The Real Awakener

Further Lights on the Path

Words of the Mother – 10

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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, Jan. – Feb. 1957

1. Can One Go Out of Time and Space?*

"If one goes out of the manifestation.

It is the fact of objectivisation, of manifestation which has created time and space. To go out of it one must return to the origin, that is, go out of the manifestation. Otherwise from the very first objectivisation time and space were created.

There is a feeling or a perception or an experience of eternity and infinity in which one has the impression of going out of time and space.... It is only an impression.

One must pass beyond all forms, even the most subtle forms of consciousness, far beyond the forms of thought, the forms of consciousness, to be able to have this impression of being outside space and time. This is what generally happens to people who enter into samadhi – the true samadhi – and when they come back to their normal consciousness, they don't remember anything, for, in fact, there was nothing they could remember. This is what Sri Aurobindo says here: If Brahman were only an impersonal abstraction, the one reasonable end would be annihilation. For it is obvious that if one goes out of time and space, all separate existence automatically ceases.

There, now. So one *can*, without much result!"[1]

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

2. It is not a Crucified but a Glorified Body that Will Save the World*

"…this is an attitude which is found everywhere in the world, differently expressed according to the country and the religion, and it was as a reaction against the ignorance of this attitude that I wrote this. Naturally, there is the same idea in India, this idea of the complete renunciation of all physical reality, the profound contempt for the material world which is considered an illusion and a falsehood, that leaves, as Sri Aurobindo used to say, the field free to the sovereign sway of the adverse forces. If you escape from the concrete reality to seek a distant and abstract one, you leave the whole field of concrete realisation at the full disposal of the adverse forces – which have taken hold of it and more or less govern it now – in order to go away yourself to realise what Sri Aurobindo calls here a zero or a void unit – to become the sovereign of a nought. It is the return into Nirvana. This idea is everywhere in the world but expresses itself in different forms.

Because until now evil has been opposed by weakness, by a spiritual force without any power for transformation in the material world, this tremendous effort of goodwill has ended only in deplorable failure and left the world in the same state of misery and corruption and falsehood. **It is on the *same* plane as the one where the adverse forces are ruling that one must have a greater power than theirs, a power which can conquer them totally *in that very domain.*** ¤ To put it otherwise, a spiritual force which

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

would be capable of transforming both the consciousness and the material world. This force is the supramental force. What is necessary is to be receptive to its action on the physical plane, and not to run away into a distant Nirvana leaving the enemy with full power over what one abandons.

It is neither sacrifice nor renunciation nor weakness which can bring the victory. It is only Delight, a delight which is strength, endurance, supreme courage. The delight brought by the supramental force. It is much more difficult than giving everything up and running away, it demands an infinitely greater heroism – but that is the only way to conquer."[2]

3. Delight – the Essential Reality of the Universe

"…The universe is created in Delight and for Delight. But this Delight can exist only in the perfect oneness of the creation with its creator, and Sri Aurobindo describes this oneness as the Possessor – that is, the Creator – the Possessor being possessed by his creation, a sort of reciprocal possession which is the very essence of the Oneness and the source of all delight.

And it is because of division – because the Possessor no longer possesses and because the possessed no longer possesses the Possessor, division is created and the essential Delight is changed into ignorance, and this ignorance is the cause of all suffering. "Ignorance", not in the sense in which it is usually understood, for that is what Sri Aurobindo calls Nescience: that ignorance is a consequence of the other. **True ignorance is ignorance of the oneness, the union, the identity. And that is the cause of all suffering.**

Ever since division began and creation lost its direct contact with the Creator, ignorance has reigned, and all suffering is its result.

All those who have had the inner experience have had this experience, that the moment one re-establishes the union with the divine source, all suffering disappears. But there has been a very persistent movement, about which I spoke to you last week, which put at the source of creation not this essential divine Delight but desire. This delight of creation, self-manifestation, self-expression – there is an entire line of seekers and sages who have considered it not as a delight but as a desire; the whole line of Buddhism is of this kind. And instead of seeing the solution in a Oneness which restores to us the essential Delight of the manifestation and the becoming, they consider that the goal and also the way are a total rejection of all desire to be and a return to annihilation.

This conception amounts to an essential misunderstanding. The methods recommended for self-liberation are methods of development which can be very useful, but **this conception of a world that's essentially bad, for it is the result of desire, and from which one must escape at all costs and as quickly as possible, has been the greatest and most serious distortion of all spiritual life in the history of mankind.**

It might have been useful, perhaps, at a particular time, for everything is useful in the world's history, but this utility has passed, it is outworn, and it is time for this conception to be superseded and for us to return to a more essential and higher Truth, to go back to the Delight of existence, the Joy of union and manifestation of the Divine.

This new orientation – I mean new in its terrestrial realisation – must replace all the former spiritual orientations and open the way to the new realisation which will be a supramental realisation. That is why I told you last week that only Delight, the true divine Delight can bring about the Victory.

Naturally, there must be no confusion about what this Delight is, and that is why from the beginning Sri Aurobindo puts us on our guard, telling us that it is only when one has passed beyond enjoyings that one can enter into Bliss. Bliss is precisely that state which comes from the manifestation of this Delight. But **it is quite the opposite of all that is usually called joy and pleasure, and these must be completely given up in order to have the other.**"[3]

4. This Creation Neither Foreseen Nor Willed

"…in spite of all the spiritual traditions, it is difficult to conceive that this state of division, ignorance and suffering was foreseen at the beginning of creation. In spite of everything, one doesn't like to think that it could have been foreseen. Indeed, I refuse to believe it. I call it an accident – a rather terrible accident, but still, you see, it is especially terrible to the human consciousness; for the universal consciousness, it may only be quite a reparable accident. And after all, when it has been set right, we shall even be able to recall it and say, "Ah! it has given us something we wouldn't have had otherwise." But we must first wait for it to be put right.

Anyway, I don't know if there are people who say that it was foreseen and willed, but I tell you it was neither

foreseen nor willed, and this is precisely why when it happened, quite unexpectedly, immediately something else sprang forth from the Source, which probably would not have manifested if this accident had not taken place. If Delight had remained Delight, conceived as Delight, and everything had come about in Delight and Union instead of in division, there would never have been any need for the divine Consciousness to plunge into the inconscience as Love. So, when one sees this from very far and from high above, one says, "After all, something has perhaps been gained from it." But one must see it from a great distance and a great height to be able to say that. Or rather, when it is left far behind, when one has gone beyond this state, entered into Union and Delight, when division and inconscience and suffering have disappeared, then one may very wisely say, "Ah, yes, we have gained an experience we would never have had otherwise." But the experience must be behind, we must not be right in the midst of it. For, even for someone who – this is something I know – even for someone who has come out of this state, who lives in the consciousness of Oneness, for whom ignorance is something external, no longer something intimate and painful, even for that person it is impossible to look on the suffering of all those who have not come out of it with a smile of indifference. That seems impossible to me. Therefore, it is really necessary that things in the world should change and the acute state of sickness should disappear, so that we can say, "Ah! yes, we have benefited by it." It is true that something has been gained, but it is a very costly gain.

That is why, I believe, because of that, so many initiates and sages have been attracted by the solution of the void, of Nirvana, for this is obviously a very radical way of escaping

from the consequences of an ignorant manifestation.

Only, the solution of changing this manifestation into a true, truly divine reality is a far superior solution. And this is what we want to attempt now, with a certitude of succeeding one day or another, for, in spite of everything, despite everything, what is true is eternally true, and what is true in essence must necessarily become true in the realisation, one day or another. Sri Aurobindo told us that we had taken the first step on the path and that the time had come to accomplish the work, therefore one has only to set out. That's all."[4]

5. In Following a Discipline of Yoga, How to Recognise and Interpret the Guidance Which Comes Through Circumstances or Interaction with Others and Through Experience?

"There are some scrupulous people who set problems to themselves and find it very difficult to solve them, because they state the problem wrongly. I knew a young woman who was a theosophist and was trying to practise; she told me, "We are taught that the divine Will must prevail in all that we do, but in the morning when I have my breakfast, how can I know whether God wants me to put two lumps of sugar in my coffee or only one?"... And it was quite touching, you know, and I had some trouble explaining to her that the spirit in which she drank her coffee, the attitude she had towards her food, was much more important than the number of lumps of sugar she put into it.*

* *About this story, a disciple remembers Mother telling him something to this effect: "Now I would no longer laugh at this poor lady. I am not sure that the Lord does not also attend to the number of lumps of sugar we put in our coffee!"*

It is the same with all the little things one does at every moment. The divine Consciousness does not work in the human way, It does not decide how many lumps of sugar you will put in your coffee. It gradually puts you in the right attitude towards actions, things – an attitude of consecration, suppleness, assent, aspiration, goodwill, plasticity, effort for progress – and this is what counts, much more than the small decision you take at every second. One may try to find out what is the truest thing to do, but it is not by a mental discussion or a mental problem that these things can be resolved. It is in fact by an inner attitude which *creates* an atmosphere of harmony – progressive harmony – in which all one does will necessarily be the best thing that could be done in those particular circumstances. And the ideal would be an attitude complete enough for the action to be spontaneous, dictated by something other than an outer reason. But that is an ideal – for which one must aspire and which one can realise after some time. Till then, to take care always to keep the true attitude, the true aspiration, is much more important than to decide whether one will do gymnastic-marching or not and whether one will go to a certain class or not. Because these things have no real importance in themselves, they have only an altogether relative importance, the only important thing is just to keep the true orientation in one's aspiration and a living will for progress.

As a general rule, and so that the experience may have its full benefit, **when one has undertaken something one must do it with persistence, without caring for obstacles and difficulties, until an absolutely irrefutable event indicates that one no longer has to do it.** This happens

very rarely. Usually, things follow their own curve and when they reach an issue – either they have come to an end or have produced the desired result – one becomes aware of the reason for doing them. But **the obstacles, oppositions – or encouragements – should not be considered as irrefutable signs to be followed, for these things may have very different meanings according to the case, and it is not at all on the basis of these outer events that one must judge the validity of one's undertaking.**

When one is very attentive and very sincere, one can have an indication, an inner but perceptible indication, of the value of what one has undertaken or the action one is doing. Truly, for someone who has an entire goodwill, that is, who in all sincerity, with the whole conscious part of his being, wants to do the right thing in the right way, there is always an indication; if for some reason or other one launches upon a more or less fatal action, one *always* feels an uneasiness in the region of the solar plexus; an uneasiness which is not violent, which doesn't compel recognition dramatically, but is very perceptible to someone who is attentive – something like a sort of regret, like a lack of assent. It may go as far as a kind of refusal to collaborate. But I must stress it, without violence, without brutal self-assertion: it makes no noise, does not hurt, it is at the most a slight uneasiness. And if you disregard it, if you pay no attention, attach no importance to it, after a little while it will completely disappear and there will be nothing any longer.

It is not that it increases with the growing error, on the contrary, it disappears and the consciousness becomes veiled.

