The Real Awakener

Lights on the Path

Words of the Mother – 8

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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, May – June 1955

1. The Psychic Beings, Flying Saucers and Life on Other Planets

"Are there psychic beings up there or are they only in Matter?

I have heard that only on the earth there are psychic beings, precisely because the earth has been created as a symbol for concentrating the problem, and the psychic being, which is the result of the direct intervention of the Supreme, has been created here exactly for the necessities of this symbolic action.

Are there really any beings on Jupiter or Mars?

For me, if you ask me, there are beings everywhere. Everywhere. One doesn't see them, that's all. But they are everywhere. But certainly I don't think they are like what we see in the pictures – the Martians you were shown in the pictures with grotesque forms. I have no reason to think that they are like that.

Have you heard the story of the flying saucer?

Ah, yes! I have studied it also. However, I am waiting to have a physical experience. I indeed saw a flying saucer pass over Pondicherry during the war, I saw it clearly, with open eyes, and going fairly slowly, coming from the sea to the land. It was light blue and had a slightly rounded shape like this. I saw it passing by and said to myself, "Why, I have a vision!" I rubbed my eyes but my eyes were open, completely open... Suddenly I saw a form passing in the sky like this; I told myself, "How strange it is!" but as no one

had spoken about it till then, I thought that I had a vision. I see many things which people ordinarily don't see; but when people started speaking about this, then I said to myself, "Why, I have seen a flying saucer pass by." But I think Udar also has seen a flying saucer.

(Udar) *Yes, Mother.* (Laughter)

That it exists is unquestionable. What is it? Each one has his opinion. But what I would like is to find myself face to face with the beings as they have been described. There is someone who has, supposedly... anyway, he said that he has spoken to a being who was in a flying saucer. Well, I would be very happy to meet a being like that. After that I shall tell you what it is – when I have met it.

Mother, it is said that there are other solar systems where perhaps one can find a similar situation as on earth. But down there can we find men like us?

You must go there and see. (*Laughter*)

Mother, can we go to the other planets by occult means?

Ah! Yes, one can go everywhere. What prevents us from going? One goes everywhere. Only, you see, we must know that it is not the physical body which goes; it is the most material thing... the most material vital; and this is already very difficult.

Usually it is the mental part of the vital which goes out; not the mind, the vital. For short distances one can go out from his body with the subtle physical, and in these cases one sees things materially as they are. But one can't go long distances. There are practical reasons, but above all there is the reason of safety; because if one goes too far with the subtle physical, the body is not only in a trance, it is

in a cataleptic state, and then, unless it is guarded by someone who has a very profound knowledge and a great power, this can turn out badly. Therefore, for these long journeys it is usually the most subtle part of the vital (which corresponds to a kind of mental consciousness of the vital), which goes out.

So one sees everything which has a similar quality. But supposing there is something very material, one doesn't see it as it is. So one can't say with certainty, "It is like this or like that." One can say, "I saw this," that's all. But one can't recount stories like those in the papers about what is happening on the moon or Jupiter or Venus. One can have an experience and know certain things but usually they are things of a more psychological nature.

However, if it is in order to know whether there are some beings there, **I don't think there's any place in the universe where there aren't beings, because that's the very principle of this universe: individual creations. Everywhere there are individual creations but they have different densities. Most of them are invisible except to those with a similar density,** and only those who have the capacity of coming out of their bodies and going for a stroll can see these things. But so long as you use these eyes you can't see very much.

Such a limited field of vision! In fact, when you think of it, such an absolutely ridiculous limitation! The field of our sense experience has an absolutely ridiculous limitation; while in the mind, if you think of someone or something, a

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

city or a place, you are there immediately, instantaneously, you see. And you are there – it is not that you are not there, you are there, and you can have so precise a mental contact that you can have a conversation, ask questions and receive answers, on condition that the other person is fairly sensitive. Why, this is something which happens constantly, constantly. Only, you must have a little knowledge, naturally, for otherwise you don't even understand what is happening.

Even physically, with this, with the eyes, the nose, the fingers, the mouth, the ears, oh, it is ridiculous! One can develop these if one wants. One can succeed, for example, in hearing something which occurs at a fairly great distance and hearing it physically, not by another means than the physical, but one must have a control over his senses and be able to prolong their vibrations sufficiently. One can see at a distance also, and not by an occult vision. One can manage to stretch his vision, and if he knows how to prolong the vibration of his nerves outside the organ, he can prolong the contact, I don't say some kilometres away, no, but in a certain area, say, for example, through a wall, which is considered something impossible; one can see what is going on in a room which is separated from another by a wall. But a very methodical practice is necessary. Yet this is possible, seeing, feeling, hearing. If one wants to take the trouble, one can enlarge his field considerably. But it asks for work, for perseverance, a kind of assiduous effort. Why, it has even been found that one can develop other visual centres than the eye. It has been tried out with people who, for some reason or other, have no vision in the eye. One can develop other centres or another centre of vision, by a

continuous, methodical effort. Jules Romains has written a book about it. He himself conducted experiments and obtained very conclusive results.

This means that we have a number of possibilities which we let sleep within us, because we don't take the trouble to develop them very much. We can do infinitely more than we actually do. But we take things like that, as they come."[1] (18-5-1955)

2. How Our Yoga Must Be for the Sake of the Divine and Not For What We Misunderstand as Ourselves

"Sweet Mother, here it is written: "This liberation, perfection, fullness too must not be pursued for our own sake, but for the sake of the Divine." But isn't the sadhana we do done for ourselves?

But he stresses precisely that. It is simply in order to stress the point. It means that all this perfection which we are going to acquire is not for a personal and selfish end, it is in order to be able to manifest the Divine, it is put at the service of the Divine. We do not pursue this development with a selfish intention of personal perfection; we pursue it because the divine Work has to be accomplished.

But why do we do this divine Work? It is to make ourselves...

No, not at all! It is because that's the divine Will. It is not at all for a personal reason, it must not be that. It is because it's the divine Will and it's the divine Work.

So long as a personal aspiration or desire, a selfish will, get mingled in it, it always creates a mixture and is not exactly an expression of the divine Will. The only thing which must

count is the Divine, His Will, His manifestation, His expression. One is here for that, one is that, and nothing else. And so long as there is a feeling of self, of the ego, the person, which enters, well, this proves that one is not yet what one ought to be, that's all. I don't say that this can be done overnight but still this indeed is the truth.

It is just because even in this field, the spiritual field, there are far too many people (I could say even the majority of those who take to the spiritual life and do yoga), far too many of these who do it for personal reasons, all kinds of personal reasons: some because they are disgusted with life, others because they are unhappy, others still because they want to know more, others because they want to become spiritually great, others because they want to learn things which they may be able to teach others; indeed there are a thousand personal reasons for taking up yoga. **But the simple fact of giving oneself to the Divine so that the Divine takes you and makes of you what He wills, and this in all its purity and constancy, well, there are not many who do that and yet this indeed is the truth; and with this one goes straight to the goal and never risks making mistakes.** But all the other motives are always mixed, tainted with ego; and naturally they can lead you here and there, very far from the goal also.

But that kind of feeling that you have only one single reason for existence, one single goal, one single motive, the entire, perfect, complete consecration to the Divine to the point of not being able to distinguish yourself from Him any longer, to be Himself entirely, completely, totally without any personal reaction

intervening, this is the ideal attitude; and besides, it is the only one which makes it possible for you to go forward in life and in the work, absolutely protected from everything and **protected from yourself which is of all dangers the greatest for you – there is no greater danger than the self (I take "self" in the sense of an egoistic self).**"[2]

* * *

"…even if you must be the one and only being in the whole creation who gives himself integrally in all purity to the Divine, and being the only one, being naturally absolutely misunderstood by everybody, scoffed at, ridiculed, hated, even if you were that, there is no reason for not doing it. One must be either a tinsel actor or else a fool. Because others don't do it? But what does it matter whether they do it or not? 'Why, the whole world may go the wrong way, it does not concern me. There is only one thing with which I am concerned, to go straight. What others do, how is it my concern? It is their business, not mine.' "[3] (8-6-1955)

3. Static and Dynamic Realisations

"…There is a realisation in inaction like that of those who enter into contemplations from which they don't come out, and who don't move; and then there is a dynamic realisation which transforms all your action, all your movements, all your way of being, your character. In the first case one's outer being remains the same, nothing changes, and usually it destroys all possibility of action, one can no longer do anything, one remains seated... In the second case, it changes everything, your character, your way of being, your way of acting, all your actions and even your

surroundings, and finally all your existence, your total being: this is dynamic realisation, with the transformation of the body as its culmination.

Some people try to transform their body before even having transformed their intelligence, and this produces a complete displacement, it unbalances them totally. One must first transform his thought, all his mind, all his mental activity, organise it with higher knowledge; and at the same time one must transform his character, all the movements of the vital, all impulses, all reactions. And finally, when these two things are done, in any case up to a certain point, one can begin to think of transforming the cells of his body, but not begin at the end; one must begin at the beginning.

One can do... Sri Aurobindo says, doesn't he, that one can do everything at the same time, but the centre, the most important part, must first be transformed sufficiently before one can think of transforming his body... like some people who, for example, immediately want to change their food or even to stop eating, because, they say, finally when the Supermind comes one will no longer need to eat. So before the Supermind has come they want to begin by what will happen; they stop eating, stop sleeping, and the result is that they fall very ill.

It is preferable at first to begin by receiving the Supermind in one's mind with a sufficient knowledge, and gradually come to transforming all the rest."[4]

4. No Pralaya in the Supramental

"*'…in the Truth-Creation the law is that of a constant unfolding without any Pralaya.' What is this constant unfolding?*

The Truth-Creation... it is the last line? (*Mother consults the book*) I think we have already spoken about this several times. It has been said that in the process of creation, there is the movement of creation followed by a movement of preservation and ending in a movement of disintegration or destruction; and even it has been repeated very often: "All that begins must end", etc., etc.

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

And this is what Sri Aurobindo says. He speaks of a constant unfolding, that is, the Divine manifests more and more completely; more and more perfectly, in a progressive creation. It is the nature of this progression which makes the return to the Origin, the destruction no longer necessary. All that does not progress disappears, and that is why physical

bodies die, it's because they are not progressive; they are progressive up to a certain moment, then there they stop and most often they remain stable for a certain time, and then they begin to decline, and then disappear. It's because the physical body, physical matter as it is at present is not plastic enough to be able to progress constantly. But it is not impossible to make it sufficiently plastic for the perfecting of the physical body to be such that it no longer needs disintegration, that is, death.

