calls them truth. One who is wicked loses his aspiration, loses his capacity of realisation, loses all possibility of understanding, feeling and realising. That is the punishment.

One puts veils, obstacles between oneself and the Divine. That is how one punishes oneself. The Divine does not withdraw; one makes oneself incapable of receiving him. The Divine does not distribute in this way rewards and punishments, it is not at all like that.

When one is insincere, when one has bad will, when one is a traitor, one punishes oneself instantaneously. Insincere people lose even the little bit of consciousness that would make them know that they are wicked; they become as though unconscious. They end up by not knowing anything at all any longer."[31] (15-4-1953)

6. On Sleep and Dreams

"*Sweet Mother, you have said that one can exercise one's conscious will and change the course of one's dreams.*

Ah, yes, I have already told you that once. If you are in the middle of a dream and something happens which you don't like (for instance, somebody shouts that he wants to kill you), you say: "That won't do at all, I don't want my dream to be like that", and you can change the action or the ending. You can organise your dream as you want. One can arrange one's dreams. But for this you must be conscious that you are dreaming, you must know you are dreaming.

But these dreams are not of much importance, are they?

Yes, they are, and one must be conscious of what can happen. Suppose that you have gone for a stroll in the vital world; there you meet beings who attack you (that's what happens usually), if you know that it is a dream, you can very easily gather your vital forces and conquer. That's a true fact; you can with a certain attitude, a certain word, a certain way of being do things you would not do if you were just dreaming.

If in the dream someone kills you it doesn't matter, for it is just a dream!

I beg your pardon! Usually, the next day you are ill, or may be a little later. That's a warning. I know someone whose eye was thus hurt in a dream, and who really lost his eye a few days later. As for me, once **I happened to dream getting blows on my face. Well, when I woke up the next morning, I had a red mark in the same place, on the forehead and the cheek.... Inevitably, a wound received in the vital being is translated in the physical body.**

But how does it happen? There must be some intermediary?

It was in the vital that I was beaten. It is from within that this comes. Nothing, nobody touched anything from outside. If you receive a blow in the vital, the body suffers the consequence. More than half of our illnesses are the result of blows of this kind, and this happens much more often than one believes. Only, men are not conscious of their vital, and as they are not conscious they don't know that fifty per cent of their illnesses are the result of what happens in the vital: shocks, accidents, fighting, ill-will.... Externally this is translated by an illness. If one knows how it reacts on the physical, one goes to its source and can cure oneself in a few hours.

How is it that the symbolism of dreams varies according to traditions, races, religions?

Because the form given to the dream is mental. If you have learnt that such and such a form represents such and such a mythological person, you see that form and say: "It is that." **In your mind there is an association between certain ideas and certain forms, and this is continued in the dream. When you translate your dream you give it an explanation corresponding to what you have learnt, what you have been taught, and it is with the mental image you have in your head that you know.** Moreover, I have explained this to you a little later in the vision of Joan of Arc (*Mother takes her book and reads*):

'The beings who were always appearing and speaking to Jeanne d'Arc would, if seen by an Indian, have quite a different appearance; for when one sees, one projects the forms of one's

mind.... You have the vision of one in India whom you call the Divine Mother; the Catholics say it is the Virgin Mary, and the Japanese call it Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy; and others would give other names. It is the same force, the same power, but the images made of it are different in different faiths.'

Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931 (21 April 1929)

And then? You are not very talkative today! Is that all?

You say that 'each person has his own world of dream-imagery peculiar to himself.'

Ibid.

Each individual has his own way of expressing, thinking, speaking, feeling, understanding. It is the combination of all these ways of being that makes the individual. That is why everyone can understand only according to his own nature. As long as you are shut up in your own nature, you can know only what is in your consciousness. All depends upon the height of the nature of your consciousness. Your world is limited to what you have in your consciousness. If you have a very small consciousness, you will understand only a few things. When your consciousness is very vast, universal, only then will you understand the world. If the consciousness is limited to your little ego, all the rest will escape you.... There are people whose brain and consciousness are smaller than a walnut. You know that a walnut resembles the brain; well these people look at things and don't understand them. They can understand nothing else except what is in direct contact with their senses. For them only what they taste, what they see, hear, touch has a reality, and all the rest simply does not exist, and they accuse us of speaking fancifully! "What I cannot touch does not exist", they say. But the only answer to give them is:

"It does not exist *for you*, but there's no reason why it shouldn't exist for others." You must not insist with these people, and you must not forget that the smaller they are the greater is the audacity in their assertions.

