

The Great Adventure

The Victory of Life

A Diary for all times

A diary with passages from The Mother's talks and writings to serve as guiding thoughts for daily meditation.

THE MOTHER

The Mother was born in Paris on 21 February 1878. She was called Mirra Alfassa. Her father was from Turkey and her mother from Egypt. Her early education was given at home. About the age of fourteen she attended a studio to learn drawing and painting and later joined Ecole de Beaux Arts. Besides being an accomplished painter she was a talented musician and a writer.

Between 11 and 13 she had a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealing the experience of God and the possibility of uniting with him. In her mid twenties she went to Algeria to study occultism under Max Théon and his wife.

At the age of thirty-six, in 1914, she came to Pondicherry to meet Sri Aurobindo and at once recognised in him the one who had been guiding her spiritual development. In 1915 she had to go back to France because of World War I. From France she went to Japan and from there returned to India in 1920.

After six years of silent development, in 1926, when Sri Aurobindo founded his Ashram, the Mother was entrusted with the full material and spiritual charge of the Ashram. About the relationship between the Mother and him Sri Aurobindo declared:

"The Mother's consciousness and mine are the same"

"There is no difference between the Mother's path and mine."

The Mother left her body on 17 November 1973 at the age of ninety-five.

THE GREAT ADVENTURE

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.

THE SUBLIMENT OF ADVENTURES

There is a moment when life such as it is, the human consciousness such as it is, seems something absolutely impossible to bear, it creates a kind of disgust, repugnance; one says: "No, it is not that, it is not that; it cannot be that, it cannot continue." Well, when one comes to this, there is only to throw in one's all - all one's effort, all one's strength, all one's life, all one's being into this chance, if you like, or this exceptional opportunity that is given to cross over to the other side. What a relief to set foot on the new path, that which will lead you elsewhere! This is worth the trouble of casting behind much luggage, of getting rid of many things in order to be able to take that leap. That is how I see the problem.

In fact it is the sublimit of adventures, and if one has in him in the slightest the true spirit of adventure, it is worth risking all for all.

A DECISIVE TURNING-POINT

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.

AN EXCEPTIONAL HOUR

People sleep, they forget, they take life easy - they forget, forget all the time... But if we could remember... that we are at an exceptional hour, a *unique* time, that we have this immense good fortune, this invaluable privilege of being present at the birth of a new world, we could easily get rid of everything that impedes and hinders our progress.

So, the most important thing, it seems, is to remember this fact: even when one does not have the tangible experience, to have the certainty of it and faith in it; to remember always, to recall it constantly, to go to sleep with this idea, to wake up with this perception; to do all that one does with this great truth as the back ground, as a constant support, this great truth that we are witnessing the birth of a new world.

We can participate in it, we can become this new world. And truly, when one has such a marvelous opportunity, one should be ready to give up everything for its sake.

WE ARE HERE TO LEARN

Essentially there is but one single true reason for living: it is to know oneself. We are here to learn - to learn what we are, why we are here, and what we have to do. And if we do not know that, our life is altogether empty-for ourselves and for others.

And so, generally, it is better to begin early, for there is much to learn. If one wants. to learn about life as it is, the world as it is, and then really know the 'why' and the 'how' of life, one can begin when very young, from the time one is very, very tiny - before the age of five. And then, when one is a hundred, he will still be able to learn. So it is interesting. And all the time one can have surprises, always learn something one did not know, meet with an experience one did not have before, find something one was ignorant of. It is surely very interesting. And the more one knows, the more aware does one become that one has everything to learn. Truly, I could say that only fools believe they know. That indeed is a sure sign, someone coming and telling you: "Oh! I know all that;" he is immediately sized up!

ONE DREAMS OF MIRACLES

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... 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..."

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."

A VERY DIFFICULT ART

If, when you were quite small, your parents or those who looked after you, took the trouble to teach you how to do what you do, do it properly as it should be done, in the right way, then that would help you to avoid all - all these mistakes you make throughout the years. And not only do you make mistakes, but nobody tells you they are mistakes! And so you are surprised that you fall ill, are tired, donot know how to do what you want to, and that you have never been taught. Some children are not taught anything, and so they need years and years and years to learn the simplest things, even the most elementary thing: to be clean...

To live in the right way is a very difficult art, and unless one begins to learn it when quite young and to make an effort, one never knows it very well. Simply the art of keeping one's body in good health, one's mind quiet and goodwill in one's heart, things which are indispensable in order to live decently I do not say in comfort, I do not say remarkably, I only say decently.

ONE NEEDS EDUCATION

If a child were not taught how to live, he could not live, he would not know how to do anything, anything... Even the most elementary things he would not do properly if he were not taught how to do them... If everyone had to go through the whole experience needed for the formation of an individuality, he would be long dead before having begun to live! This is the advantage of those- accumulated through centuries who have had the experience and tell you: "Well, if you want to go quickly, to know in a few years what has been learnt through centuries, do this!" Read, learn, study and then, in the material field, you will be taught to do this in this way, that in that way, this again in this way (gestures). Once you know a little, you can find your own method, if you have the genius for it! But first one must stand on one's own feet and know how to walk. It is very difficult to learn it all alone. It is like that for everyone. One must form oneself. Therefore, one needs education.

EDUCATION

Usually all education, all culture, all refinement of the senses and the being is one of the best ways of curing instincts, desires, passions. To eliminate these things does not cure them; to cultivate, intellectualise, refine them, this is the surest means of curing. To give the greatest possible development for progress and growth, to acquire a certain sense of harmony and exactness of perception, this is a part of the culture of the being, of the education of the being...

Education is certainly one of the best means of preparing the consciousness for a higher development. There are people with very crude and very simple nature, who can have great aspiration and attain a certain spiritual development, but the base will always be of an inferior quality, and as soon as they return to their ordinary consciousness they will find obstacles in it, because the stuff is too thin, there are not enough elements in their vital and material consciousness to enable them to bear the descent of a higher force.

ORGANISE WITH THE HELP OF REASON

In order to set out on these paths: {towards the higher realities} without fear and without any danger, one must have organised his being with the help of reason around the highest centre he consciously possesses, and organised it in such a way that it is inwardly in his control and he has not to say at every moment: "Ah! I have done this, I do not know why. Ah! that has happened to me, I do not know why," - and always it is, "I do not know, I do not know, I do not know," and as long as it is like that, the path is somewhat dangerous. Only when one does what he wants, knows what he wants, and is able to direct himself with certitude, without being tossed about by the hazards of life, then one can go forward on the suprarational path fearlessly, unhesitatingly and with the least danger. But one need not be very old for this to happen...

But one must not set out on this road with a baggage of impulses and desires, for that brings along all kinds of serious disturbances.

REASON MUST BE THE MASTER

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,... life must be dominated by reason and not by vital impulses. This should be taught to all children from their infancy... 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 the superinstinct 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... 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 animals. That is all.

CONTROL YOUR IMPULSES

From the time you are quite young, the work of your educators is to teach you to control your impulses and obey only those which are in conformity with the laws under which you live or with the ideal you wish to follow or the customs of the environment in which you are. The value of this mental construction which will govern your impulses depends a great deal on the surroundings in which you live and the character of the parents or people who educate you. But whether it be good or bad, mediocre or excellent, it is always the result of a mental control over the impulses. When your parents tell you: "You should not do this," or when they say: "You have to do that," this is a beginning of education for the mind's control over the impulses...

So the man of real merit or the more civilised man has a whole mental construction to which he must conform in order to be in harmony with the ideal of the environment in which he lives.

THE FEELING OF UNEASINESS

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

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

THE GREATEST OBSTACLE: HYPOCRISY

Now I am addressing parents and teachers, for it is very important to teach children that it is absolutely useless to "look" as if they were good, to "look" as if they were obedient, to "look" as if they were studying well, etc. Very often, the course parents and teachers adopt with their children is to encourage them to "look as if." It often happens that if a child spontaneously confesses his mistake, he is given a scolding. This is one of the greatest mistakes of parents. You must have sufficient control over yourself never to scold a child, even if he has broken a very valuable and cherished object. You should simply ask him: "How did you do that?" "What happened?" For the child ought to see why it happened, so that he can be more careful next time. But that is all. In this way you will get the child to be sincere with you instead of trying to deceive you.

The greatest obstacle to the transformation of one's own character is hypocrisy. If you always keep this in mind when dealing with a child, you can do him a lot of good.

A DESIRE OF A HIGHER KIND

When a child is full of desires, if one could give him a desire of a higher kind... if one could awaken in him the desire to know, the desire to learn, the desire to become a remarkable person in this way, begin with that. As these things are difficult to do, so, gradually, he will develop his will for these things. Or even, from the material point of view, the desire to do something difficult, as for example, construct a toy which is difficult to make or give him a game of patience which requires a great deal of perseverance.

If one can orient them - it requires much discernment, much patience, but it can be done - and if one can orient them towards something like this, to succeed in very difficult games or to work out something which requires much care and attention, and can push them in some line like this so that it exercises a persevering will in them, then this can have results: turn their attention away from certain things and towards others.

ACT WITHOUT ANY DESIRE

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

If you observe yourself attentively, you will see that before acting you need an inner impetus, some thing which pushes you. In the ordinary man this impetus is generally desire. This desire ought to be replaced by a clear, precise, constant vision of the Truth.

NEED AND DESIRE

How to know if things are really necessary, not desired?

...For that you must observe yourself very, very attentively, and if there is anything in you which produces something like a small intense vibration, then you may be sure that there lies a desire. For example, you say: "This food is necessary for me," - you believe, you imagine, you think that you need such and such a thing and you find the necessary means to obtain the thing. To know if it is a need or a desire, you must look at yourself very closely and ask yourself: "What will happen if I cannot get the thing?" Then if the immediate answer is: "Oh, it will be very bad," you may be sure that it is a matter of desire. It is the same for everything. For every problem you draw back, look at yourself and ask: "Let us see, am I going to have the thing?" If at that moment something in you jumps up with joy, you may be certain there is a desire. On the other hand, if something tells you: "Oh, I am not going to get it," and you feel very depressed, then again it is a desire.

GIVE UP DESIRE

The Buddha has said that there is a greater joy in overcoming a desire than in satisfying it. It is an experience everybody can have and one that is truly very interesting, very interesting...

There is a kind of inner communion with the psychic being which takes place when one willingly gives up a desire, and because of this one feels a much greater joy than if he had satisfied his desire. Besides, most usually, almost without exception, when one satisfies a desire it always leaves a kind of bitter taste somewhere.

There is not one satisfied desire which does not give a kind of bitterness; as when one has eaten too sugary a sweet it fills your mouth with bitterness. It is like that. You must try sincerely. Naturally you must not pretend to give up desire and keep it in a corner, because then one becomes very unhappy. You must do it sincerely.

WIN YOUR LITTLE VICTORIES

If through an effort of inner consciousness and knowledge, you can truly overcome in yourself a desire, that is to say, dissolve and abolish it, and if through inner goodwill, through consciousness, light, knowledge, you are able to dissolve the desire, you will be, first of all in yourself personally, a hundred times happier than if you had satisfied this desire, and then it will have a marvelous effect. It will have a repercussion in the world of which you have no idea. It will spread forth. For the vibrations you have created will continue to spread. These things grow larger like the snowball. The victory you win in your character, however small it be, is one which can be gained in the whole world...

If you really want to do something good, the best thing you can do is to win your small victories in all sincerity, one after another, and thus you will do for the world the maximum you are able to.

CHANGE YOURSELF FIRST

You can do nothing with others unless you are able to do it with yourself. You can never give a good advice to anyone unless you are able to give it to yourself first, and to follow it. And if you see a difficulty somewhere, the best way of changing this difficulty is to change it in yourself first. If you see a defect in anyone, you may be sure it is in you, and you begin to change it in yourself first. And when you would have changed it in yourself, you would be strong enough to change it in others. And this is a wonderful thing. People do not realise what an infinite grace it is that this universe is arranged in such a way that there is a collection of substance, from the most material to the highest spiritual, all that gathered together into what is called a small individual, but at the disposal of a central Will. And that is yours, your field of work, nobody can take it away from you, it is your own property.

YOGA AND RELIGION

Imagine someone who, in some way or other, has heard of something like the Divine or has a personal feeling that something of the kind exists, and begins to make all sorts of efforts: efforts of will, efforts of discipline, efforts of concentration, all sorts of efforts to find this Divine, to discover what He is, to become acquainted with Him and unite with Him. Then this person is doing yoga.

Now, if this person has noted down all the processes he has used and constructs a fixed system, and sets up all that he has discovered as absolute laws - for example, he says: "The Divine is like this, to find the Divine you must do this, make this particular gesture, take this attitude, perform this ceremony, and you must admit that this is the truth," you must say: "I accept that this is the Truth and I fully adhere to it; and your method is the only right one, the only one which exists" - if all that is written down, organised, arranged into fixed laws and ceremonies, it becomes a religion.

RELIGION: NOT DIVINE BUT HUMAN

Religion belongs to the higher mind of humanity. It is the effort of man's higher mind to approach, as far as it lies in its power, something beyond it, something to which humanity gives the name God or Spirit or Truth or Faith or Knowledge or the Infinite, some kind of Absolute, which the human mind cannot reach and yet tries to reach. Religion may be divine in its ultimate origin; in its actual nature it is not divine but human...

The articles and dogmas of a religion are mind-made things and, if you cling to them and shut yourself up in a code of life made out for you, you do not know and cannot know the truth of the Spirit that lies beyond all codes and dogmas, wide and large and free. When you stop at a religious creed and tie yourself in it, taking it for the only truth in the world, you stop the advance and widening of your inner soul.

RELIGION AND TRUE SPIRITUAL LIFE

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.

SRI AUROBINDO AND RELIGION

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

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

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

YOUR BELIEF AND OTHERS' BELIEFS

To think that your knowledge is the only true one, that your belief is the only true one and that others' beliefs are not true, is to do precisely what is done by all sects and religions... The contact which you have had with the truth of things, your personal contact - a contact which is more or less clear, profound, vast, pure – may have given you, as an individual, an interesting, perhaps even a decisive experience; but although this contact may have given you an experience of decisive importance, you must not imagine that it is a universal experience and that the same contact would give others the same experience. And if you understand this, that it is something purely personal, individual, subjective, that it is not at all an absolute and general law, then you can no longer despise the knowledge of others, nor seek to impose your own point of view and experience upon them. This understanding obviates all mental quarrels, which are always totally useless.

THE PROPAGANDIST SPIRIT

If you arrive at the conception of the world as the expression of the Divine in all His complexity, then the necessity for complexity and diversity has to be recognised, and it becomes impossible for you to want to make others think and feel as you do.

Each one should have his own way of thinking, feeling and reaction; why do you want others to do as you do and be like you? And even granting that your truth is greater than theirs,... the minute you want your truth to be greater than your neighbour's, you begin to wander away from the truth.

This habit of wanting to compel others to think as you do, has always seemed very strange to me; this is what I call: "the Propagandist Spirit," and it goes very far. You can go one step further and want people to do what you do, feel as you feel, and then it becomes a frightful uniformity.

SPIRITUAL LIFE AND MORALITY

The spiritual life, the life of Yoga, has for its object to grow into the Divine Consciousness and for its result to purify, intensify, glorify and perfect what is in you. It makes you a power for manifesting the Divine; it raises the character of each personality to its full value and brings it to its maximum expression; for this is part of the Divine plan. Morality proceeds by a mental construction and, with a few ideas of what is good and what is not, sets up an ideal type into which all must force themselves... The spiritual life reveals the one essence in all, but reveals too its infinite diversity; it works for diversity in oneness and for perfection in that diversity. Morality lifts up one artificial standard contrary to the variety of life and the freedom of the spirit. Creating something mental, fixed and limited, it asks all to conform to it. All must labour to acquire the same qualities and the same ideal nature. Morality is not Divine or of the Divine; it is of man and human.

A CERTAIN NUMBER OF RULES

Morality is something altogether artificial and arbitrary, and in most cases, among the best, it checks the true spiritual effort by a sort of moral satisfaction that one is on the right path...

What really helps, until one has found the inner light, is to make for oneself a certain number of rules which naturally should not be too rigid and fixed, but yet should be precise enough to prevent one from going completely out of the right path, or making irreparable mistakes - mistakes the consequences of which one suffers all one's life.

To do that, it is good to set up a certain number of principles in oneself, which, however, should be for each one, in conformity with his own nature. If you adopt a social, collective rule, you immediately make yourself a slave to this social rule, and that prevents you almost radically from making any effort for transformation.

FOLLOW YOUR OWN PATH

*"Thou must reach thy own summit,"
says Sri Aurobindo.*

*Is the summit the same for everybody or does each
one have his particular summit?*

In the last analysis, it is always the same summit the Divine oneness which is behind all things but everyone will reach his own summit, that is, through his own nature and own way of manifesting the Divine unity. This is what we were saying the other day: each one represents a special way of having a relation with the Divine and manifesting the Divine. You do not need to follow another's path! You must follow your own path and it is by this path that you will reach the summit, which is one, but found by your own route. The goal is beyond the summits the goal is one and beyond the summits but one may attain this summit each by his own road, climbing his own mountain, not the mountains of another.

SERVICE TO HUMANITY

One of the commonest forms of ambition is the idea of service to humanity. All attachment to such service or work is a sign of personal ambition. The Guru who believes that he has a great truth to teach to humanity and who wants many disciples and who feels uncomfortable when the disciples go away or who seizes on anybody that comes and tries to make him a disciple, is evidently following nothing but his ambition. You must be able, if you are ready to follow the Divine order, to take up whatever work you are given, even a stupendous work, and leave it the next day with the same quietness with which you took it up and not feel that the responsibility is yours. There should be no attachment - to any object or any mode of life. You must be absolutely free. If you want to have the true yogic attitude, you must be able to accept everything that comes from the Divine and let it go easily and without regret.

IT IS NOT WHAT ONE DOES

It is not what one does (what one does is very important, that is evident) that is the most important thing but what one is. Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of consciousness in which it is done that is important. You may work, do disinterested work without any idea of personal profit, work for the joy of working, but if you are not at the same time ready to leave this work, to change the work or change the way of working, if you cling to your own way of working, your surrender is not complete. You must come to a point when everything is done because you feel within, very clearly, in a more and more imperious way, that it is this which must be done and in this particular way, and that you do it only because of that. You do not do it because of any habit, attachment or preference, nor even any conception, even a preference for the idea that it is the best thing to do else your surrender is not total.

TO HELP HUMANITY - I

The Divine is everywhere. So if one serves humanity, one serves the Divine, is it not so?

That is marvelous! The clearest thing in this business is to say: "The Divine is in me. If I serve myself, I am also serving the Divine!" (*Laughter*) In fact, the Divine is everywhere. The Divine will do His own work very well without you.

I see quite well that you do not understand. But truly, if you do understand that the Divine is there, in all things, with what are you meddling in serving humanity? To serve humanity you must know better than the Divine what must be done for it. Do you know better than the Divine how to serve it?

...As for me, I see only one solution: if you want to help humanity, there is one thing to do, it is to take yourself, as possible and offer yourself the Divine. That is the solution. Because in this way, at least the material reality which you represent will be able to grow a little more like the Divine.

TO HELP HUMANITY - II

What do you want to do to serve humanity? Give food to the poor? - You can feed millions of them. That will not be a solution, this problem will remain the same. Give new and better living conditions to men? - The Divine is in them, how is it that things do not change? The Divine must know better than you the condition of humanity. What are you? You represent only a little bit of consciousness and a little bit of matter, it is that you call "myself". If you want to help humanity, the world or the universe, the only thing to do is to give that little bit entirely to the Divine. Why is the world not Divine?... It is evident that the world is not in order. So the only solution to the problem is to give what belongs to you. Give it totally, entirely to the Divine; not only for yourself but for humanity, for the universe. There is no better solution.

A CALL FOR THE PATH

The question you are to answer is this: Do you want the Yoga for the sake of the Divine? Is the Divine the supreme fact of your life, so much so that it is simply impossible for you to do without it? Do you feel that your very *raison d'être* is the Divine and without it there is no meaning in your existence? If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path.

This is the first thing necessary, - aspiration for the Divine.

The next thing you have to do is to tend it, to keep it always alert and awake and living. And for that what is required is concentration - concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose.

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

A fire is burning there, in the deep quietude of the heart. It is the Divinity in you, your true being. Hear its voice...

PLUNGE INTO THE DIVINE

There are disciplines such as Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga that one can practice and yet have nothing to do with the spiritual life; the former arrives mostly at body control, the latter at mind control. But to enter the spiritual life means to take a plunge into the Divine, as you would jump into the sea. And that is not the end but the very beginning; for after you have taken the plunge, you must learn to live in the Divine. How are you to do it? You have simply to jump straight in and not to think: "Where shall I fall? What will happen to me?" It is the hesitation of your mind that prevents you. You must simply let yourself go. If you wish to dive into the sea and are thinking all the time: "Ah, but there may be a stone here or a stone there," you cannot dive.

...Take the whole and entire plunge and you will be free from this outer confusion and get the true experience of the spiritual life.

A SPIRIT OF SURRENDER

Whatever you do, whatever the process you use, and even if you happen to have acquired in it a great skill and power, you must leave the result in the hands of the Divine. Always you may try, but it is for the Divine to give you the fruit of your effort or not to give it. There your personal power stops; if the result comes, it is the Divine Power and not yours that brings it... There is no more harm in turning to the Divine for the removal of a physical imperfection than in praying for the removal of a moral defect. But whatever you ask for or whatever your effort, you must feel, even while trying your best, using knowledge or putting forth power, that the result depends upon the Divine Grace. Once you have taken up the Yoga, whatever you do must be done in a spirit of complete surrender. This must be your attitude: "I aspire, I try to cure my imperfections, I do my best, but for the result! I put myself entirely into the hands of the Divine."

SURRENDER AND YOGA

Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. Without this decision nothing is at all possible; if you do not surrender, the Yoga is entirely out of the question. Everything else comes naturally after it, for the whole process starts with surrender. You can surrender either through knowledge or through devotion. You may have a strong intuition that the Divine alone is the truth and a luminous conviction that without the Divine you cannot manage. Or you may have a spontaneous feeling that this line is the only way of being happy, a strong psychic desire to belong exclusively to the Divine: "I do not belong to myself," you say, and give up the responsibility of your being to the Truth. Then comes self-offering: "Here I am, a creature of various qualities, good and bad, dark and enlightened. I offer myself as I am to you, take me up with all my ups and downs, conflicting impulses and tendencies - do whatever you like with me."

TRUE SURRENDER ENLARGES YOU

By surrender we mean... a spontaneous self-giving, a giving of all yourself to the Divine, to a greater Consciousness of which you are a part. Surrender will not diminish, but increase; it will not lessen or weaken or destroy your personality, it will fortify and aggrandise it. Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving; there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slightest feeling that you are making a sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender. For it means that you reserve yourself or that you are trying to give, with grudging or with pain and effort, and have not the joy of the gift, perhaps not even the feeling that you are giving. When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way. True surrender enlarges you; it increases your capacity; it gives you a greater measure in quality and in quantity which you could not have had by yourself.

TAPASYA AND SURRENDER

The path of *tapasya* is arduous. Here you rely solely upon yourself, you proceed by your own strength. You ascend and achieve according to the measure of your force. There is always the danger of falling down. And once you fall, you lie broken in the abyss and there is hardly a remedy. The other path, the path of surrender, is safe and sure. It is here, however, that the western people find their difficulty. They have been taught to fear and avoid all that threatens their personal independence. They have imbibed with their mother's milk the sense of individuality. And surrender means giving up all that. In other words, you may follow, as Sri Ramakrishna says: "either the path of the baby monkey or that of the baby cat." The baby monkey holds to its mother in order to be carried about and it must hold firm, otherwise if it loses its grip, it falls. On the other hand, the baby cat does not hold to its mother, but is held by the mother and has no fear nor responsibility; it has nothing to do but to let the mother hold it and cry *ma ma*.

THE MOST IMPORTANT SURRENDER

The most important surrender is the surrender of your character, your way of being, so that it may change. If you do not surrender your very own nature, never will this nature change. It is this that is most important. You have certain ways of understanding, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of feeling, almost certain ways of progressing, and above all, a special way of looking at life and expecting from it certain things - well, it is this you must surrender. That is, if you truly want to receive the Divine Light and transform yourself, it is your whole way of being you must offer - offer by opening it, making it as receptive as possible so that the Divine Consciousness which sees how you ought to be, may act directly and change all these movements into movements more true, more in keeping with your real truth. This is infinitely more important than surrendering what one does.

A CERTAIN NUMBER OF RULES

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

This is what you have to do to carry out your general offering in detailed offerings. Live constantly in the presence of the Divine; live in the feeling that it is this Presence which moves you and is doing everything you do. Offer all your movements to it, not only every mental action, every thought and feeling but even the most ordinary and external actions such as eating; when you eat, you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you. When you can thus gather all your movements into the One Life, then you have in you unity instead of division. No longer is one part of your nature given to the Divine, while the rest remains in its ordinary ways, engrossed in ordinary things; your entire life is taken up, an integral transformation is gradually realised in you.

THE INTEGRAL YOGA

In the integral Yoga, the integral life down even to the smallest detail has to be transformed, to be divinised. There is nothing here that is insignificant, nothing that is indifferent. You cannot say: "When I am meditating, reading philosophy or listening to these conversations I will be in this condition of an opening towards the Light and call for it, but when I go out to walk or see friends I can allow myself to forget all about it." To persist in this attitude means that you will remain untransformed and never have the true union; always you will be divided; you will have at best only glimpses of this greater life. For although certain experiences and realisations may come to you in meditation or in your inner consciousness, your body and your outer life will remain unchanged. An inner illumination that does not take any note of the body and the outer life, is of no great use, for it leaves the world as it is.

SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA - I

To do Sri Aurobindo's yoga is to want to transform oneself integrally, it is to have a single aim in life, such that nothing else exists any longer, that alone exists. And so one feels it clearly in oneself whether one wants it or not; but if one does not, one can still have a life of goodwill, a life of service, of understanding; one can labour for the work to be accomplished more easily all that - one can do many things. But between this and doing yoga there is a great difference.

And to do yoga you must want it consciously, you must know what it is, to begin with. You must know what it is, you must take a resolution about it; but once you have taken the resolution, you must no longer flinch. That is why you must take it in full knowledge of the thing. You must know what you are deciding upon when you say: "I want to do yoga," and that is why I do not think I have ever pressed you from this point of view.

SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA - II

To do the yoga, this yoga of transformation which, of all things, is the most arduous, it is only if one feels that one has come here for that (*I mean here upon earth*) and that one has to do nothing else but that, and that it is the only reason of one's existence - even if one has to toil hard, suffer, struggle, it is of no importance "This is what I want, and nothing else," - then it is different. Otherwise I shall say: "Be happy and be good, and that is all that is asked of you. Be good, in the sense of being understanding, knowing that the conditions in which you have lived are exceptional, and try to live a higher, more noble, more true life than the ordinary one, so as to allow a little of this consciousness, this light and its goodness to express itself in the world. It would be very good." There we are.

But once you have set foot on the path of yoga, you must have a resolution of steel and walk straight on to the goal, whatever the cost.

DO NOT LEAVE THE PATH

When you are on the path, do not ever leave it. Wait a little, you can hesitate as long as you want before taking it; but the minute you set your foot on it, it is finished, do not leave it. Because this has consequences which can even extend to several lives. It is something very serious. That is why, besides, I never push anyone to take the path. You are quite a number of children here; I have never asked anyone only those who came to me and told me: "I want it." And to these also, unless I am absolutely sure of them because it is written in their destiny that they have come for that, I always say: "Think about it, think, be quite sure that this is what you want and nothing else." And when they have reflected and decided, it is finished.

I mean, one should not leave the path any more. One should go forward at all costs and try not to stop too often on the way, because it is easier to continue even if it is hard, you see, than to begin all over again when one has stopped. A much greater effort is needed to get going again than to continue on the way.

GET RID OF ALL TIES

If your aim is to be free, in the freedom of the Spirit, you must get rid of all the ties that are not the inner truth of your being, but come from subconscious habits. If you wish to consecrate yourself entirely, absolutely and exclusively to the Divine, you must do it in all completeness; you must not leave bits of yourself tied here and there...

When you come to the Yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental buildings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you except your faith. You will have to forget your past self and its clingings altogether, to pluck it out of your consciousness and be born anew, free from every kind of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be; be altogether in what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family lie there; it is the DIVINE.

ABANDON ALL MENTAL CONCEPTIONS

When you come to the Divine, you must abandon all mental conceptions; but, instead of doing that, you throw your conceptions upon the Divine and want the Divine to obey them. The only true attitude for a Yogi is to be plastic and ready to obey the Divine Command whatever it may be; nothing must be indispensable to him, nothing a burden. Often the first impulse of those who want to live the spiritual life is to throw away all they have; but they do it because they want to be rid of a burden, not because they want to surrender to the Divine. Men who possess wealth and are surrounded by the things that give them luxury and enjoyment turn to the Divine, and immediately their movement is to run away from these things, or, as they say: "to escape from their bondage". But it is a wrong movement; you must not think that the things you have belong to you, - they belong to the Divine. If the Divine wants you to enjoy anything, enjoy it; but be ready too to give it up the very next moment with a smile.