Only, this cannot be realised except by the descent of the Supermind which is a force higher than all those which have so far manifested and which will give the body a plasticity that will allow it to progress constantly, that is, to follow the divine movement in its unfolding."[5] (15-6-1955)

5. How Can One Awaken His Yogashakti?*

"It depends on this: when one thinks that it is the most important thing in his life. That's all.

Some people sit in meditation, concentrate on the base of the vertebral column and want it very much to awake, but that's not enough. It is when truly it becomes the most important thing in one's life, when all the rest seems to have lost all taste, all interest, all importance, when one feels within that one is born for this, that one is here upon earth for this, and that it is the only thing that truly counts, then that's enough.

One can concentrate on the different centres; but sometimes one concentrates for so long, with so much effort,

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

and has no result. And then one day something shakes you, you feel that you are going to lose your footing, you have to cling on to something; then you cling within yourself to the idea of union with the Divine, the idea of the divine Presence, the idea of the transformation of the consciousness, and you aspire, you want, you try to organise your feelings, movements, impulses around this. And it comes.

Some people have recommended all kinds of methods; probably these were methods which had succeeded in their case; but to tell the truth, one must find one's own method, it is only after having done the thing that one knows how it should be done, not before.

If one knows it beforehand, one makes a mental construction and risks greatly living in his mental construction, which is an illusion; because when the mind builds certain conditions and then they are realised, there are many chances of there being mostly pure mental construction which is not the experience itself but its image. So for all these truly spiritual experiences I think it is wiser to have them before knowing them. If one knows them, one imitates them, one doesn't have them, one imagines oneself having them; whereas if one knows nothing – how things are and how they ought to happen, what should happen and how it will come about – if one knows nothing about all this, then by keeping very still and making a kind of inner sorting out within one's being, one can suddenly have the experience, and then later knows what one has had. It is over, and one knows how it has to be done when one has done it – afterwards. Like that it is sure.

One may obviously make use of his imagination, imagine the Kundalini and try to pull it upwards. But one can also tell himself tales like this. I have had so many instances of people who described their experiences to me exactly as they are described in books, knowing all the words and putting down all the details, and then I asked them just a little question like that, casually: that if they had had the experience they should have known or felt a certain thing, and as this was not in the books, they could not answer."[6] (22-6-1955)

6. The Time and Space in Higher Worlds

"As there are forms, there is necessarily a Time, a Space, but it is not at all the same as the physical. It is neither the same Time nor the same Space.

For example, as soon as you come to the vital there is a Time and Space which are similar to the physical but without that fixity and hardness and irremediability which are here. That is, for instance, in the vital a strong intelligent will has an immediate action; here, in the physical, it takes sometimes extremely long to be realised, an entire process has to be followed. In the vital it is direct, the will acts directly on the circumstances, and if it is truly of a very strong kind, it is instantaneous. But there is still a Space, that is, one has the impression of moving to go from one place to another, and that necessarily, as one moves, a certain time intervenes; but it is an extremely short time compared with physical time.

On the mental plane the notion of Time disappears almost totally. For example, you are in your mental consciousness, you think of someone or something or of a

place, and immediately you are there. There is no need of any time between the thought and the realisation. It is only when the mind is mingled with the vital that the notion of time is introduced; and if they go down into the physical, before a mental conception can be realised a whole process is necessary. You do not have a direct mental action on matter. For instance, if you think of someone who lives in Calcutta, well, physically you have to take a plane and some hours must pass before you can be there; while mentally if you are here and think of someone in Calcutta, instantaneously you are there with him. Instantaneously, you see. But if you go out in the vital from your body and want to go somewhere, well, you have the feeling of moving, and of the time it takes you to reach the place you are going to. But it is incomparably fast in relation to the physical, to the time necessary to do things physically.

Only right at the top of the ladder, when one reaches what could be called the centre of the universe, the centre and origin of the universe, everything is instantaneous. The past, present and future are all contained in a total and simultaneous consciousness, that is, what has always been and what will be are as though united in a single instant, a single beat of the universe, and it is only there that one goes out of Time and Space."[7]

7. The Psychic Being and the Orientation of an Individual's Life

"…Absolutely unconsciously for the individual, most of the time; but it is the psychic which organises his existence – only in what may be called the main lines, because for

intervening in the details there would have to be a conscious union between the outer being, that is, the vital and physical being, and the psychic being, but usually this does not exist. So externally, in the details... for example, there was someone who in deep perplexity said to me, "Well, if it is the psychic being or rather the Divine in the psychic who directs our life, is it He who decides the number of pieces of sugar I put in my tea-cup?" That was the question, verbatim. So the answer had to be, 'No, because it is not a detailed intervention of this kind.'"[8]

"…If you have never known more than a certain number of very primary principles, your choice is very easy, but if by chance you have studied a little and know if it be only the different medical systems of treatment... there are the systems of different countries, the different systems of medicines, there are, you know, allopathy, homeopathy, this one and that; so one tells you one thing, another tells you another. You know people who have told you, "Don't do this, do that", others who say, "Above all don't do this, do that", and so on, and so you find yourself facing the problem and ask yourself, 'Well, with all that, what do I know myself, what am I going to decide? I know nothing.'

There is only one thing which knows in you, that's your psychic; *it* makes no mistake, it will immediately, instantaneously tell you, if you obey it without a word and without your ideas and arguments, it will make you do the right thing. But all the rest... you are lost. And for everything: what are you going to study, what are you not going to study, what work are you going to do, what path are you going to take? But then there are all the

possibilities which come in, all that you have either studied or met in life, all the suggestions you have received from all sides, which are there, like that, dancing around you. And with what will you decide? I am speaking of people who are absolutely sincere and have no preconceived ideas, prejudices, established rules which they follow in a mechanical routine, without endeavouring to know the truth at all, and for whom their mental construction is the truth. Then it is so simple, one goes straight on his path, bumps his nose against the wall but doesn't notice it until the nose is smashed. But otherwise it is terribly difficult.

This was what Sri Aurobindo meant when he said that one lived constantly in ignorance and that unless the mind of ignorance is replaced by the mind of light one could not follow the true path, and that this was the indispensable preparation before any integral transformation could take place."[9] (29-6-1955)

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II. Questions and Answers, July – August 1955

1. The Psychic Being and the Central Being

"Sweet Mother, here it is written: "Finally the soul or psychic being retires into the psychic world to rest there till a new birth is close." Then, Mother, what happens to the central being afterwards?

This depends absolutely on the different instances. We said that the central being and the psychic being are the same thing but the part which stays and is in the Divine stays and is in the Divine. The psychic is the delegate of this Divine in the earth life, for the growth on earth. But the part of the central being which is identified with the Divine remains identified with the Divine and does not change. Even during life it is identified with the Divine, and after death it remains what it was in life, for it this makes no difference. It is the psychic being which has alternations of experience and assimilation, experience and assimilation. But the Jivatman is in the Divine and remains in the Divine, and doesn't move from there; and it is not progressive. It is in the Divine, it is identified with the Divine, it remains identified with the Divine, not separated. It makes no difference to it, whether there is an earthly body or not.

Then, Sweet Mother, is everyone's central being the same?

No, for we are told that it is identified in multiplicity. It is the eternal truth of each being. From one point of view they are identical, from another they are multiple; because the truth of each being is an individual truth, but it is identified with the Divine. It is outside the manifestation

but it is the origin of the manifestation. It is a unity which is not a uniformity.

It is indeed the same thing that I was explaining last time; each one is different and yet each one is identical. If you approach the Divine from various angles, He seems to you different, because of the angle from which you approach Him. It is the same thing for the Manifested. But in this angle it is all the same, if I may say so, the complete unity of the Divine which one attains. It is the meeting point which is different but beyond the meeting point it is a single totality.

It is very difficult to put it in words. But it is an experience which one can have. It is as though there were innumerable doors or paths by which one could reach the Divine. So when one approaches he does so from a certain angle, he enters by a certain door, but as soon as he has gone right in, he realises that it is a single oneness, it is only the path leading to it or the particular approach which is different."[10]

2. The Faculty of Imagination and its Use

"The mind has a capacity of vision of its own and it is not the same vision as with these eyes, but it is a vision, it is a perception in forms. But this is not imagination. It has nothing to do with imagination.

Imagination, for instance, is when you begin to picture to yourself an ideal being to whom you apply all your conceptions, and when you tell yourself, "Why, it should be like this, like that, its form should be like this, its thought like that, its character like that," when you see all the details and build up the being. Now, writers do this all the time

because when they write a novel, they imagine. There are those who take things from life but there are those who are imaginative, creators; they create a character, a personage and then put him in their book later. This is to imagine. To imagine, for example, a whole concurrence of circumstances, a set of events, this is what I call telling a story to oneself. But it can be put down on paper, and then one becomes a novelist. There are very different kinds of writers. Some imagine everything, some gather all sorts of observations from life and construct their book with them. There are a hundred ways of writing a book. But indeed some writers imagine everything from beginning to end. It all comes out of their head and they construct even their whole story without any support in things physically observed. This truly is imagination. But as I say, if they are very powerful and have a considerable capacity for creation, it is possible that one day or other there will be a physical human being who realises their creation. This too is true.

What do you suppose imagination is, eh? Have you never imagined anything, you?

And what happens?

All that one imagines.

You mean that you imagine something and it happens like that, eh? Or it is in a dream...

What is the function, the use of the imagination?

If one knows how to use it, as I said, one can create for oneself his own inner and outer life; one can build his own existence with his imagination, if one knows how to use it and has a power. In fact it is an elementary way of

creating, of forming things in the world. I have always felt that if one didn't have the capacity of imagination he would not make any progress. Your imagination always goes ahead of your life. When you think of yourself, usually you imagine what you want to be, don't you, and this goes ahead, then you follow, then it continues to go ahead and you follow. Imagination opens for you the path of realisation. People who are not imaginative – it is very difficult to make them move; they see just what is there before their nose, they feel just what they are moment by moment and they cannot go forward because they are clamped by the immediate thing. It depends a good deal on what one calls imagination. However...

Men of science must be having imagination!

A lot. Otherwise they would never discover anything. In fact, **what is called imagination is a capacity to project oneself outside realised things and towards things realisable, and then to draw them by the projection.** One can obviously have progressive and regressive imaginations. There are people who always imagine all the catastrophes possible, and unfortunately they also have the power of making them come. It's like the antennae going into a world that's not yet realised, catching something there and drawing it here. Then naturally it is an addition to the earth atmosphere and these things tend towards manifestation. It is an instrument which can be disciplined, can be used at will; one can discipline it, direct it, orientate it. It is one of the faculties one can develop in himself and render serviceable, that is, use it for definite purposes.