Therefore, one cannot give this as a sure sign, for if you

have disobeyed this little indication several times, well, it will no longer come. But I tell you that if in all sincerity you are very attentive to it, then it will be a very sure and precious guide."[5]

6. Pleasure and Pain

"…The very nature of the soul is divine Delight, constant, unvarying, unconditioned, ecstatic; but it is true that if one can face suffering with courage, endurance, an unshakable faith in the divine Grace, if one can, instead of shunning suffering when it comes, enter into it with this will, this aspiration to go through it and find the luminous truth, the unvarying delight which is at the core of all things, **the door of pain is often more direct, more immediate than that of satisfaction or contentment.**

I am not speaking of pleasure because pleasure turns its back constantly and almost completely on this profound divine Delight.

Pleasure is a deceptive and perverse disguise which turns us away from our goal and we certainly should not seek it if we are eager to find the truth. Pleasure vaporises us; it deceives us, leads us astray. Pain brings us back to a deeper truth by obliging us to concentrate in order to be able to bear it, be able to face this thing that crushes us. It is in pain that one most easily finds the true strength again, when one is strong. It is in pain that one most easily finds the true faith again, the faith in something which is above and beyond all pain.

When one enjoys oneself and forgets, when one takes things as they come, tries to avoid being serious and looking life in the face, in a word when one seeks to forget, to forget

that there is a problem to solve, that there is something to find, that we have a reason for existence and living, that we are not here just to pass our time and go away without having learnt or done anything, then one really wastes one's time, one misses the opportunity that has been given to us, this – I cannot say unique, but marvellous opportunity for an existence which is the field of progress, which is the moment in eternity when you can discover the secret of life; for this physical, material existence is a wonderful opportunity, a possibility given to you to find the purpose of life, to make you advance one step towards this deeper truth, to make you discover this secret which puts you into contact with the eternal rapture of the divine life.

(*Silence*)

I have already told you many a time that to seek suffering and pain is a morbid attitude which must be avoided, but to run away from them through forgetfulness, through a superficial, frivolous movement, through diversion, is cowardice. When pain comes, it comes to teach us something. The quicker we learn it, the more the need for pain diminishes, and when we know the secret, it will no longer be possible to suffer, for that secret reveals to us the reason, the cause, the origin of suffering, and the way to pass beyond it.

The secret is to emerge from the ego, get out of its prison, unite ourselves with the Divine, merge into Him, not to allow anything to separate us from Him. Then, once one has discovered this secret and realises it in one's being, pain loses its justification and suffering disappears. It is an

all-powerful remedy, not only in the deeper parts of the being, in the soul, in the spiritual consciousness, but also in life and in the body.

There is no illness, no disorder which can resist the discovery of this secret and the putting of it into practice, not only in the higher parts of the being but in the cells of the body.

If one knows how to teach the cells the splendour that lies within them, if one knows how to make them understand the reality which makes them exist, gives them being, then they too enter the total harmony, and the physical disorder which causes the illness vanishes as do all other disorders of the being.

But for that one must be neither cowardly nor fearful. When the physical disorder comes, one must not be afraid; one must not run away from it, must face it with courage, calmness, confidence, with the certitude that illness is a *falsehood* and that if one turns entirely, in full confidence, with a complete quietude to the divine Grace, It will settle in these cells as It is established in the depths of the being, and the cells themselves will share in the eternal Truth and Delight."[6]

7. The Necessity of Fixed Physical Forms

"If you did not have a body with a precise form, if you were not a formed individuality, fully conscious and having its own qualities, you would all be fused into one another and be indistinguishable. Even if we go only a little inwards, into the most material vital being, there is such a mixture between the vibrations of different people that it is very

difficult to distinguish any of you. And if you did not have a body, it would be a sort of inextricable pulp. Therefore, it is the form, this precise and apparently rigid form of the body, which distinguishes you one from another. So this form serves as a mould. (*Speaking to the child*) Do you know what a mould is? – Yes! One pours something inside, in a liquid or semi-liquid form, and when it cools down one can break the mould and have the object in a precise form. Well, the form of the body serves as a mould in which the vital and mental forces can take a precise form, so that you can become an individual being separate from others.

It is only gradually, very slowly, through the movements of life and a more or less careful and thorough education that you begin to have sensations which are personal to you, feelings and ideas which are personal to you. An individualised mind is something extremely rare, which comes only after a long education; otherwise it is a kind of thought-current passing through your brain and then through another's and then through a multitude of other brains, and all this is in perpetual movement and has no individuality. One thinks what others are thinking, others think what still others are thinking, and everybody thinks like that in a great mixture, because these are currents, vibrations of thought passing from one to another. If you look at yourself attentively, you will very quickly become aware that very few thoughts in you are personal. Where do you draw them from? – From what you have heard, from what you have read, what you have been taught, and how many of these thoughts you have are the result of your own experience, your own reflection, your purely personal observation? – Not many.

Only those who have an intense intellectual life, who are in the habit of reflecting, observing, putting ideas together, gradually form a mental individuality for themselves.

Most people – and not only those who are uneducated but even the well-read – can have the most contradictory, the most opposite ideas in their heads without even being aware of the contradictions. I have seen numerous examples like that, of people who cherished ideas and even had political, social, religious opinions on all the so-called higher fields of human intelligence, who had absolutely contradictory opinions on the same subject, and were not aware of it. And if you observe yourself, you will see that you have many ideas which ought to be linked by a sequence of intermediate ideas which are the result of a considerable widening of the thought if they are not to coexist in an absurd way.

Therefore, before an individuality becomes truly individual and has its own qualities, it must be contained in a vessel, otherwise it would spread out like water and would no longer have any form at all. Some people, at a rather lower level, know themselves only by the name they bear. They would not be able to distinguish themselves from their neighbours except by their name. …"[7]

"Therefore, individuality is not at all the rule, it is an exception, and if you do not have that sort of bag, a particular form which is your outer body and your appearance, you could hardly be distinguished from one another.

Individuality is a conquest. And, as Sri Aurobindo says here, this first conquest is only a first stage, and once you have realised within you something like a personal

independent and conscious being, then what you have to do is to break the form and go farther. For example, if you want to progress mentally, you must break all your mental forms, all your mental constructions to be able to make new ones. So, to begin with, a tremendous labour is required to individualise oneself, and afterwards one must demolish all that has been done in order to progress. But as you do not watch yourself doing things and as it is the custom – not everywhere, of course; let us say here – the custom to work, to read, to develop yourself, to try to do something, to form yourself a little, you do it quite naturally and without even watching yourself, as I said.

And only when these external forms come into a mutual friction you begin to feel that you are different from others. Otherwise you are this person or that, according to the name you bear. It is only when there is a friction, when something does not go smoothly, that you become aware of a difference, then you see that you are different, otherwise you are not aware of it and you are not different. In fact, you are very, very little different from one another.

How many things in your life are done at least essentially in the same way as others. For instance, sleeping, moving and eating, and all sorts of things like that. Never have you asked yourselves why you do a thing in one way and not another. You wouldn't be able to say. If I asked you, "Why do you act in this way and not that?" you wouldn't know what to say. But it is quite simply because you were born in certain conditions and it is the habit to be like that in these conditions. Otherwise, if you had been born in another age and other conditions, you would act altogether differently without even

realising the difference, it would appear absolutely natural to you.... For instance – a very, very small instance – in most Western countries and even in some Eastern ones, people sew like this, from right to left; in Japan they sew from left to right. Well, it seems quite natural to you to sew from right to left, doesn't it? That is how you have been taught and you don't think about it, you sew in that way. If you go to Japan and they see you sewing, it makes them laugh, for they are in the habit of sewing differently. It is the same thing with writing. You write like this, from left to right, but there are people who write from top to bottom, and others who write from right to left, and they do it most naturally. I am not speaking of those who have studied, reflected, compared ways of writing, I am not speaking of more or less learned people, no, I am speaking of quite ordinary people, and above all of children who do what is done around them, quite spontaneously and without questioning. But then, when by chance or circumstance they are faced with a different way, it is a tremendous revelation for them that things can be done in a different way from theirs.

And these are quite simple things, I mean the ones which strike you, but this is true down to the smallest detail. You do things in this way because in the place and environment in which you live they are done in this way. And you do not watch yourself doing them.

Indeed, the source was One, you see, and creation had to be manifold. And it must have represented quite a considerable labour to make this multiplicity conscious of being multiple.

And if one observes very attentively, if creation had

kept the memory of its origin, it would perhaps never have become a diverse multiplicity. There would have been at the centre of each being the sense of perfect unity, and the diversity would – perhaps – never have been expressed.

Through the loss of the memory of this unity began the possibility of becoming conscious of differences; and when one goes into the inconscient, at the other end, one falls back into a sort of unity that's unconscious of itself, in which the diversity is as unexpressed as it is in the origin.

At both ends there is the same absence of diversity. In one case it is through a supreme consciousness of unity, in the other through a perfect unconsciousness of unity.

The fixity of form is the means by which individuality can be formed.

That's all, then."[8]

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II. Questions and Answers, Mar. – Apr. 1957

1. Freedom and Servitude Complementary in their Truth

"At a superficial glance these two things appear absolutely contradictory and incompatible. Outwardly one cannot conceive how one can be at once in freedom and in servitude, but there is an attitude which reconciles the two and makes them one of the happiest states of material existence.

Freedom is a sort of instinctive need, a necessity for the integral development of the being. In its essence it is a perfect realisation of the highest consciousness, it is the expression of Unity and of union with the Divine, it is the very sense of the Origin and the fulfilment. But because this Unity has manifested in the many – in the multiplicity – something had to serve as a link between the Origin and the manifestation, and the most perfect link one can conceive of is love. And what is the first gesture of love? To give oneself, to serve. What is its spontaneous, immediate, inevitable movement? To serve. To serve in a joyous, complete, total self-giving.

So, in their purity, in their truth, these two things – freedom and service – far from being contradictory, are complementary. **It is in perfect union with the supreme Reality that perfect freedom is found, for all ignorance, all unconsciousness is a bondage which makes you inefficient, limited, powerless. The least ignorance in oneself is a limitation, one is no longer free. As long as there is an element of unconsciousness in the being, it**

is a limitation, a bondage. Only in perfect union with the supreme Reality can perfect freedom exist. And how to realise this union if not through a spontaneous self-giving: the gift of love. And as I said, the first gesture, the first expression of love is service.

So the two are closely united in the Truth. But here on earth, in this world of ignorance and inconscience, this service which should have been spontaneous, full of love, the very expression of love, has become something imposed, an inevitable necessity, performed only for the maintenance of life, for the continuation of existence, and thus it has become something ugly, miserable – humiliating. What should have been a flowering, a joy, has become an ugliness, a weariness, a sordid obligation. And this sense, this need for freedom has also been deformed and has become that kind of thirst for independence which leads straight to revolt, to separation, isolation, the very opposite of true freedom.

Independence!... I remember having heard an old occultist and sage give a beautiful reply to someone who said, "I want to be independent! I am an independent being! I exist only when I am independent!" And the other answered him with a smile, "Then that means that nobody will love you, because if someone loves you, you immediately become dependent on this love."