RENUNCIATION

There is in books a lot of talk about renunciation - that you must renounce possessions, renounce attachments, renounce desires. But I have come to the conclusion that so long as you have to renounce anything you are not on this path; for, so long as you are not thoroughly disgusted with things as they are, and have to make an effort to reject them, you are not ready for the supramental realisation... To renounce means that you are to give up what you value, that you have to discard what you think is worth keeping. What, on the contrary, you must feel is that this world is ugly, stupid, brutal and full of intolerable suffering; and once you feel in this way, all the physical, all the material consciousness which does not want it to be that, will want it to change, crying: "I will have something else - something that is true, beautiful, full of delight and knowledge and consciousness!"

WORK IN THE WORLD

I have seen persons who had no pretensions of doing yoga, who were simply filled with enthusiasm by the idea of terrestrial transformation and of the descent of the Divine into the world and who did their little bit of work with that enthusiasm in the heart, giving themselves wholly, without reserve, without any selfish idea of a personal salvation; these I have seen making magnificent progress, truly magnificent. And sometimes they are wonderful. I have seen sannyasis, I have seen people who live in monasteries, I have seen people who professed to be yogis, well, I would not exchange one of the others for a dozen such people... It is not by running away from the world that you will change it. It is by working there, modestly, humbly but with a fire in the heart, something that burns like an offering.

"SPIRITUAL LIFE"

There is no "spiritual life"! It is still the old idea, still the old idea of the sage, the *sannyasin*, the... who represents spiritual life, while all the others represent ordinary life - and it is not true, it is not true, it is not true at all.

...What is most important is to eliminate these divisions. And everyone of them, all of them have it in their minds: the division between leading a spiritual life and leading an ordinary life, having a spiritual consciousness and having an ordinary consciousness - there is only One Consciousness.

In most people it is three-quarters asleep and distorted; in many it is still completely distorted. But what is needed, very simply, is not to leap from one consciousness into another, but to open one's consciousness (*upward gesture*) and to fill it with vibration of Truth, to bring it in harmony with what must be here - there it exists all eternity - but here, what must be here: the "tomorrow" of the earth.

ASCETIC METHODS -I

Mother, for self-mastery are not the ascetic methods useful sometimes?

No! You cure nothing. You only give yourself the illusion that you have progressed, but you cure nothing. The proof is that if you stop your ascetic methods, the thing is even stronger than before; it comes back with a vengeance. It depends upon what you call ascetic methods. If it is not to indulge in satisfying all your desires, this indeed is not asceticism, it is common sense. It is something else. Ascetic methods are things like repeated fasting, compelling yourself to endure the cold,.. in fact, to torture your body a little. This indeed gives you only a spiritual pride, nothing more. It masters nothing at all. It is infinitely easier. People do it because it is very easy, it is simple. Just because the pride is quite satisfied and the vanity can get puffed up, it becomes very easy.

ASCETIC METHODS - II

One makes a great demonstration of his ascetic virtues, and so considers himself an extremely important personage, and that helps him to endure many things.

It is much more difficult to master one's impulses quietly, composedly, and to prevent them from showing themselves - much more! - without taking ascetic measures. It is much more difficult not to be attached to the things you possess than to possess nothing. This is something that has been known for centuries. It requires a much greater quality not to be attached to the things one possesses than to be without any possessions or to reduce one's possessions to a strict minimum. It is much more difficult. It is a much higher degree of moral worth. Simply this attitude: when a thing comes to you, to take it, use it; when for one reason or another it goes away, to let it go and not regret it. Not to refuse it when it comes, to know how to adapt yourself and not to regret it, when it goes.

OUTER DISCIPLINE

But does not some outer discipline help?

If you impose a discipline upon yourself and if it is not too stupid, it may help you. A discipline, I tell you disciplines, - *tapasyas*, all ascetic disciplines are, as ordinarily practiced, the best means of making you proud, of building up in you such a terrific pride that never, never will you be converted. It will have to be broken down with hammer-strokes.

The first condition is a healthy humility which makes you realise that unless you are sustained, nourished, helped, enlightened, guided by the Divine, you are *nothing at all*. There now. When you have felt that, not only understood it with your mind, but felt it down to your very body, then you will begin to be wise, but not before.

TRUE HUMILITY

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

It is very simple, when people are told: "be humble," they think immediately of "being humble before other men" and that humility is wrong. True humility is humility before the Divine, that is, a precise, exact, living sense that one is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine, that even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the Divine Consciousness, and this sense one must always keep, because then one always has the true attitude of "receptivity" - a humble receptivity that does not put personal pretensions in opposition to the Divine.

SOMEONE WHO KNOWS VERY LITTLE

It is not necessarily someone with experience who is most advanced. He lacks an element of simplicity, modesty, and the plasticity that comes from the fact that one is not yet totally developed. As one grows, something crystallises in the head; it gets more and more fixed and unless you try very hard you finish by becoming fossilised. This is what usually happens to people, particularly those who have tried for some realisation and succeeded in it or those who have come to believe they have reached the goal... For me personally, I admit I prefer for my work someone who knows very little, has not laboured too much, but who has a great deal of aspiration, a great goodwill and who feels in himself this flame, this need for progressing. He may know very little, may have realised still less, but if he has that within him, it is good stuff with which one can go very far, much further.

PRIDE AND VANITY

For the sage or the saint who is quite infatuated with his own importance and his own worth, and full of pride and vanity, there is not much chance that the Divine will manifest in him, for there is no place for the expression of the Divine! There is no place except for the important personality of the wise man and his moral worth.

Naturally, there is a state in which one may be perfectly pure, perfectly wise, and be in contact with the Divine! But then, that means that one has reached a certain degree of perfection and lost the sense of one's personal importance and personal worth. I believe that is most important. The greatest obstacle to the contact with the Divine is pride and the sense of one's personal worth, one's personal capacities, personal power - the person becomes very big, so big that there is no place for the Divine.

No, the one truly important thing is the intensity of the aspiration. And this intensity of aspiration comes in all kinds of circumstances.

VANITY CLOSES YOU UP

There is nothing that closes you up more than vanity. When you are self-satisfied, you have that kind of vanity of not wanting to admit that you lack something, that you make mistakes, that you are incomplete, that you are imperfect, that you are... There is something in the nature, you know, which grows stiff in this way, which does not want to admit, it is this which prevents you from receiving. You have, however, only to try it out and get the experience. If, by an effort of will you manage to make even a very tiny part of the being admits that: "Ah, well, yes, I am mistaken, I should not be like that, and I should not do that and should not feel that, yes, it is a fault," if you manage to make it admit this, at first, as I said just now, it begins by hurting you very much, but when you hold on firmly, until this is admitted, immediately it is open, it is open and strangely a flood of light enters, and then you feel so glad afterwards, so happy that you ask yourself: "Why, from what foolishness did I resist so long?"

THE ONLY TRULY EFFECTIVE ATTITUDE

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

And it is only when one understands that all external things, all mental constructions, all material efforts are vain, futile, if they are not entirely consecrated to this Light and Force from above, to this Truth which is trying to express itself, that one is ready to make decisive progress. So the only truly effective attitude is a perfect, total, fervent giving of our being to that which is above us and which alone has the power to change everything.

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

First one must wake up, then one can conquer.

OPEN YOURSELF, BE MODEST

What you should do is to throw the doors of your being wide open to the Divine. The moment you conceal something, you step straight into falsehood. The least suppression on your part pulls you immediately down into unconsciousness. If you want to be fully conscious, be always in front of the Truth, completely open yourself and try your utmost to let it see deep inside you, into every corner of your being. That alone will bring into you light and consciousness and all that is most true. Be absolutely modest, that is to say, know the distance between what you are and what is to be, not allowing the crude physical mentality to think that it knows when it does not, that it can judge when it cannot. Modesty implies the giving up of yourself to the Divine wholeheartedly, asking for help and, by submission, winning the freedom and absence of responsibility which imparts to the mind utter quietness. Not otherwise can you hope to attain the union with the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Will.

SINCERITY

"What is the fundamental virtue to be cultivated in order to prepare for the spiritual life?"

I have said this many times, but this is an opportunity to repeat it: it is *sincerity*.

A sincerity which must become total and absolute, for sincerity *alone* is your protection on the spiritual path. If you are not sincere, at the very next step you are sure to fall and break your head. All kinds of forces, wills, influences, entities are there, on the look out for the least little rift in this sincerity and they immediately rush in through that rift and begin to throw you into confusion.

Therefore, before doing anything, beginning anything, trying anything, be sure *first of all* that you are not only as sincere as you can be, but have the intention of becoming still more so.

For that is your only protection.

PERFECT SINCERITY

Do you know what perfect sincerity is?...

Never to try to deceive oneself, never let any part of the being try to find out a way of convincing the others, never to explain favorably what one does in order to have an excuse for what one wants to do, never to close one's eyes when something is un-pleasant, never to let anything pass, telling oneself: "That is not important, next time it will be better."

Oh! it is very difficult. Just try for one hour and you will see how will see how very difficult it is. Only one hour, to be *totally, absolutely* sincere. To let nothing pass. That is, all one does, all one feels, all in things, all one wants, is *exclusively* the Divine.

"I want nothing but the Divine, I think of nothing but the Divine, I do nothing but what will lead me to the Divine, I love nothing but the Divine."

ABSOLUTE SINCERITY

If you are not absolutely sincere, not only with others but also with yourself, if at any time you try to cover up your imperfections and failings, you will never make any progress, you will always remain what you are throughout all your life, without ever making any progress. So, even if you only want to grow out of this primitive unconscious state into a progressive consciousness, the most important thing, the one absolutely important thing is sincerity. If you have done something which you ought not to have done, you must admit it to yourself; if a less-than- admirable movement has occurred in yourself, you must look it in the face and tell yourself: "It was not good," or "It was disgusting" or even: "It was wicked."

It is only when you look yourself in the face, in the light of your highest consciousness, that whatever you want, eliminate from your nature will disappear. Without this striving for absolute sincerity, the defect, the little shadow, will stay in a corner biding its time to come out.

INSINCERITY AND UNHAPPINESS

"Things are not beautiful, the world is nasty, people are not pleasant." It goes sometimes to this length: "The food is not good, yesterday it was excellent." It is the same but today it is not good! This is the barometer! You may immediately tell yourself that an insincerity has crept in somewhere. It is very easy to know, you do not need to be very learned, for, as Sri Aurobindo has said in *Elements of Yoga*: "One knows whether one is happy or unhappy, one knows whether one is content or discontented, one does not need to ask oneself, put complicated questions for this, one knows it!" - Well, it is very simple.

The moment you feel unhappy, you may write beneath it: "I am not sincere!"

These two sentences go together:

"I FEEL UNHAPPY."

"I AM NOT SINCERE."

Now, what is it that is wrong? Then one begins to take a look, it is easy to find out.

THE PSYCHIC MIRROR

This is life. One stumbles and falls on the first occasion. One tells oneself: "Oh! one cannot always be so serious," and when the other part returns, once again, one repents bitterly: "I was a fool, I have wasted my time, now I must begin again..."

There is but one remedy: that signpost must always be there, a mirror well placed in one's feelings, impulses, all one's sensations. One sees them in this mirror. There are some which are not very beautiful or pleasant to look at; there are others which are beautiful, pleasant, and must be kept. This one does a hundred times a day if necessary. And it is very interesting. One draws a kind of big circle around the psychic mirror and arranges all the elements around it. If there is something that is not all right, it casts a sort of grey shadow upon the mirror: this element must be shifted, organised. It must be spoken to, made to understand, one must come out of that darkness. If you do that, you never get bored.

FACE YOURSELF

Every time you are afraid to face yourself and hide carefully from yourself, what prevents you from advancing, well, it is as though you were building a wall on the way; later you must demolish it to pass on. It is better to do your task immediately, look yours straight in the face, straight in the face, not try to sugarcoat the bitter pill. It is very bitter: all the weaknesses, ugliness, all kinds of nasty little things which one has inside, there are, oh! lots of them. "What petty meanness, small stupidity, little vanity, ignorance, bad will is still there, hidden in the corner, preventing me from crossing the threshold, the threshold of this new discovery? Who is there in me, who is so small, so mean and obstinate, hiding there like a worm in a fruit so that I may not be able to see it?" If you are sincere you find it; you always sugar-coat the pill. The sugar-coating is a kind of what is called 'mental understanding' of oneself. So one coats as thickly with sugar as possible in order to hide well from oneself what is there, the worm in the fruit.

TO SEE ONESELF AS ONE IS

It is no use at all hiding things and pushing them behind, like this, and imagining they are not there because one has put a veil in front. It is much better to see oneself as one is - provided one is ready to give up this way of being. If you come allowing all the bad movements to rise to the surface, to show themselves; if you offer them, if you say: "Well, this is how I am," and if at the same time you have the aspiration to be different, then this second of presence is extremely useful; you can, yes, in a few seconds receive the help you need to get rid of them; while if you come like a little saint and go away content, without having received anything, it is not very useful.

Automatically the Consciousness acts like that, it is like the ray that brings light where there wasn't any. Only, what is needed is to be in a state where one wants to give up the thing, to get rid of it, not to cling to it and keep it. If one sincerely wants to pull it out of oneself, make it disappear, then it is very useful.

OFFER UP WRONG MOVEMENTS

Instead of driving the wrong movement underground, it is to be offered. It is to place the thing, the movement itself, to *project* it into the Light.

...If we can project our sensation or our activity or our perception into that Light, that will bring the cure. Instead of suppressing or rejecting it as something to be destroyed (it cannot be destroyed!) it has to be projected into the Light... Instead of seeking to throw away far from oneself certain things (which one does not accept, and which produce an imbalance in the being), instead of doing that, to accept them, take them as part of oneself and... (*Mother opens her hands*) offer them up. They do not want to be offered, but there is a way of compelling them: the resistance is diminished in the proportion as we can diminish in us our sense of disapprobation; if we can replace this sense of disapprobation by a higher understanding, then we succeed. It is much more easy.

A VERY TINY SERPENT - I

There is a great difference between pushing back a thing simply because one does not want it and changing the state of one's consciousness which makes the thing totally foreign to one's nature. Usually, when one has a movement one does not want, one drives it away or pushes it back, but one does not take the precaution of finding within oneself what has served and still serves as a support for this movement, the particular tendency, the fold of the consciousness which enables this thing to enter the consciousness. If, on the contrary, instead of simply making a movement of reprobation and rejection, one enters deeply into one's vital consciousness and finds the support, that is, a kind of particular little vibration buried very deeply in a corner, often in such a dark corner that, it is difficult to find it there; if one starts hunting it down, that is, if one goes within, concentrates, follows as it were the trail of this movement to its origin, one finds something like a very tiny serpent coiled up, something at times quite tiny, not bigger than a pea, but very black and sunk very deeply.

A VERY TINY SERPENT - II

And then there are two methods: either to put so intense a light, the light of a truth- consciousness so strong, that this tiny serpent will be dissolved; or else to catch the thing as with pincers, pull it out from its place and hold it up before one's consciousness. The first method is radical but one does not always have at his disposal this light of truth, so one cannot always use it. The second method can be taken, but it hurts; it hurts as badly as the extraction of a tooth; I do not know if you have ever had a tooth pulled out, but it hurts as much as that, and it hurts here, like that. (*Mother shows the centre of the chest and makes a movement of twisting.*) And usually one is not very courageous. When it hurts very much, well, one tries to efface it like this (*gesture*) and that is why things persist. But if one has the courage to take hold of it and pull it until it comes out and to put it before himself, even if it hurts very much... To hold it up like this (*gesture*) until one can see it clearly, and then dissolve it, then it is finished.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR CONTRADICTION

Sometimes the whole day through one is good and suddenly one becomes wicked, for a minute very wicked, all the more wicked as one was good! Only, one does not observe it, thoughts cross one's mind, violent, bad, hateful things, like that. Usually one pays no attention to it. But this is what must be caught! As soon as it manifests, you must catch it like this (*Mother makes a movement*) with a very firm grip, and then hold it, hold it up to the light and say: "No! I do not want you! I do-not-want-you! I have nothing to do with this! You are going to get out of here, and you will not return!"...

to One is quite accustomed contradictions; one does not pay attention to this and that is why all these things live comfortably together as neighbors. One must first discover them and prevent them from intermingling in one's consciousness: decide between them, separate the shadow from the light. Later one can get rid of the shadow.

PAY ATTENTION

If one does not pay attention, things slide very easily into a hole: one takes a false step, then slips and suddenly bumps against the bottom of the hole. Then one asks oneself: "But how did this come about? What happened?" Simply a false step: you did not take care, you allowed that part of the being to draw you into its own field; because you did not pull it out of its way, did not compel it to follow you, it now drags you back instead.

If one wants to lead the spiritual life, one must not be three-fourths asleep. It is necessary to be wide awake and very attentive; otherwise you are like a little boat upon a river or a great sea with terrible currents, and if you are not alert, if you do not pay close heed to these currents, if you relax, relax your vigilance, all of a sudden you find that you are at the other end from where you wanted to go! You are carried away, just like that, quite naturally: "Why, yes, I wanted to go there and I find myself here!"

VIGILANCE

Vigilance means to be awake, to be on one's guard, to be sincere - never to be taken by surprise. When you want to do *sadhana*, at each moment of your life, there is a choice between taking a step that leads to the goal and falling asleep or sometimes even going backwards, telling yourself: "Oh, later on, not immediately" - sitting down on the way.

To be vigilant is not merely to resist what pulls you downward, but above all to be alert in order not to lose any opportunity to progress, any opportunity to overcome a weakness, to resist a temptation, any opportunity to learn something, to correct something, to master something. If you are vigilant, you can do in a few days what would otherwise take years. If you are vigilant, you change each circumstance of your life, each action, each movement into an occasion for coming nearer the goal.

BEFORE REACTING THINK A LITTLE

Do not ever take lightly all the circumstances of each day, all the tiny little things of life, all the small events, you know; never take all this lightly. Never react with your lower being. Each time you are told to do something or not to do it, you are not told this very often, but each time you are told, before reacting think a little, try to find in yourself the part which reacts. Do not react just like that, with what is most common place in you. Enter within yourself, try to find the best in yourself and with this you must react. *It is very important, it is very important.*

There are people who mark time for years because they have not done this. There are others who seem to fly, so fast do they go, because they pay attention to this. And those who do not do that throw the blame always on the Divine. They accuse the Grace... And so, naturally they make their case worse because they push away even the help they could have had in their difficulty. There we are.

THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SIDES - I

Ah, my child, you have certain faults, you know, things which prevent you from progressing. So, the negative side is to try and get rid of your defects. There are things which you have to be, to become, qualities which you must build in yourself in order to realise; so this side of construction is the positive side.

You have a defect, for example, a tendency not to speak the truth. Now this habit of falsehood, of not seeing or not speaking the truth, you fight against it by rejecting falsehood from your consciousness and endeavoring to eliminate that habit of not speaking the truth. For the thing to be done, you must build in yourself the habit of perceiving and always telling the truth. One is negative: you reject a fault. The other is positive: you build the quality. It is like that.

THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SIDES - II

The positive side is to increase one's aspiration, develop one's consciousness, unify one's being, to go within in order to enter more and more into contact with one's psychic being; to take up all the parts, all the movements, all the activities of one's being and put them before this psychic consciousness so that they fall into their true place in relation to this centre; finally, to organise all one's aspiration towards the Divine and one's progress towards the Divine. That is the positive side.

At the same time the negative side consists in refusing methodically and with discernment all the influences which come from outside or from the subconscious or inconscient or from the environment, and stand in the way of spiritual progress. One must discern these influences, suggestions, impulses, and systematically refuse them without ever getting discouraged by their persistence and ever yielding to their will... That is the negative side.

INNER CLEANLINESS

Not only is the positive movement of self- giving necessary but also the negative movement of rejection of everything in you that opposes this giving. You must not leave things "like that," buried somewhere, in such a way that at the first opportunity they wake up and undo all your work...

{Some} have completely neglected cleaning their room; it has remained as dirty as ever, and so, naturally, when the {spiritual} experience has gone, this dirt becomes still more repulsive than before.

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

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

BEGIN FROM THE OUTSIDE

All forces upon earth tend towards expressing themselves. These forces come with the object of manifesting themselves and if you place a barrier and refuse expression, they may try to beat against the barrier for a time, but in the end, they will tire themselves out and not being manifested, they will withdraw and leave you quiet.

So you must never say: "I shall first purify my thought, purify my body, purify my vital and then later I shall purify my action." That is the normal order, but it never succeeds. The effective order is to begin from the outside: "The very first thing is that I do not do it, and afterwards, I desire it no longer and next I close my doors completely to all impulses: they no longer exist for me, I am now outside all that." This is the true order, the order that is effective. First, not to do it. And then you will no longer desire and after that it will go out of your consciousness completely.

REFUSE THE LOWER MOVEMENTS - I

*Sweet Mother, how can we empty the consciousness
of its mixed contents?*

By aspiration, the rejection of the lower movements, a call to a higher force. If you do not accept certain movements, then naturally, when they find that they cannot manifest, gradually they diminish in force and stop occurring. If you refuse to express everything that is of a lower kind, little by little the very thing disappears, and the consciousness is emptied of lower things, it is by refusing to give expression - I mean not only in action but also in thought, in feeling. When impulses, thoughts, emotions come, if you refuse to express them, if you push them aside and remain in a state of inner aspiration and calm, then gradually they lose their force and stop coming. So the consciousness is emptied of its lower movements.

REFUSE THE LOWER MOVEMENTS - II

For instance, when undesirable thoughts come, if you look at them, observe them, if you take pleasure in following them in their movements, they will never stop coming. It is the same thing when you have undesirable feelings or sensations; if you pay attention to them, concentrate on them or even look at them with a certain indulgence, they will never stop. But if you absolutely refuse to receive and express them, after some time they stop. You must be patient and very persistent.

In a great aspiration, if you can put yourself into contact with something higher, some influence of your psychic being or some light from above, and if you can manage to put this in touch with these lower movements, naturally they stop more quickly. But before even being able to draw these things by aspiration, you can those movements from finding in you by a very persistent and patient refusal. When thoughts which you do not like come, if you just brush them and do not pay them any attention at all after some time they will not come...

BLAMING ONESELF

Is blaming oneself a good method of progressing?

Blaming oneself? No, not necessarily. It may be useful, it is indeed useful from time to time in order to get out of the illusion of one's own perfection. But one wastes much energy in self-criticism. It is much better to use this same energy in making progress, a concrete progress, something more useful. For example, if you have thoughts which are unpleasant, ugly, vulgar and disturbing, and you say: "Ah, ah, how intolerable I am, I still have such thoughts, what a nuisance it is!" It would be much better to use this very energy simply to do this (*gesture*) and drive away the thoughts...

It is of course necessary from time to time to recognise one's faults it is altogether indispensable. But to dwell too much upon them is not necessary. What is necessary is to use all one's energy in order to build up the qualities one wants to have and do what one wants to do. This is much more important.

GUARD AGAINST DESPAIR

For some people events are always contrary to what they desire or aspire for or believe to be good for them. They often despair. Is this a necessity for their progress?

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

So, in all circumstances of life you must always be very careful to guard against despair. Besides, this habit of being sombre, morose, of despairing, does not truly depend on events, but on a lack of faith in nature. One who has faith, even if in himself, can face all difficulties, all, even the most adverse, discouragement or despair. He fights like a man to the end. Natures that faith also lack endurance and courage.

DEPRESSION: TWO CAUSES

Depression may come from two causes: either from a want of vital satisfaction or from a considerable nervous fatigue in the body. Depression arising from physical fatigue is set right fairly easily: one has but to take rest. One goes to bed and sleeps until one feels well again, or else one rests, dreams, lies down. The want of vital satisfaction is pretty easily produced and usually one must face it with one's reason, must ferret out the cause of the depression, what has brought about the lack of satisfaction in the vital; and then one looks at it straight in the face and asks oneself whether that indeed has anything to do with one's inner aspiration or whether it is simply quite an ordinary movement. Generally one discovers that it has nothing to do with the inner aspiration and one can quite easily overcome it and resume one's normal movement. If that does suffice, then one must go deeper and deeper until one touches the psychic. Then one has only to put this psychic in contact with the movement of depression, and instantaneously it will vanish...

THE ARGUMENT OF WEAKNESS

Correcting an ignorance is like eliminating darkness: you light a lamp, the darkness disappears. But to make a mistake once again when you know it is a mistake, is as if someone lighted a lamp and you deliberately put it out... That correspond exactly to bringing the darkness back deliberately. For the argument of weakness does not hold. The Divine Grace is *always* there to help those who have decided to correct themselves, and they cannot say: "I am too weak to correct myself." They can say that they still have not taken the resolution to correct themselves, that somewhere in the being there is something that has not *decided* to do it, and that is what is serious.

The argument of weakness is an excuse. The Grace is there to give the supreme strength to whoever takes the resolution...

In the case of ignorance which is to be enlightened, it is enough, as I said, to light the lamp. In the case of conscious relapse, what is necessary is a cauterisation.

TO FALL BACK INTO ERROR

To fall back into an error which one knows to be an error, to make a mistake once again which one knows to be a mistake, this seems to me fantastic! It is a long time - well, at least relatively, by human reckoning - it is a long time I have been on earth, and I have yet not been able to understand that. It seems to me - it seems to me impossible. Wrong thoughts, wrong impulses, inner and outer falsehood, things which are ugly, base, so long as one does them or has them through ignorance - ignorance is there in the world - one understands, one is in the habit of doing them; it is ignorance, one does not know that it ought to be otherwise. But the moment the knowledge is there, the light is there, the moment one has seen the thing as it is, how can one do it again? That I do not understand!

Then what is one made of? One is made of shreds? One is made of goodness knows what, of jelly?... It cannot be explained. But is there no incentive, no will, nothing? Is there no inner dynamism?

ONE CHOOSES TO BE WEAK

It is a choice between your will and accepting submission. There is always a moment when one can decide.

...For ordinary things, as for example, giving way before an impulse or refusing it,.. one has plenty of time before him, one certainly has several minutes. And it is a choice between weak submission and a controlling will. And if the will is clear, if it is based on truth, if truly it obeys the truth and is clear, it always has the power to refuse the wrong movement. It is an excuse you give yourself when you say: "I could not." It is not true. It is that truly you have not wanted it in the right way. For there is always the choice between saying "yes" and saying "no". But one chooses to be weak and later gives oneself this excuse, saying: "It is not my fault; it was stronger than I." It is your fault if the thing was stronger than you. Because you are not these impulses, you are a conscious soul and an intelligent will, and your duty is to see that this is what governs you and not the impulses from below.

HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE WILL

Mother, how can one strengthen one's will?

Oh, as one strengthens muscles, by a methodical exercise. You take one little thing, something you want to do or do not want to do. Begin with a small thing, not something very essential to the being, but a small detail. And then, if, for instance, it is something you are in the habit of doing, you insist on it with the same regularity, you see, either not to do it or to do it - you insist on it and compel yourself to do it as you compel yourself to lift a weight it is the same thing. You make the same kind of effort, but it is more of an inner effort. And after having taken little things like this - things relatively easy, you know - after taking these and succeeding with them, you can unite with a greater force and try a more complicated experiment. And gradually, if you do this regularly, you will end up by acquiring an independent and very strong will.

LEARN HOW TO WILL

To learn how to will is a very important thing. And to will truly, you must unify your being. In fact, to be a being, one must first unify oneself. If one is pulled by absolutely opposite tendencies, if one spends three-fourths of his life without being conscious of himself and the reasons why he does things, is one a real being? One does not exist. One is a mass of influences, movements, forces, actions, reactions, but one is not a being. One begins to become a being when he begins to have a will. And one cannot have a will unless he is unified.

And when you have a will, you will be able to say, say to the Divine: "I want what You want." But not before that. Because in order to want what the Divine wants, you must have a will, otherwise you can will nothing at all. You would like to. You would like it very much. You would very much like to want what the Divine wants to do. You do not possess a will to give to Him and to put at His service.

VIOLENCE AND ANGER - I

Agitation, violence, anger, all these things are always, without exception, signs of weakness. And especially when one gets carried away in his speech and says things one should not say, this indeed is the sign of a frightful mental weakness - mental and vital-frightful...

There is a great weakness in social relations, a very great weakness; and that is why, in fact, one gets angry and gets carried away and says things he should not say. If one were not weak, one would never be violent. Weakness and violence are two things that go together. He who is truly strong is never violent. This is something one should always remember. Violence is always a sign of a weakness somewhere. Of course, one sees a man with bulging muscles who is very strong, knocking down another with all his might, and one says: "He is strong." It is not true. He has muscles, but morally he is very weak. So, he may be strong here and weak there. Usually this is what happens.

VIOLENCE AND ANGER - II

You may hear all the insults in the world, people may tell you all possible stupidities; if you are not weak, you may perhaps not smile outwardly, for it is not always good taste to smile, but deep within you, you are smiling, you let it pass, it does not touch you... Simply, if your mind has formed the habit of being quiet as it is recommended here, and you have the perception of truth within yourself, you can hear anything at all. It does not even produce the semblance of a vibration - everything remains absolutely immobile and quiet. And then if the witness we were speaking about a while ago is there, looking on at the comedy, he surely smiles.

But if you feel the vibrations which come from the other person who throws on you all his violence and anger, if you feel this... at first it does,.. and then, suddenly, there is a response; and then if you yourself begin to get into a temper, you may be sure that you are as weak as him.