Sweet Mother, can one imagine the Divine and have the contact?

Certainly if you succeed in imagining the Divine you have the contact, and you can have the contact with what you imagine, in any case. In fact **it is absolutely impossible to imagine something which doesn't exist somewhere. You cannot imagine anything at all which doesn't exist somewhere. It is possible that it doesn't exist on the earth, it is possible that it's elsewhere, but it is impossible for you to imagine something which is not already contained in principle in the universe; otherwise it could not occur.**

Then, Sweet Mother, this means that in the created universe nothing new is added?

In the created universe? Yes. The universe is progressive; we said that constantly things manifest, more and more. But for your imagination to be able to go and seek beyond the manifestation something which will be manifested, well, it may happen, in fact it does – I was going to tell you that it is in this way that some beings can cause considerable progress to be made in the world, because they have the capacity of imagining something that's not yet manifested. But there are not many. One must first be capable of going beyond the manifested universe to be able to imagine something which is not there. There are already many things which can be imagined.

What is our terrestrial world in the universe? A very small thing. Simply to have the capacity of imagining something which does not exist in the terrestrial manifestation is already very difficult, very difficult. For how many billions of years hasn't it existed, this little earth? And there have been no two identical things. That's much. It is

very difficult to go out from the earth atmosphere with one's mind; one can, but it is very difficult. And then if one wants to go out, not only from the earth atmosphere but from the universal life!

To be able simply to enter into contact with the life of the earth in its totality from the formation of the earth until now, what can this mean? And then to go beyond this and enter into contact with universal life from its beginnings up to now... and then again to be able to bring something new into the universe, one must go still farther beyond."[11] (6-7-1955)

3. The Secret of the Creation of the Universe

"You know, so long as you want to apply your mental, moral notions to the creation of the universe, you will never understand anything about it, never. Because from all sides and in all ways it goes beyond these conceptions – conceptions of good and evil, and these things. All the mental, moral conceptions we have cannot explain the universe. And for this part of ourselves which indeed lives in a total ignorance, **all that can be said is: "Things are like that because they are like that", one can't explain them, because the explanations one gives are those of ignorance and explain nothing at all.**

The mind explains one thing by another, this other which needs to be explained is explained by another still, and that other which needs explanation is explained by another, and if you continue in this way you can go all round the universe and return to the starting-point without having explained anything at all. (*Laughter*) So you have to pierce a

hole, rise in the air and see things in another way. Then like that one can begin to understand."[12]

"**…you cannot understand and be something unless it is in you in some way or other or you are in it** – it's the same thing, isn't it? However, to make you understand more easily, I can say it's because it is in you, because it's a part of your consciousness, somewhere, otherwise you could never become aware of it. **If one did not carry the Divine within oneself, in the essence of one's being, one could never become aware of the Divine; it would be an impossible venture.** And then if you reverse the problem, the moment you conceive and feel in some way or other, or even, to begin with, admit that the Divine is in you, as well as you are in the Divine, then already this opens the door to realisation, just a little, not much – slightly ajar. Then if later the aspiration comes, the intense need to know and to be, then that intense need widens the opening until one can creep in. Then when one has crept in, one becomes aware of what he is. And that's exactly what Sri Aurobindo says, that one has forgotten, that due to this separation of Sat, Chit, Ananda, forgetfulness comes, forgetfulness of what one is; one thinks oneself to be somebody, you see, anyone at all, a boy, a girl, a man, a woman, a dog, a horse, anything at all, a stone, the sea, the sun; one believes oneself to be all this, instead of thinking oneself the One Divine – because, in fact, if one had continued thinking oneself the One Divine, there would have been no universe at all.

That was what I wanted to tell him (*indicating a child*), that this phenomenon of separation seems to be

indispensable for a universe to be there, otherwise it would always have remained as it was. But if we re-establish the unity, after having made it pass through this curve, you see, if we re-establish the unity, having benefited from the multiplicity, the division, then we have a unity of a higher quality, a unity which knows itself instead of the unity which doesn't have to know itself, for there's nothing which may know the other. **When the Oneness is absolute, who can know the Oneness? We must at least be able to have an image, an appearance of something which is not it in order to understand what it is. I believe that this is the secret of the universe. Perhaps the Divine wanted really to know Himself, so He threw Himself out and then looked at Himself, and now He wants to enjoy this possibility of being Himself with the full knowledge of Himself. This becomes much more interesting.**"[13] (13-7-1955)

4. The Condition of Perfect Freedom

"**…when one is perfectly surrendered to the Divine one is perfectly free, and *this is* the absolute condition for freedom,** to belong to the Divine alone; you are free from the whole world because you belong only to Him. And this surrender is the supreme liberation, you are also free from your little personal ego and of all things this is the most difficult – and the happiest too, the only thing that can give you a constant peace, an uninterrupted joy and the feeling of an *infinite* freedom from all that afflicts you, dwarfs, diminishes, impoverishes you, and from all that can create the least anxiety in you, the least fear. You are no longer afraid of anything, you no longer fear anything, you are the

supreme master of your destiny because it is the Divine who wills in you and guides everything. But this does not happen overnight: a little time and a *great deal* of ardour in the will, not fearing to make any effort and not losing heart when one doesn't succeed, knowing that the victory is certain and that one must last out until it comes. There you are."[14]

5. The Meaning of "the Divine Gives Himself"

"It means exactly this: that the more you give yourself the more you have the experience – it is not just a feeling or impression or sensation, it is a total experience – that the more you give yourself to the Divine the more He is with you, totally, constantly, at every minute, in all your thoughts, all your needs, and that there's no aspiration which does not receive an immediate answer; and you have the sense of a complete, constant intimacy, of a total nearness. It is as though you carried... as though the Divine were all the time with you; you walk and He walks with you, you sleep and He sleeps with you, you eat and He eats with you, you think and He thinks with you, you love and He is the love you have. But for this one must give himself entirely, totally, exclusively, reserve nothing, keep nothing for himself and not keep back anything, not disperse anything also: the least little thing in your being which is not given to the Divine is a waste; it is the wasting of your joy, something that lessens your happiness by that much, and all that you don't give to the Divine is as though you were holding it in the way of the possibility of the Divine's giving Himself to you. **You don't feel Him close to yourself, constantly with you, because you don't belong to Him, because you belong to hundreds of other things and people; in your thought,**

your action, your feelings, impulses... there are millions of things which you do not give Him, and that is why you don't feel Him always with you, because all these things are so many screens and walls between Him and you. But if you give Him everything, if you keep back nothing, He will be constantly and totally with you in all that you do, in all that you think, all that you feel, always, at each moment. But for this you must give yourself absolutely, keep back nothing; each little thing that you hold back is a stone you put down to build up a wall between the Divine and yourself. And then later you complain: "Oh, I don't feel Him!" What would be surprising is that you could feel Him."[15]

6. The Impersonal Divine, Nirvana and the Multiplicity of Planes and Dimensions

"What exactly is meant by 'the impersonal Divine'?

It's what is called in some philosophies and religions the Formless; something that's beyond all form, even the forms of thought, you see, not necessarily physical forms: forms of thought, forms of movement. It is the conception of something which is beyond not only what can be thought or conceived or seen even with the most subtle eyes, but all that has any kind of perceptible form whatever, even vibrations more subtle than those which infinitely overpass all human perceptions, even in the highest states of being, something which is beyond all manifestation of any order whatever – usually that's how we define the impersonal God. He has nothing, none of the qualities we can conceive of, He is beyond all qualification. It is obviously the quest of something which is the opposite of the creation, and that is why some religions have introduced the idea of what they

call Nirvana, that is, of something which is nothing; it is the same quest, the same attempt to find something which would be the opposite of all that we can conceive. So finally we define It, because how can we speak of It? But in experience one tries to go beyond all that belongs to the manifested world, and that is what we call the impersonal Divine.

Well, it happens – and this is very interesting – that there is a region like that, a region which... how to put it?... which is the negation of all that exists. **Behind all the planes of being, even behind the physical, there is a Nirvana.** We use the word Nirvana because it is easier, but we can say, "There is an impersonal Divine behind the physical, behind the mind, behind the vital, behind all the regions of being; behind, beyond." (We are obliged to express ourselves in some sort of way.) **It is not necessarily more subtle, it's something else, something absolutely different; that is, in a meditation, for example, if you meditate on Nirvana you can remain in a region of your mind and by a certain concentration produce a kind of reversal of your consciousness and find yourself suddenly in something which is Nirvana, nonexistence; and yet in the ascent of your consciousness you have not gone beyond the mind.**

One can have a little understanding of these things if one knows the multiplicity of dimensions, if one has understood this principle. First of all you are taught the fourth dimension. If you have understood that principle, of the dimensions, you can understand this. For example, as I said, you don't need to exteriorise yourself to go from one plane to another, when going to the most subtle planes

to pass from the last most subtle plane to what we call Nirvana – to express it somehow. It is not necessary. **You can, through a kind of interiorisation and by passing into another dimension or other dimensions... you can find in any domain whatever of your being this non-existence.** And truly, one can understand a little bit of this without experiencing it. It is very difficult, but still, even without the experience one can understand just a little, if one understands this, this principle of the inner dimensions.

(*Silence*)

It can be put like this (you see, it's one way of saying it) that you carry within yourself both existence and non-existence at the same time, the personal and the impersonal, and... yes... the manifest and unmanifest... the finite and the infinite... time and eternity. And all that is in this tiny little body.

There are people who go beyond – even mentally, you see... their mental atmosphere goes beyond their body, even their vital atmosphere goes beyond their body – there are people whose consciousness is vast enough to extend over continents and even over other earths and other worlds, but this is a spatial concept. Yet by an interiorisation in other dimensions, the fourth and more, you can find all this in yourself, in one point... the infinite.

Then Mother, isn't the infinite an extension of space?

Oh, no! That's the indefinite, not the infinite.