One's cocksureness is in proportion to one's unconsciousness; the more unconscious one is, the more is one sure of oneself. The most foolish are always the most vain. Your stupidity is in proportion to your vanity. The more one knows... In fact, there is a time when one is quite convinced that one knows nothing at all. There's not a moment in the world which does not bring something new, for the world is perpetually growing. If one is conscious of that, one has always something new to learn. But one can become conscious of it only gradually. **One's conviction that one knows is in direct proportion to one's ignorance and stupidity.**"[32] (29-4-1953)

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IV. Questions and Answers, May-June 1953

1. True Humility and an Incorrigible Vanity

"There is one thing that has always been said, but always misunderstood, it is the necessity of humility. It is taken in the wrong way, wrongly understood and wrongly used. Be humble, if you can be so in the right way; above all, do not be so in the wrong way, for that leads you nowhere. **But there is one thing: if you can pull out from yourself this weed called vanity, then indeed you will have done something. But if you knew how difficult it is! You cannot do a thing well, cannot have a fine idea, cannot have a right movement, cannot make a little progress without getting puffed up inside (even without being aware of it), with a self-satisfaction full of vanity. And you are obliged then to hammer it hard to break it. And still broken bits remain and these begin to germinate. One must work the whole of one's life and never forget to work in order to uproot this weed that springs up again and again and again so insidiously that you believe it is gone and you feel very modest and say: "It is not I who have done it, I feel it is the Divine, I am nothing if He is not there", and then the next minute, you are so satisfied with yourself simply for having thought that!**

What is the right and the wrong way of being humble?

It is very simple, when people are told "be humble", they think immediately of "being humble before other men" and that humility is wrong. **True humility is humility before the Divine, that is, a precise, exact, *living* sense that one**

is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine, that even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the divine Consciousness, and this sense one must always keep, because then one always has the true attitude of receptivity – a humble receptivity that does not put personal pretensions in opposition to the Divine."[33] (13-5-1953)

2. Transformation of the Human Body into a Divine and Immortal Body

"I heard a Sufi mystic, who was besides a great musician, an Indian, saying that for the Sufis there was a state higher than that of adoration and surrender to the Divine, than that of devotion, that this was not the last stage; the last stage of the progress is when there is no longer any distinction; you have no longer this kind of adoration or surrender or consecration; it is a very simple state in which one makes no distinction between the Divine and oneself. They know this. It is even written in their books. It is a commonly known condition in which everything becomes quite simple. There is no longer any difference. There is no longer that kind of ecstatic surrender to "Something" which is beyond you in every way, which you do not understand, which is merely the result of your aspiration, your devotion. There is no difference any longer. When the union is perfect, there is no longer any difference.

Is this the end of self-progress?

There is never any end to progress – never any end, you can never put a full stop there.

Can that happen before the transformation of the body?

Before the transformation of the body?... This is a phenomenon of consciousness. For instance, the physical consciousness may have this experience even for years before the cells change. There is a great difference between the physical consciousness (the body consciousness) and the material body. This takes a long time, because it is a thing that has never been done. That state, as I have already told you, is a commonly known state which has been realised by some people, the most advanced, the highest among the mystics; but the transformation of the body has never been done by anyone.

And it takes a terribly long time. Sri Aurobindo said – one day I asked him: "How long will it take to transform the body?" He did not hesitate, he said: 'Oh! something like three hundred years.'

Three hundred years from when?

Three hundred years from the time one has the consciousness I was just speaking about. (*Laughter*)

No, the conclusion, what you must succeed in doing, is to be able to prolong life at will: not to leave the body until one wants to.

So, if one has resolved to transform the body, well, one must wait with all the necessary patience – three hundred years, five hundred years, a thousand years, it does not matter – the time needed for the change. As for me, I see that three hundred years is a minimum. To tell you the truth, with the experience I have of things, I think it is truly a minimum.

Just imagine. You have never thought about what it

means, have you? How is your body built? In a purely animal way, with all the organs and all the functions. You are absolutely dependent: if your heart stops for even the thousandth part of a second, you are gone and that's the end. The whole thing works and works automatically without your conscious will (happily for you, for if you had to supervise the functioning, it would have gone the wrong way long ago). All that is there. Everything is necessary, because it was organised in that manner. You cannot do without an organ, at least totally; there must be something in you representing it.

Transformation implies that all this purely material arrangement is replaced by an arrangement of concentrations of force having certain types of different vibrations substituting each organ by a centre of conscious energy moved by a conscious will and directed by a movement coming from above, from higher regions. No stomach, no heart any longer, no circulation, no lungs, no... All this disappears. But it is replaced by a whole set of vibrations representing what those organs are symbolically. For the organs are only the material symbols of centres of energy; they are not the essential reality; they simply give it a form or a support in certain given circumstances. The transformed body will then function through its *real* centres of energy and not any longer through their symbolic representatives such as were developed in the animal body. Therefore, first of all you must know what your heart represents in the cosmic energy and what the circulation represents and what the stomach and the brain represent. To begin with, you must first be conscious of all that. And then, you must have at your disposal the original vibrations of that which is symbolised by these organs. And you must slowly gather together all these energies in your body and change

each organ into a centre of conscious energy which will replace the symbolic movement by the real one.... You believe it will take only three hundred years to do that? I believe it will take much more time to have a form with qualities which will not be exactly those we know, but will be much superior; a form that one naturally dreams to see plastic: as the expression of your face changes with your feelings, so the body will change (not the form but within the same form) in accordance with what you want to express with your body. It can become very concentrated, very developed, very luminous, very quiet, with a perfect plasticity, with a perfect elasticity and then a lightness at will... Have you never dreamt of giving a kick to the ground and then soaring into the air, flying away? You move about. You push a little with your shoulder, you go this way; you push again, you go that way; and you go wherever you like, quite easily; and finally when you have finished you come back, enter your body. Well, you must be able to do that with your body, and also certain things related to respiration – but there will no longer be lungs; there's a true movement behind a symbolic movement which gives you this capacity of lightness; you do not belong any longer to the system of gravitation, you escape it.* And so for each organ.