INSULTS: REMAIN IMMOBILE

Suppose someone insults you; if in the face of these insults, you can remain immobile (*not only outwardly, I mean integrally*), without being shaken or touched in any way: you are there like a force against which, one can do nothing and you do not reply, you do not make a gesture, you do not say a word, all the insults thrown at you leave you absolutely untouched, within and without; you can keep your heart-beats absolutely quiet, you can keep the thoughts in your head quite immobile and calm without their being in the least disturbed, that is, your head does not answer immediately by similar vibrations and your nerves do not feel clenched with the need to return a few blows to relieve themselves; if you can be like that, you have a static power, and it is infinitely more powerful than if you had that kind of force which makes you answer insult by insult, blow by blow and agitation by agitation.

SHOCK AND INDIGNATION

You may very well be shocked by certain things, not for personal reasons, but precisely in your goodwill and eagerness to serve the Divine, when you see people behaving badly, being selfish, unfaithful and treacherous. There is a stage where you have overcome these things and no longer allow them to manifest in yourself, but to the extent that you are linked to the ordinary consciousness, the ordinary point of view, the ordinary life, the ordinary way of thinking, they are still possible, they exist latently because they are the reverse of the qualities that you are striving to attain. And this opposition still exists - until you rise above it and no longer have either the quality or the defect. So long as you have the virtue, its opposite is always latent in you; it is only when you are above both the virtue and the defect that it disappears.

So this kind of indignation that you feel comes from the fact that you are not altogether above it; you are at the stage where you thoroughly disapprove and could not do it yourself.

OTHERS ARE A MIRROR OF YOURSELF - I

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

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

OTHERS ARE A MIRROR OF YOURSELF - II

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

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

DEFECTS ARE IN ONESELF

Defects - do not think they come from outside; one has enough of them inside one without needing to borrow them from elsewhere. And in fact, if one did not carry them in oneself, one could not become aware of them in others. It is because the seed of all this is in oneself that one is in contact with them. And when we say that great waves of passion pass through people, and that they are not generated in them but pass through them, it is perfectly true. But if there was someone absolutely immune from all possibility of passion, they could pass by for centuries, he would not even feel them. He could see them, see them passing, as one sees a storm passing in the sky, but he would feel nothing at all. When the vibrations inside oneself answer the vibrations from outside, it means that they are there; otherwise no vibration can enter...

The reason why a movement, a vibration, a forceful movement is contagious is because the ground for contagion is there.

BE GOOD FOR THE SAKE OF BEING GOOD

You must not cherish the illusion that if you want to follow the straight path, if you are modest, if you seek purity, if you are disinterested, if you want to lead a solitary existence and have a clear judgment, things will become easy... It is quite the contrary! When you begin to advance towards inner and outer perfection, the difficulties start at the same time.

I have very often heard people saying: "Oh! now that I am trying to be good, everybody seems to be bad to me!" But this is precisely to teach you that one should not be good with an interested motive, one should not be good, so that others will be good to you - one must be good for the sake of being good.

It is always the same lesson: one must do as well as one can, the best one can, but without expecting a result, without doing it with a view to the result. Just this attitude, to expect a reward for a good action to become good because one thinks that this will make life easier - takes away all value from the good action.

DEGRADING SELF-COMPASSION

This turning back upon oneself, a kind of degrading self-compassion, in which one tells oneself in a tone so full of pity: "Nobody understands me! No one loves me! No one cares for me as people should!" etc., and one goes on and on... And now this is really terrible, it draws you down into a hole immediately.

One must have gone far beyond all that, left it very far behind oneself, in order to truly have the joy of faithfulness, the joy of self-giving, which does not care at all, no, indeed, not at all, in any way, whether it is properly received or gets the adequate response. Not to expect anything in exchange for what one does, not to expect anything, not through asceticism or a sense of sacrifice but because one has the joy of the consciousness one is in and that is enough; this is much better than all one can receive, from whomsoever it may be.

GET RID OF ABHIMANA - I

*How can we get rid of "abhimana?"**

Oh, good heavens! First of all, see how utterly disastrous it is: it is very petty, it is destructive; and then take a step farther and hold yourself up to ridicule, see to what extent you are ludicrous. So, in this way you get rid of it. But so long as you take it seriously, so long as you justify the movement, so long as somewhere in the mind there's the idea: "After all, it is quite natural, I was ill-treated and I suffer from the ill-treatment," then it is finished, it will never go. But if you begin to understand that it is a sign of weakness, of inferiority, naturally, of a very considerable egoism, a narrow-mindedness, and above all of a pettiness of the feelings, a small-heartedness, if you understand that, you can fight it. But your thought should be in agreement. If there is the attitude: "I have been hurt, I am suffering, I am going to show that I am suffering," then it is like that.

* Hurt pride, self-pity because one feels ill-treated.

GET RID OF ABHIMANA - II

There are people who nurse a fairly secret spirit of vengeance and say: "I have been made to suffer, I shall make them suffer." This indeed becomes nasty enough for people to notice that it should not exist, though it is not always easy to resist. It indicates something very petty in the nature. It may be very sensitive, it may be very emotional, it may have a certain intensity but it is quite petty, it is all turned back on oneself, and is quite petty...

You can make use of the reason and can tell yourself something which is very true: that in our being it is only egoism which always suffers, and that if there was no egoism there would be no suffering, and that if one wants the spiritual life, one must overcome his egoism. So the first thing to do is to look straight at this suffering, perceive to what an extent it is the expression of a very petty egoism and then sweep the place clean, make a clean ground and say: "I do not want this dirt, I am going to clean my inner chamber."

IF ANYONE SNEERS AT YOU

If you are worried, grieved or even discouraged by the malicious stupidities that men say about you, you will not advance far on the way. And such things come to you, not because you are unlucky or because your lot is not a happy one, but because, on the contrary, the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Grace take your resolution seriously and allow the circumstances to become a touch-stone on your way, to see whether your resolution is sincere and whether you are strong enough to face the difficulties.

Therefore, if anyone sneers at you or says something that is not very charitable, the first thing you should do is to look within yourself for whatever weakness or imperfection has allowed such a thing to happen and not to be disconsolate, indignant or aggrieved, because people do not appreciate you at what you think to be your true value; on the contrary, you must be thankful to the Divine Grace for having pointed out to you the weakness or imperfection or deformation that you must correct.

YOGA: NOT FOR APPRECIATION

If you truly want to follow the path and practice yoga, you must not do it for appreciation or honour, you must do it because it is an imperative need of your being, because you cannot be happy in any other way. Whether people appreciate you or do not appreciate you, it is of absolutely no importance. You may tell yourself that the farther you are from men, foreign to the ordinary of being, the less people will appreciate you, quite naturally, because they will not understand you. And I repeat, it has absolutely no importance.

True sincerity consists in advancing on the way because you cannot do otherwise, to consecrate yourself to the Divine Life, because you cannot do otherwise, to seek to transform your being and come out into the light because you cannot do otherwise, because it is the purpose of your life.

When it is like that you may be sure that you are on the right path.

YOU NEED NOT APPEAR GOOD

When you are absolutely sincere, you make a constant effort to live in harmony with the highest ideal of your being, the truth of your being. At every moment, in all that you think, all that you feel and all that you do, you try as perfectly as possible, as completely as possible, to put yourself in harmony with the highest ideal or, if you are conscious of it, with the truth of your being - then you have reached true sincerity. And if you are like that, if truly you do not act from egoistic motives or for personal reasons, if you act guided by your inner truth, that is, if you are perfectly sincere, it is absolutely the same to you whether the whole world judges you in one way or another. In this state of perfect sincerity you do not need to appear good or to be approved by others, for the first thing you experience when you are in harmony with your true consciousness is that you do not care what you look like.

THE ONLY WAY OUT - I

There is only one way for you. It is a total, complete and unconditional surrender. What I mean by that, is the giving up not only of your actions, work, ambitions, but also of all your feelings, in the sense that all that you do, all that you are, is exclusively for the Divine. So, you feel above the surrounding human reactions - not only above them but protected from them by the wall of the Divine's Grace. Once you have no more desires, no more attachments, once you have given up all necessity of receiving a reward from human beings, whoever they are - knowing that the only reward that is worth getting is the one that comes from the Supreme and that never fails - once you give up the attachment, to all exterior beings and things, you at once feel in your heart this Presence, this Grace that is always with you.

And there is no other remedy. It is the remedy for *everybody* without exception

THE ONLY WAY OUT - II

To all those who suffer, it is the same thing that has to be said: all suffering is the sign that the surrender is not total. Then, when you feel in you a 'bang', like that, instead of saying: "Oh, this is bad" or "This circumstance is difficult," you say: "My surrender is not perfect." Then it is all right. And then you feel the Grace that helps you and leads you, and you go on. And one day you emerge into that peace that nothing can trouble. You answer to all the contrary forces, the contrary movements, the attacks, the misunderstandings, the bad wills, with the same smile that comes from full confidence in the Divine Grace. And that is the *only* way out, there is none else.

This world is a world of conflict, suffering, difficulty, strain; it is made of it. It has not yet changed, it will take some time before changing. And for each one there is a possibility of getting out. If you lean back on the presence of the Supreme Grace, that is the *only* way out.

THE ONLY WAY OUT - III

Do not expect human appreciation - because human beings do not know on what grounds to appreciate something, and, moreover, when there is something that is superior to them, they do not like it.

But where to get such a strength?

Within you. The Divine Presence is in you. It is in you. You look for it outside; look inside. It is in you. The Presence is there. You want the appreciation of others to get strength - you will never get it. The strength is in you. If you want, you can aspire for what seems to you the Supreme goal, Supreme light, Supreme knowledge, Supreme love. But it is in you - otherwise you would never be able to contact it. If you go deep enough inside you, you will find it there, like a flame that is always burning straight up.

THE ONLY WAY OUT - IV

It is because the look is always turned outside that you do not feel the Presence. But if, instead of looking outside for support, you concentrate and you pray - inside, to the Supreme knowledge - to know at each moment what is to be done, the way to do it, and if you give all you are, all you do in order to acquire perfection, you will feel that the support is there, always guiding, showing the way. And if there is a difficulty, then instead of wanting to fight, you hand it over, hand it over to the Supreme wisdom to deal with it, to deal with all the bad wills, all the misunderstandings, all the bad reactions. If you surrender completely, it is no more your concern: it is the concern of the Supreme who takes it up and knows better than anybody else, what is to be done. The only way out, only way out. There, my child.

ESCAPING OTHER PEOPLE'S INFLUENCE

Sweet Mother, how can we escape from other people's influence?

By concentrating more and more totally and completely on the Divine. If you aspire with all your ardour, if you want to receive only the Divine influence, if all the time you pull back towards yourself what is taken, caught by other influences and with your will put it under the Divine influence, you succeed in doing it. It is a work that cannot be done in a day, in a minute; you must be vigilant for a very long time, for years; but one can succeed.

First of all you must will it.

For all things, first you must understand, will, and then begin to practise - begin by just a very little.

OPEN ONLY TO THE DIVINE

Sweet Mother, what does "an exclusive self- opening to the Divine Power" mean?

Instead of self-opening we could put receptivity, something that opens in order to receive. Now, instead of opening and receiving from all sides and from everyone, as is usually done, one opens only to the Divine to receive only the Divine Force. It is the very opposite of what men usually do. They are always open on the surface, they receive all the influences from all sides. And then this produces inside them what we might call a *pot-pourri* {Mother laughs} of all kinds of contradictory movements which naturally create countless difficulties. So here, you are advised to open only to the Divine and to receive only the Divine Force to the exclusion of everything else. This diminishes all difficulties almost entirely.

STEP BACK INTO YOURSELF

You must always step back into yourself learn to go deep within - step back and you will be safe. Do not lend yourself to the superficial forces which move in the outside world. Even if you are in a hurry to do something, step back for a while and you will discover to your surprise how much sooner and with what greater success your work can be done. If someone is angry with you, do not be caught in his vibrations but simply step back and his anger, finding no support or response, will vanish. Always keep your peace, resist all temptation to lose it. Never decide anything without stepping back, never speak a word without stepping back, never throw yourself into action without stepping back. All that belongs to the ordinary world is impermanent and fugitive, so there is nothing in it worth getting upset about...

When you get the sense of the relativity of things, then whatever happens you can step back and look; you can remain quiet and call on the Divine Force and wait for an answer. Then you will know exactly what to do.

ATTACKS FROM ADVERSE FORCES

Attacks from adverse forces are inevitable: you have to take them as tests on your way and go courageously through the ordeal. The struggle may be hard, but when you come out of it, you have gained something, you have advanced a step. There is even a necessity for the existence of the hostile forces. They make your determination stronger, your aspiration clearer...

In any case, when an attack comes the wisest attitude is to consider that it comes from outside and to say: "This is not myself and I will have nothing to do with it." You have to deal in the same way with all lower impulses and desires and all doubts and questionings in the mind. If you identify yourself with them, the difficulty in fighting them becomes all the greater; for then you have the feeling that you are facing the never easy task of overcoming your own nature. But once you are able to say: "No, this is not myself, I will have nothing to do with it," it becomes much easier to disperse them.

ATTACK BY AN ADVERSE FORCE

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

THE HOLE MADE BY BOASTING

In their relation with human beings the hostile forces take a very wicked pleasure in testing them. For example, if you are not extremely strong and extremely sincere, and you tell yourself: "Oh, I am sure of my faith,"- this for instance among many other things - immediately something happens which is going to try to shake your faith completely. This is one... I suppose that is their diversion, their amusement.

How many times, you know, when someone boasts... it may be very childish... but when someone boasts about something: "Oh, I am sure of that, I shall never make that mistake," immediately I see a hostile formation passing there, like that, and it enters by the little hole made by the boasting. It enters within, like that, and then penetrates, and so prepares everything for you to do exactly what you did not want to. But this is an amusement, it is certainly not to help you to progress. (*Mother laughs*) But if you know how to take it, it does help you to progress. You say: "Good, another time I will not boast."

FEAR IS AN IMPURITY

Fear is an impurity, one of the greatest impurities, one of those which come most directly from the anti-divine forces which want to destroy the Divine action on earth; and the first duty of those who really want to do yoga is to eliminate from their consciousness, with all the might, all the sincerity, all the endurance of which they are capable, even the shadow of a fear. To walk on the path, one must be dauntless, and never indulge in that petty, small, feeble, nasty shrinking back upon oneself, which is fear.

An indomitable courage, a perfect sincerity and a sincere self-giving, so that one does not calculate or bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving, does not trust with the idea of being protected, does not have a faith which asks for proofs - it is this that is indispensable in order to walk on the path, and it is this alone which can truly shelter you from all danger.

GET RID OF ALL FEARS

get you Once you enter the path of yoga you must rid of all fears - the fears of your mind, the fears of your vital, the fears of your body which are lodged in its very cells. One of the uses of the blows and knocks you receive on the path of yoga is to rid of all fear. The causes of your fears leap on you again and again, until you can stand before them free and indifferent, untouched and pure. One has a fear of the sea, another the fear of fire. The latter will find, it may be, that he has to face conflagration after conflagration till he is so trained that not a cell of his body quivers. That of which you have horror comes repeatedly till the horror is gone. One who seeks the transformation and is a follower of the Path, must become through and through fearless, not to be touched or shaken by anything whatever in any part of his nature.

FEAR: A LACK OF TRUST

Never be afraid, even if you see extremely ugly things - not only have no fear but no disgust and no repulsion, simply a perfect quietude - and try to be as pure and calm as possible. Then, whatever it may be, whether it be your own formation or it comes from others, whether it be an attack or a bad place - no matter what it is - everything will be all right. But above all, quiet, calm, naturally sheltered from kind of possible fear, and without any disgust, without any recoiling, nothing; like that: a perfect indifference with a complete calm. Then nothing bad can happen, absolutely nothing. Even if it is truly an enemy who comes to attack you, he becomes powerless.

In all cases, without exception, whatever may happen, calm and quietude and serene peace and an absolute faith in the Divine Grace - if you have all this, nothing can happen to you.

NEVER BE AFRAID

Why does one feel afraid?

I suppose it is because one is egoistic.

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

CONQUERING FEAR

That which knows, has no fear. That which is perfectly awake, which is fully conscious and which knows, has no fear. It is always something dark that is afraid.

One of the great remedies for conquering fear is to face boldly what one fears. You are put face to face with the danger you fear and you fear it no longer. The fear disappears. From the yogic point of view, the point of view of discipline, this is the cure recommended. In the ancient initiations, especially in Egypt, in order to practice occultism, as I was telling you last time, it was necessary to abolish the fear of death completely. Well, one of the practices of those days was to lay the neophyte in a sarcophagus and leave him in there for a few days, as though he were dead. Naturally, he was not left to die, neither of hunger nor suffocation, but still he remained lying there as though he were dead. It seems that cures you of all fear.

When fear comes, if one succeeds in putting upon it consciousness, knowledge, force, light, one can cure it altogether.

TRUE COURAGE

True courage, in its deepest sense, is to be able to face everything, everything in life, from the smallest to the greatest things, from material things to those of the spirit, without a shudder, without physically... without the heart beginning to beat faster, without the nerves trembling or the slightest emotion in any part of the being. Face everything with a constant consciousness of the Divine Presence, with a total self-giving to the Divine, and the whole being unified in this will; then one can go forward in life, can face anything whatever. I say, without a shudder, without a vibration; this, you know, is the result of a long effort, unless one is born with a special grace, born like that. But this indeed is still more rare.

...True courage is courage with the full knowledge of the thing, that is, it knows all the possibilities and is ready to face everything without exception.

SUFFERING AND PAIN

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...

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 vapourises 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 easily finds the true strength again, when one is strong. It is in pain that one easily finds the true faith again, the faith in something which is above and beyond all pain.

BLOWS: TO MAKE US PROGRESS

*“O Thou that lovest, strike! If Thou strike me not now,
I shall know that Thou lovest me not.”*

Sri Aurobindo (Thoughts and Aphorisms)

All who aspire for the Divine Perfection know that the blows which the Lord deals us in His infinite love and grace are the surest and quickest way to make us progress. And the harder the blows the more they feel the greatness of the Divine Love.

Ordinary men, on the contrary, always ask God to give them an easy, pleasant and successful life. In every personal satisfaction they see a sign of Divine mercy; but if on the contrary they meet with unhappiness and misfortune in life, they complain and say to God: "You do not love me."

In opposition to this crude and ignorant attitude, Sri Aurobindo says to the Divine Beloved: "Strike, strike hard, let me feel the intensity of Thy love for me."

BLOWS ARE NEEDED

Ah, it is very difficult to be sincere... That is why the blows multiply and sometimes become terrible, because that is the only thing which breaks your stupidity. This is the justification of calamities. Only when you are in an acutely painful situation and indeed before something that affects you deeply, then that makes the stupidity melt away a little. But as you say, even when there is something that melts, there is still a little something which remains inside. And that is why it lasts so long...

How many blows are needed in life for one to know to the very depths that one is nothing, that one can do *nothing*, that one *does not exist*, that one is *nothing*, that there is no entity without the Divine Consciousness and the Grace. From the moment one knows it, it is over; all the difficulties have gone. When one knows it integrally and there is nothing which resists... but till that moment... And it takes very long.

DIFFICULTIES AND PROGRESS

With the touch of the Divine Grace, how do difficulties become opportunities for progress?

Opportunities for progress? Yes! Well, this is something quite obvious. You have made a big mistake, you are in great difficulty: then, if you have faith, if you have trust in the Divine Grace, if you really rely on It, you will suddenly realise that it is a lesson, that your difficulty or mistake is nothing else but a lesson and that it comes to teach you to find within yourself what needs to be changed, and with this help of the Divine Grace you would discover in yourself what has to be changed. And you will change it. And so, from a difficulty you would have made great progress, taken considerable leap forward. This, happens all the time. Only, you must be truly sincere, that is, rely on the Grace and let It work in you.

DIFFICULTIES AND REALISATION

When you have something to realise, you will have in you just the characteristic which is the contradiction of that something. Face to face with the defect, the difficulty, you say: "Oh, I am like that! How awful it is!" But you ought to see the truth of the situation. Say to yourself: "My difficulty shows me clearly what I have ultimately to represent. To reach the absolute negation of it, the quality at the other pole - this is my mission."

Even in ordinary life, we have sometimes the experience of contraries. He who is very timid and has no courage in front of circumstances proves capable of the most!...

There is also the fact that if somebody has a hundred difficulties it means he will have a tremendous realisation - provided, of course, there are in him patience and endurance and he keeps the aspiring flame of Agni burning against those defects.

And remember: the Grace of the Divine is generally proportionate to your difficulties.

DEFECTS AND DIFFICULTIES

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

NEVER GET DISCOURAGED

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

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

THE ESSENCE OF ENDURANCE

Let endurance be your watchword: teach life-force in you - your vital being - not to complain but to put up with all the conditions necessary for great achievement... The very essence of endurance, is that the vital should learn to give up its capricious likes and dislikes and preserve an equanimity in the midst of the most trying conditions. When you are treated roughly by somebody or you lack something which would relieve your discomfort, you must keep up cheerfully instead of letting yourself be disturbed. Let nothing ruffle you the least bit, and whenever the vital tends to air its petty grievances with pompous exaggeration just stop to consider how very happy you are, compared to so many in this world. Reflect for a moment on what the soldiers who fought in the last war had to go through. If you had to bear such hardships you would realise the utter silliness of your dissatisfactions.

IF ONE HAS ENDURANCE

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

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

This is most necessary. Most necessary.

PAY THE PRICE

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... You must know that very persistent efforts, and very steadfast endurance are necessary to master, the least weakness, the least pettiness, the least meanness in one's nature...

You are still very young, but you must learn *right away* that to reach the goal you must know how to pay the price, and that to understand the supreme truths you must put them into practice in your daily life.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU KNOW

When you have found something which has the power to help you in gaining a victory over your unconsciousness and inertia, you must, till you reach the final result, exhaust all the effects produced by that word or phrase before you look for others.

It is more important to pursue to its end the practice of the effect produced by an idea that one has met somehow, than to try to accumulate in the head a large number of ideas. Ideas may all be very useful in their own time, if they are allowed in at the opportune moment, particularly if you carry to the extreme limit the result of one of those dynamic ideas that capable of making you win an victory. That is to say, one should have for one's chief, if not only aim the practice of what one knows rather than the accumulation in oneself of a knowledge which remains purely theoretical.

So one could sum up: put into practice integrally what you know, only then can you usefully increase your theoretical knowledge.

SINCERE PRACTICE

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

Some people are always complaining about their disabilities. But that does not lead you very far. If, once, you have truly your weaknesses and truly, sincerely, understood, seen that you must not be like that - that is the end of complaining. Then there is the daily effort, the building up of the will, the vigilance of every moment, you must never allow a recognised mistake to renew itself.

EFFORT GIVES JOY

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

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

THE UNIVERSAL VITAL FORCES - I

Sweet Mother, how can one draw on "the Universal Vital Force?"

First of all, you must know that it exists and that one can enter into contact with it. Secondly, you must try to make this contact, to feel it circulating everywhere, through everything, in all persons and all circumstances: to have this experience, for example when you are in the countryside among trees, to see it circulating in of whole of Nature, in trees and things, and then commune with it, feel yourself close to it, and each time you want to deal with it, recall that impression you had and try to enter into contact.

Some people discover that with certain movements, certain gestures, certain activities, they enter into contact more closely. I know people who gesticulated while walking... this truly gave them the impression they were in contact - certain gestures they made while walking.

THE UNIVERSAL VITAL FORCES - II

I knew young people who had always lived in cities, in a city and in those little rooms one has in the big cities in which everyone is huddled. Now, they had come to spend their holidays in the countryside, in the south of France, and there the sun is hot... When they walked around the countryside the first few days they really began to get a terrible headache and to feel absolutely uneasy because of the sun; but they suddenly thought: "Why, if we make friends with the sun it would not harm us any more!" And they began to make a kind of inner effort of friendship and trust in the sun, and when they were out in the sun, instead of trying to bend double and tell themselves: "Oh! how hot it is, how it burns!" they said: "Oh, how full of force and joy and love the sun is!" etc., they opened themselves like this (*gesture*).

THE UNIVERSAL VITAL FORCES - III

How can we increase the receptivity [to the universal vital forces]?

By progressing.

One must first know how to open himself and then, in a great quietude know how to assimilate the forces one has received, not to throw them out again. One must know how to assimilate them.

So the progress lies in a normal but progressive equilibrium, periods of assimilation - reception, assimilation - and periods of expenditure, and knowing how to balance the two, and alternate them in a rhythm which is your personal one. You must not go beyond your capacity, you must not remain below it, because the universal vital forces are not something which you could put into a strong box. They must circulate. So you must know how to receive and at the same time to spend, but to increase the capacity of reception so as to have more and more of the things which are to be used up, to be spent.

THE UNIVERSAL VITAL FORCES - IV

Each person has a different receptivity to the universal vital forces. No two receptivities are the same in quality and quantity, but specially in quality. One enters into contact with very pure, very intense forces what could be already called converted forces, that is, universal vital forces which are in contact with the Divine and not only receive the Divine but aspire to receive Him. So if you absorb these forces it gives you a great strength for progress. It is in this that the quality is much more important. And for the quality of the universal vital forces, it depends naturally a great deal on what one is, but also much on what one does.

If one uses these forces for a purely selfish action of a base kind, well, one makes it almost totally impossible for himself to receive any new ones of as fine a quality. All depends on the utilisation of the forces one receives. If, on the other hand, you use them to make progress, to perfect yourself, it gives you... it increases your capacity of receiving enormously...

THREE SOURCES OF VITAL FORCE

In the immense majority of people all their vital force comes to them from below, from the earth, from food, from all the sensations. From food... they draw vital energy out of food and they... it is by seeing, hearing, touching, feeling that they contact the energies contained in matter. They draw them in this way. This is their customary food.

Now, some people have a very developed vital which they have subjected to a discipline - and they have a sense of immensity and are in contact with the world and the movements of world-forces. And so they can receive... if in a movement of calling... they can receive the universal vital forces which enter them and renew the dose of energy they need.

There are others, very rare ones - or may be in very rare moments of their individual lives - who have an aspiration for the higher consciousness, higher force, higher knowledge, and who, by this call, draw to themselves the forces of higher domains. And so this also renews in them very special energies, of a special value.

RECEPTIVITY: OPEN YOURSELF

To be active is to throw the consciousness or force or movement from within outwards. To be passive is to remain immobile and receive what comes from outside.

Now if you want to get true inspiration, inner guidance, the guide, and if you want to have the force, to receive the force which will guide you and make you act as you should, then you do not move any longer, that is - I do not mean not move physically but nothing must come out from you any more and, on the contrary, you remain as though you were quite still, but open, and wait for the Force to enter, and then open yourself as wide as possible to take in all that comes into you. And it is this movement: instead of out-going vibrations there is a kind of calm quietude, but completely open, as though you were opening all your pores in this way to the force which must descend into you and transform your action and consciousness.

Receptivity is the result of a fine passivity.

ASPIRATION AND RECEPTIVITY-I

You can be at once in the state of aspiration, of willing, which calls down something - exactly the will to open oneself and receive, and the aspiration which calls down the force you want to receive and *at the same time* be in that state of complete inner stillness which allows full penetration, for it is in this immobility that one can be penetrated, that one becomes permeable by the Force... One can be like that, like a great flame rising in aspiration, and at the same time as though this flame formed a vase, a large vase, opening and receiving all that comes down.

And the two can go together. And when one succeeds in having the two together, one can have them constantly, whatever one may be doing. Only there may be a slight, very slight displacement of consciousness, almost imperceptible, which becomes aware of the flame first and then of the vase of receptivity - of what seeks to be filled and the flame that rises to call down what must fill the vase...

ASPIRATION AND RECEPTIVITY - II

Aspiration calls down an answer, and this answer, the effect, which is the result of the aspiration, depends upon each one, for it depends upon his receptivity. I know many people of this kind, they say: "Oh! but I aspire all the time and still I receive nothing." It is impossible that they should receive nothing, in the sense that the answer is sure to come. But it is they who do not receive. The answer comes but they are not receptive, so they receive nothing...

When you have an aspiration, a very active aspiration, your aspiration is going to do its work. It is going to call down the answer to what you aspire for. But if, later, you begin to think of something else or are not attentive or receptive, you do not even notice that your aspiration has received an answer. This happens very frequently. So people tell you: "I aspire and I do not receive anything, I get no answer !" Yes, you do have an answer but you are not aware of it, because you continue to be active in this way, like a mill turning all the time.

TO FIND THAT SOMETHING

We can, simply by a sincere aspiration, open a sealed door in us and find... that something which will change the whole significance of life, reply to all our questions, solve all our problems and lead us to the perfection we aspire for without knowing it, to that Reality which *alone* can satisfy us and give us lasting joy, equilibrium, strength, life...

The starting-point: to want it, truly want it, to need it. The next step: to think, *above all*, of that. A day comes, very quickly, when one is unable to think of anything else.

That is the one thing which counts. And then...

One formulates one's aspiration, lets the true prayer spring up from one's heart, the prayer which expresses the sincerity of the need. And then... well, one will see what happens.

Something will happen. Surely something will happen. For each one it will take a different form.

ASPIRATION AND PROGRESS

If you are in a state of conscious aspiration and very sincere, well, everything around you will be arranged in order to help in your aspiration, whether directly or indirectly, that is, either to make you progress, put you in touch with something new or to eliminate from your nature something that has to disappear. This is something quite remarkable. If you are truly in a state of intensity of aspiration, there is not a circumstance which does not come to help you to realise this aspiration. Everything comes, everything, as though there were a perfect and absolute consciousness organising around you all things, and you yourself in your outer ignorance may not recognise it and may protest at first against the circumstances as they show themselves, may complain, may try to change them; but after a while, when you have become wiser, and there is a certain distance between you and the event, well, you will realise that it was just what you needed to do to make the necessary progress.