The infinite is the opposite of the finite. One can contain in himself the most finite finite and the most infinite infinite; in fact one does contain them, perhaps even in each one of the cells of the brain."[16] (20-7-1955)

7. The Significance of the "March Past"

"…the March Past, it is... it is more a physical action – preparing oneself for the physical action. It is more a way of opening oneself to the energy, the universal energy, to prepare for the action. It is a contact with the energy, the universal energy which is there, it is to help the body to participate in the work. At that moment it is something very physical. This is truly the basis of physical culture: to prepare the body for the action and the receptivity of energies to accomplish the work. And also the Marching, even when I am not there. But the March Past is for stimulating the receptivity of the body to the energies for realisation. It is based upon something which is expressed in all kinds of ways; but **it is a kind of admiration... how to put it?... a spontaneous and also charming admiration for heroism, which is in the most material physical consciousness.**

And this is a tremendous power for overcoming tamas and physical inertia. Besides **it is upon this that all the fighting capacities of armies in the wars are founded. If human beings did not have this, well, one could never make them go to fight one another, stupidly, for things which they don't even know. And it is because this is there in the being that these great masses of men can be utilised, employed and put in motion.**

There were examples of this, absolutely marvellous ones, in the First World War, which was much harder for the individual than the Second. It was a terrible war because men had dug trenches and were obliged to lie sunk in the earth like worms, under the perpetual danger of a

bombardment against which they could do nothing but protect themselves as well as possible; and they remained at times shut in there for days. Sometimes it happened that they were shut in for more than fifteen days in one trench, for there was no means of changing them; that is, it was a mole's life under a perpetual danger, and with nothing to do about it. Of all things it was the most horrible. It was a horrible war. Well, there were troops which had been left like that, for nothing more could be done because of the bombardments and all that, they could not be relieved any more. It was called "relieving", relieving the troops, bringing new troops and taking away the others to give them rest. There were some who remained in this way for days. There were some who remained ten days, twelve days. There was cause enough to go mad, for anyone at all. Well, among these people there were some who related their life, related what happened.

I have read books about this, not novels, reports noted from day to day of what was happening. There is one – by the way it is a great writer who wrote his memories of the War, and he related that they had held on like that under the bombardment for ten days. (Naturally there were many who were finished off there.) And then they were made to come back behind and were replaced by others, new ones arrived, the old ones returned. And naturally when they returned – you see, they had eaten poorly, had slept badly, had lived in dark holes, indeed it was a dreadful life – when they had come back, some of them could not even take off their shoes any more because the feet were so swollen inside that they couldn't pull them off. These are unthinkable physical horrors. Well, these people (you see, at that time mechanical

transports were not as common as in this last war), so they came back on foot, like that, broken, half-dead.

They had stuck.

That was one of the most beautiful things in the war from the point of view of courage: because they had held on, the enemy could not take the trenches and was not able to advance. Naturally the news spread and then they came to a village and all the people of the village came out to receive them and lined the road with flowers and shouts of enthusiasm. All those men who could no longer even drag themselves along, you see, who were like this (*gesture of collapse*), suddenly all of them were seen drawing themselves up erect, holding up their heads, filled with energy, and all together they began to sing and went through the whole village singing. It seemed like a resurrection.

Well, it is about this kind of thing I am speaking. **It is something so beautiful, which is in the most material physical consciousness! You see, all of a sudden, they had the feeling that they were heroes, that they had done something heroic, and so they didn't want to look like people completely flattened out, no longer good for anything. "We are ready to go back to the fight if necessary!" Like that. And they went by in this way. It seems it was marvellous; I am sure of it, that it was marvellous.***

Well, that's what you are developing with the March Past now."[17] (27-7-1955)

** In continuation of this talk, while leaving the Playground Mother remarked to Pavitra: "It is the cellular response to the enthusiasm of the vital."*

8. What Happens to Magicians After Their Death?

"I don't know whether they suffer after their death or lose their consciousness, but in any case, obviously they are not in any state of peace or happiness, that's absolutely certain. For it is a kind of absolute rule from the spiritual point of view: it is by an inner discipline and by consecration to the Divine that the powers come to you. **But if with your aspiration, your discipline and consecration, an ambition is mixed up, that is, an intention to obtain powers, then if they come to you it is almost like a curse. Usually they don't come to you, but something vital which tries to imitate them comes to you with adverse influences which put you entirely under the domination of beings who give you powers simply with the intention of making use of you, using you to do all the work they have the intention of doing, and to create all the disorder they want to create. And when they find that you have served them enough and are no longer good for anything, they just destroy you. They may not be able to destroy you physically because they don't always have the power to do it, but they destroy you mentally, vitally and in your consciousness, and after that you are good for nothing, even before dying.** And after death, as you are entirely under their influence, the first thing they do is to swallow you up, because this is their way of making use of people – to swallow them. So it cannot be a very pleasant experience. It is a very, very, very dangerous game.

But everywhere, in all the teachings, in all the disciplines, in all ages, the same thing has been repeated: that one must

never intermingle ambition and personal interest with the sadhana, otherwise he is inviting trouble. So it is not only a particular case, it is all the instances of this kind which have fatal consequences."[18]

9. Occultism and Magic

"…you must not mix up magic with occultism.

Occultism is a science and it is the knowledge of invisible forces and the capacity to handle them, as one has the capacity of handling material forces if one has studied them scientifically.

Magic: these are different kinds of processes which were fixed probably by people who had a certain knowledge, and still more a certain power of vital formation. These things can be learnt without having any special capacity, that is, someone who has no inner power can learn this as he learns chemistry, for example, or mathematics. It is one of the things which are learnt like that, it is not a thing one acquires. So it doesn't itself carry any special virtues except the same kind of qualities as those one learns through chemical manipulations. You may reproduce these manipulations, but if you are an intelligent and capable being, you can by the help of these manipulations obtain an interesting and useful result, and in any case, be sheltered from all danger; whereas if you are an idiot, misfortunes may come to you. It is something similar.

With the help of magical formulas one may produce a certain result, but this result is necessarily limited and has no particular interest for those who, through their inner development, spontaneously receive powers of which they

have a higher knowledge, not a mechanical one. It is not for someone who is truly a yogi; it has no interest except that of curiosity. It is interesting only for people who are precisely not yogis and who want to have certain powers which, in fact, they have in a very limited way – it is always limited.

What is special about it is that it has a direct action upon matter; while usually, apart from some rare exceptions, with people who have spiritual powers, yogic powers, it acts through the intermediary of the mental forces usually – either spiritual or mental forces – sometimes of the vital forces (more rarely), but not directly upon matter, except naturally with those who have done yoga in matter, but these are exceptional cases of which one doesn't speak. These things put into motion certain small entities which are usually the result of the decomposition of human beings and yet have a sufficient contact with the material world to be able to act there. But anyhow, if the action is of a lower order, the power is of a lower order, and it is something almost repugnant for one who is truly in relation with the higher forces.

To act in order to accomplish a work with the spontaneous powers of spiritual realisation, that is well understood. But one may say that everybody does that, because just the fact of thinking means that you are acting invisibly; and according to the power of your thought your action is more or less widespread. But to use small magical formulas to obtain a result is something that has no true relation with the spiritual life. From the spiritual point of view it appears even surprising that these things can always prove effective, because for each case the need is different;

and how putting together certain words and making certain signs can always have an effect seems surprising.

When one wants to act spiritually and for some reason or other it is necessary, for example, to formulate words, the words come spontaneously and are exactly the words needed for the particular occasion. But things written beforehand which one repeats mechanically most of the time, without even knowing what one is saying and why one is saying it – it is difficult to see how this can always work. There is bound to be a great imprecision in the action. And one thing is certain, that this same formula cannot have exactly the same effect, and that **one factor is indispensable for it to take effect: fear. The first thing is a kind of fear, a fright created in the person against whom the magic is done; for if he has no fear I am quite sure that it cannot have any effect or has so ridiculously small an effect that it's not worth speaking about it.**

What opens the door to the action of these forces is fear, a kind of apprehension, the feeling that something is going to happen; and it is these vibrations of fear which put out certain forces from you, forces which give these entities the power to act."[19] (3-8-1955)

10. How to Enter into Contact with One's Psychic Being

"…when one goes on the discovery of one's inner being, of all the different parts of one's being, one very often has the feeling that one is entering deep into a hall or room, and according to the colour, the atmosphere, the things it contains, one has a very clear perception of the

part of the being one is visiting. And then, one can go from one room to another, open doors and go into deeper and deeper rooms each of which has its own character. And often, these inner visits can be made during the night. Then it takes a still more concrete form, like a dream, and one feels that he is entering a house, and that this house is very familiar to him. And according to the time, the periods, it is internally different, and sometimes it may be in a state of very great disorder, very great confusion, where everything is mixed up; sometimes there are even broken things; it is quite a chaos. At other times these things are organised, put in their place; it is as though one had arranged the household, one cleans up, puts it in order, and it is always the same house. This house is the image, a kind of objective image, of your inner being. And in accordance with what you see there or do there, you have a symbolic representation of your psychological work. It is very useful for concretising. It depends on people.

Some people are just intellectuals; for them everything is expressed by ideas and not by images. But if they were to go down into a more material domain, well, they risk not touching things in their concrete reality and remaining only in the domain of ideas, remaining in the mind and remaining there indefinitely. Then one thinks one is making progress, and mentally one has done so, though it is something altogether indefinite. **The mind's progress may take thousands of years, for it is a very vast and very indefinite field, which is constantly renewed. But if one wants to progress in the vital and physical, well, this imaged representation becomes very useful for fixing the action, making it more concrete.** Naturally it doesn't

happen completely at will; it depends on each one's nature. But those who have the power of concentrating with images, well, they have one more facility.

To sit in meditation before a closed door, as though it were a heavy door of bronze – and one sits in front of it with the will that it may open – and to pass to the other side; and so the whole concentration, the whole aspiration is gathered into a beam and pushes, pushes, pushes against this door, and pushes more and more with an increasing energy until all of a sudden it bursts open and one enters. It makes a very powerful impression. And so one is as though plunged into the light and then one has the full enjoyment of a sudden and radical change of consciousness, with an illumination that captures one entirely, and the feeling that one is becoming another person. And this is a very concrete and very powerful way of entering into contact with one's psychic being."[20] (17-8-1955)

11. The Master Principle of All Working

"…There are all kinds of different and even opposite theories. Some people say, "Children must be left to have their own experience because it is through experience that they learn things best." Like that, as an idea, it is excellent; in practice it obviously requires some reservations, because if you let a child walk on the edge of a wall and he falls and breaks a leg or his head, the experience is a little hard; or if you let him play with a match-box and he burns out his eyes, you understand, it is paying very dearly for a little knowledge! I have discussed this with... I don't remember now who it was... an educationist, a man concerned with

education, who had come from England, and had his ideas about the necessity of an absolute liberty. I made this remark to him; then he said, "But for the love of liberty one can sacrifice the life of many people." It is one opinion. (*Mother laughs*)

At the same time, the opposite excess of being there all the time and preventing a child from making his experiment, by telling him, "Don't do this, this will happen", "Don't do that, that will happen" – then finally he will be all shrunk up into himself, and will have neither courage nor boldness in life, and this too is very bad.