There is no end to imagination: to be luminous whenever

* *According to Sri Aurobindo, this true movement behind respiration is the same as the one governing electrical and magnetic fields; it is what the ancient yogis used to call Vayu, the Life-Energy. The breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*) are simply one system (among others) for acquiring mastery over Vayu which eventually enables you to be free from gravitation and gives certain powers known to the ancients: the power to be extremely light or extremely heavy, very big or very tiny* (garimā, laghimā, mahimā, aṇimā).

one wants it, to be transparent whenever one wants it. Naturally there is no longer any need of any bones also in the system; it is not a skeleton with skin and viscera, it is another thing. It is concentrated energy obeying the will. This does not mean that there will no longer be any definite and recognisable forms; the form will be built by qualities rather than by solid particles. It will be, if one may say so, a practical or pragmatic form; it will be supple, mobile, light at will, in contrast to the fixity of the gross material form.

So, to change this into what I have just described, I believe three hundred years are truly very little. It seems many more than that are needed. Perhaps with a very, very, very concentrated work...

Three hundred years with the same body?

Well, there is change, it is no longer the same body.

But, you see, when our little humanity says three hundred years with the same body, you say: "Why! when I am fifty it already begins to decompose, so at three hundred it will be a horrible thing!" But it is not like that. If it is three hundred years with a body that goes on perfecting itself from year to year, perhaps when the three hundredth year is reached one will say: "Oh! I still need three or four hundred more to be what I want to be." If each year that passes represents a progress, a transformation, one would like to have more and more years in order to be able to transform oneself more and more. When something is not exactly as you want it to be – take, for example, simply one of the things I have just described, say, plasticity or lightness or elasticity or luminosity, and none of them is exactly as you want it, then you will still need at least two hundred years more so that it may be

accomplished, but you never think: "How is it? It is still going to last two hundred years more!" On the contrary, you say: "Two hundred years more are *absolutely* necessary so that it may be truly done." And then, when all is done, when all is perfect, then there is no longer any question of years, for you are immortal.

But there are many objections that may be raised. It may be said that it would be impossible for the body to change unless something changes in the surroundings also. What would be your relation with other objects if you have changed so much? With other beings also? It seems necessary that a whole set of things changes, at least in relative proportions, so that one can exist, continue to exist. This then brings much complication, for it is no longer one individual consciousness that has to do the work, it becomes a collective consciousness. And so it is much more difficult still."[34] (20-5-1953)

3. What is There "Behind" the External Form of Music?*

"Music is a means of expressing certain thoughts, feelings, emotions, aspirations. There is even a region where all these movements exist and from there, as they are brought down, they take a musical form. One who is a very good composer, with some inspiration, will produce very beautiful music, for he is a good musician. A bad musician may also have a very high inspiration; he may receive something which is good, but as he possesses no musical capacity, what he produces is terribly commonplace, ordinary, uninteresting. **But if you go beyond, if you reach just the place where there is this**

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

origin of music – of the idea and emotion and inspiration – if you reach there, you can taste these things without being in the least troubled by the forms; the commonplace musical form can be linked up again with that, because that was the inspiration of the writer of the music. Naturally, there are cases where there is no inspiration, where the origin is merely a kind of mechanical music. It is not always interesting in every case. But what I mean is that there is an inner condition in which the external form is not the most important thing; it is the origin of the music, the inspiration from beyond, which is important; it is not purely the sounds, it is what the sounds express.

So the expression cannot be better than the inspiration?

There are musical pieces which have no inspiration, they are like mechanical works. There are musicians who possess a great virtuosity, that is, who have thoroughly mastered the technique and who, for example, can execute without making a mistake the fastest and most difficult things. They can play music but it expresses nothing: it is like a machine. It means nothing, except that they have great skill. For what is most important is the inspiration, **in everything that one does; in all human creations the most important thing is inspiration. Naturally, the execution must be on the same level as the inspiration; to be able to express truly well the highest things one must have a very good technique. I do not say that technique is not necessary; it is even indispensable, but it is not the only indispensable thing, it is less important than inspiration.**

The essential quality of music depends upon where the music comes from, upon its origin."[35]

4. The Origin of Physical Life and the Reason for the Ugliness of Things on Earth

"All physical life has the vital and mental life as its origin. The mental and the vital reality have themselves another origin, and so on. Nothing can be manifested physically upon earth that has not a higher truth at its origin, otherwise the world would not exist. If it were a flat thing having its origin in itself, it would very soon cease to exist. It is because there is a force which pushes, an energy which pushes towards manifestation, that life continues to exist. Otherwise it would exhaust itself very soon.