It is a beautiful reply, for it is indeed love which leads to Unity and it is Unity which is the true expression of freedom. And so those who in the name of their right to freedom claim independence, turn their backs completely on this true freedom, for they deny love.

The deformation comes from constraint.

One cannot love through compulsion, you cannot be compelled to love, it is no longer love. Therefore, as soon as compulsion intervenes, it becomes a falsehood. All the movements of the inner being must be spontaneous movements, with that spontaneity which comes from an inner harmony, an understanding – from a voluntary self-giving – from a return to the deeper truth, the reality of being, the Origin and the Goal."[9]

2. Our Best Friend is He Who Loves Us in Our Best Part, and yet does not Ask Us to be Different from What We are*

"Well, everyone in his own little field is like that. He has an ideal, a conception of what is true and beautiful and noble, and even divine, and this conception of his he wants to impose on others. There are also many people who have a conception of the Divine and who try with all their might to impose their conception on the Divine... and usually don't lose heart until they have lost their life!

It is this *spontaneous* and almost unconscious attitude I had in mind, for if I were to tell one of you, "There! that's what you want to do", he would protest very vehemently and say, "What! Never in my life!" **But when one has opinions about people and especially reactions to their way of life, it is because one blames them for not being what one thinks they ought to be.** If we never forget that there cannot be, should not be two things exactly alike in the universe, for the second would be useless since there would already be one of the same kind, and that the universe is constituted for the harmony of an infinite multiplicity in

which two movements – and even more, two consciousnesses – are never alike, then what right have we to intervene and want that somebody should conform to our own thought?... For if you think in a particular way, it is certain that the other won't be able to think in the same way. And if you are a person of a certain type, it is absolutely certain that the other cannot be of the same type. And what you ought to learn is to harmonise, synthesise, combine all the disparate things in the universe by putting each one *in its place*. Total harmony does not at all lie in an identity, but in a harmonisation which can come only by putting each thing in its place.

And this must be at the basis of the reaction that one has the right to expect from a true friend, who should wish not that his friend should be like him, but that he may be what he is.

Now, at the beginning of the sentence I said, "He loves you in the best part of yourself...." To put it a little more positively: Your friend is not one who encourages you to come down to your lowest level, encourages you to do foolish things along with him or fall into bad ways with him or one who commends you for all the nasty things you do, that's quite clear. And yet, usually, very, very often, much too often, one makes friends with somebody with whom one doesn't feel uneasy when one has sunk lower. One considers as one's best friend somebody who encourages one in one's follies: one mixes with others to roam about instead of going to school, to go and steal fruit from gardens, to make fun of one's teachers and for all kinds of things like that. I am not making any personal remarks, but

indeed I could quote some examples, unhappily far too many. And perhaps this is why I said, "They are not your true friends." But still, they are the most convenient friends, for they don't make you feel that you are in the wrong; while to one who comes and tells you, "Now then, instead of roaming about and doing nothing or doing stupid things, if you came to the class, don't you think it would be better!" usually one replies, "Don't bother me! You are not my friend." This is perhaps why I wrote this sentence. There you are. I repeat, I am not making any personal remarks, but still it is an opportunity to tell you something that unfortunately happens much too often.

There are children here who were full of promise, who were at the top of their class, who used to work seriously, from whom I expected much, and who have been completely ruined by this kind of friendship. Since we are speaking of this, I shall tell them today that I regret this very much and that I do not call such people friends but mortal enemies against whom one should protect oneself as one would against a contagious disease.

We don't like the company of someone who has a contagious disease, and avoid him carefully; generally he is segregated so that it does not spread. But the contagion of vice and bad behaviour, the contagion of depravity, falsehood and what is base, is infinitely more dangerous than the contagion of any disease, and this is what must be very carefully avoided. You must consider as your best friend the one who tells you that he does not wish to participate in any bad or ugly act, the one who gives you courage to resist low temptations; he is a friend. He is the one you must

associate with and not someone with whom you have fun and who strengthens your evil propensities. That's all.

Now, we won't labour the point and I hope that those I have in mind will understand what I have said.

Indeed, you should choose as friends only those who are wiser than yourself, those whose company ennobles you and helps you to master yourself, to progress, to act in a better way and see more clearly. And finally, the best friend one can have – isn't he the Divine, to whom one can say everything, reveal everything? For there indeed is the source of all compassion, of all power to efface every error when it is not repeated,* to open the road to true realisation; it is he who can understand all, heal all, and always help on the path, help you not to fail, not to falter, not to fall, but to walk straight to the goal. He is the true friend, the friend of good and bad days, the one who can understand, can heal, and who is always there when you need him. When you call him sincerely, he is always there to guide and uphold you – and to love you in the true way."[10]

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* In 1961 when this talk was first published, Mother commented on this phrase: *"So long as one repeats one's mistakes, nothing can be abolished, for one recreates them every minute. When someone makes a mistake, serious or not, this mistake has consequences in his life, a 'Karma' which must be exhausted, but the Divine Grace, if one turns to It, has the power of cutting off the consequences; but for this the fault must not be repeated. One shouldn't think one can continue to commit the same stupidities indefinitely and that indefinitely the Grace will cancel all the consequences, it does not happen like that! The past may be completely purified, cleansed, to the point of having no effect on the future, but on condition that one doesn't change it again into a perpetual present; you yourself must stop the bad vibration in yourself, you must not go on reproducing the same vibration indefinitely."*

3. Nothing is More Dangerous than Wanting to Rest, Stopping Half-way

"…How many times in life does one meet people who become pacifists because they are afraid to fight, who long for rest before they have earned it, who are satisfied with a little progress and in their imagination and desires make it into a marvellous realisation so as to justify their stopping half-way.

In ordinary life, already, this happens so much. Indeed, this is the bourgeois ideal, which has deadened mankind and made man into what he is now: "Work while you are young, accumulate wealth, honour, position; be provident, have a little foresight, put something by, lay up a capital, become an official – so that later when you are forty you "can sit down", enjoy your income and later your pension and, as they say, enjoy a well-earned rest." – To sit down, to stop on the way, not to move forward, to go to sleep, to go downhill towards the grave before one's time, cease to live the purpose of life – to sit down!

The minute one stops going forward, one falls back. The moment one is satisfied and no longer aspires, one begins to die. Life is movement, it is effort, it is a march forward, the scaling of a mountain, the climb towards new revelations, towards future realisations. Nothing is more dangerous than wanting to rest. It is in action, in effort, in the march forward that repose must be found, the true repose of complete trust in the divine Grace, of the absence of desires, of victory over egoism.

True repose comes from the widening, the universalisation of the consciousness. Become as vast as

the world and you will always be at rest. In the thick of action, in the very midst of the battle, the effort, you will know the repose of infinity and eternity."[11]

4. To Really Possess Knowledge it Must be Put into Practice

"...you must not be impatient, that you must understand that in order **to really possess knowledge, whatever it may be, you must put it into practice, that is, master your nature so as to be able to express this knowledge in action.**

All of you who have come here have been told many things; you have been put into contact with a world of truth, you live within it, the air you breathe is full of it; and yet how few of you know that these truths are valuable only if they are put into practice, and that it is useless to talk of consciousness, knowledge, equality of soul, universality, infinity, eternity, supreme truth, the divine presence and... of all sorts of things like that, if you make no effort yourselves to *live* these things and feel them concretely within you. And don't tell yourselves, "Oh, I have been here so many years! Oh, I would very much like to have the result of my efforts!" **You must know that very persistent efforts, a very steadfast endurance are necessary to master the least weakness, the least pettiness, the least meanness in one's nature.** What is the use of talking about divine Love if one can't love without egoism? What is the use of talking about immortality if one is stubbornly attached to the past and the present and if one doesn't want to give anything in order to receive everything?"[12]

5. If Man Could Consent to be Spiritualised*

"…"If man could once consent to be spiritualised." If only the individual could *consent* to be spiritualised... could consent.

Something in him asks for it, aspires, and all the rest refuses, wants to continue to be what it is: the mixed ore which needs to be cast into the furnace.

At the moment we are at a decisive turning-point in the history of the earth, once again. From every side I am asked, "What is going to happen?" Everywhere there is anguish, expectation, fear. "What is going to happen?..." There is only one reply: "If only man could consent to be spiritualised."

And perhaps **it would be enough if some individuals became pure gold, for this would be enough to change the course of events.... We are faced with this necessity in a very urgent way.**

This courage, this heroism which the Divine wants of us, why not use it to fight against one's own difficulties, one's own imperfections, one's own obscurities? Why not heroically face the furnace of inner purification so that it does not become necessary to pass once more through one of those terrible, gigantic destructions which plunge an entire civilisation into darkness?

This is the problem before us. It is for each one to solve it in his own way."[13]

6. A New Religion Would be Harmful

"Religion exists almost exclusively in its forms, its cults,

in a certain set of ideas, and it becomes great only through the spirituality of a few exceptional individuals, whereas true spiritual life, and above all what the supramental realisation will be, is independent of every precise, intellectual form, every limited form of life. It embraces all possibilities and manifestations and makes them the expression, the vehicle of a higher and more universal truth.

A new religion would not only be useless but very harmful. It is a new *life* which must be created; it is a new *consciousness* which must be expressed. This is something beyond intellectual limits and mental formulae. It is a living truth which must manifest.

Everything in its essence and its truth should be included in this realisation. This realisation must be an expression as total, as complete, as universal as possible of the divine reality. Only that can save humanity and the world. That is the great spiritual revolution of which Sri Aurobindo speaks. And this is what he wanted us to realise."[14]

7. Qualities of a True Leader

"…Be yourself what you would like them to be. Give them the example of disinterestedness, patience, self-control, constant good humour, the overcoming of one's little personal dislikes, a sort of constant goodwill, an understanding of others' difficulties; and that equality of temper which makes children free from fear, for what makes children deceitful and untruthful, and even cunning, is the fear of being punished. If they feel secure, they will hide nothing and you will then be able to help them to be loyal and honest. Of all things the most important is good

example. Sri Aurobindo speaks of that, of the invariable good humour one must have in all circumstances, this self-forgetfulness: not to throw one's own little troubles on others; when one is tired or uncomfortable, not to become unpleasant, impatient. This asks for quite some perfection, a self-control which is a great step on the path of realisation. If one fulfilled the conditions needed to be a true leader, even if only a leader of a small group of children, well, one would already be far advanced in the discipline needed for the accomplishment of the yoga.

It is from this aspect that the problem should be seen, the aspect of self-mastery, of control, of the endurance which will not allow your personal condition to react on your group-work or collective action. To forget oneself is one of the most essential conditions for being a true leader: to have no selfish interests, to want nothing for oneself, to consider only the good of the group, of the whole, the totality that depends on one; to act only with that aim in mind, without wanting any personal profit from one's action.

A leader of a small group can thus become a perfect leader for a large group, for a nation, and prepare himself for a collective role. It is a training-ground of great importance, and that is truly what we have attempted and are continuing to try out here: to give to everyone as soon as possible a responsibility, big or small, so that he learns to become a true leader.