In fact it comes to this:

One must never make rules.

Every minute one must endeavour to apply the highest truth one can perceive. It is much more difficult, but it's the only solution.

Whatever you may do, don't make rules beforehand, because once you have made a rule you follow it more or less blindly, and then you are sure, ninety-nine and a half times out of a hundred, to be mistaken.

There is only one way of acting truly, it is to try at each moment, each second, in each movement to express only the highest truth one can perceive, and at the same time know that this perception has to be progressive and that what seems to you the most true now will no longer be so tomorrow, and that a higher truth will have to be expressed more and more through you. This leaves no room any longer for sleeping in a

comfortable tamas; one must be always awake – I am not speaking of physical sleep – one must be always awake, always conscious and always full of an enlightened receptivity and of goodwill. To want always the best, always the best, always the best and never tell oneself, "Oh! It is tiring! Let me rest, let me relax! Ah, I am going to stop making an effort"; then one is sure to fall into a hole immediately and make a big stupid blunder!"[21] (31-8-1955)

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III. Questions and Answers, Sep – Oct 1955

1. The Teaching of the Rishis and the Ascetic Spirituality

"If we go back to the teaching of the Rishis, for example, there was no idea of flight out of the world; for them the realisation had to be terrestrial. They conceived a Golden Age very well, in which the realisation would be terrestrial. But starting from a certain decline of vitality in the spiritual life of the country, perhaps, from a different orientation which came in, you see... it is certainly starting from the teaching of the Buddha that this idea of flight came, which has undermined the vitality of the country, because one had to make an effort to cut oneself off from life. The outer reality became an illusory falsehood, and one had no longer to have anything to do with it. So naturally one was cut off from the universal energy, and the vitality went on diminishing, and with this vitality all the possibilities of realisation also diminished.

But it is very remarkable... I have met many people who were trying this method of detachment and separation from life, and living exclusively in the inner reality. These people, almost all of them, had in the outer life absolutely gross defects. When they returned to the ordinary consciousness, they were very much lower than one of the élite, for instance, a man of great culture and great intellectual and moral development. These people in their ordinary conduct, when they came out of their meditation, their exclusive concentration, lived very grossly. They had very, very ordinary defects, you see. I knew many of this

kind. Or perhaps they had come to a stage where their outer life was a sort of dream in which they were, so to say, not existing. But one had altogether the impression of beings who were completely incomplete, totally incomplete, that is, outwardly there was nothing at all.

But if in the outer consciousness one is very low, how can one meditate? It becomes very difficult, doesn't it?

Yes, very difficult!

Then how do these people succeed?

But they came out of it completely, they left it as one takes off a cloak, then they put it aside and entered another part of their being. And this is what happened exactly, it was as though they took away this consciousness, laid it aside and entered another part of their being. And in their meditation, as long as they remained there, it was very good. But these people, most of them, when in that state, were in a kind of samadhi, and they could not even speak; and so when they came back and returned to the ordinary consciousness, it was just where it was before, completely unchanged; there was no contact.

You see, what makes the thing difficult for you to understand is that you *don't know* concretely, practically, that there are... different planes of your being, as of all beings, which may not have any contact among themselves, and that one may very well pass from one plane to another, and live in a certain consciousness, leaving the other absolutely asleep. And moreover, even in activity, at different times different states of being enter into activity, and unless one takes the greatest care to unify them, put them all in harmony, one of

them may pull from one side, another from the other, and a third pull from the third, and all of them be absolutely in contradiction with one another.

There are people who in a certain state of being are constructive, for example, and capable of organising their life and doing very useful work, and in another part of their being they are absolutely destructive and constantly demolish what the other has constructed. I knew quite a number of people of this kind who, apparently had a rather incoherent life, but it was because the two parts of the being, instead of completing each other and harmonising in a synthesis, were separated and in opposition, and one undid what the other did, and all the time they passed like this from one to the other. They had a disorganised life. And there are more people of this kind than one would think!

There are very outstanding examples, striking ones, so clear and distinct they are; but less totally opposed conditions, though all the same in opposition to one another, occur very, very often. Besides, one has oneself the experience, when one has tried to make progress; there is one part of the being which participates in the effort and makes progress, and suddenly, without rhyme or reason, all the effort one has made, all the consciousness one has gained, capsizes in something which is quite different, opposed, over which one has no control.

Some people can make an effort the whole day through, succeed in building something within themselves; they go to sleep at night and the next morning all that they had done on the previous day is lost, they have lost it in a state of unconsciousness. This happens very often, these are not

exceptional cases, far from it. And this is what explains, you see, why some people – when they withdraw into their higher mind for instance – can enter into very deep meditation and be liberated from the things of this world, and then when they return to their ordinary physical consciousness, are absolutely ordinary if not even vulgar, because they haven't taken care to establish any contact, and to see that what is above acts and transforms what is below."[22]

2. A Great Instrument of Perversion – the Cinema

"…Well, I think some things have been great instruments of perversion, and among these one may put the cinema. It could have been, and I hope it will become, an instrument of education and development; but for the moment it has been an instrument of perversion, and of a truly hideous perversion: perversion of taste, perversion of consciousness, and everything with a terrible moral and physical ugliness. Yet it is something which can be used for education, progress, culture and artistic development; and from this point of view it could be a means of spreading beauty and culture much more widely and making them much more accessible to all, than the former methods could do. **But it is always like this – for what can be better, if it is not better, it becomes worse. And as I said at the beginning, we are in a period of excesses – excess in every way – a thing tries excessively to perfect itself and falls into excesses of perversion which, relatively, are as great if not greater.** And if one looks attentively at oneself, one becomes aware that naturally, as one lives in the world as it is at present, one shares in its vulgarity, and that unless one observes oneself closely and constantly puts

the light of one's highest consciousness upon oneself, one risks making mistakes in taste, from the spiritual point of view, rather frequently."[23] (7-9-1955)

3. Politicians, Politics and the Field of Finance

"**…usually they cover all their misdeeds with beautiful words, but the misdeeds are there all the same. The world is organised in such a way that one can't be otherwise. If one were a man who did not accept any kind of compromise, one could not remain in politics; one would quite simply be pushed out by the very force of things.** There will be a time when all this will change, but not yet. Politics is perhaps the last thing which will change. There are many others which must change before. It is certainly one of the most recalcitrant things.

There are two things which it is very difficult to change: finance and politics; the field of money and the field of government are the two points where man is weakest and most attached to falsehood. So, probably, transformation will come there last of all. One can hope for a social transformation, an economic transformation, a transformation of education; one can hope for all this long before the transformation of politics and of finance. I wrote this precisely to show people what the real state of the world is, and to give an indication of the way to get out of it. But when we are at the point of coming out, you will see that it is not so easy. Perhaps the first thing that will be transformed will be the scientific world, it is possible; because there a very great sincerity is required and a very persevering effort, and these already are qualities which open for you the door to a higher life."[24] (14-9-1955)

4. The Commercial Mentality Should be Driven out from the World

"The latest scientific discoveries, applied to life, have put within the reach of everyone all kinds of things which formerly were reserved only for the intellectual and artistic élite; and **to justify their effort and profit by their work, they have made things which can sell most, that is, the lowest, most ordinary, most vulgar things, the easiest to understand because they require no effort and no education. And the whole world is drowned under these things, to such an extent that when there's someone who has written a good book or a fine play, there is no longer any place for him anywhere, because the whole place has been taken up by these things.**

Naturally there are sensible people who try to react; but it is very difficult. **First of all the commercial mentality should be driven out from the world.** This will take some time. There are a few signs that it is perhaps less respected than before. There was a time when, you see, one was considered a criminal if he didn't know how to do business, and he who had the audacity to spend his capital, even for very good things, was fit to be sent to a madhouse. It is a little better now, but still we are quite far from the real situation; there is yet the golden calf, there, reigning over the world; before it is pulled down some time will yet go by, I am afraid. This has so perverted men's mind, that it is for them the criterion. You see, in America when someone is spoken about, it is said: "He, oh, he is worth a million dollars!" This indeed is the greatest compliment one can pay. And it is this: someone asks, "Do you know this person?

What is he worth?" – "He is worth a hundred thousand dollars", "He is worth five hundred dollars." So this means that he has a position which brings him this. "Is he intelligent, is he stupid? Is he..." This is not at all important. "Is he a good man or a bad one?" That makes no difference at all! "Is he a rich man or a poor one?" If he is rich, ah, ah! "I would like to know him very much! If he is poor, I have nothing to do with him." There! **Naturally America is a young country, so its ways are those of a child, but of a fairly ill-bred child. But the older countries have become too old and can no longer react, they shake their heads and wonder if after all this youth is not right. Everything is like that. The world is very ill.**"[25] (21-9-1955)

5. One Who Truly Wants the Divine will have Him

"**…I know by experience that there isn't one being who, were it only once in his life, has had a great urge towards... it doesn't matter what he calls it – let us say the Divine for facility of speech, who is not sure to arrive; even if he turns his back on Him at a certain time, it's of no importance – he is sure to arrive.** He will have to struggle more or less, will have more or less difficulty, but he is sure to succeed one day. It's a soul that has been chosen, it has become conscious because its hour has come – once the hour has come, well, the result will follow more or less quickly. You can do this in a few months; you can do it in some years; you can do it in some lives – but you will do it.

And what is remarkable is that this freedom of choice is left to you and that, if you decide within yourself that you will do it in this lifetime, you will do it. And I am not speaking here of a permanent and continuous decision because then

you can arrive in twelve months. No, I mean: if you have suddenly been seized by this, "I want this", even once, in a flash, the seal is put, there, like that.

There we are.

That's not a reason for wasting time on the way; that's not a reason for just following all the meanderings of the labyrinth and arriving with... with considerable rubbish when you are at the end. No. But, in any case it is a reason for never despairing, whatever the difficulties may be.

I am of the opinion that when there is something to do, it is better to do it as quickly as possible. But still, there are people who like to waste their time. Perhaps they need to turn and turn and turn and return and make lots of windings before reaching the place they have to. But that's a question of choice. Unfortunately, those who are in this habit of turning and returning and turning aside and making all kinds of useless meanderings, are the ones who complain most; they moan, and they are the workers of their own misery!

If one decided to go quite straight upon his path, whatever the cost – knowing how to bear a few difficulties, facing discomforts, without weakness, you see – well, one would avoid much trouble. But some people go only if they are taken by the scruff of the neck and dragged with a terrible force. Then they shout that they are violently forced.

However, it's they who wanted it."[26] (19-10-1955)

6. The Higher Regions – Origins of Music, Painting and Ideas

"There certainly is a sound in all the manifested worlds, and when one has the appropriate organs one hears it.