If everything that is manifested in the physical world has its origin in the higher Truth, what is it that makes it ugly when it expresses itself? Why are there ugly things at all?

Because there are forces that intervene between the origin and the manifestation.

If I ask you, "Do you know the truth of your being?" What will you say?... Do you know it? Well, the same holds for everything. And yet you are already a sufficiently evolved thinking being who has passed through all kinds of refinements. You are no longer quite like, let us say, a lizard that runs on the wall; and yet you would not be able to say what the truth of your being is. **That is just the secret of all deformations in the world. It is because there is all the inconscience created by the fact of separation from the Origin.** It is due to this inconscience that the Origin, though always there, is not able to manifest itself. It is there, that is why the world exists. But in its expression it is deformed because it manifests itself through the inconscience, ignorance and obscurity.

It is something I shall try to explain in the next issue of the *Bulletin*. But still, very briefly summed up, it is this:

In creating the universe as it was, the Will was an individual projection – individual, you understand, a scattering: instead of being a unity containing all, it was a unity made of innumerable small unities which are individualisations, that is, things that feel themselves separated. And the very fact of being separated from all others is what gives you the feeling that you are an individual. Otherwise you would have the feeling that you were a fluid mass. For example, instead of being conscious of your external form and of everything in your being which makes of you a separate individuality, if you were conscious of the vital forces which move everywhere or of the inconscient that is at the base of all, you would have the feeling of a mass moving with all kinds of contradictory movements but which could not be separated from each other; you would not have the feeling of being an individual at all: you would have the feeling of something like a vibration in the midst of a whole. Well, the original Will was to form individual beings capable of becoming conscious once again of their divine origin. Because of the process of individualisation one must feel separate if one is to be an individual. **The moment you are separated, you are cut off from the original consciousness, at least apparently, and you fall into the inconscient. For the only thing which is the Life of life is the Origin, if you cut yourself off from that, consciousness naturally is changed into unconsciousness. And then it is due to this very unconsciousness that you are no longer aware of the truth of your being....** It is a process. You cannot argue whether it is inevitable or evitable; the fact is it is like that. This process

of formation and creation is the reason why purity no longer manifests in its essence and in its purity but through the deformation of unconsciousness and ignorance.... If you had answered immediately: "Yes, of course, I know the truth of my being!" it would have finished there, there wouldn't have been any problem.

That is why there is all this ugliness, there is death; that is why there is illness; that is why there is wickedness; that is why there is suffering. There is no remedy, there is only one way for all these things. All this is there in different domains and with different vibrations, but the cause of all is the same. **It is inconscience produced because of the necessity of individual formation.** Once again I do not say that it was indispensable. That is another problem which perhaps later on we shall be ready to solve; but for the moment we are obliged to state that that's how it is.

And so, the remedy? Since such is the cause, the only way of putting everything right is to become conscious once again. And this is very simple, very simple.

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

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

It has been called by various names, each one has presented it in his own way. According to the angle of seeing, one's experience differs. All those who have found the Divine within themselves have found Him in a certain way, following a certain experience and from a certain angle, and this angle was self-evident to them. But then, if they are not well on their guard, they begin to say: "To find the Divine, one must do this and do that. And it is like that and it is that path one should follow", because for them that was the path of success. When one goes a little further, has a little more experience, one becomes aware that it is not necessarily like that, it can be done through millions of ways.... There is only one thing that is certain, it is that what is found is always the same. And that's remarkable, that whatever the path followed, whatever the form given to it, the result is always the same. Their experience and everyone's is the same. When they have touched the Thing, it is for all the same thing. And this is just the proof that they have touched That, because it is the same thing for all. If it is not the same thing, it means that they have not yet touched That. When they have touched That, it is the same thing. And to That, you may give all the names you like, it makes no difference."[36]

5. The Difference Between the European and the Indian Music

"…very high inspiration comes only rarely in European music; rare also is a psychic origin, very rare. Either it comes from high above or it is vital. The expression is almost always, except in a few rare cases, a vital expression – interesting, powerful. Most often, the origin is purely vital. Sometimes it comes from the very heights, then it is wonderful. Sometimes it is psychic, particularly in what has been religious music, but this is not very frequent.

Indian music, when there are good musicians, has almost always a psychic origin; for example, the *rāgas* have a psychic origin, they come from the psychic. The inspiration does not often come from above. But Indian music is very rarely embodied in a strong vital. It has rather an inner and intimate origin. I have heard a great deal of Indian music, a great deal; I have rarely heard Indian music having vital strength, very rarely; perhaps not more than four or five times. But very often I have heard Indian music having a psychic origin, it translates itself almost directly into the physical. And truly one must then concentrate, and as it is – how to put it? – very tenuous, very subtle, as there are none of those intense vital vibrations, one can easily glide within it and climb back to the psychic origin of the music. It has that effect upon you, it is a kind of ecstatic trance, as from an intoxication. It makes you enter a little into trance. Then if you listen well and let yourself go, you move on and glide, glide into a psychic consciousness. But if you remain only in the external consciousness, the music is so tenuous that there is no response from the vital, it leaves you altogether flat.

