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

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

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

(Silence)

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

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

27 June 1961

63 – God is great, says the Mahomedan. Yes, He is so great that He can afford to be weak, whenever that too is necessary.
64 – God often fails in His workings; it is the sign of His illimitable godhead.

65 – Because God is invincibly great, He can afford to be weak; because He is immutably pure, He can indulge with impunity in sin; He knows eternally all delight, therefore He tastes also the delight of pain; He is inalienably wise, therefore He has not debarred Himself from folly.

Why does God need to be weak?

Sri Aurobindo does not say that God has any need of weakness. He says that in any particular whole, for the perfection of the play of forces, a moment of weakness may be just as necessary as a display of strength. And he adds, somewhat ironically, that since God is almighty force, He can at the same time afford to be weak, if necessary.

This is to widen the outlook of certain moralists who attribute definite qualities to God and will not permit Him to be otherwise.

Strength as we see it and weakness as we see it are both an equally distorted expression of the Divine Truth which is secretly present behind all physical manifestations.

30 June 1961

Does God ever really fail? Is God ever really weak? Or is it simply a game?25

It is not like that! That is precisely the distortion in the Western attitude as opposed to the attitude of the Gita. It is extremely difficult for the Western mind to understand in a living and concrete manner that everything is the Divine.

25 The Mother replied orally to this question.
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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.

I put that rather childishly, on purpose, so that you can understand it properly. But it is like that — I am sure, because I observed it in myself for a very long time, because of the subconscious formation of childhood, environment, education, etc. You must be able to press into this body the consciousness of Oneness, the absolute exclusive Oneness of the Divine — exclusive in the sense that nothing exists except in this Oneness, even the things we find most repulsive.

And this is what Sri Aurobindo is fighting, for he too had this Christian education, he too had to struggle; and these aphorisms are the result — the flowering, as it were — of this necessity of fighting a subconscious formation. For that is what makes you ask such questions: “How can God be weak? How can God be foolish? How...?” But there is nothing other than God, only He exists, there is nothing outside Him. And if something seems ugly to us, it is simply because He no longer wants it to exist. He is preparing the world so that this thing may no longer be manifested, so that the manifestation can move from that state to something else. So naturally, within us, we violently repulse everything that is about to go out of the active manifestation — there is a movement of rejection.

But it 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.

There is only Him. There is nothing but Him — He alone exists, there is no existence without Him, there is only Him!

So, to ask a question like this is still to react like those who make a distinction between what is and what is not Divine or rather between what is and what is not God. “How can He be weak?” It is a question I cannot ask.

*I understand, but they speak of the Lila, the divine play; so He is standing back, as it were. He is not really entirely “involved”, not really absolutely in the play.*

Yes, yes, He is! He is totally in it. He himself is the Play.

We speak of God, but we should remember that there are all these gradations of consciousness; and when we speak of God and His Play, we mean God in His transcendent state, beyond all the levels of matter, and when we speak of the Play we speak of God in his material state. So we say: Transcendent God is watching and playing — in Himself, by Himself, with Himself — His material game.

But all language is a language of ignorance. Our entire way of expressing ourselves, everything we say and the way in which we say it, is necessarily ignorance. And that is why it is so difficult to express something which is concretely true; this would require explanations which would themselves be full of falsehood, of course, or else extremely long. This is why Sri Aurobindo’s sentences are sometimes very long, precisely because he strives to escape from this ignorant language.

Our very way of thinking is wrong. The believers, the faithful, all of them — particularly in the West — when they speak of God, think of Him as “something else”, they think that He cannot be weak, ugly or imperfect — they think wrongly, they divide, they separate. It is subconscious, unreflecting thought; they are in the habit of thinking like this instinctively; they do not watch themselves thinking. For example, when they speak of
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“perfection” in a general way, they see or feel or postulate precisely the sum-total of everything they consider to be virtuous, divine, beautiful, admirable — but it is not that at all! Perfection is something which lacks nothing. The divine perfection is the Divine in His entirety, which lacks nothing. The divine perfection is the Divine as a whole, from whom nothing has been taken away — so it is just the opposite! For the moralists divine perfection means all the virtues that they represent.

From the true point of view, perfection is the whole (Mother makes a global gesture), and it is precisely the fact that there can be nothing outside the whole. It is impossible that anything should be missing, because it is impossible for anything not to form part of the whole. There can be nothing which is not in the whole. Let me explain. A given universe may not contain everything, for a universe is a mode of manifestation; but there is every possible kind of universe. So I always come back to the same thing: there can be nothing which does not form part of the whole.

Therefore one can say that each thing is in its place, exactly as it should be, and that relations between things are exactly as they should be.

But perfection is only one special way of approaching the Divine; it is one side, and in the same way there are innumerable sides, angles or aspects, innumerable ways of approaching the Divine, for example: will, truth, purity, perfection, unity, immortality, eternity, infinity, silence, peace, existence, consciousness, etc. The number of approaches is almost unlimited. With each one you approach or draw near or enter into contact with the Divine through one aspect and if you really do it, you find that the difference is merely in the most external form, but the contact is identical. It is as if you were turning around a centre, a globe, and seeing it from many different angles as in a kaleidoscope; but once the contact is made, it is the same thing.

Perfection is therefore a global way of approaching the Divine: everything is there and everything is as it should be
— “should be”, that is to say, a perfect expression of the Divine; one cannot even say of His Will, for if you say “His Will” it is still something outside Him.

One can also say — but this is far, far below it — that He is what He is and exactly as He wants to be — with this “exactly as He wants to be”, one has come down by a considerable number of steps! But this is to give you the point of view of perfection.

Besides, divine perfection implies infinity and eternity; that is to say, everything coexists outside time and space.

It is like the word “purity”; one could hold forth interminably on the difference between divine purity and what people call purity. The divine purity, at the lowest, allows no influence other than the divine influence — at the lowest. But that is already very much distorted; the divine purity means that there is only the Divine, nothing else — it is perfectly pure, there is only the Divine, there is nothing other than Him.

And so on.

7 July 1961

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

Has cruelty, for example, ever been in its place?²⁶

This very question of yours came to my vision, since I receive in my consciousness all the questions people ask.

To kill out of cruelty? To make others suffer out of cruelty? And yet it is an expression of the Divine — we always come back to the same thing — but an expression which is distorted in its appearance. Can you tell me what lies behind it?

Cruelty was one of the things that was most repugnant to Sri Aurobindo, but he always said that it was the distortion of

²⁶ Oral question and answer.