There are sounds which belong to the highest regions, and in fact, the sound we have here gives the feeling of a noise in comparison with that sound.

For example, there are regions harmonious and musical in which one hears something which is the origin of the music we have here – but the sounds of material, physical music seem absolutely barbaric in comparison with that music! When one has heard that, even the most perfect instrument is inadequate. All constructed instruments, among which the violin certainly has the purest sound, are very much inferior in their expression to the music of this world of harmonies.

The human voice when absolutely pure is of all instruments the one which expresses it best; but it is still... it has a sound which seems so harsh, so gross compared with that. **When one has been in that region, one truly knows what music is. And it has so perfect a clarity that at the same time as the sound one has the full understanding of what is said. That is, one has the principle of the idea, without words, simply with the sound and all the inflexions of the... one can't call it sensations, nor feelings... what seems to be closest would be some kind of soul-states or states of consciousness. All these inflexions are clearly perceptible through the nuances of the sound.** And certainly, those who were great musicians, geniuses from the point of view of music, must have been more or less consciously in contact with that. The physical world as we have it today is an absolutely gross world; it looks like a caricature.

It's the same thing with painting: all the pictures we

know today look like daubings when one has seen the domain of form and colour, the source of the things expressed through the painting.

And fundamentally it is the same thing from the point of view of ideas. If one enters into contact with the domain of pure ideas beyond words, all words are such limitations, restrictions... it becomes a kind of caricature. **The intensity of life contained in the idea is untranslatable.** One can receive it if one is capable of entering consciously this domain. One can transmit it to a certain extent if one is master of its vibrations and can let them pass and emanate from him. But all that one says or all that one writes is truly a caricature."[27] (26-10-1955)

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IV. Questions and Answers, Nov – Dec 1955

1. The Vedic Rishis were Involutionary Beings

"Mother, were the Vedic Rishis men who had evolved to that state or were they special manifestations?

What do you mean? Whether they were evolutionary beings or involutionary beings?

They were probably... no... they were surely involutionary beings. But the body was the result of evolution.

But it is absolutely certain that they were involutionary beings, that is, beings who had come down from higher regions and used these bodies, who had identified themselves with these bodies.

This is it, what I said the other day, you know, that what has changed the course of terrestrial and human development totally is bodies becoming perfected enough to be able to serve as instruments for beings of higher regions who have come to incarnate in them in order to use them. And it seems obvious that the Rishis were of these – if not all at least those who were the leaders, those who were at the head. But very probably they formed a group which must have had its own realisation, very independent of the surroundings. They lived, besides, quite isolated, if what is reported is correct."[28] (2-11-1955)

2. The Source of Our Sense of Personal Effort and Aspiration

"Mother, I don't understand 'Our sense of personal effort

and aspiration comes from the attempt of the egoistic mind to identify itself in a wrong and imperfect way with the workings of the divine Force.'

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

The idea, Mother.

It can be put in very familiar terms.

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

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

And this is what Sri Aurobindo means – that the mind is something so egoistic and so proud that if you take away from it the satisfaction it seeks, it no longer collaborates; nor the vital either. And as the physical is very obedient to

the vital and the mind, it too collaborates no longer. Then one is before an inert mass which says, 'Good, if it isn't I, well, let the Divine do what He likes, I am not going to do anything at all any more.'

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

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

Mother, at times one spontaneously feels an aspiration: and at other moments when one wants to aspire it is no longer spontaneous. Then what is the difference, does the Divine aspire?...

Sri Aurobindo answers this. He describes it extremely well.

For all this darkness, all this inconscience, all this ignorance is not at all something personal. It is the condition of the world, the state of matter, the state of physical life. And it enters you, makes you act; it's like something pulling the strings of the puppet. All these desires, all these impulses, all these currents of force are things which pass through you, which you obey without even being aware of it, and which you take for yourself. And there is no yourself in this affair. It comes from everywhere and goes everywhere. You are a public square: things enter, go out, make you move.

Mother, why does one have a particular defect and not other defects?

This is the work of Nature.

Why are there some plants of one kind and others of another, some animals of one sort and others of another? There are no two exactly alike combinations in the universe. All the combinations are different. There are no two movements exactly similar in the universe. There is nothing which is reproduced exactly. There are analogies, there are similarities, there are families – there are families of movements which may be called families of vibrations – but there are no two identical things; neither in time nor in space. Nothing is repeated. Otherwise there would be no manifestation, there would be only one single thing.

Manifestation is simply diversity. It is the One deploying Himself in the innumerable, indefinitely."[29]

3. The Role and the Necessity of Ego and Adverse Forces

"…The purpose of existence of the ego is the formation of the individual. When the individual is ready

the ego can disappear. But before that it does not disappear because it has still some work to do.

When the world is ready to receive the new creation, the adverse forces will disappear. But so long as the world needs to be tempted, kneaded, churned in order to be prepared, the adverse forces will be there to be the temptation and that which strikes you, pushes you, prevents you from sleeping, compels you to be absolutely sincere.

A being that is absolutely sincere becomes the master of the adverse forces. But so long as there is egoism in a being or pride or ill-will, it will always be the object of temptation, of attack; and it will always be fully subject to this constant conflict with what, under the appearance of hostile beings, toils in spite of itself at the divine Work.

The time is not absolutely determined. I have already explained this to you several times. There are many fields of consciousness, zones of consciousness superimposed upon one another; and in each one of these fields of consciousness or action there is a determinism which seems absolute. But the intervention in one field of even the next higher field, like the intervention of the vital in the physical, introduces the determinism of the vital in that of the physical, and necessarily transforms the determinism of the physical. And if through aspiration, the inner will, self-giving and true surrender one can enter into contact with the higher regions or even the supreme region, from up there the supreme determinism will come down and transform all the intermediate determinisms and it will be able to bring about in a so-to-say almost inexistent span of time what would have otherwise taken either years or lives to be

accomplished. But this is the only way.

If at the time of some event or circumstance – take for instance, to simplify things, of a danger – if at that time instead of trying to struggle in the domain where one is, one can traverse in a great soaring all the domains which are rungs in the consciousness, and go to the supreme region, what Sri Aurobindo calls the Transcendent, if one can enter into contact with this Transcendent, in a state of perfect surrender, it is He who will act and change everything, in all circumstances – to the extent that this will be what people call miracles, because they do not understand how it can happen.

The sole secret is to know how to climb up right to the top."[30] (9-11-1955)

4. All Forces of Nature are Personal

"…All forces are personal; all things in Nature are personal. But if we consider them as impersonal things, our relation with them is impersonal.

Take for instance what has just happened. If you are a meteorologist and have calculated all the wind-currents and all that, and say, "Given that this has happened, that will happen, and there will be so many days of rain, and all that." So this is a force for you, which we are compelled to call a force of Nature, and you can do nothing about it except look on quietly and wait for the number of days to pass. But if it happens that you have this personal relation with the little conscious entities which are behind the wind, behind the storm, behind the rain, the thunder, behind all these so-called forces of Nature, which are forces and personal forces,

if you have a personal relation with them and can create a kind of friendship through this relation, instead of considering them as enemies and inexorable mechanisms which you have to put up with without being able to do anything, perhaps you could manage to establish a slightly more friendly relation and have an influence over them and ask them: 'Why do you feel like blowing and making the rain fall, why don't you do it elsewhere?'

And with my own eyes I have seen... I have seen this here, seen it in France, seen it in Algeria... the rain falling at a particular, altogether fixed place, and it was exactly a place where it absolutely needed to rain, because it was dry and there was a field which needed watering, and at another place there was... at a distance from here to the end of the hall, at the other place there was a small sunlit spot, everything was dry, because to have the sun there was necessary. Naturally, if you seek the scientific point of view, they will explain this to you very scientifically. But I indeed have seen it as the result of an intervention... someone who knew how to ask it and obtained it."[31] (30-11-1955)

5. The Three Stages of Yoga and Three Victories

"…the first victory is to create an individuality. And then later, the second victory is to give this individuality to the Divine. And the third victory is that the Divine changes your individuality into a divine being.

There are three stages: the first is to become an individual; the second is to consecrate the individual, that he may surrender entirely to the Divine and be identified with Him; and the third is that the Divine takes

possession of this individual and changes him into a being in His own image, that is, he too becomes divine.

Generally, all the yogas stopped at the second. When one had succeeded in surrendering the individual and giving him without reserve to the Divine to be identified with Him, one considered that his work was finished, that all was accomplished.

But *we* begin there, and we say, "No, this is only a beginning. We want this Divine with whom we are identified to enter our individuality and make it into a divine personality acting in a divine world." And this is what we call transformation. But the other precedes it, must precede it. If that is not done, there is no possibility of doing the third. One can't go from the first to the third; one must pass through the second.

Mother, the third depends entirely on the Divine, whether He wills to take possession or not.

In fact everything depends entirely on the Divine. It is only the consciousness you have of it which is different. So in the third stage, obviously, one becomes conscious that it is the Divine who does everything; so it depends entirely on the Divine.

When you say this, the part of your consciousness which is still convinced of its separation and its own existence is looking at the other and saying, "Ah, good! Now I shall no longer have to do anything." But if it no longer exists, if it becomes conscious that it is the Divine, then it can't have this impression. It does the work, continues to do it, but with the true consciousness, instead of having the distorted consciousness."[32] (14-12-1955)

6. The Individual and the Collective Yoga – the Story of the Ashram's Growth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So in addition to your own personal difficulty you have all the frictions, all the contacts, all the reactions, all the things which come from outside. As a test. Exactly on the weak point, the thing that's most difficult to solve; it is there that you will hear from someone the phrase which was just the

one you did not want to hear; someone will make towards you that gesture which was exactly the one which could shock you; you find yourself facing a circumstance, a movement, a fact, an object, anything at all – just the things which... "Ah, how I should have liked this not to happen!" And it's that which will happen. And more and more. Because you do not do your yoga for yourself alone. You do the yoga for everybody – without wanting to – automatically.

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

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

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

But all those who are quite small, the younger they are,

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

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

at a single go, without needing to receive all the blows from outside in order to know that *this* is the true thing.

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

There we are."[33] (21-12-1955)

7. The Two Most Powerful Levers for Entering into Contact with the Divine

"…there are certain things which suddenly push you, lift you above yourself, open a kind of door upon something greater. It can be many things; and it depends upon each one's nature. It's the part of the being which enthuses over something; it is this capacity for enthusiasm.