Sometimes, there was a vital force, then it became quite good.... I myself like this music very much, this kind of theme developing into a play. The theme is essentially very musical: and then it is developed with variations, innumerable variations, and it is always the same theme which is developed in one way or another. In Europe there were musicians who were truly musicians and they too had the thing: Bach had it, he used to do the same sort of thing, Mozart had it, his music was purely musical, he had no intention of expressing any other thing, it was music for music's sake. But this manner of taking a certain number of notes in a certain relation (they are like almost infinite variations), personally I find it wonderful to put you in repose, and you enter deep within yourself. And then, if you are ready, it gives you the psychic consciousness: something that makes you withdraw from the external consciousness, which makes you enter elsewhere, enter within.

In what form does music come to the great composers? That is, is it only the melody that comes or is it what we hear?

But that depends upon the musician. This is just what I was saying. For example, here in India, the science of harmony does not exist much, so the thing is translated by melody. As soon as the vital intervenes, there comes a kind of harmonic complexity in the music. That gives it a richness, a plenitude which it did not have.

But is it the melody that comes?

No, it is the music, and music is not necessarily melody. It is a relation of sounds which is not necessarily melodic. Melody is a part of this relation of sounds."[37]

6. How Does the Universe Explain at Every Moment the Universe*?

"That is not what I have said. If you want an explanation of something, it is the universe that explains this something. And each thing is explained by everything; and you can explain nothing except by the whole universe and the entire universe is explained by everything.... Just see: if you read all the explanations given in all the sciences, all the branches of human knowledge, always one thing is explained by another, and if you want to explain this other you explain it by yet another and if you want to explain this other one too, you explain it by yet another. So you continue in this way and go round the universe in order to explain one thing. Only, usually people get tired after a time, they accept the last explanation and stick to it. Otherwise, if they continued to find an explanation, they would have to make the full round of all things and would come back always to the same point. Things are so because they are so, because they had to be so, otherwise they would not be. Things are so, because they are as they are. There's no doubt about it. And that indeed is supreme wisdom."[38] (27-5-1953)

7. Different Planes of the Consciousness

"I have already spoken to you of the different planes of consciousness. Well, on the material plane, purely material (when separated from the vital plane), it is an absolute mechanism where consequently all things are linked together; and as I was saying the other day, if you want to find the cause of one thing or what is the result of a thing, you will find another and yet another and you will make an entire tour round the universe. And it is like that, everything is absolutely

mechanised. Only, in this purely material plane, there can intervene the vital plane, and it already does intervene in the vegetable kingdom. The vital plane has an altogether different determinism, its own particular determinism. But when you introduce the vital determinism into the determinism of the physical, that produces a kind of combination that changes everything. And above the vital plane there is the mental plane. The mental plane also has its own determinism where all things are linked together rigorously.

But that is the movement which could be called "horizontal". If you take a vertical movement, the mind descending into the vital and the vital descending into the physical, you have there three determinisms that intervene and naturally produce something altogether different. And where the mind has intervened the determinism will necessarily be different from the one where it does not intervene; that is, in the higher animal life there is already a mental determinism which intervenes that is altogether different from the determinism of the vegetable plane.

Above these planes there are others – above each plane there are others, following one another right up to the highest plane. The highest plane is the plane of absolute freedom. If in your consciousness you are capable of passing through all these planes, so to say in a vertical line, and reaching the highest plane and, by means of this connection, of bringing down this plane of perfect freedom into the material determinisms, you change everything. And all the intermediaries change everything. Then because of the very changes from level to level, it gives altogether the appearance of complete freedom; for the intervention or descent of one plane into another has unforeseen consequences for the other plane, the lower plane.

The higher plane can foresee, but the lower ones cannot. So, as these consequences are unforeseen, that gives altogether the impression of the unexpected and of freedom. And it is only if you remain consciously and constantly on the highest level, that is, in the supreme Consciousness, that there you can see that, at the same time, all is absolutely determined but also, because of the complexity of the interlinking of these determinisms, all is absolutely free. It is the Plane where there are no more contradictions, where all things *are* and are in harmony without contradicting one another.

In the lower planes can't one say what will happen at a particular moment?