ASPIRATION IS LIKE AN ARROW

Aspiration is like an arrow, like this (*gesture*). So you aspire, want very earnestly to understand, know, enter into the truth. Yes? And then with that aspiration you do this (*gesture*). Your aspiration rises, rises, rises, rises straight up, very strong and then it strikes against a kind of... how to put it? ...lid which is there, hard like iron and extremely thick, and it does not pass through. And then you say: "See, what is the use of aspiring? It brings nothing at all. I meet with something hard and cannot pass!" But you know about the drop of water which falls on the rock, it ends up by making a chasm: it cuts the rock from top to bottom. Your aspiration is a drop of water which, instead of falling, rises. So, by dint of rising, it beats, beats, beats, and one day it makes a hole, by dint of rising; and when it makes the hole suddenly it springs out from this lid and enters an immensity of light, and you say: "Ah, now I understand."

CONCENTRATING THE ATTENTION

Whatever you may want to do in life, one thing is absolutely indispensable and at the basis of *everything*, the capacity of concentrating the attention. If you are able to gather together the rays of attention and consciousness on one point and can maintain this concentration with a persistent will, *nothing* can resist it - whatever it may be, from the most material physical development to the highest spiritual one. But this discipline must be followed in a constant and, it may be said, imperturbable way...

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

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

CONCENTRATION

What is concentration?

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

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

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

MEDITATION AND CONCENTRATION

What is the difference between meditation and concentration?

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

Concentration is a more active state. You may concentrate mentally, you may concentrate vitally, psychically, physically, and you may concentrate integrally. Concentration or the capacity to gather oneself at one point is more difficult than meditation.

KINDS OF MEDITATIONS

There are all kinds of different meditations! What people usually call meditation is, for example, choosing a subject or an idea and following its development or trying to understand what it means. There is a concentration but not as complete a concentration as in concentration proper, where nothing should exist, except the point on which one concentrates. Meditation is a more relaxed movement, less tense than concentration.

When one is trying to understand a problem which comes up, a psychological problem or a circumstantial one, and he sits down and looks at and sees all the possibilities, compares them, studies them, this is a form of meditation; and one does it spontaneously when the thing comes up. When one is facing a decision to be taken, for instance, and does not know which one to take, well, ordinarily one reflects, consults his reason, compares all the possibilities and makes his choice... more or less. Well, this is a form of meditation.

DYNAMIC MEDIATION

I think the most important thing is to know why one meditates; this is what gives the quality of the meditation and makes it of one order or another.

You may meditate to open yourself to the Divine Force, you may meditate to reject the ordinary consciousness, you may meditate to enter the depths of your being, you may meditate to learn how to give yourself integrally; you may meditate for all kinds of things. You may meditate to enter into peace and calm and silence, this is what people generally do, but without much success. But you may also meditate to receive the Force of transformation, to discover the points to be transformed, to trace out the line of progress...

I think everyone has his own mode of meditation. But if one wants the meditation to be dynamic, one must have an aspiration for progress and the meditation must be done to help and fulfil this aspiration for progress. Then it becomes dynamic.

CONCENTRATE IN THE CENTRE OF ASPIRATION

It is always better, for meditation... to try to concentrate in a centre, the centre of aspiration, one might say, the place where the flame of aspiration burns, to gather in all the energies there, at the solar plexus centre and, if possible, to obtain an attentive silence as though one wanted to listen to something extremely subtle, something that demands a complete attention, a complete concentration and total silence. And then not to move at all. Not to think, not to stir, and make that movement of opening so as to receive all that can be received... to be silent, as totally silent as possible, in an attentive concentration, and then be still.

If one succeeds in this, then, when everything is over, when one comes out of meditation, some time later - usually not immediately - from within the being something new new emerges in the consciousness: a new understanding, a new appreciation of things, a attitude in life - in short, a new way of being.

CONCENTRATE IN THE HEART

Mother, why is it better to concentrate in the heart?

{Sri Aurobindo} says: "... that it is easier." For some people it is more difficult, it depends on one's nature. But it is better because if you concentrate there, deeply enough, it is there that you enter into contact with the psychic for the first time; while if you concentrate in the head you have to pass later from the head to the heart to be able to identify yourself with the psychic being. And if you concentrate by gathering the energies, it is better to gather them here, because it is in this centre, in this region of the being that you find the will to progress, the force of purification, and the most intense and effective aspiration. The aspiration that comes from the heart is much more effective than that from the head.

AN INTENSE CONCENTRATION

I do not say think in the heart, I say concentrate, concentrate the energy, concentrate the consciousness, concentrate the aspiration, concentrate the will. *Concentrate*. One can have an extremely intense concentration without a single thought, and in fact it is usually much more intense when one does not think. (*Silence*) It is one of the most indispensable things to do if one wants to succeed in having self-control and even a limited self-knowledge: to be able to localise one's consciousness and move it about in the different parts of one's being, in such a way as to distinguish between one's consciousness and one's thought, feelings, impulses, become aware of what the consciousness is in itself...

This consciousness must be mobile, and one must know how to distinguish it from the other parts of the being which in fact are its instruments, its modes of expression. The consciousness must make use of these things, and not you, mistake these things for the consciousness.

MEDITATION AND PROGRESS - I

The number of hours spent in meditation is no proof of spiritual progress. It is a proof of your progress when you no longer have to make an effort to meditate. Then you have rather to make an effort to stop meditating: it becomes difficult to stop meditation, difficult to stop thinking of the Divine, difficult to come down to the ordinary consciousness. Then you are sure of progress, then you have made real progress when concentration in the Divine, which is the necessity of your life, when you cannot do without it, when it continues naturally from morning to night whatever you may be engaged in doing. Whether you sit down to meditation or go about and do things and work, what is required of you is consciousness; that is the one need to be constantly conscious of the Divine. -

MEDITATION AND PROGRESS - II

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

If you need to make an effort to go into meditation, you are still very far from being able to live the spiritual life. When it takes an effort to come out of it, then indeed your meditation can be an indication that you are in the spiritual life.

MEDITATION UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

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

Do not fall into the very common error of believing that you must sit in an absolutely quiet corner where nobody passes by, where you are in a classical position and altogether immobile, in order to be able to meditate - it is not true. What is needed is to succeed in meditating under all circumstances, and I call "meditating" not emptying your head but concentrating yourself in a contemplation of the Divine.

SAMADHI

If in order to have a meditation or a relation with the inner world, you are obliged to enter into *samadhi*, your waking consciousness always remains what it is, without ever changing. That is what I said in other words, you see, when I said that people have a higher consciousness only in very deep meditation. When they come out of their meditation they are no better than they were before. All their defects are there which come back as soon as they come back into their waking consciousness; and they never make any progress because they do not establish a relation between their deeper consciousness, the truth of their inner being, and their outer being. You see, they take off their outer being as though they were taking off a cloak, and they put it in a corner...

If you want the outer being to change, it is while remaining conscious of it that you should have the other experiences; and you must not lose contact with your ordinary outer consciousness if you want it to profit by the experience.

MEDITATION WITHOUT WORKING

If you remain in meditation or contemplation without working, well, you do not know if you have progressed or not. You may live in an illusion, the illusion of your progress; while if you begin to work, all the circumstances of your work, the contact with others, the material occupation, all this is a field of experience in order that you may become aware not only of the progress made but of all the progress that remains to be made. If you live closed up in yourself, without acting, you may live in a completely subjective illusion; the moment you externalise your action and enter into contact with others, with circumstances and the objects of life, you become aware absolutely objectively of whether you have made progress or not, whether you are more calm, more conscious, stronger, more unselfish, whether you no longer have any desire, any preference, any weakness, any unfaithfulness - you can become aware of all this by working.

CONTROL OF THE BODY

Those who despise physical activities are people who would not 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.

THE BODY NEEDS ACTIVITY

The body needs activity: if you keep it inactive, it will begin to revolt by becoming sick and so on. It needs an activity, it really needs an activity like planting flowers, building a house, something really material. You must feel it. Some people do exercises, some ride bicycles, there are countless activities... Each one can find the activity which suits his temperament, his nature and his need. But not with ideas. Ideas are not much good, ideas give you preconceptions, for example: "That is a good work, that work is not worthy of me," and all that sort of nonsense. There is no bad work, there are only bad workers. All work is good when you know how to do it in the right way. Everything. And it is a kind of communion. If you are fortunate enough to be conscious of an inner light, you will see that in your manual work, it is as if you called the Divine down into things; then the communion becomes very concrete, there is a whole world to be discovered, it is marvelous.

THE THREE VICTORIES

The first victory is to create an individuality. And then later, the second victory is to give this individuality to the Divine. And the third victory is that the Divine changes your individuality into a Divine Being...

There are three stages: the first is to become an individual; the second is to consecrate the individual, that he may surrender entirely to the Divine and be identified with Him; and the third is that the Divine takes possession of this individual and changes him into a being in His own image, that is, He too becomes Divine.

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

But we begin there, and we say: "No, this is only a beginning. We want this Divine with whom we are identified to enter our individuality and make it into a Divine personality acting in a Divine world."

COME FOR THE DIVINE WORK

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

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

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

WHY THIS DIVINE WORK?

All this perfection which we are going to acquire is not for a personal and selfish end, it is in order to be able to manifest the Divine, it is to put at the service of the Divine. We do not pursue this development with a selfish intention of personal perfection; we pursue it because the Divine Work has to be accomplished.

But why do we do this Divine Work? Is it to make ourselves Divine?...

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

So long as a personal aspiration or desire, a selfish will, get mingled in it, it always creates a mixture and is not exactly an expression of the Divine Will. The only thing which must count is the Divine, His Will, His Manifestation, His Expression. One is here for that, one is that, and nothing else.

HOW DOES ONE DO THE DIVINE WORK?

Mother, if for instance in the long jump one makes an effort to jump a greater and greater distance, how does one do the Divine work?

Eh? Excuse me, it is not for the pleasure of doing the long jump, it is to make your body more perfect in its functioning, and, therefore, a more suitable instrument for receiving the Divine forces and manifesting them.

Why, everything, everything one does in this place must be done in this spirit, otherwise you do not even profit by the opportunity given to you, the circumstances given to you. I explained to you the other day, did I not? That the Consciousness is here, penetrating all things and trying to manifest in all movements. But if you, on your side, tell yourself that the effort you are making, the progress you are making, you make in order to become more capable of receiving this Consciousness and of manifesting it, the work would naturally be better and quicker.

REALISING THE DIVINE WORK

Who thinks that all this Force that is here, that is infinitely greater, infinitely more precious than all money-forces, this Force which is here and is given consciously, constantly, with an endless perseverance and patience, only for *one sole purpose*, that of realising the Divine work - who thinks of not wasting it? Who realises that it is a sacred duty to make progress, to prepare oneself to understand better and live better? For people live *by* the Divine Energy, they live *by* the Divine. Consciously, and use them for their personal, selfish ends.

You are shocked when a few thousand rupees are wasted but not shocked when there are... when streams of Consciousness and Energy are diverted from their true purpose!

If one wants to do a Divine work upon earth, one must come with tons of patience and endurance. One must know how to live in eternity and wait for the consciousness to awaken in everyone - the consciousness of what *true* integrity is.

THE ILLUSION OF ACTION

Agitation, haste, restlessness lead nowhere. It is foam on the sea; it is a great fuss that stops with itself. Men have a feeling that if they are not all the time running about and bursting into fits of feverish activity, they are doing nothing. It is an illusion to think that all these so-called movements change things. It is merely taking a cup and beating the water in it; the water is moved about, but it is not changed for all your beating. This illusion of action is one of the greatest illusions of human nature. It hurts progress because it brings on you the necessity of rushing always into some excited movement...

In peace, in silence and in quietness the world was built; and each time that something is to be truly built, it is in peace and silence and quietness that it must be done. It is ignorance to believe that you must run from morning to night and labour at all sorts of futile things in order to do something for the world.

LEARN TO BE QUIET

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

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

When you are caught in a difficulty, try this method: instead of becoming agitated, turning over all the ideas and actively seeking solutions, of worrying, fretting, running here and there inside your head... *remain quiet*. And according to your nature, with ardour or peace, with intensity or widening or with all these together, implore the Light and wait for it to come.

In this way the path would be considerably shortened.

THE MENTAL BEING AS A WITNESS

Sweet Mother, what does "the reduction of the mental being do to the position of a witness" mean?

...Witness means an observer, someone who looks on and does not act himself. So, when the mind is very quiet, one can withdraw little in this way from circumstances and look at things as though he were a witness, a spectator, and not participating in the action himself. This gives you a great detachment, a great quietude, and also a very precise sense of the value of things, because it cuts the attachment to action. When you know how to do this with yourself, when you can withdraw and watch yourself acting, you learn many things about yourself. When you are all mixed up and take part in the action, you do not observe yourself acting, you do not know what you are like. But when you draw back and look at yourself, you can perceive many imperfections which you would not have seen otherwise.

"PEACE, PEACE, PEACE" - I

How can we establish a settled peace and silence in the mind?

First of all, you must want it.

And then you must try and must persevere, continue trying... You sit quietly, to begin with; and then, instead of thinking of fifty things, you begin saying to yourself: "Peace, peace, peace, and peace, peace, calm, peace!" You imagine peace and calm. You aspire, ask that it may come: "Peace, peace, calm." And then, when something comes and touches you and acts, say quietly, like this: "Peace, peace, peace."

Do not look at the thoughts, do not listen to the thoughts, you understand. You must not pay attention to everything that comes. You know, when someone bothers you a great deal and you want to get rid of him, you do not listen to him, do you? Good! You turn your head away (*gesture*) and think of something else.

"PEACE, PEACE, PEACE" - II

When thoughts come, you must not look at them, must not listen to them, must not pay any attention at all, you must behave as though they did not exist, you see! And then, repeat all the time like a kind of... how shall I put it? -As an idiot does, who repeats the same thing always. Well, you must do the same thing; you must repeat: "Peace, peace, peace." So you try this for a few minutes and then do what you have to do; and then, another time, you begin again; sit down again and then try. Do this on getting up in the morning, do this in the evening when going to bed. There comes a time when you no longer need to sit down, and no matter what you are doing, no matter what you are saying, it is always: "Peace, peace, peace."...

You must be very simple in these things. It is as though you were learning how to call a friend: by dint of being called he comes. Well, make peace and calm your friends and call them: "Come, peace, peace, peace, peace, come!"

SIT DOWN QUIETLY

When you have a little time, whether it is one hour or a few minutes, tell yourself: "At last, I have some time to concentrate, to collect myself, to relive the purpose of my life, to offer myself to the True and the Eternal." If you took care to do this each time you are not harassed by outer circumstances, you would find out that you were advancing very quickly on the path. Instead of wasting your time in chattering, in doing useless things, reading things that lower the consciousness... it is better to be moderate, balanced, patient, quiet, but never to lose an opportunity that is given to you, that is to say, to utilise for the true purpose the unoccupied moment before you.

...Sit down quietly before the sky, before the sea or under trees, whatever is possible... to understand why you live, to learn how you must live, to ponder over what you want to do and what should be done, what is the best way of escaping from the ignorance and falsehood and pain in which you live.

MAKE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS VAST - I

Sweet Mother, how can we make our consciousness vast?

Vast? Ah, there are many ways of doing this.

The easiest way is to identify yourself with something vast. For instance, when you feel that you are shut up in a completely narrow and limited thought, will, consciousness, when you feel as though you were in a shell, then if you begin thinking about something very vast, as for example, the immensity of the waters of an ocean, and if really you can think of this ocean and how it stretches out far, far, far, far, in all directions, like this (*Mother stretches out her arms*), how, compared with you it is so far, so far that you cannot see the other shore, you cannot reach its end anywhere, neither behind or in front nor to the right or left... it is wide, wide, wide, wide... you think of this and then you feel that you are floating on this sea, like that, and that there are *no* limits...

This is very easy. Then you can widen your consciousness a little.

MAKE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS VAST - II

There is a way also {of making your consciousness vast} by trying to identify yourself with all things upon earth. For example, when you have a small narrow vision of something and are hurt by others' vision and point of view, you must begin by shifting your consciousness, try to put it in others, and try gradually to identify yourself with all the different ways of thinking of all others... Some people do this more easily. For instance, when they are in disagreement with someone, in order to widen their consciousness they try to put themselves in the place of the other and see the thing not from their own point of view but from the point of view of the other. This widens the consciousness, though not as much as by the first ways I spoke about, which are quite innocent. They do not do you any harm, they do you much good. They make you very peaceful.

MAKE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS VAST - III

If one can realise... visualise, picturise the little person one is, in the little earth where one is, and the tiny second of consciousness which for the moment is hurting you or is unpleasant for you... then suddenly you sense the utter ridiculousness of the importance you attach to what happened to you... *Truly* you feel... to what an extent it is absurd to attach any importance to one's life, to oneself, and to what happens to you. And in the space of three minutes, if you do this properly, all unpleasantness is swept away. Even a very deep pain can be swept away. Simply a concentration like this, and to place oneself in infinity and eternity. Everything goes away. One comes out of it cleansed. One can get rid of *all* attachments and even, I say, of the deepest sorrows, of everything, in this way, if one knows how to do it in the right way. It immediately takes you out of your little ego. There we are.

KEEP THE CONSCIOUSNESS HIGH - I

To keep one's consciousness in a higher state is to raise it above the lower levels in the being, it is to keep it in the light, in the peace, in the higher knowledge and harmony; that is, to place one's consciousness as high as possible in one's being, at the level where one is liberated from all lower movements. Then naturally, if the consciousness is there, the thoughts it receives are those of a higher order. And thought is only one form of activity of the consciousness, it is not the stuff of consciousness. There is a consciousness without thought, there is a very much higher state of consciousness in which there are no thoughts. It is a consciousness that can have a very perfect knowledge of things, without it being expressed in thoughts and words. Thought is only one form of activity.

KEEP THE CONSCIOUSNESS HIGH - II

If you open to the higher regions of consciousness and the force descends from above, quite naturally it establishes a silence in the lower regions, for they are governed by this higher power which descends. This comes from higher regions of the mind or from beyond, even from the supermind. So when this force and consciousness come down and enter into the consciousness of a lower plane, this consciousness becomes naturally quiet, for it is as though invaded, flooded by that higher light which transforms it.

In fact, this is even the only way of establishing a constant silence in one's mind. It is to open oneself to higher regions and let this higher consciousness, force, light descend constantly into the lower mind and take possession of it. And here, when this happens, this lower mind can remain constantly quiet and silent, because it is this one which acts and fills the whole being.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

You speak of spiritual experience. What is an experience and how can one have it?

It is something which puts you in contact with a consciousness higher than the one you usually have. You have a certain feeling about yourself, you are not even aware of it, it is for you, your ordinary condition, you understand? Well, if suddenly you become conscious within of something very different and much higher, then, whatever it may be, this will be a spiritual experience. You may formulate it with a mental idea, you may not formulate it; you may explain it to yourself, you may not; it may last, it may not, it may be instantaneous. But when there is this essential difference in the consciousness and when, naturally, the quality that comes is very... much higher, clearer, purer than what one usually has, then one can call this a spiritual experience; this means that there are thousands of different things which can be called spiritual experiences.

COME OUT OF WORDS

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

You must see the thing, the experience behind the words. Here we speak of "Yoga" but elsewhere one would speak differently; some would say: "I am seeking my *raison d'être*," and so on. Those who have a religious bent will say: "I want to find the Divine Presence." There are fifty ways of saying the thing but it is the *thing* which is important; you must feel it in your head, in your heart, everywhere. It must be concrete, living, otherwise you cannot advance. You must come out of words and get into action - get into the experience, get into life.

THE ONE THING NECESSARY

As soon as one is convinced that there is a living and real Truth seeking to express itself in an objective universe, the only thing that seems to have any importance or value is to come into contact with this Truth, to identify oneself with it as perfectly as possible, and to no longer be anything but a means of expressing it, making it more and more living and tangible so that it may be manifested more and more perfectly. All theories, all principles, all methods are more or less good according to their capacity to express that Truth; and as one goes forward on this path, if one goes beyond all the limits of the Ignorance, one becomes aware that the *totality* of this manifestation, its wholeness, its integrality is necessary for the expression of that Truth, that *nothing* can be left out, and perhaps that there is nothing more important or less important. The one thing that seems necessary is a harmonisation of everything which puts each thing in its place, in its true relation with all the rest, so that the total Unity may manifest harmoniously.

CONTACTING THAT - I

There is something there which cannot be grasped - grasped by thought - but which exists. But the name you give it matters little, that is of no importance, it exists. And so the only thing to do is to enter into contact with it - not to give it a name or, describe it. In fact, there is hardly any use giving it a name or describing it. One must try to enter into contact, to concentrate upon it, live it, live that reality, and whatever the name you give it is not at all important once you have the experience. The experience alone counts. And when people associate the experience with a particular expression and in so narrow a way, so closed up in itself that apart from this formula one can find nothing that is an inferiority. One must be able to live that reality through all possible paths, all occasions, all formations; one must live it, for that indeed is true, for that is supremely good, that is all-powerful, that knows all, that... Yes, one can live that, but one cannot speak about it. And if one does speak, all that one says about it has no great importance.

CONTACTING THAT - II

There is an entire line of philosophers and people who have replaced the notion of God by the notion of an impersonal Absolute or by a notion of Truth or a notion of justice or even by a notion of progress - of something eternally progressive; but for one who has within him the capacity of identifying himself with that, what has been said about it has not much importance. Sometimes one may read a whole book of philosophy and not progress a step farther. Sometimes one may be quite a fervent devotee of a religion and not progress. There are people who have spent entire lifetimes seated in contemplation and attained nothing. There are people (*we have well-known examples*) who used to do the most modest of manual works, like a cobbler mending old shoes, and who had an experience. It is altogether beyond what one thinks and says of it. It is some gift that is there, that is all. And all that is needed is to be that to succeed in - identifying oneself with it and live it.

CONTACTING THAT - III

There is only one thing that is important: that is a sincere and persistent will [*to identify oneself with that*], for these things do not happen in a twinkling. So one must persevere. When someone feels that he is not advancing, he must not get discouraged; he must try to find out what it is in the nature that is opposing, and then make the necessary progress. And suddenly one goes forward. And when you reach the end you have an experience. And what is remarkable is that people who have followed altogether different paths, with altogether different mental constructions, from the greatest believer to the most unbelieving, even materialists, have arrived at that experience, it is the same for everyone. Because it is true - because it is real, because it is the sole reality. And it is quite simply *that*. I do not say anything more. This is of no importance, the way one speaks about it, what is important is to follow the path, *your* path, no matter which-yes, to go there.

BIRTH INTO THE SPIRIT

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

A REVERSAL OF CONSCIOUSNESS - I

The question continues coming up: "But then, what is myself?" Well, there is a moment when it comes up with so much concentration and such intensity that with this intensity of concentration suddenly there occurs a reversal, and then, instead of being on this side you are on that side, and when you are on that side everything is very simple; you understand, you know, you are, you live, and then you see clearly the unreality of the rest, and this is enough.

You see, one may have to wait for days, months, years, centuries, lives, before this moment comes. But if one intensifies his aspiration, there is a moment when the pressure is so great and the intensity of the question so strong that something turns over in the consciousness, and then this is absolutely what one feels: instead of being here one is there, instead of seeing from outside and seeking to see within, one is inside; and the minute one is within, absolutely everything changes, completely, ...one has touched something which is supremely true and eternally beautiful, and this one never loses again.

A REVERSAL OF CONSCIOUSNESS - II

Once the reversal has taken place, you can glide into an external consciousness, not lose the ordinary contact with the things of life, but that remains and it never moves. You may, in your dealings with others fall back a little into their ignorance and blindness, but there is always something there, living, standing up within, which does not move any more, until it manages to penetrate everything, to the point where it is over, where the blindness disappears for ever. And this is an absolutely tangible experience, something more concrete than the most concrete object, more concrete than a blow on your head, something more real than anything whatever.

This is why I always say... when people ask me how one may know whether he is in contact with his psychic being or how one may know whether he has found the Divine, well, it makes me laugh; for when it happens to you it is over, you can no longer ask any questions, it is done; you do not ask how it happens, it is done.

CONTACT WITH ONE'S PSYCHIC BEING

In the ordinary life there is not one person in a million who has a conscious contact with his psychic being, even momentarily. The psychic being may work from within, but so invisibly and unconsciously for the outer being that it is as though it did not exist. And in most cases, the immense majority, almost the totality of cases, it is as though it were asleep, not at all active, in a kind of torpor.

It is only with the *sadhana* and a very persistent effort that one succeeds in having a conscious contact with his psychic being...

In almost, almost all cases, a very very sustained effort is needed to become aware of one's psychic being. Usually it is considered that if one can do it in thirty years one is very lucky - thirty years of sustained effort, I say. It may happen that it is quicker. But this is so rare that immediately one says: "This is not an ordinary human being." That is the case of people who have been considered more or less divine beings and who were great yogis, great initiates.

THE SEAT OF THE DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS

[*The psychic being*] is the seat of the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Self in the individual being. It is a centre of light and truth and knowledge and beauty and harmony which the Divine Self in each of you creates by his presence, little by little; it is influenced, formed and moved by the Divine Consciousness of which it is a part and parcel. It is in each of you the deep inner being which you have to find in order that you may come in contact with the Divine in you. It is the intermediary between the Divine Consciousness and your external consciousness; it is the builder of the inner life, it is that which manifests in the outer nature the order and rule of the Divine Will. If you become aware in your outer consciousness of the psychic being within you and unite with it, ...you can find the pure Eternal Consciousness and live in it; you grow aware of the presence of an eternal light and knowledge within you, and to it you surrender and are integrally consecrated to it and moved by it in all things.

THE TEMPLE WITHIN YOU

In the depths of your consciousness is the psychic being, the temple of the Divine within you. This is the centre round which should come about the unification of all these divergent parts, all these contradictory movements of your being. Once you have got the consciousness of the psychic being and its aspiration, these doubts and difficulties can be destroyed. It takes more or less time, but you will surely succeed in the end. Once you have turned to the Divine, saying: "I want to be yours," and the Divine has said: "Yes" the whole world cannot keep you from it. When the central being has made its surrender, the chief difficulty has disappeared. The outer being is like a crust. In ordinary people the crust is so hard and thick that they are not conscious of the Divine within them. If once, even for a moment only, the inner being has said: "I am here and I am yours," then it is as though a bridge has been built and little by little the crust becomes thinner and thinner until the two parts are wholly joined and the inner and the outer become one.

THE VALUE OF A PHYSICAL BODY

This harmonisation and organisation of the being around the Divine Centre can only be done in a physical body and on earth. That is truly the essential and original reason for physical life. For, as soon as you are no longer in a physical body, you can no longer do it *at all*.

And what is still more remarkable is that only human beings can do it, for only human beings have at their centre the divine Presence in the psychic being...

And yet, human beings come into a physical body without knowing why, most of them go through life without knowing why, they leave their body without knowing why, and they have to begin the same thing all over again, indefinitely, until one day, someone comes along and tells them: "Be careful! you know, there is a purpose to this. You are here for this work, do not miss your opportunity!"

THE WORK OF THE PSYCHIC BEING

What is the work of the Psychic Being?

One could put it this way, that it is like an electric wire that connects the generator with the lamp. Now, if someone has understood, let him explain what I said!...

The generator is the Divine and the lamp is the body.

It is the body, it is the visible being.

So, that is its function. This means that if there were no Psychic in Matter, it would not be able to have any direct contact with the Divine. And it is happily due to this Psychic presence in Matter that the contact between Matter and the Divine can be direct and all human beings can be told: "You carry the Divine within you, and you have only to enter within yourself and you will find Him."

THE DIVINE IS IN YOU

If you could find, each one of you, your psychic and unite with it, all the problems would be solved.

The psychic being is the representative of the Divine in the human being. That is it, you see, the Divine is not something remote and inaccessible. The Divine is in you but you are not fully conscious of it...

It acts now as an influence rather than, as a Presence. It would be a conscious Presence, you should be able at each moment to ask yourself... how the Divine sees. It is like that: first how the Divine sees, and then how the Divine wills, and then how the Divine acts. And it is not to go away into inaccessible regions, it is right here. Only, for the moment, all the old habits and the general unconsciousness put a kind of covering which prevents us from seeing and feeling. You must... you must lift, you must lift that up.

In fact, you must become conscious instruments... conscious... conscious of the Divine.

THE PSYCHIC AND THE TRUTH

The psychic is moved by the Truth. The Truth is something eternally self-existent and dependent on nothing in time or space, whereas the psychic being is a being that grows, takes form, progresses, individualises itself more and more. In this way it becomes more and more capable of manifesting this Truth, the eternal Truth that is one and permanent. The Psychic Being is a progressive being, which means that the relation between the Psychic Being and the Truth is a progressive one. It is not possible to become aware of one's Psychic Being without becoming aware at the same time of the inner Truth. All those who have had this experience - not a mental experience but an integral experience of contact with the Psychic Being, not a contact with the idea they have constructed of it, but a truly concrete contact, all say the same thing: from the very minute this contact takes place, one is absolutely conscious of the Eternal Truth within oneself and one sees that it is the purpose of life and the guide of the world.

THE INNER LAW

The inner law, the truth of the being is the Divine Presence in every human being, which should be the Master and Guide of our life.