To be a true leader one must be completely disinterested and efface from oneself as much as possible all self-regard and all selfish movements. To be a leader one must master one's ego, and to master one's ego is the first indispensable

step for doing yoga. And this is what can make sports a powerful aid for the realisation of the Divine.

Very few people understand this, and generally those who are against this outer discipline of sports, this concentration on the material realisation, are people who *completely* lack control over their physical being. And to realise the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo the control of one's body is a first *indispensable* step. Those who despise physical activities are people who won't be able to take a single step on the true path of integral yoga, unless they first get rid of their contempt. Control of the body in all its forms is an indispensable basis. A body which dominates you is an enemy, it is a disorder you cannot accept. It is the enlightened will in the mind which should govern the body, and not the body which should impose its law on the mind. When one knows that a thing is bad, one must be capable of not doing it. When one wants something to be realised, one must be able to do it and not be stopped at every step by the body's inability or ill-will or lack of collaboration; and for that one must follow a physical discipline and become master in one's own home.

It is very fine to escape into meditation and from the height of one's so-called grandeur look down on material things, but one who is not master in his own home is a slave."[15]

8. Spiritual Mastery and Material Mastery Incomplete Without Each Other

"…It is very obvious that those who practise physical culture scientifically and with coordination acquire a control

over their bodies that's unimaginable for ordinary people. When the Russian gymnasts came here, we saw with what ease they did exercises which for an ordinary man are impossible, and they did them as if it was the simplest thing in the world; there was not even the least sign of effort! Well, that mastery is already a great step towards the transformation of the body. And these people who, I could say, are materialists by profession, used no spiritual method in their education; it was solely by material means and an enlightened use of human will that they had achieved this result. If they had added to this a spiritual knowledge and power, they could have achieved an almost miraculous result.... Because of the false ideas prevalent in the world, we don't usually see the two things together, spiritual mastery and material mastery, and so one is always incomplete without the other; but this is exactly what we want to do and what Sri Aurobindo is going to explain: if the two are combined, the result can reach a perfection that's unthinkable for the ordinary human mind, and this is what we want to attempt."[16]

"**…one has to fight against a formidable mass of stupid prejudices which create an irreconcilable antagonism between material and spiritual life. And it is something so deep-rooted in human consciousness that it is very difficult to eradicate it, even in those who think they have understood Sri Aurobindo's teaching!** And many people said, when for altogether different reasons I began to hold meditations again, "Ah! At last! We are returning to spiritual life...." This was indeed what prevented me from holding them for a long time. It was in order not to encourage this stupidity. But for other reasons it was

necessary to do it and so I did. So long as this foolishness is not uprooted from human consciousness, the supramental force will always find it considerably difficult not to be engulfed in the obscurity of a human thought which understands nothing. That's all. All the same, we shall succeed."[17]

9. The Higher and Lower Perfections

"The higher perfection is the spiritual perfection, integral union with the Divine, identification with the Divine, freedom from all the limitations of the lower world. That is spiritual perfection, the perfection that comes from yoga – quite independent of the body and the physical world – which, in ancient times, meant first rejecting the body and the physical life so as to have a relation only with the higher world and finally with the Divine. That is the higher perfection.

And the lower perfection is to be able to make the human being in his present form and in his body, in his relation with all terrestrial things, do the utmost he can. This is the case of all great men of genius: artistic genius, literary genius, genius in organisation, the great rulers, those who have carried physical capacities to their maximum perfection, human development to the limit of its possibilities; and, for instance, all those who have complete control over their bodies and succeed in doing miraculous things, as we saw, for example, during the war, with the airmen: they made their bodies do things which at first sight seemed quite impossible, they obtained from them an endurance, a skill, a power which were almost unthinkable.

And from every point of view: from the point of view of physical strength, of intellectual realisation, of the physical qualities of energy and courage, of disinterestedness, goodness, charity; all human qualities carried to their utmost limits. That is the lower perfection.

The higher perfection is spiritual and super-human. The lower perfection is human perfection carried to its maximum limits, and this may be quite independent of all spiritual life, all spiritual aspiration. One can be a genius without having any spiritual aspiration. One can have all the most extraordinary moral qualities without having any spiritual life. And even, usually, those who have a very great power of human realisation are satisfied – more or less satisfied – with their condition. They feel they are self-sufficient, that they carry in themselves the source of their realisation and their joy, and it is usually very difficult to make them understand and feel that they are not the creators of their own creations, whatever they may be. Most of them, with very rare exceptions, if they were told, "You are not the originator of this work you are doing, it is a force higher than you and you are only its instrument", they would dislike it very much – and they will send you about your business! Therefore, these two perfections are really divergent in ordinary life. It was said in the old yoga that the first condition for doing yoga was to be disgusted with life. But those who have realised this human perfection are very rarely disgusted with life, unless they have met with personal difficulties such as the ingratitude of people around them, the lack of understanding of their genius which was not sufficiently appreciated – so all this disgusts them, but otherwise, so long as they are in their period of success and

creation, they are perfectly satisfied. So, as they are satisfied – above all, self-satisfied – they don't need to seek anything else.

It is not essentially true, but this is usually how things happen, and unless there is in this genius a soul which is perfectly conscious of itself and has come to accomplish a specific work on earth, he may very well be born, grow up and die without knowing that there is anything other than this earthly life. And above all it is this, you see, this feeling of having achieved the utmost realisation which gives a satisfaction that keeps one from needing anything else.... If they have a soul that's fully conscious of itself and fully conscious of its purpose in the physical world, there could be a vague feeling that all this is pretty hollow, that all these achievements are a little too superficial and that something is lacking; but that comes only to those who are predestined, and after all, in the mass of humanity, there are not very many of them.

Only those who are predestined can combine these two perfections and realise something integral.... This is quite rare. **The great spiritual leaders have very rarely been great realisers in the physical world. It has happened, but it is very rare. Only those who are conscious incarnations of the Divine naturally carry in themselves the possibility of the two perfections, but this is exceptional.** People who had a spiritual life, a great spiritual realisation, were able at certain exceptional moments to have a capacity for outward realisation; this also was exceptional, but it was intermittent and never had the integrality, the totality, the perfection of those who concentrated on material

realisation. And this is why those who live only in the external consciousness, for whom the earthly material life is all that really exists, concrete and tangible, perceptible to all, always feel that spiritual life is something hazy, something almost mediocre from the material point of view.

I have met many people – "many", well, quite a number – who wanted to demonstrate that spiritual powers gave a great capacity for outer realisation and who tried, in certain exceptional spiritual states or conditions, to paint or to compose music or write poetry; well, everything that they produced was thoroughly second-rate and could not be compared with the works of the great geniuses who had mastered material nature – and this of course gave the materialists a good opening: "You see, your so-called power is nothing at all." But this was because in their external life they were ordinary men; for the greatest spiritual power, if it enters material that's not educated, will produce a result far superior to what that individual would have been able to achieve in his ordinary state, but far inferior to what a genius who has mastered matter can produce. It is not enough that "the Spirit bloweth", the instrument must also be capable of manifesting it.

I believe that is one of the things Sri Aurobindo is going to explain: why it is necessary to give to the physical, external being, its full development, the capacity of controlling matter directly; then you put at the disposal of the Spirit an instrument capable of manifesting it, otherwise... Yes, I knew several people who in their ordinary state could not write three lines without making a mistake, not only spelling mistakes but mistakes of language, that is,

who could not express one thought clearly – well, in their moments of spiritual inspiration, they used to write very beautiful things, but all the same these very beautiful things were not so beautiful as the works of the greatest writers. These things seemed remarkable in comparison with what they could do in their ordinary state; it was true, their present possibilities were used to the maximum, it was something that gave a value to what otherwise would have had none at all. But supposing **you take a real genius – a musician or artist or writer of genius – who has fully mastered his instrument, who can use it to produce works that express the utmost human possibility, if you add to this a spiritual consciousness, the supramental force, then you will have something truly divine.**

And this is precisely the key to the effort Sri Aurobindo wanted us to make.

And your body, if you draw from it all the possibilities it holds, if you educate it by the normal, well-known, scientific methods, if you make this instrument into something as perfect as possible, then, when the supramental truth manifests in that body, it will become *immediately* – without centuries of preparation – a marvellous instrument for the expression of the Spirit.

That is why Sri Aurobindo used to repeat and has always said: You must work from both ends, not let go of one for the other. And certainly, if you want to have a divine consciousness, you must not give up spiritual aspiration; but if you want to become an integral divine being on earth, take good care not to let go of the other end, and make your body the best possible instrument.

It is a disease of the ordinary human intellect – which comes, moreover, from separation, division – to make a thing always *either* this *or* that. If you choose this, you turn your back on that; if you choose that, you turn your back on this.

It is an impoverishment. One must know how to take up everything, combine everything, synthesise everything. And then one has an integral realisation."[18]

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III. Questions and Answers, May – June 1957

1. Reason Must be the Master of the House

"…In ordinary men reason is the summit of human consciousness, and this is the part of the being which must govern the rest, for it is orderly and reasonable, that is, it does things with a feeling for order, for goodness, usefulness, and in accordance with a plan, a specific plan, recognised and used by each one, whereas the vital part of the being likes excitement, the unexpected, adventure – all that makes games attractive – above all, competition, the effort to win, victory over the opponent, all these things; it is the vital impulse, and the vital in man being the seat of enthusiasm, ardour, normal energy, when the attraction of the unexpected, of struggle and victory is not there, it goes to sleep, unless it is in the habit of obeying, regularly and spontaneously, the will of the reason. **And this is even one of the first things for which all physical training is useful: the fact that it cannot be done really well unless the body is in the habit of obeying the reason rather than the vital impulse.** For instance, the whole development of bodily perfection, of physical culture with dumb-bells and the exercises which have nothing particularly exciting and demand a discipline, habits which must be regular, reasonable, which give no scope to passion, desire, impulse – one must order one's life according to a very strict and very regular discipline – well, in order to do them really well one must be in the habit of governing one's life by the reason.

This is not very common. Usually, unless one has taken

good care to make it otherwise, the impulses – the impulses of desire – all the enthusiasms and passions with all their reactions are the masters of human life. One must already be something of a sage to be able to undergo a rigorous discipline of the body and obtain from it the ordered, regular effort which can perfect it. There is no longer any room there for all the fancies of desire. You see, as soon as one gives way to excesses, to immoderation of any kind and a disorderly life, it becomes quite impossible to control one's body and develop it normally, not to mention that, naturally, one spoils one's health and as a result the most important part of the ideal of a perfect body disappears; for with bad health, impaired health, one is not much good for anything. **And it is certainly the satisfaction of desires and impulses of the vital or the unreasonable demands of certain ambitions which make the body suffer and fall ill.**

Naturally, there is all the ignorance of those who don't even know the most elementary rules of life; but everybody knows one must learn how to live and, for instance, that fire burns and water can drown! People don't need to be told all that, it is something they learn fast as they grow up; but the fact that the control of reason over life is absolutely indispensable even for good health, is not always accepted by the inferior man for whom life has no savour unless he can live out his passions.