That depends. On certain planes there are consciousnesses that form, that make formations and try to send them down to earth and manifest them. These are planes where the great forces are at play, forces struggling with each other to organise things in one way or another. On these planes all the possibilities are there, all the possibilities that present themselves but have not yet come to a decision as to which will come down.... Suppose a plane full of the imaginations of people who want certain things to be realised upon earth – they invent a novel, narrate stories, produce all kinds of phenomena; it amuses them very much. It is a plane of form-makers and they are there imagining all kinds of circumstances and events; they play with the forces; they are like the authors of a drama and they prepare everything there and see what is going to happen. All these formations are facing each other; and it is those which are the strongest, the most successful or the most persistent or those that have the advantage of a favourable set of circumstances which dominate. They meet and out of the conflict yet another thing results: you lose one

thing and take up another, you make a new combination; and then all of a sudden, you find, pluff! it is coming down. Now, if it comes down with a sufficient force, it sets moving the earth atmosphere and things combine; as for instance, when with your fist you thump the saw-dust, you know surely what happens, don't you? You lift your hand, give a formidable blow: all the dust gets organised around your fist. Well, it is like that. These formations come down into matter with that force, and everything organises itself automatically, mechanically as around the striking fist. And there's your wished object about to be realised, sometimes with small deformations because of the resistance, but it will be realised finally, even as the person narrating the story up above wanted it more or less to be realised. If then you are for some reason or other in the secret of the person who has constructed the story and if you follow the way in which he creates his path to reach down to the earth and if you see how a blow with the fist acts on earthly matter, then you are able to tell what is going to happen, because you have seen it in the world above, and as it takes some time to make the whole journey, you see in advance. And the higher you rise, the more you foresee in advance what is going to happen. And if you pass far beyond, go still farther, then everything is possible.

It is an unfolding that follows a wide road which is for you unknowable; for all will be unfolded in the universe, but in what order and in what way? There are decisions that are taken up there which escape our ordinary consciousness, and so it is very difficult to foresee. But there also, if you enter consciously and if you can be present up there... How shall I explain that to you? All is there, absolute, static, eternal: but all that will be unfolded in the material world, naturally more

or less one thing after another; for in the static existence all can be there, but in the becoming all becomes in time, that is, one thing after another. Well, what path will the unfolding follow? Up there is the domain of absolute freedom.... Who says that a sufficiently sincere aspiration, a sufficiently intense prayer is not capable of changing the path of the unfolding?

This means that all is possible.

Now, one must have a sufficient aspiration and a prayer that's sufficiently intense. But that has been given to human nature. It is one of the marvellous gifts of grace given to human nature; only, one does not know how to make use of it.

This comes to saying that in spite of the most absolute determinisms in the horizontal line, if one knows how to cross all these horizontal lines and reach the highest Point of consciousness, one is able to make things change, things apparently absolutely determined. So you may call it by any name you like, but it is a kind of combination of an absolute determinism with an absolute freedom. You may pull yourself out of it in any way you like, but it is like that.

I forgot to say in that book (perhaps I did not forget but just felt that it was useless to say it) that all these theories are only theories, that is, mental conceptions which are merely more or less imaged representations of the reality; but it is not the reality at all. When you say "determinism" and when you say "freedom", you say only words and all that is only a very incomplete, very approximate and very weak description of what is in reality within you, around you and everywhere; and to be able to begin to understand what the universe is, you must come out of your mental formulas, otherwise you will never understand anything.

To tell the truth, if you live only a moment, just a tiny moment, of this absolutely sincere aspiration or this sufficiently intense prayer, you will know more things than by meditating for hours."[39]

8. Karma and the Divine Grace

"…the Divine Grace completely contradicts Karma; you know, It makes it melt away like butter that's put in the sun.

That is what I was saying just now. What you have just told me is another way of speaking. I was putting myself in your place and asking: There you are, if you have an aspiration that's sincere enough or a prayer that's intense enough, you can bring down in you Something that will change everything, everything – truly it changes everything."[40]

9. Prayer and Aspiration

"There is something very beautiful in both, I shall speak to you about it one day, I shall tell you what there is in aspiration and what in prayer and why both of them are beautiful.... Some dislike prayer; if they entered deep into their heart, they would find it was pride – worse than that, vanity. And then there are those who have no aspiration, they try and they cannot aspire; it is because they do not have the flame of the will, it is because they do not have the flame of humility.

Both are needed. There must be a very great humility and a very great will to change one's Karma."[41] (3-6-1953)

10. The Reasons for the Repeated Attacks of Adverse Forces

"…We have said that the force can attack only when there

is something which responds in the nature – however slight it may be. There is a kind of affinity, something corresponding, there is a disorder or an imperfection which attracts the adverse force by responding to it. So, if the attack comes, you must keep perfectly quiet and send it back, but it does not necessarily follow that you have got rid of that small part in you which allows the attack to come.

You have something in you which attracts this force; take, for example (it is one of the most frequent things), the force of depression, that kind of attack of a wave of depression that falls upon you: you lose confidence, you lose hope, you have the feeling you will never be able to do anything, you are cast down. It means there is in your vital being something which is naturally egoistic, surely a little vain, which needs encouragement to remain in a good state. So it is like a little signal for those forces which intimates to them: "You can come, the door is open." But there is another part in the being that was watching when these forces arrived; instead of allowing them to enter, the part which sees clearly, which knows, which has power, which resists, says: "No, I do not want that, it is not true, I do not want it", and sends them back. But you have not necessarily been cured of the little thing within you which permitted them to come. You must go very deep within, work within you persistently to be able to efface all possibility of calling. And so long as you have not completely effaced it, the attack will recur almost unexpectedly. You push it back – it is like a ball you throw against the wall, back it returns; you push it back once again and again it returns – until the moment there is no longer anything to attract it. Then it does not return again.