When you acquire the habit of listening to this inner law, when you obey it, follow it, try more and more to let it guide your life, you create around you an atmosphere of truth and peace and harmony which naturally reacts upon circumstances and forms, so to say, the atmosphere in which you live. When you are a being of justice, truth, harmony, compassion, understanding, of perfect goodwill, this inner attitude, the more sincere and total it is, the more it reacts upon the external circumstances; not that it necessarily diminishes the difficulties of life, but it gives these difficulties a new meaning and that allows you to face them with a new strength and a new wisdom.

DIFFICULTIES AND THE PSYCHIC BEING

I have noticed that most often those who have many difficulties are those who are in a more or less close contact with their psychic being. If you want to speak about outer circumstances - I am not speaking of the character, that is quite different, but of outer circumstances - the people who have to struggle most and would have most reason to suffer are those who have a very developed psychic being.

...But there is the counterpart, that is, to the extent to which one is in relation with the psychic being, one faces the circumstances of life in an altogether different way and with a kind of inner freedom which makes one capable of withdrawing from a circumstance and not feeling the shock in the ordinary way. You can face the difficulty of outer things with calm, peace, and a sufficient inner knowledge not to be troubled. So, on one side you are more sensitive and on the other you have more strength to deal with the sensitivity.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PSYCHIC

The perception of the exterior consciousness may deny the perception. of the Psychic. But the Psychic has the true knowledge, an intuitive instinctive knowledge. It says: "I know, I cannot give reasons, but I know." For its knowledge is not mental, based on experience or proved true. It does not believe after proofs are given: faith is the movement of the soul whose knowledge is spontaneous and direct. Even if the whole world denies and brings forward a thousand proofs to the contrary, still it knows by an inner knowledge, a direct perception that can stand against everything, a perception by identity. The knowledge of the Psychic is something which is concrete and tangible, a solid mass. You can also bring it into your mental, your vital and your physical; and then you have an integral faith - a faith which can really move mountains.

YOUR PSYCHIC KNOWS

There is only one thing which knows in you, that is your Psychic; it makes no mistake, it will immediately, instantaneously tell you, if you obey it without a word and without your ideas and arguments, it will make you do the right thing. But all the rest... you are lost. And for everything: what are you going to study, what are you not going to study, what work are you going to do, what path are you going to take? But then there are all the possibilities which come in, all that you have either studied or met in life, all the suggestions you have received from all sides, which are there, like that, dancing around you. And with what will you decide?...

This was what Sri Aurobindo meant when He said that one lived constantly in ignorance and that unless the mind of ignorance is replaced by the mind of light one could not follow the true path, and that this was the indispensable preparation before any integral transformation could take place.

TO DO YOGA WITH THE HEAD - I

I believe there is a vast difference between an effort for transformation which, precisely, comes from the Psychic Centre of the being and a kind of mental construction to obtain something.

I do not know, it is very difficult to make oneself understood, but so long as the thing goes on in the head in this way (*Mother turn a finger near her forehead*), it has no power. It has a very little force that is extremely limited. And all the time it belies itself. One thinks that with great difficulty one collects a will, artificial enough, besides, and one tries to catch something, and the very next minute it has all vanished. And one does not even realise it; one asks oneself: "How does it happen to turn out like that?"

I do not know, indeed it seems to me very difficult to do yoga with the head - unless one is gripped.

TO DO YOGA WITH THE HEAD - II

The will is not in the head.

The will what I call the will - is something that is here (*Mother points to the centre of the chest*), which has a power of action, a power of realisation.

What one does exclusively in the head is subject to countless fluctuations; it is not possible to construct a theory, for instance, without there intervening immediately things which give all the opposite arguments. And so, there is the great skill of the mind, you know: it can prove no matter what, argue about anything at all. Consequently one does not go a step farther. Even if momentarily one catches an idea that has a certain force, unless one can keep that state of intensity, as soon as there is a relaxation all the contrary things come along, and all, as you know, with the charm of their expression. So it is a ceaseless battle.

It has no solution.

THE HEART HAS WINGS

There are people in whom the psychic movement, the emotional impulse is stronger than intellectual understanding. They feel an irresistible attraction for the Divine without knowing, without having the slightest idea of what it is, of what it can be, what it represents - nothing, no intellectual notion - but a kind of impulse, attraction, a need, an inevitable need.

And these people who have that, if, I may say as a result of the Grace, they have a mind which does not trouble them, does not question, does not discuss, go very fast...

There are others who understand first, who are very intellectual, have studied, can play with words and ideas, who will give you brilliant lectures on all the philosophies, all the religions, all human conceptions and who, perhaps, will take years to advance one step. Because all that goes on in the head.

It is not the head which has wings: it is the heart.

THE PSYCHIC AND THE MIND

Psychic life in the universe is a work of the Divine Grace. Psychic growth is a work of the Divine Grace and the ultimate power of the Psychic Being over the physical being will also be a result of the Divine Grace. And the mind, if it wants to be at all useful, has only to remain very quiet, as quiet as it can, because if it meddles in it, it is sure to spoil everything...

The mind is an instrument for formation and organisation, and if the mind lets the psychic make use of it, that will be very good. But it is not the mind which will help the psychic to manifest. The roles are reversed. The mind can be an instrument for the manifestation of the psychic later, when it has already taken possession of the outer consciousness. It is rarely so before that. Usually it is a veil and an obstruction. But surely it cannot help in the manifestation. It can help in the action if it takes its true place and true movement. And if it becomes completely docile to the psychic inspiration, it can help to organise life, for this is its function, its reason of existence.

REASON AND SPIRITUAL LIFE - I

{Reason} is a very good instrument for all ethics, morality, self-control, but spiritual life goes beyond these things and reason understands nothing of it.

...If it tries to intervene it is an obstacle, if it withdraws in an orderly way and' remains quiet, then it is very good.

It is an obstacle if you want to use it as judge and master. But it is not an obstacle if you use it as an instrument, like all the other parts of the being. It is an excellent instrument on condition that it remains an instrument and does not want to become the master who decides and judges. It is a power of judgment which, in its field, is absolutely right. But as soon as it goes beyond its domain, it cannot understand, it has no discernment any longer.

So if the reason understands this and keeps quiet, with the attitude of an instrument and not of master and judge, it is perfect.

REASON AND SPIRITUAL LIFE - II

A being who is in a whirlwind of darkness is obviously not ready to receive the Spirit. But when by the use of reason one has managed to organise his being logically and reasonably, in a balanced and wise way, reason is essentially an instrument of wisdom, well, this is an excellent preparation for going beyond, on condition that one knows that it is not a culmination, that it is only a preparation. It is like a base, you see; people who have spiritual experiences, who have a contact with the higher worlds and are not ready in the lower domains, have a lot of trouble, because they have to fight constantly against a heap of elements which are neither organised nor purified nor classified; and each one pulls its own way, there are impulses and preferences and desires, and so this light which has come from above has to organise all this; whereas if the reason had worked to begin with and made the place at least a habitable one, when the Spirit came it would have been more easily installed.

KEEP YOUR REASON

Usually people who have a tendency for not altogether ordinary experiences find reason very troublesome; and even before being ready to surpass its action they reject it, and that is how usually they become absolutely unreasonable and end up by being half-mad. That is why, so long as you do not have an absolute certainty of having reached where you want to go, well, you must keep the reason very active in yourself in order to prevent yourself from becoming derailed. This is very, very important. One cannot dethrone reason unless the experience of the higher regions is so absolute, so true, so complete, that it compels recognition. It is not a very frequent thing. So I always advise people to keep their reason. But there is a point where it must cease having its superior rights that is to judge spiritual experience, because it cannot judge this, it does not understand it; but it must truly be a spiritual experience, not something which tries to imitate it; here an absolute sincerity is necessary.

REASON AND KNOWLEDGE

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

THE RELATIVITY OF THOUGHT - I

If you say that there is nothing in the universe that is not the work of the Divine, which is essentially true, though not true here on the ordinary plane of life, then you say: "Good. It is the Divine who organises everything; consequently it is He who has organised the difficulties also." But this is indeed a very childish way of putting things - over-simple. Only, as I said at the beginning: "If it helps you to think in this way, think in this way." You see, thought is so approximate a thing, it is so far from *the* truth... it is only a kind of vague, incomplete, confused reflection, full of falsehood, even at its best. So, in truth, it is the moment to be practical and tell yourself: "Well, I shall adopt this thought if it helps me to progress." But if you think that it is the absolute truth, you are sure to go wrong, for there is not a single thought which is the absolute truth.

THE RELATIVITY OF THOUGHT - II

Whatever your thought may be, even if it is very high, very pure, very noble, very true, it is only a very tiny microscopic aspect of the Truth, and consequently it is not entirely true. So in that field one must be practical, as I said, adopt the thought for the time being, the one which will help you to make progress when you have it. Sometimes it comes as an illumination and this helps you to progress. So long as it helps you to make progress, keep it; when it begins to crumble, not to act any longer, well, drop it, and try to get another which will lead you a little farther.

Many miseries and misfortunes in the world would disappear if people knew the relativity of knowledge, the relativity of faith, the relativity of the teachings and also the relativity of circumstances... to what an extent a thing is so relatively important.

THE RELATIVITY OF THOUGHT - III

When you have grown a few years older from the spiritual point of view, and you look back on this thing, this circumstance or idea which perhaps has decided your life, it will seem so relative, so insignificant to you... and you will need something much higher to make new progress.

If one could always remember this, well, one would avoid much sectarianism, much intolerance, and annul all quarrels immediately, because a quarrel means just this, that one thinks in one way and the other in another, that one has taken one attitude and the other another, and that instead of trying to bring them together and find out how they could be harmonised, one puts them over against each other as one fights with one's fists. It is nothing else.

But if you become aware of the complete relativity of your point of view, your thought, your conviction of what is good, to what an extent it is relative in the march of the universe, then you will be less violent in your reactions and more tolerant.

THE UNIVERSE AND YOUR EGO

The whole universe moves in accordance with {your} ego: you are at the centre, and the universe turns round you. If you look at yourself attentively, you will see it is like that. Your vision of the universe - that is you at the centre and the universe all around. So there is no place for anything else. It is not the universe you see: it is yourself you see in the universe...

But if you want to know things as they really are, you must be *absolutely* like a mirror: silent, peaceful, immobile, impartial, without preferences and in a state of total receptivity. And if you are like that, you will begin to see that there are many things you are not aware of, but which are there, and which will start becoming active in you.

Then you will be able to be in these things instead of being exclusively enclosed within the little point you are in the universe.

A CAGE, A SHELL, A PRISON

This sense of one's own person becomes a kind of cage, a prison which shuts you in, prevents you from being true, from knowing truly, acting truly, understanding truly. It is as though someone had put you in a very hard shell and you were compelled to stay there.

This is the first sensation you have. Afterwards you begin to tap against the shell in order to break it. Sometimes it resists very long. But still, when you begin to feel this... that this is a prison preventing you from being truly yourself, then you have made great progress, and there is hope. You feel yourself stifled, crushed, absolutely shut up in a prison without air, without light, without an opening, and then you begin pushing from inside, pushing, pushing, pushing so that it may break.

And the day it breaks, the day it opens, suddenly, you enter the Psychic Consciousness. And then you understand. And then, truly, if you have a sense of humour, you laugh; you realise your stupidity.

THE KNOT OF THE EGO - I

Sweet Mother, how can we cut the knot of the ego?

How to cut it? Take a sword and strike it, {laughter}, when one becomes conscious of it. For usually one is not; we think it quite normal, what happens to us; and in fact it is very normal but we think it quite good also. So to begin with one must have a great clear-sightedness to become aware that one is enclosed in all these knots which hold one in bondage. And then, when one is aware that there is something altogether tightly closed in there - so tightly that one has tried in vain to move it - then one imagines his will to be a very sharp sword-blade, and with all one's force one strikes a blow on this knot {*imaginary, of course, one does not take up a sword in fact*}, and this produces a result.

THE KNOT OF THE EGO - II

You can do this work {*of cutting the knot of the ego*} from the psychological point of view, discovering all the elements constituting this knot, the whole set of resistances, habits, preferences, of all that holds you narrowly closed in. So when you grow aware of this, you can concentrate and call the Divine Force and the Grace and strike a good blow on this formation, these things so closely held, like that, that nothing can separate them. And at that moment you must resolve that you will no longer listen to these things, that you will listen only to the Divine Consciousness and will do no other work except the Divine Work without worrying about personal results, free from all attachment, free from all preference, free from all wish for success, power, satisfaction, vanity, all this... All this must disappear and you must see only the Divine Will incarnated in your will and making you act. Then, in this way, you are cured.

DO NOT "PULL"

The surest means {*to get out of the ego*} is to give oneself to the Divine; not to try to draw the Divine to oneself but try to give oneself to the Divine. Then you are compelled at least to come out a little from yourself to begin with. Usually, you know, when people think of the Divine, the first thing they do is to "pull" as much as they can into themselves. And then, generally, they receive nothing at all. They tell you: "Ah! I called, I prayed and I did not have the answer. I had no answer, nothing came." But then, if you ask: "Did you offer yourself?" - "No, I pulled." - "Ah, yes, that is why it did not come !" It is not that it did not come, it is that when you pull you remain so shut up in your ego, ... it raises a wall between what is to be received and yourself. You put yourself in prison and then you are astonished that in your prison you feel nothing...

Throw yourself out {*Mother opens her hands*}, give yourself without holding back. anything, simply for the joy of giving yourself. Then there is a chance that you may feel something.

NEVER TRY TO PULL THE FORCE

I would like to recommend something to you. In your desire for progress and your aspiration for realisation, take great care not to attempt to pull the forces towards you. Give yourself, open yourself with as much disinterestedness as you can attain through a constant self-forgetfulness, increase your receptivity to the utmost, but *never* try to *pull* the Force towards you, for wanting to *pull* is already a dangerous egoism. You may aspire, you may open yourself, you may give yourself, but never seek to take. When things go wrong, people blame the Force, but it is not the Force that is responsible: it is ambition, egoism, ignorance and the weakness of the vessel.

Give yourself generously and with a perfect disinterestedness and from the deeper point of view nothing bad will ever happen to you. Try to take and you will be on the brink of the abyss.

GIVE INSTEAD OF TAKING

One tries to take, accumulate, accumulate, accumulate, but that is impossible, one cannot accumulate. One must identify oneself. And then, the little bit one gives, one wants to get back: one gives a good thought, one expects some recognition; one gives a little affection, one expects it from others... for one does not have the ability to become the good thought in everything, one does not have the ability to be the affectionate, the tender love in all things. One feels just like that, all cut up and limited, and fears to lose everything, fears to lose what one has because one would be impoverished. On the other hand, if one were able to identify oneself, one would no longer need to pull. The more one spreads out, the more one has. The more one gets identified, the more one becomes. And then, instead of taking, one gives. And the more one gives, the more one grows.

THE IDEAL ATTITUDE

The simple fact of giving oneself to the Divine so that the Divine takes you and makes of you what He wills, and this in all its purity and constancy, well, there are not many who do that and yet this indeed is the truth; and with this, one goes straight to the goal and never risks making mistakes. But all the other motives are always mixed, tainted with ego; and naturally they can lead you here and there, very far from the goal also.

But that kind of feeling that you have only one single reason for existence, one single goal, one single motive, the entire, perfect, complete consecration to the Divine to the point of not being able to distinguish yourself from Him any longer, to be Himself entirely, completely, totally without any personal reaction intervening, this is the ideal attitude; and besides, it is the only one which makes it possible for you to go forward in life and in the work, absolutely protected from everything and protected from yourself which is of all dangers the greatest for you.

GIVE EVERYTHING

The more you give yourself to the Divine the more He is with you, totally, constantly, at every minute, in all your thoughts, all your needs, and that there is no aspiration which does not receive an immediate answer; and you have the sense of a complete, constant intimacy, of a total nearness. It is as though you carried... as though the Divine were all the time with you; you walk and He walks with you, you sleep and He sleeps with you, you eat and He eats with you, you think and He thinks with you, you love and He is the love you have. But for this you must give yourself entirely, totally, exclusively, reserve nothing, keep nothing for yourself and not keep back anything... If you give Him everything, if you keep back nothing, He will be constantly and totally with you in all that you do, in all that you think, all that you feel, always, at each moment. But for this you must give yourself absolutely, keep back nothing; each little thing that you hold back is a stone you put down to build up a wall between the Divine and yourself.

MAKE THE GIFT OF YOUR WILL

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

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

OFFER YOUR WILL

You have a will and you can offer that will. Take the example of becoming conscious of your rights. If you take the attitude of passive surrender, you would say: "When it is the Divine Will that I should become conscious, then I shall become conscious." On the other hand, if you offer your will to the Divine, you begin to will, you say: "I will become conscious of my rights." You have the will that it should be done; you do not sit down idle and wait. The surrender comes in when you take the attitude that says: "I give my will to the Divine. I intensely want to become conscious of my rights, I do not have the knowledge, let the Divine Will work it out for me." Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved. This is the first step.

THE DIVINE WILL IN OTHERS

If you persist you will perceive the Divine Will more and more clearly. But even before you know what it is, you can make an offering of your own will and you will see that all circumstances will be so arranged as to make you do the right thing. But you must not be like that person I knew who used to say: "I always see the Divine Will in others." That can land you anywhere, there is nothing more dangerous, for if you think you see the Divine Will in others, you are sure to do their will, not the Divine Will. There too we can say that not one among many, many human beings, acts in accord with the Divine Will.

You know the story of the irritable elephant, his mahout, and the man who would not make way for the elephant. Standing in the middle of the road, the man said to the mahout: "The Divine Will is in me and the Divine Will wants me not to move." The driver, a man of some wit, answered: "But the Divine Will in the elephant wants you to move!"

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

I knew a young woman who was a theosophist and was trying to practice; 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.

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, good will, plasticity, effort for progress, and this is what counts, much more than the small decisions you take at every second.

THE SUITABLE SPIRIT

In each circumstance there is a spirit which is the suitable spirit, the one you ought to have, the attitude you must inwardly take. It depends on the case...

Naturally it always comes back to the same thing, that one must remember the Divine and put oneself at His service and will what He wills...

When one is perplexed, when one has to make a choice, when one does not know what the right thing to do is - you see, one has to choose among two or three or four possible decisions and does not know which is the right one - then one must put oneself as far as possible in contact with one's psychic being and the Divine Presence in one, present the problem to this Psychic Consciousness and ask for the true light, the true decision, the one most in accordance with the Divine Will, and try to listen and receive the inspiration.

In each case, you see, it is the right attitude.

ONE FEELS THE DIVINE WILL

How can we know what the Divine Will is?

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

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

What is necessary is an aspiration which burns in the being like a constant fire, and every time you have a desire, a preference, an attraction, it must be thrown into this fire.

THE DIVINE WILL IS UNMISTAKABLE

How are we to know, you will ask, when it is the Divine Will that makes us act? The Divine Will is not difficult to recognise. It is unmistakable. You can know it without being very far on the path. Only you must listen to its voice, the small voice that is here in the heart. Once you are accustomed to listen, if you do anything that is contrary to the Divine Will, you feel an uneasiness. If you persist on the wrong track, you get very much disturbed... Do not try to give a material excuse when you feel a little depression. or a slight uneasiness. When you stop and look about for the reason, be absolutely straight, and sincere. At first your mind will construct a very plausible and beautiful explanation. Do not accept it, but look beyond and ask: "What is it that is behind this movement? Why am I doing this?" Finally you will discover, hidden in a corner, the little ripple - a slight wrong turn or twist in your attitude that is causing the trouble or disturbance.

LIVE THIS DIVINE WILL

How can one change one's will into the Divine Will?...

Well, first you must want it. Afterwards. you must have a great aspiration. And then you must continue to want it, and continue to aspire and not give way when difficulties come, and continue until you succeed. That is all. And then, a certain number of things are necessary, as for example not to be selfish, not to have a small narrow- mindedness, not to live with preferences, not to have desires, not to have mental opinions - many things. It is a fairly long process because you must change your ordinary nature. This is the first condition.

To break all the limits of one's mind, break all the desires of one's vital, break all the preferences of one's physical nature. After that one may hope to be in contact with the Divine Will; and then, later, one must not only be in contact with it, but live integrally this Will, that is, be unified in all one's being: not have a single bit which goes on this side and another bit which goes on that. You must be entirely in one single will.

KEEP FAITH

{*We must have*} faith that always is for the best that happens. We may for the moment not consider it as the best because we are ignorant and also blind, because we do not see the consequences of things and what will happen later. But we must keep the faith that if it is like that, if we rely on the Divine, if we give Him the full charge of ourselves, if we let Him decide everything for us, well, we must know that it is always what is best for us which happens. This is an absolute fact. To the extent to which you surrender, the best happens to you. This may not be in conformity with what you would like, your preference or desire, because these things are blind: it is the best from the spiritual point of view, the best for your progress, your development, your spiritual growth, your true life. It is always that. And you must keep this faith, because faith is the expression of a trust in the Divine and the full self-giving you make to the Divine. And when you make it, it is something absolutely marvelous.

A CHILDLIKE TRUST

"What I need will be given to me; if I pray I shall have an answer; if I am in a difficulty and ask for help, the help will come - and not only will it come but it will manage everything." If the trust is there, spontaneous, candid, unquestioning, it works better than anything else, and the results are marvellous. It is with the contradictions and doubts of the mind that one spoils everything, with this kind of notion which comes when one is in difficulties: "Oh, it is impossible! I shall never manage it. And if it is going to be aggravated, if this condition I am in, which I do not want, is going to grow still worse, if I continue to slide down farther and farther, if, if, if, if..." like that, and one builds a wall between oneself and the force one wants to receive. The psychic being has this trust, has it wonderfully, without a shadow, without an argument, without a contradiction. And when it is like that, there is not a prayer which does not get an answer, no aspiration which is not realised.

FAITH THROUGH ASPIRATION

Can one have faith through aspiration?

What? Faith through aspiration? I think so, because it is rare to have it spontaneously, to be born with it. Very few people have this good luck to have a spontaneous faith. But if one is very sincere in one's aspiration, one gets it. Aspiration can bring everything, provided it is sincere and constant. One always has a tiny element of faith within oneself, whether it be faith in what one's parents have said or in the books one has studied. After all, all your education is based upon a faith of this kind. Those who have educated you have told you certain things. You had no means of checking, because you were too young. and had no experience. But you have faith in what they told you and you go forward on that faith. So everyone has a tiny bit of faith, and to increase it one can use one's aspiration.

WATCHING OVER ONE'S FAITH

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

For the inner flame to burn, one must feed it; one must watch over the fire, throw into it the fuel of all the errors one wants to get rid of, all that delays the progress, all that darkens the path. If one does not feed the fire, it smoulders under the ashes of one's unconsciousness and inertia, and then, not years but lives, centuries will pass before one reaches the goal.

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

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

THE EXTENT OF THE GRACE

No matter how great your faith and trust in the Divine Grace, no matter how great your capacity to see it at work in all circumstances, at every moment, at every point in life, you will never succeed in understanding the marvelous immensity of Its Action, and the precision, the exactitude with which this Action is accomplished; you will never be able to grasp to what extent the Grace does. everything, is behind everything, organises everything, conducts everything, so that the march forward to the Divine Realisation may be as swift, as complete, as total and harmonious as possible, considering the circumstances of the world. As soon as you are in contact with It, there is not a second in time, not a point in space, which does not show you *dazzlingly* this perpetual work of the Grace, this constant intervention of the Grace.

THE NEED FOR THE GRACE - I

What is the way to accept the Grace with gratitude?

Ah! First of all you must feel the need for it.

This is the most important point. It is to have a certain inner humility which makes you aware of your helplessness without the Grace, that truly, without it you are incomplete and powerless...

This is the first condition. And then, if you become aware that it is only the Grace which can, pull you out, can give you the solution and the strength to come out of it, then, quite naturally an intense aspiration awakes in you, a consciousness which is translated into an opening. If you call, aspire, and if you hope to get an answer, you will quite naturally open yourself to the Grace...

But once you are free from trouble and have come out of your difficulty, do not forget that it is the Grace which pulled you out, and do not think it is yourself. For this, indeed, is the important point.

THE NEED FOR THE GRACE - II

Most people, as soon as the difficulty has gone, say: "After all, I pulled myself out of the difficulty quite well."

There you are. And then you lock and bolt the door, you see, and you cannot receive anything any more. You need once again some acute anguish, some terrible difficulty for this kind of inner stupidity to give way, and for you to realise once more that you can do nothing. Because it is only when you grow aware that you are powerless that you begin to be just a little open and plastic. But so long as you think that what you do depends on your own skill and your own capacity, truly, not only do you close one door, but, you know, you close lots of doors one upon another, and bolt them. You shut yourself up in a fortress and nothing can enter there. That is the great drawback: one forgets very quickly. Quite naturally one is satisfied with one's own capacity.

THE GRACE AND THE SINNER

How can the Grace come to the help of the sinner?

It does not help the sinner to be a sinner! It helps the sinner to give up his sin; that is to say, it does not push away the sinner, saying: "I will not do anything for you." It is there, always, even when he is sinning, to help him to come out of it, but not to continue in his sin.

There is a great difference between this and the idea that you are bad and so: "I will not look after you, I shall throw you far away from me, and whatever is to happen to you will happen, I am not concerned about it." This is the common idea. One says: "God has rejected me, you know." It is not that. You may not be able to feel the Grace, but It will always be there, even with the worst of sinners, even with the worst of criminals, to help him to change, to be cured of his crime and sin if he wants to. It will not reject him, but It will not help him to do evil. It would not be the Grace any longer.

THE GRACE AND FALSEHOOD - I

The Grace has come; well, it works for the realisation of the Truth. If it accepts the conditions laid upon it by the falsehood, it can no longer do anything. Of this, you know, I could give you *countless* examples - of people who insist that things should happen in a particular way as far as they are concerned. They implore, at times even demand that things should be like that; and what they ask for is absolutely contrary to the truth; and if the Grace obeyed their demand, it would go against Its own purpose and defeat Its own purpose, that is, It would go against Its own work and aim. It comes here to realise the truth; if It obeys the falsehood, It turns Its back on truth. And people, you see, very often put the cart before the horse - most often through ignorance and stupidity; but sometimes it is also through bad will that they insist on having their conditions fulfilled, that they go in for a kind of bargaining in exchange for their surrender.

THE GRACE AND FALSEHOOD - II

They go as far as to say to the Divine: "If you are like this and like that, if you fulfil the conditions I lay down for you, I shall obey you!" They do not put it in this way because that would be too ridiculous, but they almost constantly do it. You see, they say: "Oh, the Divine is like this. The Divine does this. The Divine must respond like this." And they continue in this way, and they are not aware that they are quite simply imposing their conceptions and also their desires on what the Divine ought to be and do. And so, when the Divine does not do what they want or does not fulfil the conditions they lay down, they say: "You are not the Divine!" {*Laughter*} It is very simple. "You do not fulfil the conditions I lay down, so you are not the Divine!" But they do it constantly, you know. So, naturally, if to please people, the Divine Grace were to submit to their demands, It would be working entirely against Its own purpose and would destroy Its own work.

IDENTIFY WITH THE GRACE

It is the Divine Grace which makes you progress, and with the Divine Grace feel the Divine Joy. But instead of identifying yourself with the Grace which makes you progress, you identify yourself with the ugly thing you want to get rid of; and so, naturally, you feel like it and suffer.

That is an experiment you can make if you are just a little conscious. There is something in you which you do not want, something bad - for one reason or another you do not want it, you want to pull it out well, if you identify yourself ever so little with that thing, you feel the pain of the extraction; if on the contrary, you identify yourself with the Divine Force which comes to liberate you, you feel the joy of the Divine Grace - and you experience the deep delight of the progress you have made.

And this is a sure sign for you, a sure indication of what you identify yourself with. If you are identified with the forces from below, you suffer; if you are identified with the forces from above, you are happy.

ALL DEPENDS UPON ONE'S ATTITUDE

There is a state in which one realises that the effect of things, circumstances, all the movements and actions of life on the consciousness depends almost exclusively upon one's attitude to these things. There is a moment when one becomes sufficiently conscious to realise that things in themselves are truly neither good nor bad: they are this only in relation to us; their effect on us depends absolutely upon the attitude we have towards them. The same thing, identically the same, if we take it as a gift of God, as a Divine Grace, as the result of the full Harmony, helps us to become more conscious, stronger, more true, while if we take it - exactly the very same circumstance - as a blow from fate, as a bad force wanting to affect us, this constricts us, weighs us down and takes away from us all consciousness and strength and harmony. And the circumstance in itself is *exactly* the same of this. I should like you all to have the experience, for when you have it, you become master of yourself.

BAD THOUGHTS

Sri Aurobindo says that all that one thinks one is, one can, by the very fact of that thinking, become. This knowledge of the fact that *all* that one thinks one can be, is a very important key for the development of the being...

This makes us understand the necessity of not admitting into ourselves any thought which destroys aspiration or the creation of the truth of our being. It reveals the considerable importance of not allowing what one does not want to be or does not want to do to formulate itself into thought within the being. Because to think these things is already a beginning of their realisation. From every point of view it is bad to concentrate on what one does not want, on what one has to reject, what one refuses to be...

One must not admit bad thoughts into oneself under the pretext that they are merely thoughts. They are tools of execution. And one should not allow them to exist in oneself if one does not want them to do their work of destruction.

UNPLESANT THOUGHTS - I

Mother, at times unpleasant thoughts come and disturb us. How can we get rid of them?