I remember a man who came here a very long time ago, to stand as a candidate for the government. It so happened that he was introduced to me because they wanted my opinion of him, and so he asked me questions about the Ashram and the life we lead here, and about what I

considered to be an indispensable discipline for life. This man used to smoke the whole day and drank much more than was necessary, and so he complained, you see, that he was often tired and sometimes could not control himself. I told him, "You know, first of all, you must stop smoking and you must stop drinking." He looked at me with an unbelievable bewilderment and said, "But then, if one doesn't either smoke or drink, it is not worth living!" I told him, 'If you are still at that stage, it is no use saying anything more.'

And this is much more frequent than one thinks. To us it seems absurd, for we have something else which is of course more interesting than smoking and drinking, but **for ordinary men the satisfaction of their desires is the very reason for existence. For them it seems to be an affirmation of their independence and their purpose in life. And it is simply a perversion, a deformation which is a denial of the life-instinct, it is an unhealthy interference of thought and vital impulse in physical life.** It is an unhealthy impulse which does not usually exist even in animals. In this case, instinct in animals is infinitely more reasonable than human instinct – which, besides, doesn't exist any more, which has been replaced by a very perverted impulse.

Perversion is a human disease, it occurs only very rarely in animals, and then only in animals which have come close to man and therefore have been contaminated by his perversion.

There is a story about some officers in North Africa – in Algeria – who had adopted a monkey. The monkey lived with them and one day at dinner they had a grotesque idea

and gave the monkey something to drink. They gave it alcohol. The monkey first saw the others drink, this seemed to it something quite interesting, and it drank a glass, a full glass of wine. Afterwards it was ill, as ill as could be, it rolled under the table with all kinds of pains and was really in a very bad way, that is, it gave the men an example of the spontaneous effect of alcohol when the physical nature is not already perverted. It nearly died of poisoning. It recovered. And some time later it was again allowed to come for dinner as it was all right, and somebody placed a glass of wine in front of it. It picked it up in a terrible rage and flung it at the head of the man who had given the glass to it.... By that it showed that it was much wiser than the men!

It is a good thing to begin to learn at an early age that to lead an efficient life and obtain from one's body the maximum it is able to give, reason must be the master of the house. And it is not a question of yoga or higher realisation, it is something which should be taught everywhere, in every school, every family, every home: man was made to be a mental being, and merely to be a man – we are not speaking of anything else, we are speaking only of being a man – life must be dominated by reason and not by vital impulses. This should be taught to all children from their infancy. If one is not dominated by reason, one is a brute lower than the animal; for animals don't have a mind or a reason to dominate them, but they obey the instinct of the species. There is an instinct of the species which is an extremely reasonable instinct that regulates all their activities for their own good, and automatically, without knowing it, they are subject to this instinct of the species which is altogether reasonable from

the point of view of that species, of each species. And those animals which for some reason or other become free of it – as I was saying just a while ago, those which live near man and begin to obey man instead of obeying the instinct of the species – are perverted and lose the qualities of their species. But **an animal left to its natural life and free from human influence is an extremely reasonable being from its own point of view, for it only does things which are in conformity with its nature and its own good. Naturally, it meets with disasters, for it is constantly at war with all the other species, but it does not itself act foolishly.** Stupidities and perversion begin with conscious mind and the human species. It is the wrong use man makes of his mental capacity. Perversion begins with humanity. It is a distortion of the progress of Nature which mental consciousness represents. And, therefore, the first thing which should be taught to every human being as soon as he is able to think, is that he should obey reason which is a super-instinct of the species. Reason is the master of the nature of mankind. **One must obey reason and absolutely refuse to be the slave of instincts. And here I am not talking to you about yoga, I am not talking about spiritual life, not at all; it has nothing to do with that. It is the basic wisdom of human life, purely human life: every human being who obeys anything other than reason is a kind of brute lower than the animal.** That's all. And this should be taught everywhere; it is the basic education which should be given to children.

The reign of reason must come to an end only with the advent of the psychic law which manifests the divine Will."[19]

2. Consciousness and Dealings with the Body

"…the method we use to deal with our body, maintain it, keep it fit, improve it and keep it in good health, depends *exclusively* on the state of consciousness we are in; for our body is an instrument of our consciousness and this consciousness can act directly on it and obtain what it wants from it.

So, if you are in an ordinary physical consciousness, if you see things with the eyes of the ordinary physical consciousness, if you think of them with the ordinary physical consciousness, it will be ordinary physical means you will have to use to act on your body. These ordinary physical means make up the whole science which has accumulated through thousands of years of human existence. This science is very complex, its processes innumerable, complicated, uncertain, often contradictory, always progressive and almost absolutely relative! Still, very precise results have been achieved; ever since physical culture has become a serious preoccupation, a certain number of experiments, studies, observations have accumulated, which enable us to regulate diet, activities, exercise, the whole outer organisation of life, and provide an adequate basis so that those who make the effort to study and conform strictly to these things have a chance to maintain their body in good health, correct the defects it may have and improve its general condition, and even achieve results which are sometimes quite remarkable.

I may add, moreover, that this intellectual human science, such as it is at present, in its very sincere effort to find the truth, is, surprisingly enough, drawing closer and

closer to the essential truth of the Spirit. It is not impossible to foresee the movement where the two will unite in a very deep and very close understanding of the essential truth.

So, for all those who live on the physical plane, in the physical consciousness, it is physical means and processes which have to be used in dealing with the body. And as the vast majority of human beings, even in the Ashram, live in a consciousness which, if not exclusively physical, is at least predominantly physical, it is quite natural for them to follow and obey all the principles laid down by physical science for the care of the body.

Now, according to what Sri Aurobindo teaches us, this is not a final realisation, nor is it the ideal to which we want to rise. There is a higher state than this, in which the consciousness, though it still remains principally mental or partially mental in its functioning, is already open to higher regions in an aspiration for the spiritual life, and open to the supramental influence.

As soon as this opening occurs, one passes beyond the state in which life is purely physical – when I say "physical" **I include the whole mental and intellectual life and all human achievements, even the most remarkable; I am speaking of a physical which is the summit of human capacities,** of an earthly and material life in which man can express values of a higher order from the mental and intellectual point of view – one can go beyond that state, open oneself to the supramental force which is now acting on earth and enter a transitional zone where the two influences meet and interpenetrate, where the consciousness is still mental and intellectual in its functioning, but

sufficiently imbued with the supramental strength and force to become the instrument of a higher truth.

At present this state can be realised on earth by those who have prepared themselves to receive the supramental force which is manifesting. And in that state, in that state of consciousness, the body can benefit from a much better condition than the one it was in before. It can be put into direct contact with the essential truth of its being, to the extent that, *spontaneously*, at every moment it knows instinctively, or intuitively, what is to be done and that it can do it.

As I say, this state can now be realised by all those who take the trouble of preparing themselves to receive the supramental force, to assimilate it and obey it.

Of course, there is a higher state than this, the state Sri Aurobindo speaks of as the ideal to be fulfilled: the divine life in a divine body. But he himself tells us that this will take time; it is an integral transformation which cannot be achieved in a moment. It will even take quite a long time. But when it is accomplished, when the consciousness has become a supramental consciousness, then action will no longer be determined at every moment by a mental choice or be dependent on the physical capacity: the entire body will spontaneously, integrally, be the perfect expression of the inner truth.

This is the ideal we must keep before us, for the realisation of which we must strive; but we must not delude ourselves and think that it can be a rapid transformation, miraculous, immediate, marvellous, without effort and without labour.

However, it is no longer only a possibility, it is no longer even only a promise for a far-off future: it is something which is in the making. And already one can not only foresee but feel the moment when the body will be able to repeat integrally the experience of the most spiritual part of the being, as the inner spirit has already done, and will itself be able to stand in its bodily consciousness before the supreme Reality, turn to it integrally and say in all sincerity, in a total self-giving of all its cells: 'To be Thyself – exclusively, perfectly – Thyself, infinitely, eternally... very simply.'"[20]

3. How the Force Acts Much Better in Silence than with Words

"…action in silence is *always* much more important.... The force which is at work is not limited by words, and this gives it an infinitely greater strength, and it expresses itself in each consciousness in accordance with its own particular mode, which makes it infinitely more effective. A certain vibration is given out in silence, with a special purpose, to obtain a definite result, but according to the mental receptivity of each person it is expressed in each individual consciousness exactly in the form which can be the most effective, the most active, the most immediately useful for each individual; while if it is formulated in words, this formula has to be received by each person in its fixity – the fixity of the words given to it – and it loses much of its strength and fullness of action because, first, the words are not always understood as they are said and then they are not always adapted to the understanding of each one.

So, **unless a question immediately gives rise to an**

experience which can be expressed as a new formula, in my opinion it is always better to keep silent. Only when the question is living can it give rise to an experience which will be the occasion of a living teaching. And for a question to be alive, it must answer an inner need for progress, a spontaneous need to progress on some plane or other – on the mental plane is the most usual way, but if by chance it answers an inner aspiration, a problem one is tackling and wants to solve, then the question becomes interesting and living and truly useful, and it can give rise to a vision, a perception on a higher plane, an experience in the consciousness which can make the formula new so that it carries a new power for realisation.

Apart from such cases I always feel that it is much better not to say anything and that a few minutes of meditation are always more useful.

What I read at the beginning ought to serve to canalise the thought, to direct and focus it on a particular problem or a set of ideas or a new possibility of understanding which comes from the passage read; and in fact it is almost like a subject of meditation suggested for the silence which follows the reading.

To speak for the sake of speaking is not at all interesting – there are schools for that! Not here."[21]

4. A Vivid Description of a Consciousness Entirely Absorbed in Aspiration for a Higher Life

"It is not by abstaining from food that you can make a spiritual progress. It is by being free, not only from all

attachment and all desire and preoccupation with food, but even from all need for it; by being in the state in which all these things are so foreign to your consciousness that they have no place there. Only then, as a spontaneous, natural result, can one usefully stop eating. **It could be said that the essential condition is to forget to eat – forget, because all the energies of the being and all its concentration are turned towards a more total, more true inner realisation, towards this *constant*, imperative preoccupation with the union of the whole being, including the bodily cells, with the vibration of the divine forces, with the supramental force which is manifesting, so that this may be the true life: not only the purpose of life, but the essence of life, not only an imperative need of life, but all its joy and all its *raison d'être.***

When that is there, when this realisation is attained, then to eat or not to eat, to sleep or not sleep, all this has no longer any importance. It is an outer rhythm left to the play of the universal forces as a whole, finding expression through the circumstances and people around you; and then the body, united, totally united with the inner truth, has a suppleness, a constant adaptability: if food is there, it takes it; if it isn't there, it doesn't think about it. And so too with all things.... This is not life! They are modes of existing to which one adapts oneself without giving it any thought. This gives you the feeling of a kind of blossoming, as a flower opens on a plant, a sort of activity which does not come from a concentrated will but is in harmony with all the forces around you, a way of being which is adapted to the circumstances you live in, which have absolutely no importance in themselves.