Therefore, the most important thing to do when you are attacked by an adverse force, is to say to yourself: "Yes, the force comes from outside and the attack is there, but there must certainly be a correspondence in my nature, otherwise it could not have attacked me. Well, I am going to look and find within me what allows this force to come and I am going to send it back or transform it or put the light of consciousness upon it so that it may be converted, or drive it away so that it remains no longer within me...." There is a way, you see? When the force comes, the adverse force, when it attacks, the part which corresponds rushes out to meet it, it goes forward. A kind of meeting takes place. If at that time, instead of being altogether overwhelmed or taken by surprise and off your guard, you observe very closely what it was within you that vibrated (it makes the sound tat, tat, tat: another thing has entered), then you can catch it. At that moment, you catch it and say to it: "Get out with your friends, I don't want you any longer!" You send away the two together, the part that attracted and the thing it attracted; they are sent away and you are absolutely clear.

For that, you must be very vigilant and have a little courage, in the sense that at times you have to grip it hard and then pull it out – it hurts a little – and then you throw it out along with the forces you send away. After that, it is finished. And so long as this is not done, it comes back and back again; and then if one is not in oneself sufficiently courageous or vigilant or persevering, the fourth or fifth time one falls flat and says: "That's too much, I have had enough!" So the force installs itself, contented, satisfied with its work; and then you can see it laughing, it enjoys itself immensely, it got what it wanted. Now to send it back again means a very considerable

work. But if you follow the other method, if you look closely this way: "Well, I am going to catch the thing that has allowed it to come", you see somewhere within you something rising, wriggling, coming up in response to the evil force which is approaching. That is the moment to seize it and throw it out with all the rest.

But when we throw it out, it does not die. Then it can go elsewhere once more, for it remains in the world.

Exactly. It remains in the world and it will surely go elsewhere – until it meets someone who has sufficient spiritual and occult power to dissolve it, and that is very difficult.... One must be very strong, possess a very great knowledge and power to dissolve a movement that has (this can be said at least) its reason for existence in the world – I do not say it is legitimate, but still it has its reason for existence. There are things which can be dissolved; but if somewhere in the world it exists in someone, he can reconstitute it. It is the same thing when people are attacked by small beings of the vital world, hostile beings who attack them, install themselves in their atmosphere, trying to possess them, that is, enter into them and use their body and all the rest. These beings – it is very difficult for the individual to get rid of them: that needs a very, very hard yoga. But one who has the knowledge and the power and who sees them can very well get them out of the atmosphere and destroy them. But if one who is attacked keeps within himself this little affinity which allowed the thing to enter, then he will recall it. I have had several examples of the kind, several.

I had the example of a person who was three-fourths possessed and at the moment manifested a kind of power, a force that was not very good, but all the same it gave the

impression of a force, a power, a capacity. Only he recognised that it was bad and was for evil, and prayed to be relieved of it. The opportunity comes: the being shows itself separately from the person it possesses, it can be seized, pulled out and dissolved. Then the one who had been possessed suddenly feels that he is becoming as commonplace as anybody else. That feeling of power he had is now lost and he feels he is becoming quite ordinary and says: "I have no special faculties, I have no special value, I have no special capacity, I am quite an ordinary person and less than ordinary, of a sickening commonness!" Now what does he do? He prays to have his possession back again. And so a few days later, I find him as possessed as ever.

Well, here it is truly not worth the trouble. One has only to leave them to their fate. This has happened many a time. In such people, you know, it is a kind of vanity which generally opens the door to those forces; they wished to be big, powerful, to play an important role, to be somebody; that attracts the force and so they become like that, possessed. The thing is taken away from them: all their remarkable capacity disappears at the same time and their self-satisfied vanity as well. They have the feeling they have become something quite ordinary and a tiny little thing within them says: "Oh! it was better before...." For one that is destroyed, there are always ten ready to come in. That's how it is, it is a strange task!