There are several methods. Generally - but it depends on people - generally the easiest way is to think of something else. That is, to concentrate one's attention upon something that has nothing to do with that thought, has no connection with that thought, like reading or some work generally something creative, some creative work... Those who have begun to control their thought can make a movement of rejection, push aside the thought as one would to a physical object. But that is more difficult and asks for a much greater mastery. If one can manage it, it is more active, in the sense that if you reject that movement, that thought, if you chase it off effectively and constantly or almost repeatedly, finally it does not come any more.

But in the other case, it can always return.

That makes two methods.

UNPLESANT THOUGHTS - II

The third means {*to get rid of unpleasant thoughts*} is to be able to bring down a sufficiently great light from above which will be the "*denial*" in the deeper sense; that is, if the thought which comes is something dark (and especially if it comes from the subconscious or inconscient and is sustained by instinct), if one can bring down from above the light of a true knowledge, a higher power, and put that light upon the thought, one can manage to dissolve it or enlighten or transform it - this is the Supreme Method. This is still a little more difficult. But it can be done, and if one does it, one is cured not only does the thought not come back but the very cause is removed.

The first step is to think of something else (but in this way, you know, it will be indefinitely repeated); the second is to fight; and the third is to transform. When one has reached the third step, not only is one cured but one has made a permanent progress.

CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOU WANT TO BE

Lest you get discouraged by your own faults, the Dhammapada gives you this solacing image: the purest lily can spring out of a heap of rubbish by the wayside. That is to say, there is nothing so rotten that it cannot give birth to the purest realisation.

Whatever may be the past, whatever may be the faults committed, whatever the ignorance in which one might have lived, one carries deep within oneself the Supreme Purity which can translate itself into a wonderful realisation.

The whole point is to think of that, to concentrate on that and not to be concerned with all the difficulties and obstacles and hindrances.

Concentrate exclusively on what you want to be, forget as entirely as possible what you do not want to be.

IMAGINATION

I say to you, never be dejected and disappointed but let your imagination be always hopeful and joyously plastic to the stress of the higher Truth, so that the latter may find you full of the necessary formations to hold its creative light.

The imagination is like a knife which may be used for good or evil purposes. If you always dwell in the idea and feeling that you are going to be transformed, then you will help the process of the Yoga. If, on the contrary, you give in to dejection and bewail that you are not fit or that you are incapable of realisation, you poison your own being. It is just on account of this very important truth that I am so tirelessly insistent in telling you to let anything happen but, for heaven's sake, not to get depressed. Live rather in the constant hope and conviction that what we are doing will prove a success. In other words, let your imagination be moulded by your faith in Sri Aurobindo.

IMAGINATION OPENS THE PATH

What is the function, the use of the imagination?

If one knows how to use it, as I said, one can create for oneself his own inner and outer life; one can build his own existence with his imagination, if one knows how to use it and has a power. In fact it is an elementary way of creating, of forming things in the world. I have always felt that if one did not have the capacity of imagination he would not make any progress. Your imagination always goes ahead of your life. When you think of yourself, usually you imagine what you want to be, do you not? and this goes ahead, then you follow, then it continues to go ahead and you follow. Imagination opens for you the path of realisation. People who are not imaginative - it is very difficult to make them move; they see just what is there before their nose, they feel just what they are moment by moment and they cannot go forward because they are clamped by the immediate thing.

THE IMAGINATIVE POWER

If you have a very powerful imagination and build up the realisation of your desire, build it up well with all its details and everything, like an admirably made formation existing in itself, totally, you see... well, you may be sure that if you live long enough the thing will be realised. It can be realised the next day, it can be realised the next minute, it can take years, it can take centuries. But it is sure to be realised. And then, if to this imaginative power you add a kind of creative vital strength, you make a very living force of it; and as all living forces tend towards realisation, it will put a pressure upon terrestrial events in order to be able to realise itself sooner, and it is realised...

If... instead of being desires, they are aspirations for spiritual things and one continues his line with a regular progress, then one is absolutely sure to obtain one day what he has imagined.

THE ATMOSPHERE YOU CREATE

You carry with you, around you, in you, the atmosphere created by your actions, and if what you do is beautiful, good and harmonious, your atmosphere is beautiful, good and harmonious...

When you are good, when you are generous, noble, disinterested, kind, you create in you, around you, a particular atmosphere and this atmosphere is a sort of luminous release. You breathe, you blossom like a flower in the sun; there is no painful recoil on yourself, no bitterness, no revolt, no miseries. Spontaneously, naturally, the atmosphere becomes luminous and the air you breathe is full of happiness...

Every wrong action produces on the consciousness the effect of a wind that withers, of a cold that freezes or of burning flames that consume.

Every good and kind deed brings light, restfulness, joy
- the sunshine in which flowers bloom.

CREATE YOUR OWN ATMOSPHERE - I

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "A spiritual atmosphere is more important than outer conditions," if one can get that and also create one's own spiritual air to breathe in and live in it, that is the true condition of progress."

{Sri Aurobindo}

How can one get that and also create one's true spiritual atmosphere?

...Precisely by inner discipline; you can create your atmosphere by controlling your thoughts, turning them exclusively towards the *sadhana*, controlling your actions, turning them exclusively towards the *sadhana*, abolishing all desires and all useless, external, ordinary activities, living a more intense inner life, and separating yourself from ordinary things, ordinary thoughts, ordinary reactions, ordinary actions; then you create a kind of atmosphere around you.

CREATE YOUR OWN ATMOSPHERE - II

Instead of reading any odd thing and chatting and doing anything whatever, if you read only what helps you to follow the path, if you act only in conformity with what can lead you to the Divine Realisation, if you abolish in yourself all desires and impulses turned towards external things, if you calm your mental being, appease your vital being, if you shut yourself against suggestions coming from outside and become immune to the action of people surrounding you, you create *such* a spiritual atmosphere that nothing can touch it, and it no longer depends *at all* on circumstances or on whom you live with or on the conditions you live in, because you are enclosed in your own spiritual atmosphere.

And that is how one obtains it: by turning one's attention *solely* to the spiritual life, by reading only what can help in the spiritual life, by doing only what leads you to the spiritual life, and so on. Then you create your own atmosphere.

ONE'S OWN WAY OF THINKING

One needs years of very attentive, very careful, very reasonable, very coherent work, organisation, selection, construction, in order to succeed simply in forming, oh, simply this little thing, *one's own way of thinking!*

One believes he has his own way of thinking. Not at all. It depends totally upon the people one speaks with or the books he has read or on the mood he is in. It depends also on whether you have a good or bad digestion, it depends on whether you are shut up in a room without proper ventilation or whether you are in the open air; it depends on whether you have a beautiful landscape before you; it depends on whether there is sunshine or rain! You are not aware of it, but you think all kinds of things, completely different according to a heap of things which have nothing to do with you!

And for this to become a coordinated, coherent, logical thought, a long thorough work is necessary.

A CERTAIN NUMBER OF RULES

The usefulness of work is... to crystallise power. For, what you learn {unless you put it in practice by some work or deeper studies}, half of what you learn, at least, will vanish, disappear with time. But it will leave behind one thing: the capacity of crystallising your thought, making something clear out of it, something precise, exact and organised. And that is the true usefulness of work: to organise your cerebral capacity... this mental power. For, what

Essentially, from the general point of view, particularly from the intellectual viewpoint, the most important thing is the capacity of attention and concentration, it is that which one must work at and develop. From the point of view of action {physical action}, it is the will: you must work and build up an unshakable will. From the intellectual point of view, you must work and build up a power of concentration which nothing can shake. And if you have both, concentration and will, you will be a genius and nothing will resist you.

CONCENTRATE WHEN YOU WORK

When you work, if you are able to concentrate, you can do absolutely in ten minutes what would otherwise take you one hour. If you want to gain time, learn to concentrate. It is through attention that one can do things quickly and one does them much better. If you have a task that should take you half an hour - I do not say if you have to write for half an hour of course - but if you have to think and your mind is floating about, if you are thinking not only of what you are doing but also of what you have done and of what you would have to do and of your other subjects, all that makes you lose thrice as much time as you need to do your task. When you have too much to do, you must learn how to concentrate exclusively on what you are doing, with an intensity in your attention, and you can do in ten minutes what would otherwise take you one hour.

UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU LEARN

The true way so that {what you learn} remains is to understand, it is not to learn by heart. You learn something by heart, it is mechanical, you see; but after some time it will be effaced, unless you make use of it constantly...

If you understand the thing, if you have the sense of the principle which is behind, you can remember it indefinitely, for hundreds of years if you live for hundreds of years; whereas something you have learnt by heart... after some time the brain-cells multiply, are replaced, and some things are wiped out... In one's life there are things which remain like landmarks, there are others which are totally effaced to the extent that one does not remember them at all, they are gone. But there are things like that, truly like. milestones, like landmarks in life. Well, these things were conscious experiences, that is, they were understood; so the experience remains indefinitely, and with just a tiny movement of the consciousness you can bring it forward. But something that is learnt mechanically - unless, I tell you, you make use of it daily, it is effaced.

ORGANISE YOUR LIFE - I

One must organise one's own things - and at the same time one's own ideas - in the same way, and must know exactly where things are and be able to go straight to them, because one's organisation is logical. It is your own logic, it may not be your neighbour's logic - not necessarily, it is your logic - but your organisation being logical, you know exactly where a thing is and, as I told you, if that thing is displaced, you know it immediately. And those who can do that are generally those who can put their ideas into order and can also organise their character and can finally control their movements. And then, if you make progress, you succeed in governing your physical life: you begin to have a control over your physical movements. If you take life in that way, truly it becomes interesting. If one lives in a confusion, a disorder, an inner and outer chaos in which everything is mixed up and one is conscious of nothing and still less is master of things, this is not living.

ORGANISE YOUR LIFE - II

Some... cannot keep a cupboard in order or a drawer in order. They may be in a room which looks very tidy and very neat outwardly, and then you open a drawer or a cupboard, it is like a battlefield! Everything is pell-mell. You find everything in a jumble; nothing is arranged. These are people with a poor little head in which ideas lie in the same state as their material objects. They have not organised their ideas. They have not put them in order. They live in a cerebral confusion. And that is a sure sign, I have never met an exception to this rule: people who do not know how to keep their things in order - their ideas are in disorder in their heads, always. They exist together, the most contradictory ideas are put together, and not through a higher synthesis, do you not believe it; simply because of a disorder and an incapacity to organise their ideas. You do not need to speak even for ten minutes with people if you can manage to enter their room and open the drawers of their tables and look into their cupboard. You know in what state they are, do you not?

HAVE RESPECT FOR THINGS

How should we use things?

Ah, this is... First, to use things with an understanding of their true utility, the knowledge of their real use, with the utmost care so that they do not get spoilt and with the least confusion...

There is a kind of respect for the object one has, which must make one treat it with much consideration and try to preserve it as long as possible, not because one is attached to it and desires it, but because an object is something respectable which has sometimes cost a lot of effort and labour in the producing and so much as a result be considered with the respect due to the work and effort put into it...

Many a time I say: "No, use what you have. Try to make the best possible use of it. Do not throw away things uselessly, do not ask uselessly. Try to do with what you have, putting into it all the care, all the order, all the necessary method, and avoiding confusion."

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

All in you that tries to do things well, tries to do it spontaneously and sincerely; it is something that comes from within you, and not because you have been promised rewards if you do well and punishments if you do badly. Our system is not based on this.

It is possible that at a certain moment something comes along to give you the impression that your effort has been appreciated, but the effort was not made in view of that; that is, these promises are not made beforehand nor are they balanced by equivalent punishments. This is not the practice here. Usually things are such, arranged in such a way, that the satisfaction of having done well seems to be the best of rewards and one punishes himself when he does badly, in the sense that one feels miserable and unhappy and ill at ease, and this is indeed the most concrete punishment he has. And so, all these movements, from the point of view of the inner spiritual growth, have an infinitely greater value than when they are the result of an outer rule.

DO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS

This is being continuously repeated to me: if anything is to be done properly, one must specialise... It is said and repeated, and there are people who will prove it: to do something well one must specialise... That is not what I think, that is all I can say. My experience is different. I believe there are general faculties and that it is much more important to acquire these than to specialise...

And as for me, I was scolded all the time because I did many different things! And I was always told I would never be good at anything. I studied, I did painting, I did music, and besides was busy with other things still. And I was told my music would not be up to much, my painting would not be worthwhile, and my studies would be quite incomplete. Probably it is quite true, but still I have found that this had its advantages, those very advantages - I am speaking about, of widening, making supple one's mind and understanding.

MENTAL CULTURE

Changes the constitution of your brain, enlarges it considerably, and as a result the expression becomes more complete and more precise.

It is not necessary if you want to escape from life and go into inexpressible heights, but it is indispensable if you want to express your experience in outer life...

This may very well be compared with musical instruments, one of which has a certain number of notes and the other ten times as many. Well, it is perhaps easier to play an instrument of four or five notes but the music that could be played on a complete keyboard is obviously far superior!

One could even compare this to an orchestra much more than to a simple instrument. A human being, a fully developed human individuality is very much like one of those stupendous orchestras which has hundreds and hundreds of players. It is obviously very difficult to control and conduct them but the result can be marvellous.

STUDIES AND SADHANA

When one wants to understand the deep laws of life, wants to be ready to receive whatever message is sent by the Divine, if one wants to be able to penetrate the secrets of the Manifestation, all this asks for a developed mind, so one studies with that will. But then one no longer needs to make a choice to study, for everything, no matter what, the least little circumstance in life, becomes a teacher who can teach you something, teach you how to think and act. Even - I think I said this precisely - even the reflections of an ignorant child can help you to understand something you did not understand before. Your attitude is so different. It is always an attitude which is awaiting a discovery, an opportunity for progress, a rectification of a wrong movement, a step ahead, and so it is like a magnet that attracts from all around you opportunities to make this progress. The least things can teach you how to progress. As you have the consciousness and will to progress, everything becomes an opportunity, and you project this consciousness and will to progress upon all things.

KNOWLEDGE IS WITHIN YOU

You can understand only what you already know in your own inner self. What strikes you in a book is what you have already experienced deep within you. Men find a book of a teaching very wonderful and often you hear them say: "That is exactly what I myself feel and know, but I could not bring it out or express it as well as it is expressed here." When men come across a book of true knowledge, each finds himself there, and at every new reading he discovers things that he did not see in it at first; it opens to him each time a new field of knowledge that had till then escaped him in it. But that is because it reaches layers of knowledge that were waiting for expression in the subconscious in him; the expression has now been given by somebody else and much better than he could himself have done it. But, once expressed, he immediately recognises it and feels that it is the truth. The knowledge that seems to come to you from outside is only an occasion for bringing out the knowledge that is within you.

READING WHICH AWAKENS

For those who are seeking, who grope, who are not absolutely sure, who are pulled this way and that way, have many interests in life, are not steady, stabilised in their will for realisation, it is very good to read, because it puts them in touch with the subject, it gives them some interest in the thing.

...There is a kind of reading which awakens in you an interest in the thing and can help you in the first seekings. Usually, even if one has had experiences one needs a contact of thought or idea with the thing so that the effort may be crystallized more consciously. But the more one knows, the more one must be absolutely sincere in his experience, that is, he must not use the formative power of his mind to imagine and so create the experience in himself... All this is a matter of proportion. Each one must find the exact amount he needs, how much of reading, how much meditation, how much concentration, how much... It is different for each one.

SRI AUROBINDO'S WRITINGS

In a general and almost absolute way, if you truly wish to profit from these readings, as from all of Sri Aurobindo's writings, the best method is this: having gathered your consciousness and focused your attention on what you are reading, you must establish a minimum of mental tranquillity - the best thing would be to obtain perfect silence, and achieve a state of immobility of the mind, immobility of the brain, I might say, so that the attention becomes as still and immobile as a mirror, like the surface of absolutely still water. Then what one has read passes through the surface and penetrates deep into the being where it is received with a minimum of distortion. Afterwards - sometimes long afterwards - it wells up again from the depths and manifests in the brain with its full power of comprehension, not as knowledge acquired from outside, but as a light one carried within.

LISTENING TO MUSIC

Mother, when one hears music, how should one truly hear it?

For this - if one can be completely silent, you see, silent and attentive, simply as though one were an instrument which has to record it - one does not move, and is only something that is listening - if one can be absolutely silent, absolutely still and like that, then the thing enters...

But the best way of listening is this. It is to be like a still mirror and very concentrated, very silent. In fact, we see people who truly love music... I have seen musicians listening to music, musicians, composers or players who truly love music. I have seen them listening to music... they sit completely still, you know, they are like that, they do not move at all. Everything, everything is like that. And if one can stop thinking, then it is very good, then one profits fully... It is one of the methods of inner opening and one of the most powerful.

THE SENSE OF BEAUTY

To do this yoga, one must have, at least a little, the sense of beauty. If one does not, one misses one of the most important aspects of the physical world.

There is this beauty, this dignity of soul - a thing about which I am very sensitive. It is a thing that moves me and evokes in me a great respect always.

Yes, this beauty of soul that is visible in the face, this kind of dignity, this harmony of integral realisation. When the soul becomes visible in the physical, it gives this dignity, this beauty, this majesty, the majesty that comes from one's being the Tabernacle. Then, even things that have no particular beauty put on a sense of eternal beauty, of *the* eternal beauty.

A SPONTANEOUS ADMIRATION

Wherever... there is a spontaneous admiration for the true, the beautiful, the noble, there is something Divine expressed. You should know for certain that it is the psychic being, the soul in you with which your physical consciousness comes in contact when your heart leaps out to worship and admire what you feel to be of a Divine origin.

The moment you are in front of what you feel to be such, you should be moved to tears of joy... This joy is the true sign that your soul has awakened and has sensed the truth. It is only then that you can open to the influence of the descending truth and be shaped by it. I remember occasions when I used to be moved to tears on seeing even children, even babies do something that was most divinely beautiful and simple. Feel that joy and you will be able to profit by the Divine's presence in your midst.

A SENSE OF GRATITUDE

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

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

TRUE ART

True art is intended to express the beautiful, but in close intimacy with the universal movement. The greatest nations and the most cultured races have always considered art as a part of life and made it subservient to life. Art was like that in Japan in its best moments; it was like that in all the best moments in the history of art. But most artists are like parasites growing on the margin of life; they do not seem to know that art should be the expression of the Divine in life and through life. In everything, everywhere, in all relations truth must be brought out in its all-embracing rhythm and every movement of life should be an expression of beauty and harmony. Skill is not art, talent is not art. Art is a living harmony and beauty that must be expressed in all the movements of existence. This manifestation of beauty and harmony is part of the Divine realisation upon earth, perhaps even its greatest part.

ART AND YOGA

Does the work of an artist improve if he does Yoga?

The discipline of Art has at its centre the same principle as the discipline of Yoga. In both the aim is to become more and more conscious; in both you have to learn to see and feel something that is beyond the ordinary vision and feeling, to go within and bring out from there deeper things. Painters have to follow a discipline for the growth of the consciousness of their eyes, which in itself is almost a yoga. If they are true artists and try to see beyond and use their art for the expression of the inner world, they grow in consciousness by this concentration, which is not other than the consciousness given by Yoga. Why then should not Yogic consciousness be a help to artistic creation? I have known some who had very little training and skill and yet through yoga acquired a fine capacity in writing and painting.

A LIVING ART

When one paints a picture or composes music or writes poetry, each one has his own way of expression. Every painter, every musician, every poet, every sculptor has or ought to have a unique, personal contact with the Divine, and through the work which is his speciality, the art he has mastered, he must express this contact in his own way, with his own words, his own colours. For himself, instead of copying the outer form of nature, he takes these forms as the covering of something else, precisely of his relationship with the realities which are behind, deeper, and he tries to make them express that. Instead of merely imitating what he sees, he tries to make them speak of what is behind them, and it is this which makes all the difference between a living art and just a flat copy of nature.

TELL A BEAUTIFUL STORY

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

THE MATERIALISM OF MODERN TIMES

At... the time of the Buddha, to live a spiritual life was a joy, a beatitude, the happiest state, which freed you from all the troubles of the world, all the sufferings, all the cares, making you happy, satisfied, contented.

It is the materialism of modern times that has turned spiritual effort into a hard struggle and a sacrifice, a painful renunciation of all the so-called joys of life.

This insistence on the exclusive reality of the physical world, of physical pleasures, physical joys, physical possessions, is the result of the whole materialistic tendency of human civilisation. It was unthinkable in ancient times. On the contrary, withdrawal, concentration, liberation from all material cares, consecration to the spiritual joy, that was happiness indeed...

Not to be preoccupied from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn with all the little physical satisfactions, physical pleasures, physical sensations, physical preoccupations, is to bear evidence of a remarkable spirit.

ESAU AND JACOB

I do not know how many of you have read the Bible; it is not very entertaining to read it, and besides, it is very long, but still, in the Bible there is a story I have always liked very much. There were two brothers, if I am not mistaken, Esau and Jacob. Well, Esau was very hungry, that is the story, is it not so? I believe he was a hunter or something; anyway, the story goes like this. He came back home very hungry, and told Jacob he was very hungry, and he was so hungry that he said to him: "Listen, if you give me your mess of pottage" (Jacob had prepared some stew), "if you give me your mess of pottage I will give you my birthright." You know, one can understand the story quite superficially, but it has a very profound meaning. The birthright is the right of being the son of God. And so he was quite ready to give up his Divine right because he was hungry, for a concrete, material thing, for food. This is a very old story, but it is eternally true.

A PERFECT GIFT - I

I remember having read, in a book of Indian legends, a story like this. There was a very poor, very old woman who had nothing, who was quite destitute, who lived in a miserable little hut, and who had been given a fruit. It was a mango. She had eaten half of it and kept the other half for the next day, because it was something so marvelous that she did not often happen to get it - a mango. And then, when night fell, someone knocked at the rickety door and asked for hospitality. And this someone came in and told her he wanted shelter and was hungry. So she said to him: "Well, I have no fire to warm you, I have no blanket to cover you, and I have half a mango left, that is all I have, if you want it; I have eaten half of it." And it turned out that this someone was Shiva, and that she was filled with an inner glory, for she had made a perfect gift of herself and all she had.

I read that, I found it magnificent.

A PERFECT GIFT - II

What you are, give that; what you have, give that, and your gift will be perfect; from the spiritual point of view it will be perfect. This does not depend upon the amount of wealth you have or the number of capacities in your nature; it depends upon the perfection of your gift, that is to say, on the totality of your gift...

The rich man, or even people who are quite well-off and have all sorts of things in life and give to the Divine what they have in surplus - for usually this is the gesture: one has a little more money than one needs, one has a few more things than one needs, and so, generously, one gives that to the Divine. It is better than giving nothing. But even if this "little more" than what they need represents lakhs of rupees, the gift is less perfect than the one of half the mango. For it is not by the quantity or the quality that it is measured: it is by the sincerity of the giving and the absoluteness of the giving.

MONEY IS VALUABLE WHEN SPENT

It is infinitely more difficult to be good, to be wise, to be intelligent and generous, to be more generous, you follow me, when one is rich than when one is poor. I have known many people in many countries, and the most generous people I have ever met in all the countries, were the poorest. And as soon as the pockets are full, one is caught by a kind of illness, which is a sordid attachment to money. I assure you it is a curse.

So the first thing to do when one has money is to give it. But as it is said that it should not be given without discernment, do not go and give it like those who practice philanthropy, because that fills them with a sense of their own goodness, their generosity and their own importance. You must act in a sattwic way, that is, make the best possible use of it. And so, each one must find in his highest consciousness what the best possible use of the money he has can be. And truly money has no value unless it circulates. For each and every one, money is valuable only when one has spent it.

MONEY BELONGS TO NO ONE

The conflict about money is what might be called a "conflict of ownership," but the truth is that money belongs to no one. This idea of possessing money has warped everything. Money should not be a "possession" like power it is a means of action which is given to you, but you must use it according to... what we can call the "will of the giver," that is, in an impersonal and enlightened way. If you are a good instrument for diffusing and utilising money, then it comes to you, and it comes to you in proportion to your capacity to use it as it is meant to be used. That is the true mechanism.

The true attitude is this: money is a force intended for the work on earth, the work required to prepare the earth to receive and manifest the divine forces, and it, that is, the power of utilising it - must come into the hands of those who have the clearest, most comprehensive and truest vision.

WEALTH IS A FORCE

Wealth is a force - I have already told you this once - a force of Nature; and it should be a means of circulation, a power in movement, as flowing water is a power in movement. It is something which can serve to produce, to organise. It is a convenient means, because in fact it is only a means of making things circulate fully and freely.

This force should be in the hands of those who know how to make the best possible use of it, that is, as I said at the beginning, people who have abolished in themselves or in some way or other got rid of every personal desire and every attachment. To this should be added a vision vast enough to understand the needs of the earth, a knowledge complete enough to know how to organise all these needs and use this force by these means.

If, besides this, these beings have a higher spiritual knowledge, then they can utilise this force to construct gradually upon the earth what will be capable of manifesting the Divine Power, Force and Grace.

THE MONEY-POWER

The money-power belongs to a world which was created deformed. It is something that belongs to the vital world; and {Sri Aurobindo} says this, does he not? He says that it belongs to the vital and material worlds. And so at all times, always it was under the control of the Asuric forces; and what must be done is precisely to reconquer it from the Asuric forces.

That is why in the past, all those who wanted to do yoga or follow a discipline, used to say that one should not touch money, for it was something - they said diabolic or asuric or at least altogether opposed to the Divine life. But the whole universe, in all its manifestation, is the Divine Himself, and so belongs entirely to Him; and it is on this ground that he says that the money-forces belong to the Divine. One must reconquer them and give them to Him. They have been under the influence of the asuric forces: one must win them back in order to put them at the disposal of the Divine so that He may be able to use them for His work of transformation.

PRODUCTION

If one produces something, instead of an impoverishment it is an enrichment; simply one puts into circulation in the world something else having a value equivalent to that of money. But to say that one cannot make a heap without making a hole is all right for those who speculate, who do business on the stock exchange or in finance - there it is true. It is impossible to have a financial success in affairs of pure speculation without its being detrimental to another. But it is limited to this. Otherwise a producer does not make a hole if he heaps up money in exchange for what he produces. Surely there is a question of the value of the production, but if the production is truly an acquisition for the general human wealth, it does not make a hole, it increases this wealth. And in another way, not only in the material field, the same thing holds for art, for literature or science, for any production at all.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE - I

You must not judge things from an outer success or a semblance of defeat. We may say, and generally this is what almost always happens, we could say that the Divine gives what one desires, and of all lessons this is the best! For, if your desire is inconscient, obscure, egoistic, you increase the unconsciousness, the darkness and egoism within yourself; that is to say, this takes you farther and farther away from the truth, from consciousness and happiness. It takes you far away from the Divine. And for the Divine, naturally, only one thing is true, the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Union. And each time you put material things in front, you become more and more materialistic and go farther and farther away from full success.

But for the Truth, that other success is a terrible defeat... You have exchanged truth for falsehood!

To judge from appearances and apparent success is precisely an act of complete ignorance.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE - II

One must be very great, very pure, have a very high and very disinterested spiritual consciousness in order to be successful without being affected by it. *Nothing is more difficult than being successful. This, indeed, is the true test of life!*

When you do not succeed, quite naturally you turn back on yourself and within yourself, and you seek within yourself the consolation for your outer failure. And to those who have a flame within them, if the Divine really wants to help them, if they are mature enough to be helped, if they are ready to follow the path-blows will come one after another, because this helps! It is the most powerful, the most direct, most effective help. If you succeed, be on your guard, ask yourself: "At what price, what cost have I bought success?"...

And after all, it is perhaps the last test which the Divine gives to anyone: "Now that you are noble, you are disinterested, you have no egoism, you belong only to me, I am going to make you triumph. We are going to see if you will hold out."

A PERFECT EQUALITY

When things happen which are not what we expect, what we hope for, what we want, which are contrary to our desires, in our ignorance we call them misfortunes and lament. But if we were to become a little wiser and observe the deeper consequences of these very same events, we would find that they are leading us rapidly towards the Divine, the Beloved...

One must already be very strong, very far along the way, to be able to face success and the little enjoyments it brings without giving way. Those who can do this, those who are strong, do not run after success; they do not seek it, and accept it with indifference. For they know and appreciate the value of the lashes given by unhappiness and misfortune.

But ultimately the true attitude, the sign and proof that we are near the goal, is a perfect equality which enables us to accept success and failure, fortune and misfortune, happiness and sorrow with the same tranquil joy; for all these things become marvelous gifts that the Lord in his infinite solicitude showers upon us.

EAT REASONABLY

The best thing is not to think about {eating} but to regulate one's life automatically enough not to need to think of eating. You eat at fixed hours, eat reasonably, you do not even need to think of the food when you are taking it; you must eat calmly, that is all, quietly, with concentration, and when you do not eat you must never think about it. You must not eat too much, because then you will have to think about your digestion, and it will be very unpleasant for you and will make you waste much time. You must eat just... you must put an end to all desire, all attraction, all movements of the vital, because when you eat simply because the body needs to eat, the body will tell you absolutely precisely and exactly when it has had enough; you see, when one is not moved by a vital desire or mental ideas, one grasps this with surety. "Now it is enough," says the body: "I do not want any more." So one stops.

FIRST PURITY THE HIGHER

Certainly it is better to purify one's mind and purify one's vital before thinking of purifying one's body. For even if you take all possible precautions and live physically taking care not to absorb anything except what will help to subtilise your body, if your mind and vital remain in a state of desire, inconstancy, darkness, passion and all the rest, that will not be of any use at all. Only, your body will become weak, dislocated from the inner life and one fine day it will fall ill.