There comes a moment when, free from everything, one needs practically nothing, and one can use anything, do anything without this having any real influence on the state of consciousness one is in. This is what really matters. To try through outer gestures or arbitrary decisions which come from a mental consciousness aspiring for a higher life can be a means, not a very effective one but still a sort of reminder to the being that it ought to be something other than what it is in its animality – but it's not that, it's not that at all! A person who could be entirely absorbed in his inner aspiration, to the point of not giving any thought or care to these external things, who would take what comes and not think about it when it doesn't, would be infinitely farther on the path than someone who undertakes ascetic practices with the idea that this will lead him to realisation.

The only thing that is truly effective is the change of consciousness; it is the inner liberation through an intimate, constant union, absolute and inevitable, with the vibration of the supramental forces. The preoccupation of every second, the will of all the elements of the being, the aspiration of the entire being, including all the cells of the body, is this union with the supramental forces, the divine forces. And there is no longer any need at all to be preoccupied with what the consequences will be. What has to be in the play of the universal forces and their manifestation will be, quite naturally, spontaneously, automatically, there is no need to be preoccupied with it. The only thing that matters is the constant, total, complete contact – constant, yes, constant – with the Force, the Light, the Truth, the Power, and that ineffable delight of the supramental consciousness.

That is sincerity. All the rest is an imitation, it is almost a part one plays for oneself.

Perfect purity is *to be*, to be ever more and more, in a self-perfecting becoming. One must never pretend that one *is*: one must *be*, spontaneously.

This is sincerity."[22]

5. Health, Illness and Spiritual Life

"Sweet Mother, if someone falls seriously ill, is this a purely physical phenomenon or is it a difficulty in his spiritual life?

That depends on the person! If it is someone who is doing yoga, it is quite obviously a difficulty in his spiritual life. If it is somebody who is not at all engaged in yoga and who lives an ordinary life in the most ordinary manner, it is an ordinary accident. It depends absolutely on the person. The outer phenomena may be similar, but the inner causes are absolutely different. **No two illnesses are alike, though labels are put on diseases and attempts made to group them; but in fact every person is ill in his own way, and his way depends on what he is, on his state of consciousness and the life he leads.**

We have often said that illnesses are always the result of a disturbance of equilibrium, but this disturbance can occur in completely different states of being. For the ordinary man whose consciousness is centred in the physical, outer life, it is a purely physical disturbance of equilibrium, of the functioning of the different organs. But when behind this purely superficial life, an inner life is being fashioned, the causes of illness change; they always become the expression

of a disequilibrium between the different parts of the being: between the inner progress or effort and the outer resistances or conditions of one's life, one's body.

Even from the ordinary external point of view, it has been recognised for a very long time that it is a fall in the resistance of the vitality due to immediate moral causes which is always at the origin of an illness. When one is in a normal state of equilibrium and lives in a normal physical harmony, the body has a capacity of resistance, it has within it an atmosphere strong enough to resist illnesses: its most material substance emanates subtle vibrations which have the strength to resist illnesses, even diseases which are called contagious – in fact, all vibrations are contagious, but still, certain diseases are considered as especially contagious. Well, a man who, even from the purely external point of view, is in a state in which his organs function harmoniously and an adequate psychological balance prevails, has at the same time enough resistance for the contagion not to affect him. But if for some reason or other he loses this equilibrium or is weakened by depression, dissatisfaction, moral difficulties or undue fatigue, for instance, this reduces the normal resistance of the body and he is open to the disease. But if we consider someone who is doing yoga, then it is altogether different, in the sense that the causes of disequilibrium are of a different nature and the illness usually becomes the expression of an inner difficulty which has to be overcome.

So each one should find out for himself why he is ill.

From the ordinary point of view, in most cases, it is usually fear – fear, which may be mental fear, vital fear, but which is almost always physical fear, a fear in the cells – it is

fear which opens the door to all contagion. Mental fear – all who have a little control over themselves or any human dignity can eliminate it; vital fear is more subtle and asks for a greater control; as for physical fear, a veritable yoga is necessary to overcome it, for the cells of the body are afraid of everything that is unpleasant, painful, and as soon as there is any unease, even if it is insignificant, the cells of the body become anxious, they don't like to be uncomfortable. And then, to overcome that, the control of a conscious will is necessary. It is usually this kind of fear that opens the door to illnesses. And I am not speaking of the first two types of fear which, as I said, any human being who wants to be human in the noblest sense of the word, must overcome, for that is cowardice. But **physical fear is more difficult to overcome; without it even the most violent attacks could be repelled. If one has a minimum of control over the body, one can lessen its effects, but that is not immunity. It is this kind of trembling of material, physical fear in the cells of the body which aggravates all illnesses.**

Some people are spontaneously free from fear even in their body; they have a sufficient vital equilibrium in them not to be afraid, not to fear, and a natural harmony in the rhythm of their physical life which enables them to reduce the illness spontaneously to a minimum. There are others, on the other hand, with whom the thing always becomes as bad as it can be, sometimes to the point of catastrophe. There is the whole range and this can be seen quite easily. Well, this depends on a kind of happy rhythm of the movement of life in them, which is either harmonious enough to resist external attacks of illness or else doesn't exist or is not sufficiently powerful, and is replaced by that

trembling of fear, that kind of instinctive anguish which transforms the least unpleasant contact into something painful and harmful. There is the whole range, from someone who can go through the worst contagion and epidemics without ever catching anything to one who falls ill at the slightest chance. So naturally it always depends on the constitution of each person; and as soon as one wants to make an effort for progress, it naturally depends on the control one has acquired over oneself, until the moment when the body becomes the docile instrument of the higher Will and one can obtain from it a normal resistance to all attacks.

But when one can eliminate fear, one is almost in safety. For example, epidemics, or so-called epidemics, like those which are raging at present – ninety-nine times out of a hundred they come from fear: a fear, then, which even becomes a mental fear in its most sordid form, promoted by newspaper articles, useless talk and so on.

Mother, how are medicines to be used for a body which is not altogether unconscious? For even when we draw on the divine grace, we see that we need a little medicine, and if a little medicine is given it has a good effect. Does this mean that only the body needs medicine or is there something wrong with the mind and the vital?

In most cases the use of medicines – within reasonable limits, that is, when one doesn't poison oneself by taking medicines – is simply to help the body to have confidence. It is the body which heals itself. When it wants to be cured, it is cured. And this is something very widely recognised now; even the most traditional doctors tell you, "Yes, our medicines help, but it

is not the medicines which cure, it is the body which decides to be cured." Very well, so when the body is told, "Take this", it says to itself, "Now I am going to get better", and because it says "I am going to get better", well, it is cured!

In almost every case, there are things which help – a little – provided it is done within reasonable limits. If it is no longer within reasonable limits, you are sure to break down completely. You cure one thing but catch another which is usually worse. But still, a little help, in a way, a little something that gives confidence to your body: "Now it will be all right, now that I have taken this, it is going to be all right" – this helps it a great deal and it decides to get better and it is cured.

There too, there is a whole range of possibilities, from the yogi who is in so perfect a state of inner control that he could take poison without being poisoned to the one who at the least little scratch rushes to the doctor and needs all sorts of special drugs to get his body to make the movement needed for its cure. There is the whole possible range, from total, supreme mastery to an equally total bondage to all external aids and all that you absorb from outside – a bondage and a perfect liberation. There is the whole range. So everything is possible. It is like a great key-board, very complex and very complete, on which one can play, and the body is the instrument.

Mother, by a mental effort – for instance, the resolution not to take medicines when one is ill – can one succeed in making the body understand?

That is not enough. A mental resolution is not enough, no. There are subtle reactions in your body which do not

obey the mental resolution, it is not enough. Something else is needed.

Other regions must be contacted. A power higher than the mind's is needed.

And from this point of view, all that is in the mind is always subject to inner questioning. You take a resolution but you can be sure that something will always come in which perhaps may not openly fight this resolution but will question its effectiveness. It is enough, you see, to be subject to the least doubt for the resolution to lose half its effect. If at the same time as you say "I want", there is something silently lurking, somewhere behind, in the background, something which asks itself, "What will the result be?" that is enough to ruin everything.

This play of the mind's working is extremely subtle and no ordinary human means can succeed in controlling it perfectly. For instance, this is well known among people who practise yoga and want to control their body: if through an assiduous yogic effort they have succeeded in controlling something in themselves – a particular weakness of the body, an opening to a certain disequilibrium – if they have managed to do this and had some result, for instance the disappearance of this disequilibrium for a very long time, for years, well, if one day at a particular moment, suddenly, the thought crosses their mind that "Ah! Now it is done", the very next minute it returns. That is enough. For it proves that they have come into contact with the vibrations of the thing they had rejected, on a plane where they are vulnerable, the plane of thought, and that for some reason or other in the play of forces, they are open, and it comes back.

This is something very well known in yoga. **The simple fact of observing the victory one has gained – observing it mentally, you see, thinking about it – is enough to destroy the effect of the yoga which may have existed for years. A mental silence strong enough to prevent all outer vibrations from coming in, is indispensable. Well, that is something so difficult to achieve that one must really have passed from what Sri Aurobindo calls "the lower hemisphere" to the higher, exclusively spiritual hemisphere, for it not to happen.**

No, it is not in the mental field that the victories are won. It is impossible. It is open to all influences, all contradictory currents. All the mental constructions one makes carry their own contradiction with them. One can try to overrule it or make it as harmless as possible, but it exists, it is there, and at the slightest weakness or lack of vigilance or inadvertance, it enters, and destroys all the work. Mentally, one arrives at very few results, and they are always mixed. Something else is needed. One must pass from the mind into the domain of faith or of a higher consciousness, to be able to act with safety.

It is quite obvious that **one of the most powerful means for acting on the body is faith. People who have a simple heart, not a very complicated mind – simple people, you see – who don't have a very great, very complicated mental development but have a very deep faith, have a great power of action over their bodies, very great. That is why one is quite surprised at times: 'Here's a man with a great realisation, an exceptional person, and he is a slave of all the smallest physical things, while this man, well, he is so simple and looks**

so uncouth, but he has a great faith and goes through difficulties and obstacles like a conqueror!'

I don't say that a highly cultured man can't have faith, but it is more difficult, for there is always this mental element which contradicts, discusses, tries to understand, which is difficult to convince, which wants proofs. His faith is less pure. It is necessary, then, to pass on to a higher degree in the evolutionary spiral, pass from the mental to the spiritual; then, naturally, faith takes on a quality of a very high order. But I mean that in daily life, ordinary life, a very simple man who has a very ardent faith can have a mastery over his body – without it being truly a "mastery"; it is simply a spontaneous movement – a control over his body far greater than somebody who has reached a much higher development."[23]

6. A Superhuman Body and a Supramental Body

"…There are two things. There is the possibility of a purely supramental creation on one hand, and the possibility of a progressive transformation of a physical body into a supramental body, or rather of a human body into a superhuman body. Then it would be a progressive transformation which could take a certain number of years, probably a considerable number, and would produce a being who would no longer be a "man" in the animal sense of the word, but would not be the supramental being formed fully outside all animality, for its present origin is necessarily an animal one. So, a transmutation may take place, a transformation that's enough to liberate the being from this origin, but all the same it wouldn't be a purely and entirely supramental creation. Sri Aurobindo has said that there will be an intermediary race – a race or perhaps some individuals,

we don't know – an intermediary rung which could serve as a passage or could be perpetuated according to the needs and necessities of creation. But if one starts from a body formed in the same way as human bodies are at present, the result will never be the same as a being formed entirely according to the supramental method and process. It will perhaps be more on the superhuman side in the sense that all animal expression may disappear, but it won't be able to have the absolute perfection of a body that's purely supramental in its formation."[24]

7. When One Understands, One No Longer Judges

"…I tell you that so long as it is not the divine Presence you address when you speak to someone, it means you are not conscious of it in yourself. And then it's terribly presumptuous to judge what state the other person is in. What do you know about it? If you yourself are not conscious of the Divine in the other being, what right have you to say whether he is conscious of it or not? On what basis? Your small outer intelligence? But it knows nothing! It is quite incapable of perceiving anything whatever.