There are two principal things. This, the capacity for enthusiasm which makes one come out of his greater or lesser inertia in order to throw himself more or less totally into the thing which rouses him. As for instance, the artist for his art, the scientist for his science. And in general, every person who creates or builds has an opening, the opening of a special faculty, a special possibility, creating an enthusiasm in him. When this is active, something in the being awakens, and there is a participation of almost the whole being in the thing done.

There is this. **And then there are those who have an innate faculty of gratitude,** those who have an ardent need to respond, respond with warmth, devotion, joy, to something which they feel like a marvel hidden behind the whole of life, behind the tiniest little element, the least little

event of life, who feel this sovereign beauty or infinite Grace which is behind all things.

I knew people who had no knowledge, so to say, of anything, who were hardly educated, whose minds were altogether of the ordinary kind, and who had in them this capacity of gratitude, of warmth, which gives itself, understands and is thankful.

Well, for them, the contact with the psychic was very frequent, almost constant and, to the extent that they were capable of it, conscious – not very conscious but a little – in the sense that they felt that they were carried, helped, uplifted above themselves.

These two things prepare people the most. They are born with one or the other; and if they take the trouble, it develops gradually, it increases.

We say: the capacity for enthusiasm, something which throws you out of your miserable and mean little ego; and the generous gratitude, the generosity of the gratitude which also flings itself in thanksgiving out of the little ego. These are the two most powerful levers to enter into contact with the Divine in one's psychic being. This serves as a link with the psychic being – the surest link."[34]

8. Something Aspires for the Divine Even in the Most Nasty People

"…even in the Asuras, even in the Adversaries, even in the monsters, there is something.

There is always a corner, a kind of rift, a sensitive point,

which is usually called a weakness. But this actually is the strength of the being, the point by which it can be touched.

For even in the most obscure and misled beings, even in those whose conscious will is to fight against the Divine, in spite of themselves, in spite of everything, their origin is divine. And they work in vain, try in vain to cut themselves off from their origin; they cannot do it. Deliberately, consciously, they try all they can; but they know very well they cannot do it. Even the most monstrous being there is always a means to touch.

The Divine, the Divine's action in the world, always acts as a limit to the excess of evil, and at the same time gives an unlimited power to the good. And it is this unlimited power of the good which, externally, in the manifestation, serves as a limit to the spreading of evil.

Naturally, to the very limited vision of human beings it seems sometimes that evil has no limits and that it goes to its extreme. But this extreme itself is a limit. There is always a halt, because there is a point where the Divine rises up and says, "You won't go any farther." Whether it be the great destructions of Nature or men's monstrosities, there is *always* a moment when the Divine intervenes and prevents things from going farther."[35] (28-12-1955)

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V. Questions and Answers, Jan – Feb 1956

1. Sincerity Automatically Brings Will Power

"…One tells oneself, "Oh! I can't." It is not true, if one wanted, one could.

And there are people who tell me, "I don't have the willpower." That means you are not sincere. For **sincerity is an infinitely more powerful force than all the wills in the world.** It can change anything whatever in the twinkling of an eye; it takes hold of it, grips it, pulls it out – and then it's over.

But you close your eyes, you find excuses for yourself."[36]

2. A Definition of Youth

"The definition of youth: we can say that youth is constant growth and perpetual progress – and the growth of capacities, possibilities, of the field of action and range of consciousness, and progress in the working out of details.

Naturally, someone told me, "So one is no longer young when one stops growing?" I said, 'Of course, I don't imagine that one grows perpetually! But one can grow in another way than purely physically.'"[37] (11-1-1956)

3. Cheerfulness – a Great Help in Resisting the Attacks of Adverse Forces

"**Generally, all progress made on one side is set off by an attack of the adverse forces on the other. So, the more you advance, the more vigilant must you**

become. And the most essential quality is perseverance, endurance, and a... what shall I call it? – a kind of inner good humour which helps you not to get discouraged, not to become sad, and to face all difficulties with a smile. There is an English word which expresses this very well – cheerfulness. If you can keep this within you, you fight much better, resist much better, in the light, these bad influences which try to hinder you from progressing."[38] (18-1-1956)

4. What do You Mean by a "Divine Way of Life"?*

"**We always call "Divine" all that we are not but wish to be.** All that seems to us infinitely superior, not only to all that we have done, but to all that we feel we can do; all that surpasses both our conception and our present possibilities, we call "Divine".

I say this, not as a joke, but because I am quite convinced that if we go back some thousands of years, when men spoke of the Divine – if ever they did speak of the Divine, as I believe – they spoke perhaps of a state like that of the godheads of the Overmind; and now this mode of being of the Overmind godheads who, obviously, have governed the earth and formed many things on earth for a very long time, seems to us far inferior to what we conceive the Supermind to be. And **this Supermind, which is, precisely, what we now call the Divine and try to bring down on earth, will probably strike us in the same way a few thousand or million years hence as the Overmind does today.**

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

And I am sure that in the manifestation, that is, in His self-expression, the Divine is progressive. Outside the manifestation He is something we cannot conceive; but as soon as He manifests in this kind of perpetual becoming, well, He manifests more and more of Himself, as though He were reserving for the end the most beautiful things in His Being.

As the world progresses, what He expresses in the world becomes what we might call more and more divine.

So Sri Aurobindo has used the word Supermind to explain to those who are in the outer and evolutionary consciousness and who have some idea of the way in which the earth has developed – to explain to them that this something which is going to be beyond all this, and superior to human creation, to man, whom he always calls the mental being – this something which is going to come will be greater and better than man; and so he calls it supramental in order to make himself understood. But we could just as well say that it is something more divine than what has been manifested before.

And this he himself says, in what I read today, that it is infinite, that it has no limits.* That is to say, **there will always be a growing perfection; and what now seems to us imperfect must have been the perfection for which certain ages in earth's history aspired.**

There is no reason why this should stop. If it stopped, it would be finished. It would be a new Pralaya."[39]

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* *"In a certain sense it may be an error to speak of a goal anywhere in a progression which may well be infinite."*

Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 83

5. The Divine Self-discovery and the Special Significance of the Earth in the Universe

"The divine discovery is the discovery of the Divine in oneself. So man, that is, the mental being – for what we call man is a physical body with a mental being within, a mental being manifested in a body, a physical body – so the mental being has incarnated and become man in order to find within himself the divine Being, the divine Presence.

Why? Are you asking why? It's a funny way of going about it! (*Laughter*)

I don't know if he is going to explain it here, I don't remember now, but one thing is certain, that this marvellous thing, the divine Presence in Matter, which is at the origin of the formation of the psychic being, belongs in its own right to life on earth.

So – we have already said this many times, I believe – our earth which from the astronomical point of view seems to be only a small insignificant planet in the midst of all the stars and all the worlds, our earth has been formed to become the symbol of the universe and the point of concentration for the work of transformation, of divine transmutation.

And because of that, in this Matter which was perhaps the most obscure and most inconscient of all the Matter of the universes, there plunged and incarnated directly the Divine Consciousness, from the supreme Origin right into the obscurest Matter, without going through any intermediate stages, *directly*. Consequently, the two extremes touch, the Supreme and the most inconscient, and the universal circle closes. And **so earthly life is the easiest**

means, one might say, or the most rapid, of becoming conscious of the Divine.

And it is so true that even the great cosmic Individualities, when they want to be converted or to unite with the Origin, take a physical body for that, because it is more convenient for them, for it can be done faster and better than if they had to progress through all the states of being, from any one of the states of being in the universe to the supreme Origin.

It is easier to come down into a human body and find the divine Presence there, it is quicker. Imagine the serpent biting its tail, it makes a circle, doesn't it? So, if something wants to be united with the Divine, it is easier to enter the tail than to go the whole round of the body! As the head bites the tail, well, if you enter the tail you are immediately in contact with the head, otherwise you have to go all the way round to reach the head."[40]

6. The Five Psychological Perfections

"…the first among them all is sincerity. For if there is no sincerity, one cannot advance even by half a step. So that is the first, and it is always there.

But it is possible to translate it by another word, if you prefer it, which would be "transparency". I shall explain this word:

Someone is in front of me and I am looking at him; I look into his eyes. And if this person is sincere or "transparent", through his eyes I go down and I see his soul – clearly. But – this is precisely the experience – when I look at somebody and see a little cloud, then I continue, I

see a screen, and then sometimes it is a wall, and afterwards it is something quite black; and all this must be crossed, and holes bored in order to go through; and even then I am not sure if at the last minute I may not find myself before a door of bronze so thick that I shall never get through and see his soul; so, of such a person I can immediately say that he is not sincere. But I can also say, figuratively, that he is not transparent. That is the first thing.

There is a second, which is obviously, as indispensable if you want to go forward; it is to have faith. Or another word, which seems more limited but is for me more important, because (it is a question of experience) if your faith is not made of a complete trust in the Divine, well, you may very easily remain under the impression that you have faith and yet be losing all trust in the divine Power or divine Goodness, or the Trust the Divine has in you. These are the three stumbling-blocks:

Those who have what they call an unshakable faith in the Divine, and say, "It is the Divine who is doing everything, who can do everything; all that happens in me, in others, everywhere, is the work of the Divine and the Divine alone", if they follow this with some kind of logic, after some time they will blame the Divine for all the most terrible wrongs which take place in the world and make of Him a real demon, cruel and frightful – if they have no trust.

Or again, they do have faith, but tell themselves, "Well, I have faith in the Divine, but this world, I see quite well what it's like! First of all, I suffer so much, don't I? I am very unhappy, far more unhappy than all my neighbours" – for one is always far more unhappy than all one's neighbours

– 'I am very unhappy and, truly, life is cruel to me. But then the Divine is divine, He is All-Goodness, All-Generosity, All-Harmony, so how is it that I am so unhappy? He must be powerless; otherwise being so good how could He let me suffer so much?'

That is the second stumbling-block.

And the third: there are people who have what may be called a warped and excessive modesty or humility and who tell themselves, 'Surely the Divine has thrown me out, I am good for nothing, He can do nothing with me, the only thing for me is to give up the game, for He finds me unworthy of Him!'

So, unless one adds to faith a total and complete trust in the Divine Grace, there will be difficulties. So both are necessary....

Now, we have put "devotion" in this series. Yes, devotion is all very well, but unless it is accompanied by many other things it too may make many mistakes. It may meet with great difficulties.