One must begin from inside, I have already told you this once. One must begin from above, first purify the higher and then purify the lower... What I mean is, do not try to be an angel in the body if you are not already just a little of an angel in your mind and vital; for that would dislocate you in a different way from the usual one, but not one that is better. We said the other day that what is most important is to keep the equilibrium. Well, to keep the equilibrium everything must progress at the same time.

OFFER YOUR FOOD TO THE DIVINE

There is still the problem of food; as long as our body is compelled to take in foreign matter in order to subsist, it will absorb at the same time a considerable amount of inert and unconscious forces or those having a rather undesirable consciousness, and this alchemy must take place inside the body. We were speaking of the kinds of consciousness absorbed with food, but there is also the inconscience that is absorbed with food quite a deal of it. And that is why in many yogas there was the advice to offer to the Divine what one was going to eat before eating it *{Mother makes a gesture of offering, hands joined, palms open}*. It consists in calling the Divine down into the food before eating it. One offers it to Him - that is, one puts it in contact with the Divine, so that it may be under the Divine influence when one eats it. It is very useful, it is very good. If one knows how to do it, it is very useful, it considerably reduces the work of inner transformation, which has to be done.

SMOKING, DRINKING AND DRUGS

Some people believe that smoking, drinking, etc. will form part of the life of tomorrow. That is their business. If they want to go through this experience, let them do it. They will realise that they are imprisoning themselves in their own desires. But anyway, I am not a moralist, not at all, at all, at all. It is their own business. It is their own business. If they want to go through this experience, let them do it. But the Ashram is not the place for it.

Thank God, at the Ashram we have learnt that life is something else. True life is not the satisfaction of desires. I can affirm from experience that all the experiences brought by drugs, all that contact with the invisible world, can be had in a much better, more conscious and controlled way without drugs. Only, one must control oneself. It is more difficult than swallowing poison. But I am not going to preach.

DRINKING AND DRUGS: SELF-CONTROL

There are human beings... who indulge in vice - one vice or another, like drinking or drug, injections - and who know very well that this is leading them to destruction and death. But they choose to do it, knowingly.

They have no control over themselves.

There is always a moment when everyone has self-control. And if one had not said "Yes" once, if one had not taken the decision, one would not have done it.

There is not one human being who has not the energy and capacity to resist something imposed upon him - if he is left free to do so. People tell you: "I cannot do otherwise" - it is because in the depths of their heart they do not want to do otherwise; they have accepted to be the slaves of their vice. There is a moment when one accepts.

ALCOHOL

There is a poison in alcohol, there is a poison in tobacco; and this poison goes into the cells and damages them. Alcohol is never expelled, so to say; it accumulates in a certain part of the brain, and then, after the accumulation, these cells no longer function at all, some people even go mad because of it, that is what is called *delirium tremens*, the result of having swallowed too much alcohol which is not absorbed but remains in this way concentrated in the brain. And it is so radical even that... There is a province in France, for instance, which produces wine, a wine with a very low percentage of alcohol: I believe it is four or five per cent, a very low percentage, you understand; and these people, because they make it, drink wine as one drinks water. They drink it neat, and after some time they become ill. They have cerebral disorders. I knew people of this kind, the brain was disordered, did not function any more.

TOBACCO

And tobacco - nicotine - is a very serious poison. It is a poison that destroys the cells. I have said that it is a slow poison because one does not feel it immediately except when one smokes for the first time and it makes one very ill... The first time the body reacts violently, it vomits, it tells you: "I do not want it at any cost."

You compel it with your mental and vital stupidity, you force it to do so; it does not react any longer and so lets itself be poisoned gradually until it decomposes. The functioning deteriorates; it is the nerves that are affected; they no longer transmit the will because they are affected, they are poisoned. They no longer have the strength to transmit the will. And finally people begin to tremble, they have nervous movements. There are quite a few, one does not need to go very far to find them. And they are like that only because they have committed excesses: they drank and smoked. And when they lift an object, their hands shake (*gesture*). That is what one gets by doing this.

SEX IMPULSES

There is another danger; it is in connection with the sex impulses. Yoga in its process of purification will lay bare and throw up all hidden impulses and desires in you. And you must learn not to hide things nor leave them aside, you have to face them and conquer and remould them... The strength of such impulses as those of sex lies usually in the fact that people take too much notice of them; they protest too vehemently and endeavour to control them by coercion, hold them within and sit upon them. But the more you think of a thing and say: "I do not want it, I do not want it," the more you are bound to it. What you should do is to keep the thing away from you, to disassociate from it, take as little notice of it as possible and, even if you happen to think of it, remain indifferent and unconcerned.

The impulses and desires that come up by the pressure of Yoga should be faced in a spirit of detachment and serenity, as something foreign to yourself or belonging to the outside world. They should be offered to the Divine, so that the Divine may take them up and transmute them.

THE SEXUAL IMPULSE

Humanity has the sexual impulse in a way altogether natural, spontaneous and, I would say, legitimate. This impulse will naturally and spontaneously disappear with animality... But what the ancient spiritual aspirants had sought on principle - sexual negation - is an absurd thing, because this must be only for those who have gone beyond this stage and no longer have animality in them. And it must drop off naturally, without effort and without struggle. To make of it a centre of conflict and struggle is ridiculous. It is only when the consciousness ceases to be human that it drops off quite naturally... But to seek to impose it upon those who are not ready for this transition is absurd.

It is common sense. They are human, but they must not pretend that they are not.

It is only when spontaneously the impulse becomes impossible for you, when you feel that it is something painful and contrary to your deeper need that it becomes easy; then, well, externally you cut these bonds and it is finished.

WANT TO LOVE WELL

Human nature is so limited, so full of contradictions and so exclusive in its movements that if one wants to reject love in its lower form, that is to say, human love as human beings experience it, if one makes an inner effort to reject it, one usually rejects the entire capacity of feeling love and becomes like a stone. And then sometimes one has to wait for years or centuries before there is a reawakening in oneself of the capacity to receive and manifest love.

Therefore, the best way when love comes, in whatever form it may be, is to try and pierce through its outer appearance and find the Divine principle which is behind and which gives it existence. Naturally, it is full of snares and difficulties, but it is more effective. That is to say, instead of ceasing to love because one loves wrongly, one must cease to love wrongly and want to love well.

TO KNOW HOW TO LOVE

The first step is to stop being selfish. For everyone it is the same thing, not only for those who want to do yoga but also in ordinary life: if one wants to know how to love, one must not love oneself first and above all selfishly; one must give oneself to the object of love without exacting anything in return. This discipline is elementary in order to surmount oneself and lead a life which is not altogether gross.

As for yoga we may add something else: it is as I said in the beginning, the will to pierce through this limited and human form of love and discover the principle of Divine Love which is behind it. Then one is sure to get a result. This is better than drying up one's heart. It is perhaps a little more difficult but it is better in every way, for like this, instead of egoistically making others suffer, well, one may leave them quiet in their own movement and only make an effort to transform oneself without imposing one's will on others, which even in ordinary life is a step towards something higher and a little more harmonious.

TO KNOW WHAT LOVE IS

If one wants to know what love is, one must love the Divine. Then there is a chance of knowing what love is. I have said that one grows into the likeness of what one loves. So if one loves the Divine, gradually, through this effort of love, one grows more and more like the Divine, and then one can be identified with the Divine love and know what it is, otherwise one cannot.

Inevitably, love between two human beings, whatever it may be, is always made of ignorance, lack of understanding, weakness and that terrible sense of separation. It is as though one wanted to enter the presence of a unique Splendour and that the first thing one did was to put a curtain, two curtains, three curtains between oneself and that Splendour, and one is quite surprised to have only a vague impression and not at all the thing itself. The first thing to do is to remove the curtains, to take them all away, to go through and find oneself in the presence of the Splendour. And then you will know what that Splendour is.

LOVE FOR THE DIVINE

Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo has said that one can pass from human love to Divine Love.

He was speaking of human love manifesting as Bhakti, as a force of devotion for the Divine, and he says that at the beginning your love for the Divine is a very human love with all the characteristics of human love. He describes this very well, besides. Yet if you persist and make the necessary effort, it is not impossible for this human love to be transformed into Divine Love through identification with what you love. He has not said that the love between two persons can change into Divine Love. It is not that at all! He has always said the opposite. He spoke about someone who had asked him about devotion, you know, about the *sadhak's* love for the Divine. At the beginning your love is altogether human - and he speaks of it even as commercial barter. If you make progress, your love will change into Divine Love, into true devotion.

STOPPING ILLNESS

Sweet Mother, when one sees an illness coming, how can one stop it?

Ah! First of all, you must not want it, and nothing in the body must want it. You must have a very strong will not to be ill. This is the first condition...

The second condition is to call the Light, a Light of equilibrium, a Light of peace, quietude and balance, and to push it into all the cells of the body, enjoining them not to be afraid, because that again is another condition.

First, not to want to be ill, and then not to be afraid of illness. You must neither attract it nor tremble. You must not want illness at all. But you must not because of fear not want it; you must not be afraid; you must have a calm certitude and a complete trust in the power of the Grace to shelter you from everything, and then think of something else, not be concerned about this any longer.

BEFORE GOING TO SLEEP

One thing you can do in all security is, before going to sleep, to concentrate, relax all tension in the physical being, try... that is, in the body try so that the body lies like a soft rag on the bed, that it is no longer something with twitchings and cramps; to relax it completely as though it were a kind of thing like a rag. And then the vital: to calm it as much as you can, make it as quiet, as peaceful as possible. And then the mind also, try to keep it like that, without any activity. You must put upon the brain the force of great peace, great quietude, of silence if possible, and not follow ideas actively, not make any effort, nothing; you must relax all movement there too but relax it in a kind of silence and quietude as great as possible.

Once you have done all this, you may add either a prayer or an aspiration in accordance with your nature... Ask the Grace to watch over your sleep; and then go to sleep. This is to sleep in the best possible conditions.

HELP THE DYING MAN

All men when they leave their body are flung into a domain of the lower vital which has nothing particularly pleasant about it...

The most important thing in this case is the last state of consciousness in which one was while both were joined together, when the vital being and the body were still united. So the last state of consciousness, one may say the last desire or the last hope or the last aspiration, has a colossal importance for the first impact the being has with the invisible world. And here the responsibility of the people around the dying man is much greater than they think. If they can help him to enter his Highest Consciousness, they will do him the greatest service they can. But usually what they do is to cling to him as much as they can, and to pull him towards them with a fierce selfishness; the result, you see, is that instead of being able to withdraw in a slightly higher consciousness which will protect him in his exit, he is gripped by material things.

WORSHIP OF THE GODS - I

In the invisible world hardly any beings love to be worshipped, except those of the vital. These, as I said, are quite pleased by it. And then, it gives them importance. They are puffed up with pride and feel very happy, and when they can get a herd of people to worship them they are quite satisfied.

But if you take real divine beings, this is not at all something they value. They do not like to be worshipped. No, it does not give them any special pleasure at all! ...If, for instance, they see a good intention or a fine feeling or a movement of unselfishness or enthusiasm, a joy, a spiritual joy, these things have for them an infinitely greater value than prayers and acts of worship and *pujas*...

I assure you what I am telling you is very serious: if you seat a real god in a chair and oblige him to remain there all the time while you are doing *puja*, he may perhaps have a little fun watching you do it, but it certainly gives him no satisfaction. None at all! He does not feel either flattered or happy or glorified by your *puja*.

WORSHIP OF THE GODS - II

Religious ceremony! For instance, there are so many of these entities called Kali, who are given, besides, quite terrible appearances - so many are even placed in houses. as the family-goddess; they are full of a terrible vital force!...

I know them, those entities. I know them very well, but they are vital beings, vital forms which, so to say, are given a form by human thought, and what forms! And to think that men worship such terrible and monstrous things; and what is more that these poor gods are given, are paid the compliment of believing that it is...

From this point of view, it is good that for some time men get out of this religious atmosphere, so full of fear, and this sort of blind, superstitious submission of which the hostile forces have taken a dreadful advantage. The period of denial, positivism, is from this viewpoint quite indispensable in order to free men from superstition. It is only when one comes out of that and the abject submission to monstrous vital forces that one can rise to truly spiritual heights.

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES

Sweet Mother, are religious exercises very important for those who have an ordinary consciousness?

Religious exercises? I do not know! What do you mean by religious exercises?

Japa: etc.

Oh, those things! If it helps you, it is all right. If it does not help you, it is just... This is one of those altogether relative things. It is altogether relative. Its value lies only in the effect it has on you and the extent to which you believe in it. If it helps you to concentrate, it is good. The ordinary consciousness always does it just through superstition, with the idea that: "If I do this, if I go to the temple or church once a week, if I offer prayers, something very fine will happen to me." This is superstition, spread all over the world, but it has no value at all from the spiritual point of view.

YOUR MANTRA

If you develop the habit... of calling as by a mantra, of repeating a word, that has an extraordinary effect. You choose your mantra; or rather, one day it comes to you spontaneously in a moment of difficulty. At a time when things are very difficult, when you have a sort of anguish, anxiety, when you do not know what is going to happen, suddenly this springs up in you, the word springs up in you. For each one it may be different. But if you mark this and each time you face a difficulty you repeat it, it becomes irresistible... The best is when the word comes to you spontaneously: you call in a moment of great difficulty (mental, vital, physical, emotional, whatever it may be) and suddenly that springs up in you, two or three words, like magical words. You must remember these and form the habit of repeating them in moments when difficulties come. If you form the habit, one day it will come to you spontaneously: when the difficulty comes, at the same time the mantra will come.

NOTHING IS DONE UNTIL

In the old Chaldean tradition, very often the young novices were given an image when they were invested with the white robe; they were told: "Do not try to remove the stains one by one, the whole robe must be purified." Do not try to correct your faults one by one, to overcome your weaknesses one by one, it does not take you very far. The entire consciousness must be changed, a reversal of consciousness must be achieved, a springing up out of the state in which one is towards a higher state from which one dominates all the weaknesses one wants to heal, and from which one has a full vision of the work to be accomplished.

I believe Sri Aurobindo has said this: things are such that it may be said that nothing is done until everything is done. One step ahead is not enough, a total conversion is necessary.

SPIRITUAL LIFE: EAST AND WEST

Whatever difference there is between the West and the East in relation to spiritual life lies not in the inner being or nature, which is an invariable and constant thing, but in the mental habits, in the modes of outer expression and presentation which are the result of education and environment and other external conditions. All people, whether occidental or oriental, are alike in their deepest feelings; they are different in their way of thinking. Sincerity, for example, is a quality which is the same everywhere. Those who are sincere, to whichever nation they belong, are all sincere in the same way. Only the forms given to this sincerity vary. The mind works in different ways in different peoples, but the heart is the same everywhere; the heart is a much truer reality, and the differences belong to the superficial parts. As soon as you go deep enough, you meet something that is one in all. All meet in the Divine.

TALKATIVE PEOPLE

The more one is developed, the more intelligent one is and the less is the need to express oneself. It is always at a lower level that one needs to talk. And truly, a being who is very conscious, who is mentally, intellectually, very developed, talks only when it is necessary. He does not utter useless words. In the social scale it is like this... Take people right at the bottom of the scale: they talk the most, they spend their time in talking. They cannot stop! Whatever happens to them they express immediately in words. And to the extent that one is developed and on a higher level of evolution, one feels much less need to speak...

Except those who are talkers by profession - that is, those who are in the habit of giving lectures or political speeches, or taking classes, giving lessons - except these people who obviously, can be both intellectual and talkative at the same time, as a general rule, the more talkative people are, the less are they intellectually developed!

SAY ONLY THE INDISPENSABLE WORDS

I suggest that every one of you should try - oh! not for long, just for one hour a day - to say nothing but the absolutely indispensable words. Not one more, not one less.

Take one hour of your life, the one which is most convenient for you, and during that time observe yourself closely and say only the absolutely indispensable words.

At the outset, the first difficulty will be to know what is absolutely indispensable and what is not. It is already a study in itself and every day you will do better.

Next, you will see that so long as one says nothing, it is not difficult to remain absolutely silent, but as soon as you begin to speak, always or almost always you say two or three or ten or twenty useless words which was not at all necessary to say.

GOSSIPING DEGRADES YOU

There is a state in which a simple conversation which obliges you to remain on the level of ordinary life gives you a headache, turns your stomach and, if it continues, may give you a fever. I am speaking of course about the gossip-type of conversations. I believe that apart from a few exceptions, everybody indulges in this exercise and talks of things about which he should keep silent or chatters about other things. It becomes so natural that you are not troubled by it. But if you continue in this way, you hinder your consciousness completely from rising up; you bind yourself with iron chains to the ordinary consciousness and the work in the subconscious is not done or has not even begun. Those who want to rise up have already enough difficulties without looking for encouragements outside...

You must not allow your mind to stoop low: gossiping degrades you and, if you want to do yoga, you must abstain from it, that is all.

ENTER THE OTHER'S CONSCIOUSNESS

You have never tried to enter another person's consciousness to know exactly what is going on there?... If people are reasonable they do not quarrel. But if they are not reasonable, they begin quarrelling. Then, instead of quarrelling, the best thing to do is to enter into the other's consciousness and ask yourself why he says things like that, what is it that pushes him to do this or say that? What is the inner reason, what is his vision of things which makes him take this attitude? It is extremely interesting. If you do this, immediately you stop being angry. First thing: you can no longer be angry. So this is already a great gain. But also, if the other continues being angry, it has no effect on you.

And then, later, one can try to identify oneself more perfectly and prevent the movements of division and deformation and stop quarrels. Very useful.

WIDENING ONE'S THOUGHT

You tell yourself: "Wait a little, I am going to try and see why he said that to me. Yes, why did he tell me that?" And you concentrate: "Why, why, why?" You stand there, just like that, trying. The other person continues speaking, does he not? - And is very happy too, for you do not contradict him any longer! He talks profusely and is sure he has convinced you. Then you concentrate more and more on what he is saying, and with the feeling that gradually, through his words, you are entering his mind. When you enter his head, suddenly you enter into his way of thinking, and next, just imagine, you understand why he is speaking to you thus! And then, if you have a fairly swift intelligence and put what you have just come to understand alongside what you had known before, you have the two ways together, and so can find the truth reconciling both. And here you have truly made progress. And this is the best way of widening one's thought.

MEDDLING WITH OTHER'S AFFAIRS - I

People are always giving each other advice: "Do this, do not do that." I see it, they have no idea how much confusion they create, how they increase confusion and disorder. And sometimes they impair the normal development of the individual.

I consider that opinions are always dangerous and most often absolutely worthless.

You should not meddle with other people's affairs, unless first of all you are infinitely wiser than they are - of course, one always thinks that one is wiser! - But I mean in an objective way and not according to your own opinion; unless you see further and better and are yourself above all passions, desires and blind reactions. You must be above all these things yourself to have the right to intervene in someone else's life - even when he asks you to do so. And when he does not, it is simply meddling with something which is not your business.

MEDDLING WITH OTHER'S AFFAIRS - II

To intervene you must be sure that you are right; you must be sure that your vision of things is superior, preferable or truer than the vision of the other person or people. Then it is always wiser not to intervene. People intervene without rhyme or reason, simply because they are in the habit of giving their opinion to others. -

Even when you have the vision of the true thing, it is *very rarely* wise to intervene. It only becomes indispensable when someone wants to do something which will necessarily lead to a catastrophe. Even then, intervention (*smiling*) is not always very effective.

In fact, intervention is justified only when you are absolutely sure that you have the vision of truth. Not only that, but also a clear vision of the consequences. To intervene in someone else's actions, one must be... a prophet. And a prophet with total goodness and compassion. One must even have the vision of the consequences that the intervention will have in the destiny of the other person.

JUDGING OTHERS

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 does not know.

HUMANITY IS UNABLE TO JUDGE

The only true attitude is one of humility, of silent respect before what one does not know, and of inner aspiration to come out of one's ignorance. One of the things which would make humanity progress most would be for it to respect what it does not know, to acknowledge willingly that it does not know and is therefore unable to judge. We constantly do just the opposite. We pass final judgments on things of which we have no knowledge whatsoever, and say in a peremptory manner: "This is possible. That is impossible," when we do not even know what it is we are speaking of. And we put on superior airs because we doubt things of which we have never had any knowledge.

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

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

MENTAL ARROGANCE

I do not know a human being who does not have mental arrogance. There are those who have a little, there are those who have much, there are those who are entirely made up of it... The mind, by its very nature, is something essentially arrogant. It fancies that it can know, it imagines that it can judge, and it spends its time passing judgments on everything - within you, on yourself, on others, on all things!...

But you have only to observe yourselves... You can observe yourself, catch yourself at least a hundred times a day, with a mind which decides everything, knows everything, judges everything, knows very well what is good, what is bad, what is true, what is false, what is right...

You have only to look at yourself, you will see, you will catch yourself all the time... Not to speak of those who have long ago decided about all the errors God has committed and how the world would be if it were they who had been commissioned to make it!

THE WHOLE TOTALITY OF THINGS

The whole totality of things is indispensable for realising the Divine. If you took away one of these things, there would be a hole in the realisation. And I am not speaking only of material things, material points, I am speaking of all the depths. So when you say: *{as many do}* "Ah! if that were not there in the world, how fine the world would be," you are displaying your ignorance.

I met in Japan one of the sons of Tolstoy; he was going round the world preaching human unity. He had caught this from his father and was going everywhere in the world preaching human unity. I met him at some friends' place and asked him: "How are you going to realise this human unity? Do you know what reply he gave me? Oh! it is very simple - if everybody spoke the same language, if everybody dressed in the same way, if everybody lived in the same fashion, the whole world would be united!" Then I told him: "That would be a poor world not worth living in." He did not understand me!

NOTHING SHOULD BE ELIMINATED

Virtue has always spent its time eliminating whatever it found bad in life, and if all the virtues of the various countries of the world had been put together, very few things would remain in existence.

Virtue claims to seek perfection, but perfection is a totality. So the two movements contradict each other. A virtue that eliminates, reduces, fixes limits, and a perfection that accepts everything, rejects nothing but puts each thing in its place, obviously cannot agree...

Nothing can be eliminated, nothing should be eliminated, but each thing must be in its place in total harmony with all the rest. And then all these things that seem so "bad," so "reprehensible," so "unacceptable," to the puritan mind, would become movements of delight and freedom in a totally Divine Life. And then nothing would prevent us from knowing, understanding, feeling and living this wonderful laughter of the Supreme who takes infinite delight in watching Himself live infinitely.

THE SUN OF DIVINE LAUGHTER

This delight, this wonderful laughter that dissolves every shadow, every pain, every suffering! You only have to go deep enough within yourself to find the inner Sun, to let yourself be flooded by it; and then there is nothing but a cascade of harmonious, luminous, sunlit laughter, which leaves no room for any shadow or pain...

And this Sun, this Sun of Divine Laughter is at the centre of all things, the truth of all things: we must learn to see it, to feel it, to live it.

And for that, let us avoid people who take life seriously; they are very boring people.

As soon as the atmosphere becomes grave you can be sure that something is wrong, that there is a troubling influence, an old habit trying to reassert itself, which should not be accepted. All this regret, all this remorse, the feeling of being unworthy, of being at fault - and then one step further and you have the sense of sin. Oh! to me it all seems to belong to another age, an age of darkness.

LAUGH WITH THE LORD

"What!" say the people who profess to follow a spiritual life, "how can you make such little things, such insignificant things the object of spiritual experience?" And yet this is an experience that becomes more and more concrete and real, even materially; it is not that there are "some things" in which the Lord is and "some things" in which He is not. The Lord is *a/ways* there. He takes nothing seriously, everything amuses Him and He plays with you, if you know how to play. You do not know how to play, people do not know how to play. But how well He knows how to play! How well He plays! With everything, with the smallest things: you have some things to put on the table? Do not feel that you have to think and arrange, no, let us put this one here and that one there, and this one like that. And then another time it is different again... What a good game and such fun!

So, it is agreed, we shall try to learn how to laugh with the Lord

PLAY, LAUGH, ENJOY

Perhaps there is more Divinity in the spontaneous play of children than in the erudition of the scholar or the asceticism of the saint. That is what I have always thought. Only (*smiling*) it is a Divinity which is quite unconscious of Itself.

As for me, I must confess to you that I feel much more essentially myself when I am joyful and when I play - my own way than when I am very grave and very serious - much more. Grave and serious that always gives me the impression that I am dragging the weight of all this creation, so heavy and so obscure, whereas when I play - when I play, then I can laugh, can enjoy myself - it gives me the feeling of a fine powder of delight falling from above and tinting this creation, this world with a very special colour and bringing it much closer to what it should essentially be.

THE WILL FOR PURITY

Basically, this kind of will for purity, for good, in men - which expresses itself in the ordinary mentality as the need to be virtuous - is the *great obstacle* to true self-giving. This is the origin of falsehood and even more the very source of hypocrisy the refusal to accept to take upon oneself one's own share of the burden of difficulties...

Do not try to appear virtuous. See how much you are united, one with everything that is anti-divine. Take your share of the burden, accept yourselves to be impure and false and in that way you will be able to take up the shadow, and offer it. And in so far as you are capable of taking it and offering it the things will change.

Do not try to be among the pure. Accept to be with those who are in darkness and give it all with total love.

TOTAL PURITY

One is truly perfectly pure only when the whole being, in all its elements and all its movements, adheres fully, exclusively, to the Divine Will. This indeed is total purity. It does not depend on any moral or social law, any mental convention of any kind. It depends exclusively on this: when all the elements and all the movements of the being adhere exclusively and totally to the Divine Will...

As soon as you speak of purity, a moral monument comes in front of you which completely falsifies your notion. And note that it is infinitely easier to be moral from the social point of view than to be moral from the spiritual point of view. To be moral from the social viewpoint one has only to pay good attention to do nothing which is not approved of by others; this may be somewhat difficult, but still it is not impossible; and one may be, as I said, a monument of insincerity and impurity while doing this; whereas to be pure from the spiritual point of view means a vigilance, a consciousness, a sincerity that stand all tests.

RESPECTABLE PEOPLE

Now, I may put you on your guard against... people who live in their vital consciousness and say: "I indeed am above moral laws, I follow a higher law, I am free from all moral laws." And they say this because they want to indulge in all irregularities. These people, then, have a double impurity: they have spiritual impurity and in addition social impurity...

Yet usually the people whom I have found most difficult to convert are very respectable people. I am sorry, but I have had much more difficulty with respectable people than with those who were not so, for they had such a good opinion of themselves that it was impossible to open them. But the true thing is difficult. That is to say, one must be very vigilant and very self-controlled, very patient, and have a never-failing goodwill. One must not neglect having a small dose of humility, a sufficient one, and one must never be satisfied with the sincerity one has. One must always want more.

THE RIGHT TO BE FREE

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

One who would break the law must be above the law. One who would ignore conventions must be above conventions. One who would despise all rules must be above all rules. And the motive of this liberation should never be a personal, egoistic one: the desire to satisfy an ambition, aggrandise one's personality, through a feeling of superiority, out of contempt for others, to set oneself above the herd and regard it with condescension. Be on your guard when you feel yourself superior and look down on others ironically, as if to say: "I am no longer made of such stuff." That is when you go off the track and are in danger of falling into an abyss.

FREEDOM: NOT AN INDULGENCE

If anyone imagines that he can go over to the other side without passing through this stage {*of moral perfection*}, he would risk making a great mistake, and of taking for perfect freedom a perfect weakness with regard to his lower nature.

It is almost impossible to pass from the mental being - even the most perfect and most remarkable - to the true spiritual life without having realised this ideal of moral perfection for a certain period of time, however brief it may be. Many people try to take a short-cut and want to assert their inner freedom before having overcome all the weaknesses of the outer nature; they are in great danger of deluding themselves. The true spiritual life, complete freedom, is something much higher than the highest moral realisations, but one must take care that this so-called freedom is not an indulgence and a contempt for all rules.

TO GO YOUR OWN WAY

There is only one thing that gives you the right to go straight on your path without caring for *anything*: that is if you have been set going, set in motion by a higher truth. But you must be sure of that. You must not take your desire for the higher truth, you understand, because one very easily makes a mistake. You must know it, and have solid proofs to support it, and know that it is usually something which does not touch you personally. If you are in the least interested in it, one way or another, be on your guard and think twice before being convinced that it is the higher will and the expression of a truth.

However, there are cases where it is like that. "*This* is what ought to be done; this indeed is the truth." And then, whatever the opposition, one goes straight on one's way, without worrying about circumstances or consequences. But it is only in this case that one has the right to do it; that is, at the time the Divine acts in *you*, you ought no longer to care for *anything* except the Divine Will.

TO BE A FREE BEING

{One must} try to receive the Divine inspiration to do things as it is necessary, not according to habits, not according to one's vital impulses, not according to all the vital impulses and personal wills which one receives from others and which push him to do things which perhaps he would not have done without all that.

One must observe all these things, look at them attentively and put them one after another in front of the Divine Truth as one can receive it - it is progressive, one receives it purer and purer, stronger and stronger, more and more clear-sightedly - put all these things before it and with an absolute sincerity will that *this* may guide you and nothing else. You do this once, a hundred times, a thousand times, millions of times and after years of sustained effort you can gradually become aware that at last you are a free being.