Unless your vision is *constantly* the vision of the Divine in all things, you have not only no right but no capacity to judge the state which others are in. And to pronounce a judgment on someone without having this vision spontaneously, effortlessly, is precisely an example of the mental presumptuousness of which Sri Aurobindo always spoke.... And it so happens that one who has the vision, the consciousness, who is capable of seeing the truth in all things, never feels the need to judge anything whatever. For he understands everything and knows everything.

Therefore, **once and for all, you must tell yourselves that the moment you begin to judge things, people, circumstances, you are in the most total human ignorance.**

In short, one could put it like this: when one understands, one no longer judges and when one judges, it means that one doesn't know.

Judging people is one of the first things which must be totally swept away from the consciousness before you can take even a step on the supramental path, because that is not a material progress or a bodily progress, it is only a very little progress of thought, mental progress. And unless you have swept your mind clean of all its ignorance, you cannot hope to take a step on the supramental path."[25]

8. The Ordinary Perception of the World Versus A Deeper Perception Based on the Experience of the Divine Presence

"All those who have truly and sincerely had the experience of the divine Presence, all those who have truly been in contact with the Divine, have always said the same thing: that sometimes, even often, it is in what is most decried by men, most despised by men, most condemned by human "wisdom", that one can see the divine light shining.

They are not mere words, they are living experiences.

All these ideas of good and evil, good and bad, higher, lower, all these notions belong to the ignorance of the human mind, and if one really wants to come into contact with the divine life, one must liberate oneself totally from this ignorance, one must rise to a region of consciousness where these things have *no* reality. The feeling of superiority and

inferiority completely disappears, it is replaced by something else which is of a very different nature – a sort of capacity for filtering appearances, penetrating behind masks, shifting the point of view.

And these are not words, it is altogether true that *everything* changes its appearance, totally, that life and things are completely different from what they appear to be.

All this contact, this ordinary perception of the world loses its reality completely. This is what appears unreal, fantastic, illusory, non-existent. There is something – something very material, very concrete, very physical – which becomes the reality of the being, and which has nothing in common with the ordinary way of seeing. When one has this perception – the perception of the work of the divine force, of the movement being worked out behind the appearance, *in* the appearance, through the appearance – one begins to be ready to live something truer than the ordinary human falsehood. But not before.

There is no compromise, you see. It is not like a convalescence after an illness: you must change worlds. So long as your mind is real for you, your way of thinking something true for you, real, concrete, it proves that you are not there yet. You must first pass through to the other side. Afterwards you will be able to understand what I am telling you.

Pass through to the other side.

It is not true that one can understand little by little, it is not like that. This kind of progress is different. What is more true is that one is shut up in a shell, and inside it something is happening, like the chick in the egg. It is getting

ready in there. It is in there. One doesn't see it. Something is happening in the shell, but outside one sees nothing. And it is only when all is ready that there comes the capacity to pierce the shell and to be born into the light of day.

It is not that one becomes more and more perceptible or visible: one is shut in – shut in – and for sensitive people there is even that terrible sensation of being compressed, of trying to pass through and then coming up against a wall. And then one knocks and knocks and knocks, and one can't go through.

And so long as one is there, inside, one is in the falsehood. And only on the day when by the Divine Grace one can break the shell and come out into the Light, is one free.

This may happen suddenly, spontaneously, quite unexpectedly.

I don't think one can go through gradually. I don't think it is something which slowly wears and wears away until one can see through it. I haven't had an instance of this so far. There is rather a kind of accumulation of power inside, an intensification of the need, and an endurance in the effort which becomes free from all fear, all anxiety, all calculation; a need so imperative that one no longer cares for the consequences.

One is like an explosive that nothing can resist, and one bursts out from one's prison in a blaze of light.

After that one can no longer fall back again.

It is truly a new birth."[26]

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IV. Questions and Answers, Jul. – Aug. 1957

1. On the Harm Done by Incontinence of Speech*

"Very often I have told you that every word spoken uselessly is dangerous chatter. But here, the situation has reached the very limit – there are things which have been said, said over and over again, repeated by all those who have tried to perfect humanity, unfortunately without much result – it is a question of malicious gossip... of slander, of that pleasure taken in speaking ill of others. Anyone who indulges in this kind of incontinence debases his consciousness, and when to this incontinence is added the habit of vulgar quarrelling, expressed in coarse language, then that amounts to suicide, spiritual suicide within oneself.

I stress this point and insist that you take it *very* seriously."[27]

2. The Body Must Have the Perception of the New World Before the Material Transformation Can Begin

"It is quite difficult to free oneself from old habits of being and to be able to freely conceive of a new life, a new world. And naturally, the liberation begins on the highest planes of consciousness: it is easier for the mind or the higher intelligence to conceive of new things than for the vital being, for instance, to feel things in a new way. And it is still more difficult for the body to have a purely material perception of what a new world will be. Yet this perception must *precede* the material transformation; first one must *feel* very concretely the strangeness of the old things, their lack

of relevance, if I may say so. One must have the feeling, even a material impression, that they are outdated, that they belong to a past which no longer has any purpose. …"[28]

3. The Siddhi Day (24-11-1926) and the Overmind Creation

"Sri Aurobindo had given me charge of the outer work because he wanted to withdraw into concentration in order to hasten the manifestation of the supramental consciousness and he had announced to the few people who were there that he was entrusting to me the work of helping and guiding them, that I would remain in contact with him, naturally, and that through me he would do the work. Suddenly, immediately, things took a certain shape: a very brilliant creation was worked out in extraordinary detail, with marvellous experiences, contacts with divine beings, and all kinds of manifestations which are considered miraculous. Experiences followed one upon another, and, well, things were unfolding altogether brilliantly and... I must say, in an extremely interesting way.

One day, I went as usual to relate to Sri Aurobindo what had been happening – we had come to something really very interesting, and perhaps I showed a little enthusiasm in my account of what had taken place – then Sri Aurobindo looked at me... and said: "Yes, this is an Overmind creation. It is very interesting, very well done. You will perform miracles which will make you famous throughout the world, you will be able to turn all events on earth topsy-turvy, indeed,..." and then he smiled and said: 'It will be a *great* success. But it is an Overmind creation. And it is not success that we want; we want to establish the Supermind on earth.

One must know how to renounce immediate success in order to create the new world, the supramental world in its integrality.'

With my inner consciousness I understood immediately: a few hours later the creation was gone... and from that moment we started anew on other bases."[29]

4. Overmind Creation and the New Creation

"…the old spirituality was an escape from life into the divine Reality, leaving the world just where it was, as it was; whereas our new vision, on the contrary, is a divinisation of life, a transformation of the material world into a divine world. This has been said, repeated, more or less understood, indeed it is the basic idea of what we want to do. But this could be a continuation with an improvement, a widening of the old world as it was – and so long as this is a conception up there in the field of thought, in fact it is hardly more than that – but what has happened, the really new thing, is that a new world is *born, born, born.* It is not the old one transforming itself, it is a *new* world which is *born.* And we are right in the midst of this period of transition where the two are entangled – where the other still persists all-powerful and entirely dominating the ordinary consciousness, but where the new one is quietly slipping in, still very modest, unnoticed – unnoticed to the extent that outwardly it doesn't disturb anything very much, for the time being, and that in the consciousness of most people it is even altogether imperceptible. And yet it is working, growing – until it is strong enough to assert itself visibly.

In any case, to simplify things, it could be said that

characteristically the old world, the creation of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, was an age of the gods, and consequently the age of religions. As I said, the flower of human effort towards what is above it gave rise to innumerable religious forms, to a religious relationship between the best souls and the invisible world. And at the very summit of all that, as an effort towards a higher realisation there has arisen the idea of the unity of religions, of this "one single thing" which is behind all these manifestations; and this idea has truly been, so to speak, the extreme limit of human aspiration. Well, that is at the frontier, it is something that still belongs *completely* to the Overmind world, the Overmind creation and which from there seems to be looking towards this "other thing" which is a new creation it cannot grasp – which it tries to reach, feels coming, but cannot grasp. To grasp it, a reversal is needed. It is necessary to leave the Overmind creation. It was necessary that the new creation, the supramental creation should take place.

And now, all these old things seem so old, so out-of-date, so arbitrary – such a travesty of the real truth.

In the supramental creation there will *no longer be any religions*. The whole life will be the expression, the flowering into forms of the divine Unity manifesting in the world. And there will no longer be what men now call gods.

These great divine beings themselves will be able to participate in the new creation; but to do so, they will have to put on what we could call the "supramental substance" on earth. And if some of them choose to remain in their world as they are, if they decide not to manifest physically,

their relation with the beings of a supramental earth will be a relation of friends, collaborators, equals, for the highest divine essence will be manifested in the beings of the new supramental world on earth.

When the physical substance is supramentalised, to incarnate on earth will no longer be a cause of inferiority, quite the contrary. It will give a plenitude which cannot be obtained otherwise.

But all this is in the future; it is a future... which has *begun*, but which will take some time to be realised integrally. Meanwhile we are in a very special situation, extremely special, without precedent. We are now witnessing the birth of a new world; it is very young, very weak – not in its essence but in its outer manifestation – not yet recognised, not even felt, denied by the majority. But it is here. It is here, making an effort to grow, absolutely *sure* of the result. But the road to it is a completely new road which has never before been traced out – nobody has gone there, nobody has done that! It is a beginning, a *universal beginning*. So, it is an absolutely unexpected and unpredictable adventure."[30]

5. The Great Adventure – A Call from the Mother

"There are people who love adventure. It is these I call, and I tell them this: 'I invite you to the great adventure.'

It is not a question of repeating spiritually what others have done before us, for our adventure begins beyond that. It is a question of a new creation, entirely new, with all the unforeseen events, the risks, the hazards it entails – a *real adventure*, whose goal is certain victory, but the road to which is unknown and must be

traced out step by step in the unexplored. Something that has never been in this present universe and that will *never* be again in the same way. If that interests you... well, let us embark. What will happen to you tomorrow – I have no idea.