You know the story of Durga, don't you? Durga who every year has to destroy her asura; and always she is compelled to begin again. It goes on in this way till the end of the reign allotted to the titans. When they will be banished from this world, it will not be thus any longer. But till then, that is as long as they are useful (as I have said in this book)

for intensifying the aspiration, clarifying the consciousness, for putting to the test the sincerity of people, they will be there. The day the test will not be needed, the day the sincerity will be pure and self-existent they will disappear. Then that day, Durga will no longer need to begin her battle over again every year."[42]

11. The Nature of the Hostile Beings and the Difficulties in their Conversion

"…It is the very character of these beings to be perfectly satisfied with themselves, and they do not desire, they have not the least intention to change! Even now, among the beings who are concerned with the earth, the asuric beings, the greatest of the asuras who is still busy with the earth at present, who is the asura of falsehood and calls himself the "Lord of the Nations" – he has taken a beautiful name, he is Lord of the Nations – it is he, wherever there is something going wrong, you may be sure it is he or a representative of his who is there. It is also perfectly sure that very soon his hour will come and all will be over for him, that he will have to disappear. And he absolutely refuses to change. He has no intention to do it, for immediately he will lose all his power. It is impossible. And he knows that he will disappear. But he proclaims categorically that before disappearing he will destroy all he can...."[43]

"In a human being, there is the divine Presence and the psychic being – at the beginning embryonic, but in the end a being wholly formed, conscious, independent, individualised. That does not exist in the vital world. It is a special grace given to human beings dwelling in matter and upon earth. And because of this, there is no human being who cannot be

converted, if he wants it; that is, there is a possibility of his wanting it and the moment he wants it, he can do it. He is sure to succeed the moment he wants it, whereas those beings of the vital do not have a psychic being in them, they do not have the direct divine Presence (naturally, at the Origin, they descended directly from the Divine, but that was at the Origin, that is very far away). They are not in direct contact with the Divine within them, they have no psychic being. And if they were converted, there would remain nothing of them! For they are made up entirely of the opposite movement: they are entirely made up of personal self-assertion, despotic authority, separation from the Origin, and, of a great disdain for all that is pure, beautiful and noble. They do not have within them this psychic element which in man, even in the most debased, makes him respect what is beautiful and pure; even the basest man, in spite of himself, against his own will, respects what is pure, noble and beautiful. But those beings do not have that. They are wholly on the other side, totally on the other side. It disgusts them in every way. It is for them something which should not be touched, because it destroys; it is the thing that makes them disappear. Goodwill, sincerity, purity and beauty are things which make them disappear. So they hate these things.

Now I do not know on what grounds one could convert them. What would be the point of support? I do not find it. Even in the greatest. That is, some of these beings will not disappear until hatred disappears from the earth.... One might put it the other way round. One might say that hatred will disappear from the earth when those beings disappear; but, for the reason I have just given, the power to make light spring forth in the place of darkness, beauty in the place of ugliness,

goodness instead of evil, that power man possesses, the Asura does not. Therefore it is man who will do that work, it is he who will change, it is he who will transform his earth and it is he who will compel the Asura to flee into other worlds or to dissolve. After that, all will be quiet."[44] (10-6-1953)

12. How Crystals are Formed in the Mind

"If you observe yourself, you will find out that there is always something which pulls this way, something which pulls that way and then this kind of haziness as though you were living in cotton wool, in the clouds: nothing is clear.

The usefulness of work is nothing else but that: to crystallise this mental power. For, what you learn (unless you put it in practice by some work or deeper studies), half of what you learn, at least, will vanish, disappear with time. But it will leave behind one thing: the capacity of crystallising your thought, making something clear out of it, something precise, exact and organised. And that is the true usefulness of work: to organise your cerebral capacity. If you remain in your hazy movement in that kind of cloudy fluidity, you may labour for years, it will be quite useless to you; you will not come out of it more intelligent than when you entered it. But if you are able, even for half an hour, to concentrate your attention on things that seem to you of very little interest, like a rule of grammar, for example (the rules of grammar are some of the dry things I was speaking about, there are other things much more arid, but indeed the rules of grammar are sufficiently arid), if you take one of them and try to understand it – not learn it by heart and apply mechanically what you have learnt by heart, that will be of no use – but try to

understand the thought behind the words: "Why was this rule formulated in this way?" and try to find out your own formula for the thing; that is so interesting. "Why has this gentleman who wrote this rule written it in this way? But I am studying, trying to understand why. Why has he put this word after that and that word after that other, and why has he stated the rule in this way? It is because he thought that it was the most complete and the most clear way of expressing the thing." And so that's the thing you must find. And when you find it, you suddenly exclaim: 'That is what it means! It must be seen in this way, then it becomes very clear.'

I am going to explain it to you: **when you have understood, it forms a little crystal in you, like a little shining point. And when you have put in many, many, many of these, then you will begin to be intelligent.** That is the utility of work, not simply to stuff the head with a heap of things that take you nowhere."[45] (24-6-1953)

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RNI NO. RAJENG/2002/9480

Name of the Publisher:	Peoples awakening and Service organisation
Name of the Printer :	Peoples awakening and Service organisation
Name of the Owner :	Peoples awakening and Service organisation
Printed at :	Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Press Seth Rambilasrai Kothi, Khetan Mohalla Jhunjhunu - 333 001, Rajasthan
Published at :	Mira Ambica Bhawan, Khetan Mohalla, Jhunjhunu - 333 001, Rajasthan **email:** sadlecjjn@rediffmail.com URL : www.sadlec.org
Editor :	Anjana Dharnidharka

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