THE CONDITION FOR FREEDOM

When one is perfectly surrendered to the Divine, one is perfectly free, and *this* is the absolute condition for freedom, to belong to the Divine alone; you are free from the whole world because you belong only to Him. And this surrender is the Supreme Liberation, you are also free from your little personal ego and of all things, this is the most difficult - and the happiest too, the only thing that can give you constant peace, an uninterrupted joy and the feeling of an *infinite* freedom from all that afflicts you, dwarfs, diminishes, impoverishes you, and from all that can create the least anxiety in you, the least fear. You are no longer afraid of anything, you no longer fear anything, you are the supreme master of your destiny because it is the Divine who wills in you and guides everything. But this does not happen overnight: a little time and a great deal of ardour in the will, not fearing to make any effort and not losing heart when one does not succeed, knowing that the victory is certain and that one must last out until it comes.

TRUE FREEDOM - I

To be free from all attachment does not mean running away from all occasion for attachment. All these people who assert their asceticism, not only run away but warn others not to try!

This seems so obvious to me. When you need to run away from a thing in order not to experience it, it means that you are not above it, you are still on the same level.

Anything that suppresses, diminishes or lessens cannot bring freedom. Freedom has to be experienced in the whole of life and in all sensations.

. . . In order to be above all possible error, we tend to eliminate any occasion for error. For example, if you do not want to say any useless words, you stop speaking; people who take a vow of silence imagine that this is control of speech, it is not true! It is only eliminating the occasion for speech and therefore for saying useless things. It is the same thing with food: eating only what is necessary... But the natural tendency is to fast - it is a mistake!

TRUE FREEDOM - II

For fear of being mistaken in our actions, we stop doing anything at all; for fear of being mistaken in our speech, we stop speaking; for fear of eating for the pleasure of eating, we do not eat at all, this is not freedom, it is simply reducing the manifestation to a minimum; and the natural conclusion is Nirvana. But if the Lord wanted only Nirvana, nothing but Nirvana would exist! It is obvious that He conceives of the co-existence of all opposites, and that for Him this must be the beginning of a totality...

In one's aspiration not to make anymore mistakes, one eliminates any occasion for making them. It is not a cure.

But the other way is much, much more difficult.

No, the solution is to act only under the Divine impulsion, to speak only under the Divine impulsion, to eat only under the Divine impulsion. That is the difficult thing, because naturally, you immediately confuse the Divine impulsion with your personal impulse.

TRUE FREEDOM - III

One must keep intact the aspiration to receive the true impulsion, not the aspiration for "complete liberation," but the aspiration for *active* identification with the Supreme, that is to say, to will only what He wills, to do only what He wants: to exist by and in Him alone. So one can try the method of renunciation, but this is for one who wants to cut himself off from others. And in that case, can there be any integrality? It seems impossible to me.

...True freedom is to be free of everything - including means. It is a restriction, a constriction, whereas the true thing is an opening, a widening, an identification with the whole.

When you reduce, reduce, reduce yourself, you do not have any feeling of losing yourself, it takes away your fear of losing yourself - you become something solid and compact. But if you choose the method of widening - the greatest possible widening - you must not be afraid of losing yourself.

It is much more difficult.

FREEDOM AND SERVICE

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...

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.

GO FARTHER

Always man takes upon his shoulders an interminable burden. He does not want to drop anything of the past and he stoops more and more under the weight of a useless accumulation.

You have a guide for a part of the way but when you have traveled this part, leave the road and the guide and go farther! This is something men find difficult to do. When they get hold of something which helps them, they cling to it, they do not want to move any more. Those who have progressed with the help of Christianity do not want to give it up and they carry it on their shoulders; those who have progressed with the help of Buddhism do not want to leave it and they carry it on their shoulders, and so this hampers the advance and you are indefinitely delayed.

Once you have passed the stage, let it drop, let it go! Go farther.

THE PAST: A STEPPING-STONE

The more ready you are to leave behind all that you have experienced, in order to be able to go towards something better and higher, the faster you will go; the more you drag the heavy weight of all the past which you do not want to get rid of, the slower is your advance.

All the past should always be simply like a stepping-stone or a ladder, something to lead you farther; it should not have any other use except to push you forward. And if you can feel this and always turn your back on what is past and look at what you want to do, then you go much faster, you do not waste time on the way.

What makes you lose time is always this clinging to what has been, to what is, what seemed to you beautiful and good in what is past. This must only help you, you must not reject it, but it must help you to go forward, it must simply be something on which you lean to take a step forward.

ONE MUST BURN ONE'S BRIDGES

It sometimes takes very long but one must burn one's bridges; otherwise you go in a round, progress bit by bit until the end of your life, and then, when the time to leave has come you suddenly feel: "Ah! but... well, it will be perhaps for another time." This is not pleasant; why, it must be something frightful; for if one has known nothing, understood nothing, if one has never tried. People are born, live, die and are reborn and live and die again, and it goes on, continues indefinitely, they do not even put the problem before themselves. But when one has had the taste, the foretaste of what life is, and why one is here, and what one has to do here, and then in addition one has made some effort and tries to realise, if one does not get rid of all the baggage of what does not follow, then it will be necessary to begin again yet another time. Better not. It is better to do one's work while one can do it consciously, and indeed this is what is meant by: "Never put off for tomorrow what you can do today."

MENTAL FORMATIONS AND PROGRESS

I do not believe at all in limits which cannot be crossed.

But I see very clearly people's mental formations and also a sort of laziness in face of the necessary effort. And this laziness and these limits are like diseases. But they are curable diseases... If you are a normal person, well, provided you take the trouble and know the method, your capacity for growth is almost unlimited.

There is the idea that everyone belongs to a certain type, that, for example, the pine will never become the oak and the palm never become wheat. This is obvious. But that is something else: it means that the truth of your being is not the truth of your neighbour's. But in the truth of your being, according to your own formation, your progress is almost unlimited. It is limited only by your own conviction that it is limited and by your ignorance of the true process, otherwise...

There is nothing one cannot do, if one knows how to do it.

PRECONCEIVED IDEAS

The best one can do is not to take sides, not to have preconceived ideas or principles - oh! the moral principles, the set rules or conduct, what one must do and what one must not and the preconceived ideas from the moral point of view, from the point of view of progress, and all the social and mental conventions,... no worse obstacle than that. There are people, I know people who have lost decades in surmounting one such mental construction!.. If one can be like that, open, truly open in a simplicity, well, a simplicity that knows that it is ignorant - like that (*gesture upward, of self-abandon*), ready to receive whatever comes. Then something can happen. -

And naturally, the thirst for progress, the thirst for knowledge, the thirst for transformation and, above all, the thirst for Love and Truth - if one keeps that, one goes quicker. Truly a thirst, a need, a need.

All the rest has no importance; it is that one has need of.

THE ONE TRUE JOY

Yes, this inevitable need. Nothing else counts. That's everything. Only that.

And so, after all, one does not care a rap for obstacles and difficulties. What can that do to you?... It does not count. One laughs at time also. What does it matter to you if it takes long? For a much longer time you will have the joy of aspiration, of consecration, of self-giving.

For this is the one true joy. And this joy fades away when there is something egoistic, and because there is a demand which one calls a need - which is mixed in the consecration. Otherwise the joy never disappears.

This is the first thing one obtains, and the last one realises. And it is the sign of Victory.

So long as you cannot be in joy, a constant, calm, peaceful, luminous, invariable joy, well, it means that you have still to work to purify yourself, and sometimes work hard. But this is the sign.

THE JOY OF PROGRESS

It is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to make - if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense.

When the difficulty is egoistic or personal, if one makes an offering of it and throws it into the fire of purification, one immediately feels the joy of progress. If one does it sincerely, at once there is a welling up of joy.

ASPIRE WITHOUT IMPATIENCE

{Aspire} intensely, but without impatience. That is it. One must be in that state.

And for a very long time, a very long time, one must be satisfied with inner results, that is, results in one's personal and individual reactions, one's inner contact with the rest of the world - one must not expect or be premature in wanting things to materialise. Because our hastiness usually delays things.

If it is like that, it is like that.

We - I mean men - live harassed lives. It is a kind of half-awareness of the shortness of their lives; they do not think of it, but they feel it half-consciously. And so they are always wanting - quick, quick - to rush from one thing to another, to do one thing quickly and move on to the next one, instead of letting each thing live in its own eternity. They are always wanting: forward, forward, forward... And the work is spoilt.

RAJASIC EAGERNESS

What does "Rajasic eagerness" mean?

"Eagerness"? It is vehemence, it is violence. It is an excessive ardour; and "Rajasic" - it is the over-active and violent element, it is the turbulent element in the being. Rajasic - that is the nature of all transports, flarings-up and enthusiasms, and of all violences and passions, and all over-activity also, in contrast to *Tamas* which is inert, and to *Sattwa* which is balanced. This is the over-active and violent element...

Sweet Mother, what is the effect of an aspiration which comes from Rajasic eagerness?

...Well, it takes away your quietude, that is the first effect. It makes you agitated, nervous, impatient and dissatisfied when you do not immediately obtain what you have asked for, and usually as vehement in your despair and dissatisfaction as in the aspiration, with a strong sense of your helplessness.

TIME: A FRIEND OR AN ENEMY?

How is Time a friend?

It depends on how you look at it. Everything depends on the relation you have with it. If you take it as a friend, it becomes a friend. If you consider it as an enemy, it becomes your enemy.

But that is not what you are asking. What you are asking is how one feels when it is an enemy and how when it is a friend. Well, when you become impatient and tell yourself: "Oh, I must succeed in doing this and why do not I succeed in doing it?" And when you do not succeed immediately in doing it and fall, into despair, then it is your enemy. But when you tell yourself: "It is all right, I did not succeed this time, I shall succeed next time, and I am sure one day or another I shall do it," then it becomes your friend.

FAST AND SLOW

It is *{the Psychic Being}* which governs, directs, even organises the life, organises the consciousness, the different parts of the being. When this happens, the work goes very fast. Very fast, well... relatively very fast.

In the human consciousness everything is *very slow*. When we compare the time that is necessary to realise something with the average length of human existence, it seems interminable. But happily there comes a time when one escapes from this notion, when one begins to feel no longer according to human measures. As soon as one is truly in touch with the Psychic, one loses this kind of narrowness and of agony also, this agony which is so bad: "I must be quick, I must be quick, there is not much time, I must hurry, there is not much time." One does things very badly or does not do them at all any more. But as soon as there is a contact with the Psychic, then indeed this disappears; one begins to be a little more vast and calm and peaceful, and to live in eternity.

THE EFFORT FOR PROGRESS - I

You are almost entirely incapable of knowing whether you are making progress or not, for very often what seems to us to be a state of stagnation is a long, sometimes longer, but in any case not endless preparation for a leap forward. We sometimes seem to be marking time for week or months, and then suddenly something that was being prepared makes its appearance, and we see that there is quite a considerable change and *on several points* at a time.

As with everything in yoga, the effort for progress must be made for the love of the effort for progress. The joy of effort, the aspiration for progress must be enough in themselves, quite independent of the result. Everything one does in yoga must be done for the joy of doing it, and not in view of the result one wants to obtain...

Indeed, in life, always, in all things, the result does not belong to us. And if we want to keep the right attitude, we must act, feel, think, strive spontaneously, for that is what we must do, and not in view of the result to be obtained.

THE EFFORT FOR PROGRESS - II

As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort. You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the Universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering yourself; and whether this results in progress or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it.

If you wish to progress, if you make an effort to control yourself for instance, to overcome certain defects, weaknesses, imperfections, and if you expect to get a more or less immediate result from your effort, your effort loses all sincerity, it becomes a bargaining.

HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL PROGRESS

There is a horizontal advance between abrupt ascents. It is the moment of the abrupt ascent which gives you an impression of something like a revelation, a great inner joy. But once you have climbed the step, if you want to climb it once more you would have to go down again. You must go on preparing yourself at this level in order to climb another higher step. These things which suddenly give you a great joy are always ascents. But these ascents are prepared by a slow work of horizontal progress, that is, one must become more and more conscious, establish more and more perfectly what one is, draw from it all the inner, psychological consequences, and in action also. It is a long utilisation of an abrupt leap and, as I say, there are two kinds of progress. But the horizontal progress is indispensable.

You must not stop, you must not cling in this way to your vertical progress and not want to move because it has brought you a revelation. You must know how to leave it in order to prepare for another.

TRUE PROGRESS IS SADHANA

When you take a body it is to make progress and when you leave it the period of progress is over.

And true progress is *sadhana*; that is, it is the most conscious and swiftest progress. Otherwise one makes progress with the rhythm of Nature, which means that it can take centuries and centuries and centuries and millenniums to make the slightest bit of progress. But true progress is that made by *sadhana*. In yoga one can do in a very short time what takes otherwise an interminable time. But it is always in the body and always upon earth that it is done, not elsewhere. That is why when one is in a body one must take advantage of it and not waste one's time, and not say: "A little later, a little later." It is much better to do it immediately. All the years you pass without making any progress are wasted, which you are sure to regret afterwards.

"IT IS MY FAULT"

- In ordinary life one says: "It is circumstances, it is fate, it is my bad luck, it is their fault," or else, "I have no luck." That is very, very, very convenient. One veils everything and expects,... yes, one has happy moments and then bad ones, and finally, ah, well, finally one falls into a hole, for everybody tumbles over, and expects to, sooner or later. So, one does not worry, or worries all the time which comes to the same thing. That is, one is unconscious, one lives unconsciously and puts all the blame for what happens on others and on the circumstances but never tells oneself: "Why! it is my own fault." ... It needs a sufficiently vast consciousness to begin. Even among those who profess to be conscious, there are not many who see clearly enough to become aware that all that happens to them comes from what they are and from nothing else. They always say: "He is wrong; circumstances are unfavourable: oh! why was that done?" - If you were not what you are, it would not happen in this way. It would happen differently.

YOU MUST CHOOSE

You must choose; there is no "force like that" which chooses for you, or chance or luck or fate - this is not true. Your will is free, it is deliberately left free and you have to choose. It is you who decides whether to see the Light or not, whether to be the servitor of the Truth or not - it is you. Or whether to have an aspiration or not, it is you who chooses. And even when you are told: "Make your surrender total and the work will be done for you," it is quite all right, but to make your surrender total, every day and at every moment you must choose to make your surrender total, otherwise you will not do it, it will not get done by itself. It is you who must want to do it. When It is done, all goes well, when you have the Knowledge also, all goes well, and when you are identified with the Divine, all goes even better, but till then you must will, choose and decide. Do not go to sleep lazily, saying: "Oh! the work will be done for me, I have nothing to do but let myself glide along with the stream."

EXPRESS ONLY THE HIGHEST TRUTH

There is only one way of acting truly, it is to try at each moment, each second, in each movement to express only the highest truth one can perceive, and at the same time know that this perception has to be progressive and that what seems to you the most true now will no longer be so tomorrow, and that a higher truth will have to be expressed more and more through you. This leaves no room any longer for sleeping in a comfortable *tamas*; one must be always awake - I am not speaking of physical sleep - one must be always awake, always conscious and always full of an enlightened receptivity and of goodwill. To want always the best, always the best, always the best, and never tell oneself: "Oh! it is tiring! Let me rest, let me relax! Ah, I am going to stop making an effort," then one is sure to fall into a hole immediately and make a big stupid blunder!...

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

"OTHERS ARE NOT DOING IT"

What prevents me from opening myself to the {Divine's} influence is the suggestion. "Why hurry, why so soon, since the others are not doing it?"

This is a frightful platitude!

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

YOUR BEST FRIEND - I

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 is quite clear...

We do not 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 is all.

YOUR BEST FRIEND - II

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 is He not 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.

SEEK SUPPORT IN THE DIVINE

Never take the attitude of hoping for support, help, comfort from anyone except the Divine. That is absolute. I have never, not once, met anyone who tried to cling to something to find a support there,... and who was not deceived - it breaks, it stops, one loses one's support. Then one says: "Life is difficult," - it is not difficult but one must know what one is doing. Never seek a support elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek satisfaction elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek the satisfaction of your needs in anyone else except the Divine - never, for anything at all. All your needs can be satisfied only by the Divine. All your weaknesses can be borne and healed only by the Divine. He alone is capable of giving you what you need in everything, always, and if you try to find any satisfaction or support or help or joy or... Heaven knows what, in anyone else, you will always fall on your nose one day, and that always hurts, sometimes even hurts very much.

FIRST THE DIVINE

"The Divine must always come first."

{Sri Aurobindo}

I do not understand. What does "come first" mean?

It means that before every other consideration it is the Divine who is the first consideration - that all other considerations which are not the Divine are secondary, without importance... For instance: when you have to make a choice, you must choose according to the Divine inspiration or what will bring you closer to the Divine or put you in the best situation to attain to the Divine, because it is the Divine who comes first, all personal interest or personal satisfaction must come afterwards. First the Divine. And consecration to the Divine must come first, everything else comes afterwards. If it comes, it comes; if it does not, it does not matter. What matters is the seeking for the Divine, this is the first thing, the thing that comes before everything, the most important thing. This is what it means.

A CERTAIN NUMBER OF RULES

The first thing is to want {the Divine} and know precisely that this comes first, before all other things, that this is the important thing. That is the first condition; all the rest may come later, this is the *essential* condition. You see, if once in a while, from time to time, when you have nothing to do and all goes well and you are unoccupied, suddenly you tell yourself: "Ah, I would like so much to find the Divine!" - well, this - it may take a hundred thousand years, in this way.

But if it is the important thing, the only thing that matters, and if everything else comes afterwards, and you want nothing *but this*, then - this is the first condition. You must first establish this, later we may speak of what follows. First this, that all the rest does not count, that only this counts, that one is ready to give up everything to have this, that it is the only thing of importance in life. Then one puts oneself in the condition of being able to take a step forward.

THE ONLY WAY OF KNOWING THE DIVINE

Do you understand, the only way of knowing the Divine is by identifying oneself with Him. There is no other, there is only one, one single way. Hence, once you are master of this method of identification, you can identify yourself. So you choose your object for identification, you want to identify yourself with the Divine. But so long as you do not know how to identify yourself, a hundred and one things will always come across your path, pulling you here, pulling you there, scattering you, and you will not be able to identify yourself with Him. But if you have learnt how to identify yourself, then you have only to orientate the identification, place it where you want it, and then hold on there until you get a result. It will come very fast if you are master of your power of identification. Yes, it will come very quickly. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the time could vary between three days, three hours and three minutes. Three days for very slow people, three hours for those who were a little swifter, three minutes for those who are used to it.

ASK THE DIVINE

If, for example, one wants to know something or one needs guidance, or something else, how can one have it from the Divine, according to one's need?

By asking the Divine for it. If you do not ask Him, how can you have it?

If you turn to the Divine and have full trust and ask Him, you will get what you need - not necessarily what you imagine you need; but the true thing you need, you will get. But you must ask Him for it.

You must make the experiment sincerely; you must not endeavour to get it by all sorts of external means and then expect the Divine to give it to you without even having asked Him. Indeed, when you want somebody to give you something, you ask him for it, do you not? And why do you expect the Divine to give it to you without your having asked Him for it?

THE SUPREME HAS A SENSE OF HUMOUR

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

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

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

THE ATHEIST AND THE BELIEVER

*What does "God playing at hide and seek with Himself?" * mean?*

In the game of hide and seek, one person hides and the other seeks. So God hides from the atheist who says: "God? I do not see him, I do not know where he is; therefore he does not exist." But the atheist does not know that God is also in him; and therefore it is God who is denying his own existence. Is that not a game? And yet a day will come when He will be brought face to face with Himself and will be obliged to recognise that He exists.

The believer thinks himself very superior to the atheist, but all that he has been able to seize of God is His shadow, and he clings to this shadow imagining that it is God himself. For if he truly knew God, he would know that God is all things and in everything; then he would cease to think himself superior to anybody.

* Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*

THE DIVINE IS NOT A STRANGER

Why does the Divine want to manifest Himself on earth in this chaos?

Because this is why He has created the earth, not for any other motive; the earth is He Himself in a deformation and He wants to establish it back again in its truth. Earth is not something separated from Him and alien to Him. It is a deformation of Himself which must once again become what it was in its essence, that is, the Divine.

Then why is He a stranger to us?

But He is not a stranger, my child. You fancy that He is a stranger, but He is not, not in the least. He is the essence of your being, not at all alien. You may not know Him, but He is not a stranger; He is the very essence of your being. Without the Divine you would not exist.

THE MATERIAL WORLD

Is not this material world of ours very low down in the scale in the system of worlds that form the creation?

Ours is the material world, but it is not necessarily "low down," at least, not for that reason; if it is low down, it is because it is obscure and ignorant, not because it is material. It is a mistake to make "matter" a synonym for obscurity and ignorance. And the material world too is not the only world in which we live: it is rather one of many in which we exist simultaneously, and in one way the most important of them all. For this world of matter is the point of concentration of all the worlds; it is the field of concretisation of all the worlds; it is the place where all the worlds will have to manifest. At present it is disharmonious and obscure; but that is only an accident, a false start.

One day it will become beautiful, rhythmic, full of light; for that is the consummation for which it was made.

GOD AND HIS CREATION

People are so deeply imbued with the Christian idea of "God the Creator" - the creation on one side and God on the other. When you think about it you reject it, but it has penetrated into the sensations and feelings; so, spontaneously, instinctively, almost subconsciously, you attribute to God everything you consider to be best and most beautiful and, above all, everything you want to attain, to realise. Naturally, each one changes the content of his God according to his own consciousness, but it is always what he considers to be best. And that is also why instinctively and spontaneously, subconsciously, you are shocked by the idea that God can be things that you do not like, that you do not approve of or do not think best...

But *{what seems ugly to us}* is Him. There is nothing but Him. This is what we should repeat to ourselves from morning to evening and from evening to morning, because we forget it at each moment.

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

Not to make any distinction between God and the universe at the origin. The universe is the Divine projected in space, and God is the universe at its origin. It is the same thing under one aspect or another. And you cannot divide them. It is the opposite conception to that of the "creator" and his "work". Only, it is very convenient to speak of the creator and his work, it makes explanations very easy and the teaching quite elementary. But it is not the truth. And then you say: "How is it that God who is all-powerful has allowed the world to be like this?" But it is your own conception! It is because you yourself happen to be in the midst of a set of circumstances that seems to you unpleasant, so you project that upon the Divine and you tell him: "Why have you made such a world?" - "I did not make it. It is you yourself. And if you become Myself once again, you will no longer feel as you do. What makes you feel as you do is that you are no longer Myself." This is what He could tell you in answer.

A SORT OF TOTAL SECURITY

When one has the positive experience of the one and only existence of the Supreme and that all is only the Supreme playing to Himself, instead of being something disquieting or unpleasant or troubling, it is... a sort of total security. The one reality is the Supreme. And all this is a game He plays to Himself. I find this much more comforting than the opposite view.

And after all, this is the only certitude that all this may become something marvelous...

You will see, there is a moment when one cannot bear oneself or life unless one takes the attitude that it is the Lord who is everything. You see, this Lord, how many things He possesses, He plays with all this... He plays, He plays at changing positions. And so, when one sees this, this whole, one feels the illimitable marvel, and that all our most wonderful aspirations, all these are quite possible and will even be surpassed. Then one is comforted.

WE ARE ALL ACTING A PLAY

You see, only the One who is watching the play is not worried, because He knows everything that is going to happen and He has an absolute knowledge of everything, everything that happens, everything that has happened and everything that is going to happen - and it is all there, as one presence for Him. And so it is the others, the poor actors who do not even know, they do not even know their parts! And they worry a great deal, because they are being made to act something and they do not know what it is... We are all acting a play, but we do not know what the play is, nor where it is going, nor where it comes from, nor what it is as a whole; we barely know – imperfectly - what we are supposed to do from moment to moment. Our knowledge is imperfect. And so we worry! But when one knows everything, one can no longer worry, one smiles - He must be having great fun, but we...

And yet we are given the *full power* to amuse ourselves like Him.

We simply do not take the trouble.

ALLOW THE LORD TO DO EVERYTHING

This smile, this joy, this laughter are there, and such peace! Such *full*, luminous, total peace, in which there are no more conflicts, no more contradictions. There are no more conflicts. It is *one single* luminous harmony - and yet everything we call error, suffering, misery, everything is there. It *eliminates nothing*. It is another way of seeing.

There can be no doubt that if you sincerely want to get out of it, it is not so difficult after all: you have nothing to do, you only have to allow the Lord to do everything. And He does everything. He does everything. It is so wonderful, so wonderful!

He takes anything, even what we call a very ordinary intelligence and He simply teaches you to put this intelligence aside, to rest: "There, be quiet, do not stir, do not bother me, I do not need you." Then a door opens, you do not even feel that you have to open it; it is wide open, you are taken over to the other side. All that is done by Someone else, not you. And then the other way becomes impossible.

"LORD, YOU SEE, IT IS LIKE THAT"

All this... oh, this tremendous labour of the mind striving to understand, toiling and giving itself headaches!... It is absolutely useless, absolutely useless, no use at all, it merely increases the confusion.

You are faced with a so-called problem: What should you say, what should you do, how should you act? There is nothing to do, nothing, you only have to say to the Lord: "There, You see, it is like that" - that is all. And then you stay very quiet. And then quite spontaneously, without thinking about it, without reflection, without calculation, nothing, nothing, without the slightest effort - you do what has to be done. That is to say, the Lord does it, it is no longer you. He does it; He arranges the circumstances; He arranges the people; He puts the words into your mouth or your pen - He does everything, everything, everything, everything; you have nothing more to do but to allow yourself to live blissfully.

LET THE ALL-CONSCIOUSNESS DECIDE

I am fully convinced that the confusion {in the world} is there to teach us how to live from day to day, that is to say, not to be preoccupied with what may happen, what will happen, just to occupy oneself day by day with doing what one has to do. All thinkings, pre-plannings, arrangements and all that, are very favourable to much disorder.

To live almost minute by minute, to be like that {*gesture upward*}, attentive only to the thing that is to be done at the moment, and then to let the All-Consciousness decide.

When you are assailed by the vision of such disorder and confusion, you have to do only one thing, to enter into the consciousness where you see only one Being, *one* Consciousness, one Power, there is only a single Unity - and all this is taking place within this Unity. And all our insignificant visions and knowings and judgments and,... all that is mere nothing, it is microscopic in comparison with the Consciousness presiding over All.

CONTACT THE SUPREME CONSCIOUSNESS

If one had the least sense of the reason why separate individualities existed, one would see that it is only for allowing aspiration, the existence of aspiration, of this movement of self-giving and surrender, trust and *faith*. And it is this that is the very reason why individuals. were built up; and then for you to become that in all sincerity and intensity,... it is all that is needed.

It is all that is needed, it is the *only* thing, the only, only thing that stays; all the rest... phantasmagoria.

And it is the only thing valid in every case: when you want to do a thing, when you cannot do a thing, when you move, when the body is no more able to move,... in *every*, every case, that only, only that: to come in conscious contact with the Supreme Consciousness, to be united with it; and,... to wait. There!

It is then that you receive the exact indication of what you ought to do at each minute - to do or not to do, to act or to be stone still. That is all.

DIVINE LOVE IS THERE

Divine Love is there always in all its intensity, a formidable power. But most people - ninety-nine percent - do not feel anything at all! What they feel of it is exclusively in proportion to what they are, to their capacity of receiving. Imagine, for instance, that you are bathing in an atmosphere all vibrant with Divine Love - you are not at all aware of it. Sometimes, very rarely, for a few seconds there is suddenly the feeling of "something". Then you say: "Oh, Divine Love came to me!" What a joke! It is just that you were simply, for some reason or other, a wee bit open, so you felt it. But it is there, always...

This is so for all Divine things. They are there, only one does not receive them, for one is closed up, blocked, one is busy with other things most of the time. Most of the time one is full of oneself. So, as one is full of oneself, there is no place for anything else. One is very actively (*laughing*) busy with other things. One is filled with things, there is no place for the Divine.

But He is there.

THE POWER OF LOVE

Love is obviously the most potent and integral of all powers - integral in the sense that it applies in all cases. It is even more powerful than the power of purification which dissolves all bad will and which is, as it were, the master of the adverse forces, but which has not the direct power of transformation. The power of purification first dissolves in order to allow the transformation afterwards. It destroys one form in order to be able to create a better one, whereas love need not dissolve in order to transform; it possesses the direct power of transformation. Love is like a flame that changes what is hard into some thing malleable and even sublimates this malleable thing into a kind of purified vapour - it does not destroy, it transforms.

In its essence, in its origin, love is like a flame, a white flame which overcomes *all* resistances. You can experience this yourself: whatever the difficulty in your being, whatever the burden of accumulated error, ignorance, incapacity or bad will, a single second of this pure, essential, Supreme love dissolves it as in an all- powerful flame.

THE SUPREME LOVE

Suddenly in the night I woke with the full awareness of what we could call the Yoga of the World. The Supreme Love was manifesting through big pulsations, and each pulsation was bringing the world further in its manifestation. It was the formidable pulsations of the eternal stupendous Love, only Love. Each pulsation of the Love was carrying the universe further in its manifestation...

All the results of the falsehood had disappeared: death was an illusion, sickness was an illusion, ignorance was an illusion - something that had no reality, no existence. Only Love and Love and Love and Love - immense, formidable, stupendous, carrying everything.

And we set out again on the way, sure of Victory.

- The skies are full of the songs of Victory.

- The Truth alone exists; it alone shall be manifested.
Forward!

Glory to Thee, Lord, Supreme Triumpher!

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