One must put aside all that has been foreseen, all that has been devised, all that has been constructed, and then... set off walking into the unknown. And – come what may! There."[31]

6. The Fundamental Basis of All the Methods of Physical Culture

"The basis of all these methods is the power exercised by the conscious will over matter. Usually it is a method which someone has used fairly successfully and set up as a principle of action, which he has taught to others who in turn have continued and perfected it until it has taken a somewhat fixed form of one kind of discipline or another. But **the whole basis is the action of the conscious will on the body.** The exact form of the method is not of primary importance. In various countries, at various times, one method or another has been used, **but always behind it there is a canalised mental power which acts methodically.** Of course, some methods try to use a higher power which would in its turn transmit its capacity to the mental power: if a power of a higher order is infused into the mental method, this method naturally becomes more effective and powerful. But essentially all these disciplines depend above all on the person who practises them and the way he uses them. One can, even in the most material, ordinary processes, make use of this altogether external basis

to infuse into them powers of a higher order. And all methods, whatever they may be, depend almost exclusively on the person who uses them, on what he puts into them.

You see, if the matter is considered in its most modern, most external form, how is it that the movements we make almost constantly in our everyday life, or which we have to make in our work if it is a physical work, do not help or help very little, almost negligibly, to develop the muscles and to create harmony in the body? These same movements, on the other hand, if they are made consciously, deliberately, with a definite aim, suddenly start helping you to form your muscles and build up your body. There are jobs, for instance, where people have to carry extremely heavy loads, like bags of cement or sacks of corn or coal, and they make a considerable effort; to a certain extent they do it with an acquired facility, but that doesn't give them harmony of the body, because they don't do it with the *idea* of developing their muscles, they do it just "like that". And someone who follows a method, either one he has learnt or one he has worked out for himself, and who makes these very movements with the will to develop this muscle or that, to create a general harmony in his body – he succeeds. Therefore, in the conscious will, there is something which adds considerably to the movement itself. Those who really want to practise physical culture as it is conceived now, everything they do, they do consciously. They walk downstairs consciously, they make the movements of ordinary life consciously, not mechanically. An attentive eye will perhaps notice a little difference but the greatest difference lies in the will they put into it, the consciousness they put into it. Walking to go somewhere and walking as an

exercise is not the same thing. **It is the conscious will in all these things which is important, it is that which brings about the progress and obtains the result. Therefore, what I mean is that the method one uses has only a relative importance in itself; it is the will to obtain a certain result that is important.**

The yogi or aspiring yogi who does *asanas* to obtain a spiritual result or even simply a control over his body, obtains these results because it is with this aim that he does them, whereas I know some people who do exactly the same things but for all sorts of reasons unrelated to spiritual development, and who haven't even managed to acquire good health by it! And yet they do exactly the same thing, sometimes they even do it much better than the yogi, but it doesn't give them a stable health... because they haven't thought about it, haven't done it with this purpose in mind. I have asked them myself, I said, "But how can you be ill after doing all that?" – "Oh! but I never thought of it, that's not why I do it." This amounts to saying that it is the conscious will which acts on matter, not the material fact.

But you only have to try it, you will understand very well what I mean. For instance, **all the movements you make when dressing, taking your bath, tidying your room... no matter what; make them consciously, with the will that this muscle should work, that muscle should work. You will see, you will obtain really amazing results.**

Going up and down the stairs – you cannot imagine how useful that can be from the point of view of physical culture, if you know how to make use of it. Instead of going

up because you are going up and coming down because you are coming down, like any ordinary man, you go up with the consciousness of all the muscles which are working and of making them work harmoniously. You will see. Just try a little, you will see! This means that you can use all the movements of your life for a harmonious development of your body.

You bend down to pick something up, you stretch up to find something right at the top of a cupboard, you open a door, you close it, you have to go round an obstacle, there are a hundred and one things you do constantly and which you can make use of for your physical culture and which will demonstrate to you that **it is the consciousness you put into it which produces the effect, a hundred times more than just the material fact of doing it.** So, you choose the method you like best, but you can use the whole of your daily life in this way.... To think constantly of the harmony of the body, of the beauty of the movements, of not doing anything that is ungraceful and awkward. You can obtain a rhythm of movement and gesture which is very exceptional."[32]

7. How to Awaken in the Body an Aspiration for the Divine?*

"When one is very young and as I say "well-born", that is, born with a conscious psychic being within, there is always, in the dreams of the child, a kind of aspiration, which for its child's consciousness is a sort of ambition, for something which would be beauty without ugliness, justice without injustice, goodness without limits, and a conscious, constant success, a perpetual miracle. One dreams of miracles when

one is young, one wants all wickedness to disappear, everything to be always luminous, beautiful, happy, one likes stories which end happily. This is what one should rely on. When the body feels its miseries, its limitations, one must establish this dream in it – of a strength which would have no limit, a beauty which would have no ugliness, and of marvellous capacities: one dreams of being able to rise into the air, of being wherever it is necessary to be, of setting things right when they go wrong, of healing the sick; indeed, one has all sorts of dreams when one is very young.... Usually parents or teachers pass their time throwing cold water on it, telling you, "Oh! it's a dream, it is not a reality." They should do the very opposite! Children should be taught, 'Yes, this is what you must try to realise and not only is it possible but it is *certain* if you come in contact with the part in you which is capable of doing this thing. This is what should guide your life, organise it, make you develop in the direction of the *true reality* which the ordinary world calls illusion.'

This is what it should be, instead of making children ordinary, with that dull, vulgar common sense which becomes an inveterate habit and, when something is going well, immediately brings up in the being the idea: "Oh, that won't last!", when somebody is kind, the impression, "Oh, he will change!", when one is capable of doing something, "Oh, tomorrow I won't be able to do it so well." This is like an acid, a destructive acid in the being, which takes away hope, certitude, confidence in future possibilities.

When a child is full of enthusiasm, never throw cold water on it, never tell him, "You know, life is not like that!" You should always encourage him, tell him, 'Yes, at present

things are not always like that, they *seem* ugly, but behind this there is a beauty that is trying to realise itself. This is what you should love and draw towards you, this is what you should make the object of your dreams, of your ambitions.'

And if you do this when you are very small, you have much less difficulty than if later on you have to undo, undo all the bad effects of a bad education, undo that kind of dull and vulgar common sense which means that you expect nothing good from life, which makes it insipid, boring, and contradicts all the hopes, all the so-called illusions of beauty. On the contrary, you must tell a child – or yourself if you are no longer quite a baby – **"Everything in me that seems unreal, impossible, illusory, *that* is what is true, *that* is what I must cultivate."** When you have these aspirations: "Oh, not to be always limited by some incapacity, all the time held back by some bad will!", you must cultivate within you this certitude that *that* is what is essentially true and *that* is what must be realised.

Then faith awakens in the cells of the body. And you will see that you find a response in your body itself. The body itself will feel that if its inner will helps, fortifies, directs, leads, well, all its limitations will gradually disappear.

And so, when the first experience comes, which sometimes begins when one is very young, the first contact with the inner joy, the inner beauty, the inner light, the first contact with *that*, which suddenly makes you feel, "Oh! that is what I want," you must cultivate it, never forget it, hold it constantly before you, tell yourself, "I have felt it once, so I can feel it again. This has been real for me, even for the

space of a second, and that is what I am going to revive in myself"..... And encourage the body to seek it – to seek it, *with the confidence* that it carries that possibility within itself and that if it calls for it, it will come back, it will be realised again.

This is what should be done when one is young. This is what should be done every time one has the opportunity to recollect oneself, commune with oneself, seek oneself.

And then you will see. When one is normal, that is to say, unspoilt by bad teaching and bad example, when one is born and lives in a healthy and relatively balanced and normal environment, the body, spontaneously, without any need for one to intervene mentally or even vitally, has the certitude that even if something goes wrong it will be cured. **The body carries within itself the certitude of cure, the certitude that the illness or disorder is sure to disappear. It is only through the false education from the environment that gradually the body is taught that there are incurable diseases, irreparable accidents, and that it can grow old, and all these stories which destroy its faith and trust.** But normally, the body of a normal child – the body, I am not speaking of the thought – the body itself feels when something goes wrong that it will certainly be all right again. And if it is not like that, this means that it has already been perverted. It seems *normal* for it to be in good health, it seems quite abnormal to it if something goes wrong and it falls ill; and in its instinct, its spontaneous instinct, it is sure that everything will be all right. It is only the perversion of thought which destroys this; as one grows up the thought becomes more and more distorted, there is the whole collective suggestion, and so, little by little, the body loses its trust in itself, and

naturally, losing its self-confidence, it also loses the spontaneous capacity of restoring its equilibrium when this has been disturbed.

But if when very young, from your earliest childhood, you have been taught all sorts of disappointing, depressing things – things that cause decomposition, I could say, disintegration – then this poor body does its best but it has been perverted, put out of order, and no longer has the sense of its inner strength, its inner force, its power to react.

If one takes care not to pervert it, the body carries within itself the certitude of victory. It is only the wrong use we make of thought and its influence on the body which robs it of this certitude of victory. So, the first thing to do is to cultivate this certitude instead of destroying it; and when it is there, no effort is needed to aspire, but simply a flowering, an unfolding of that inner certitude of victory.

The body carries within itself the sense of its divinity. There. This is what you must try to find again in yourself if you have lost it.

When a child tells you a beautiful dream in which he had many powers and all things were very beautiful, be very careful never to tell him, "Oh! life is not like that", for you are doing something wrong. You must on the contrary tell him, 'Life *ought to be* like that, and *it will be* like that!'"[33]

8. One Must Come Out of the Mental Consciousness to Experience a State of Perfect Freedom

"…If you remain in a consciousness which functions mentally, even if it is the highest mind, you have the notion of

an absolute determinism of cause and effect and feel that things are what they are because they are what they are and cannot be otherwise.

It is only when you come out of the mental consciousness completely and enter a higher perception of things – which you may call spiritual or divine – that you suddenly find yourself in a state of *perfect* freedom where *everything* is possible."[34]

9. The Nature of the Creation – A vision Unfolding Rather than a Will Creating

"Those who have contacted that state or lived in it, even if only for a moment, try to describe it as a feeling of an absolute Will in action, which immediately gives to the human mentality the feeling of being arbitrary. And because of that distortion there arises the idea – which I might call traditional – of a supreme and arbitrary God, which is something most *unacceptable* to every enlightened mind. I suppose that this experience badly expressed is at the origin of this notion. And in fact it is incorrect to express it as an absolute Will: it is very, very, very different. It is something else altogether. For, what man understands by "Will" is a decision that is taken and carried out. **We are obliged to use the word "will", but in its truth the Will acting in the universe is neither a choice nor a decision that is taken. What seems to me the closest expression is "vision". Things are because they are *seen.* But of course "seen", not seen as we see with these eyes. (*Mother touches her eyes*...) All the same, it is the nearest thing. It is a vision – a vision unfolding itself.**

The universe becomes objective as it is progressively seen.

And that is why Sri Aurobindo has said "intended or possible". It is neither one nor the other. All that can be said is a distortion.

(*Silence*)

Objectivisation – universal objectivisation – is something like a projection in space and time, like a living image of what *is* from all eternity. And as the image is gradually projected on the screen of time and space, it becomes objective:

The Supreme contemplating His own Image."[35]

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