You have devotion, and you keep your ego. And then your ego makes **you do all sorts of things out of devotion, things which are terribly egoistic. That is to say, you think only of yourself, not of others, nor of the world, nor of the work, nor of what ought to be done – you think only of your devotion. And you become tremendously egoistic.** And so, when you find out that the Divine, for some reason, does not answer to your devotion with the enthusiasm you expected of Him, you despair and fall back into the same three difficulties I was just speaking about: either the Divine is cruel – we have

read that, there are many such stories, of enthusiastic devotees who abuse the Divine because He is no longer as gentle and near to them as before, He has withdrawn, "Why hast Thou deserted me? Thou hast abandoned me, O monster!..." They don't dare to say this, but think it, or else they say, "Oh! I must have made such a serious mistake that I am thrown out", and they fall into despair.

But there is another movement which should constantly accompany devotion.... That kind of sense of gratitude that the Divine exists; that feeling of a marvelling thankfulness which truly fills you with a sublime joy at the fact that the Divine exists, that there is something in the universe which is the Divine, that it is not just the monstrosity we see, that there is the Divine, the Divine exists. And each time that the least thing puts you either directly or indirectly in contact with this sublime Reality of divine existence, the heart is filled with so intense, so marvellous a joy, such a gratitude as of all things has the most delightful taste.

There is nothing which gives you a joy equal to that of gratitude. One hears a bird sing, sees a lovely flower, looks at a little child, observes an act of generosity, reads a beautiful sentence, looks at the setting sun, no matter what, suddenly this comes upon you, this kind of emotion – indeed so deep, so intense – that the world manifests the Divine, that there is something behind the world which is the Divine.

So I find that devotion without gratitude is quite incomplete, **gratitude must come with devotion.**

I remember that once we spoke of courage as one of the perfections; I remember having written it down once in

a list. But this courage means having a taste for the supreme adventure. And this taste for supreme adventure is aspiration – an aspiration which takes hold of you completely and flings you, without calculation and without reserve and without a possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the divine discovery, the great adventure of the divine meeting, the yet greater adventure of the divine Realisation; you throw yourself into the adventure without looking back and without asking for a single minute, "What's going to happen?" For if you ask what is going to happen, you never start, you always remain stuck there, rooted to the spot, afraid to lose something, to lose your balance.

That's why **I speak of courage – but really it is aspiration. They go together. A real aspiration is something full of courage.**

And now, surrender. In English the word is "surrender", there is no French word which gives exactly that sense. But Sri Aurobindo has said – I think we have read this – that surrender is the first and absolute condition for doing the yoga. So, if we follow what he has said, this is not just one of the necessary qualities: it is the first attitude indispensable for beginning the yoga. If one has not decided to make a total surrender, one cannot begin.

But for this surrender to be total, all these qualities are necessary. And **I add one more – for so far we have only four – I add endurance.** For, if you are not able to face difficulties without getting discouraged and without giving up, because it is too difficult; and if you are incapable... well, of receiving blows and yet continuing, of "pocketing" them, as they say – when you receive blows as a result of your

defects, of putting them in your pocket and continuing to go forward without flagging – you don't go very far; at the first turning where you lose sight of your little habitual life, you fall into despair and give up the game.

The most... how shall I put it? **the most material form of this is perseverance.** Unless you are resolved to begin the same thing over again a thousand times if need be... You know, people come to me in despair, "But I thought it was done and now I must begin again!" And if they are told, "But that's nothing, you will probably have to begin again a hundred times, two hundred times, a thousand times; you take one step forward and think you are secure, but there will always be something to bring back the same difficulty a little farther on. You think you have solved the problem, you must solve it yet once again; it will turn up again looking just a little different, but it will be the same problem", and if you are not determined that: "Even if it comes back a million times, I shall do it a million times, but I shall go through with it", well, you won't be able to do the yoga. This is absolutely indispensable.

People have a beautiful experience and say, "Ah, now this is it!..." And then it settles down, diminishes, gets veiled, and suddenly something quite unexpected, absolutely commonplace and apparently completely uninteresting comes before you and blocks your way. And then you say, "Ah! what's the good of having made this progress if it's going to start all over again? Why should I do it? I made an effort, I succeeded, achieved something, and now it's as if I had done nothing! It's indeed hopeless." For you have no endurance.

If one has endurance, one says, 'It's all right. Good, I shall begin again as often as necessary; a thousand times, ten thousand times, a hundred thousand times if necessary, I shall begin again – but I shall go to the end and nothing will have the power to stop me on the way.'

This is most necessary. Most necessary.

So here's my proposal: we put surrender first, at the top of the list, that is, we accept what Sri Aurobindo has said – that to do the integral yoga one must first resolve to surrender entirely to the Divine, there is no other way, this is *the* way. But after that one must have the five psychological virtues, five psychological perfections, and we say that these perfections are:

Sincerity or Transparency

Faith or Trust (Trust in the Divine, naturally)

Devotion or Gratitude

Courage or Aspiration

Endurance or Perseverance.

One form of endurance is *faithfulness*, faithfulness to one's resolution – being faithful. One has taken a resolution, one is faithful to one's resolution. This is endurance.

There you are.

If one persists, there comes a time when one is victorious. Victory is to the most persistent."[41] (25-1-1956)

7. Identification With the Divine and the Spiritual Hierarchy

"**…what you expect from the Divine is what you**

find in the Divine; what you want from the Divine is what you meet in the Divine. He will have for you the aspect you expect or desire.

And His manifestation is always adapted to each one's receptivity and capacity. They may have a real, essential contact, but this contact is limited by their own capacity for receiving and approach.... It is only if you are able to go out of all limits that you can meet the total Divine as He totally is.

And this capacity for contact is perhaps what constitutes the true hierarchy of beings. For everyone carries within himself the Divine, and therefore everyone has the possibility of uniting with the Divine – that possibility is the same in all. But according to each one's capacity – in fact, according to his position in the divine hierarchy – his approach will be more or less partial or total.

It could be said – although these words deform things a lot – that the quality of the approach is the same in every being, but the quantity, the totality is very different.... It is very difficult to explain in words, but if one may say so, the *point* at which you are identified with the Divine is perfect in itself, that is to say, your identification is perfect in itself, at this point, but the number of points at which you are identified differs immensely.

And this is very marked in the difference between the paths followed to approach the Divine. Usually people set limits; they limit themselves by excluding everything that is not exactly the path they have chosen, for this is much easier and they go much faster – relatively. But if, instead of following *one* road, you go forward in a sort of movement

which could be called spherical, where everything is included, which takes in all the possibilities of approach to the Divine, naturally the result is much more complete – and it is this that Sri Aurobindo calls the integral yoga – but the progress is much more difficult and much slower.

One who chooses the path of knowledge – and even in the path of knowledge a special method, for everyone has his own method – and follows it, eliminating from his consciousness and life all that's not it, advances much more rapidly, for he is in search of only one aspect and this is much more direct, immediate. And so he rejects, rejects, rejects all that is not this, and limits his being just to the path he travels. And the more you want your approach to be integral, naturally the more will it become difficult, complicated, long, laborious.

But he who follows only one path, when he reaches his goal, that is, when he is identified with the Divine, his identification is perfect in itself; that is to say, it is really an identification with the Divine – but it is partial. It is perfect; it is perfect and partial at the same time.

This is very difficult to explain, but it is a fact. He is really identified with the Divine and has found the Divine; he is identified with the Divine – but at one point. And so **he who is able to identify himself in his totality with the Divine is necessarily, from the point of view of the universal realisation, on a much higher level of the hierarchy than one who could realise Him only at a single point.**

And that is the true meaning of the spiritual hierarchy, this is why there is a whole spiritual hierarchical organisation,

otherwise it would have no basis, for from the minute you touch the Divine, you touch Him perfectly: the point at which you touch Him is perfect in itself. And, from this point of view, all who are united with the Divine are equally perfect in their union – but not equally complete, if I may say so."[42] (1-2-1956)

8. The Harm that May Come from Pretension and from Contact with Certain Sanyasins

"**…one must not pretend, one must be; that one must be absolutely sincere and not cover up one's desires with fine theories.**

I have met many people who claimed they had perfect equality of soul and perfect freedom, and hid themselves behind these theories: "All is the divine Will", and who, in fact, in their thought, were substituting their own will for the divine Will, and were very far from realising what they claimed. They were idlers who didn't want to make any effort and preferred keeping their nature as it was, rather than working to transform it. *Voilà* !

Sweet Mother, do these people have powers?

Yes! There are some who have great powers. But **these powers come from the vital and from an association with vital entities.**

There are all kinds of powers. Only, those powers don't hold out before the true divine Power – they can't resist. But over ordinary human beings they have much power.

Then, they can do harm?

Much. **Not only they can, they do it. They do a lot of harm. The number of people who are tormented because they had the misfortune of meeting a so-called sannyasin,* is considerable, considerable.** I am not telling you this to frighten you, because here you are protected, but it is a fact. While receiving initiation these men have received the imposition of a force from the vital world, which is extremely dangerous.... This is not always the case, but most often this is what happens.

Because sincerity is so rare a virtue in the world, one ought to bow down before it with respect when one meets it. Sincerity – what we call sincerity, that is to say, a perfect honesty and transparency: that there may be nowhere in the being anything which pretends, hides or wants to pass itself off for what it is not."[43] (22-2-1956)

9. The Meaning of Sacrifice

"**It is self-giving. It is the word the Gita uses for self-giving.**

Only, the sacrifice is mutual, this is what Sri Aurobindo says at the beginning: the Divine has sacrificed Himself in Matter to awaken consciousness in Matter, which had become inconscient. And it is this sacrifice, this giving of

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** Later the Mother added the following commentary: "Of course, this refers only to those who put on the orange robe with the sole purpose of hiding their egoistic passions behind the veil of a dress which is generally respected. There can be no question about those who have a pure heart and whose dress is simply the outer sign of their integral consecration to the spiritual life."*

the Divine in Matter, that is to say, His dispersion in Matter, which justifies the sacrifice of Matter to the Divine and makes it obligatory; for it is one and the same reciprocal movement. **It is because the Divine has given Himself in Matter and scattered Himself everywhere in Matter to awaken it to the divine consciousness, that Matter is automatically under the obligation to give itself to the Divine. It is a mutual and reciprocal sacrifice.**

And this is the great secret of the Gita: the affirmation of the divine Presence in the very heart of Matter. And that is why, Matter must sacrifice itself to the Divine, automatically, even unconsciously – whether one wants it or not, this is what happens.

Only, **when it is done unconsciously, one doesn't have the joy of sacrifice; while if it is done consciously, one has the joy of sacrifice which is the supreme joy.**

The word "sacrifice" in French has slightly too narrow a sense, which it doesn't have in the original Sanskrit; for in French sacrifice implies a sort of suffering, almost a regret. While in Sanskrit this sense is not there at all; it corresponds to "self-giving"."[44] (29-2-1956)

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