3 August 1955

Mother reads from Lights on Yoga, “Surrender and Opening”.

What is “the true life-activity”?

It is to express the Divine. That is the very reason of existence and life, its truth and its sole true activity.

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said “It is impossible.” Why? For you have said that nothing is impossible!

Nothing is impossible in principle. But if one refuses to do what is necessary, obviously one cannot succeed.

In the material world there are conditions, otherwise it would not be what it is. If there were no conditions and processes, everything could be transformed and done miraculously. But evidently it is not in this way that it was decided, because things don’t happen miraculously — in any case, not miracles as the human mind conceives of them, that is, constant arbitrary decisions. It is obvious that in the world there are no arbitrary decisions.

Sri Aurobindo says: In order to do such and such a thing, these are the conditions. If you refuse to fulfil these conditions you won’t do that particular thing, you will do something else; that, evidently, is not the only thing possible. But if that’s the thing one wants to do, one must fulfil the conditions... One can do something else!

I believe that if you take the world in its totality, in Time and Space, it is obvious that you can say, “Nothing is impossible”, and that probably everything will be; but that’s in the totality, and in Time and Space, that is, through eternities of time and infinities of space all is possible. But at a given moment, at a
given point, there is a certain number of “possibles”, and all are not there, and certain conditions have to be fulfilled for these possibilities to be realised. The world is constructed like that. We can do nothing about it. I mean it is useless to say, “It ought to be otherwise.” It is like that, we must take it as it is, endeavour to make the best possible out of it.

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said: “If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this Yoga can be done...” Why has he said “the inmost soul”? Is there a superficial soul?

It is because this inmost soul, that is, the central psychic being, influences the superficial parts of the consciousness (superficial in comparison with it: mental parts, vital parts). The purest mind, the highest vital, the emotive being—the soul influences them, influences them to an extent where one has the impression of entering into contact with it through these parts of the being. So people take these parts for the soul and that is why he says “the inmost soul”, that is, the central soul, the real soul.

For very often, when one touches certain parts of the mind which are under the psychic influence and full of light and the joy of that light, or when one touches certain very pure and very high parts of the emotive being which has the most generous, most unselfish emotions, one also has the impression of being in contact with one’s soul. But this is not the true soul, it is not the soul in its very essence. These are parts of the being under its influence and manifesting something of it. So, very often people enter into contact with these parts and this gives them illuminations, great joy, revelations, and they feel they have found their soul. But it is only the part of the being under its influence, one part or another, for... Exactly what happens is that one touches these things, has experiences, and then it gets veiled, and one wonders, “How is it that I touched my soul and now
have fallen back into this state of ignorance and inconscience!”
But that’s because one had not touched one’s soul, one had
touched those parts of the being which are under the influence
of the soul and manifest something of it, but are not it.

I have already said many times that when one enters con-
sciously into contact with one’s soul and the union is established,
it is over, it can no longer be undone, it is something permanent,
constant, which resists everything, and which, at any moment
whatever, if referred to can be found; whereas the other things
— one can have very fine experiences, and then it gets veiled
again, and one tells oneself, “How does that happen? I saw my
soul and now I don’t find it any more!” It was not the soul
one had seen. And these things are very beautiful and give you
very impressive experiences, but this is not the contact with the
psychic being itself.

The contact with the psychic being is definitive, and it is
about this that I say, when people ask, “Do I have a contact
with my psychic being?”, “Your question itself proves that you
don’t have it!”

That’s all, my children?

_Sweet Mother, I have heard that the magicians who use
occult powers for their work suffer a great deal after
their death. Is it true?_

What sort of magicians are you speaking about? Any kind?
Those who have occult powers and use them for their per-
sonal interest? You mean these?

Yes.

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

"Sweet Mother, are there any magicians who do not work magic for their personal interest?"

You mean magical rites? Because, you see, you must not mix up magic with occultism.

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

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

With the help of magical formulas one may produce a certain result, but this result is necessarily limited and has no particular interest for those who, through their inner development, spontaneously receive powers of which they have a higher knowledge, not a mechanical one. It is not for someone who is truly a yogi; it has no interest except that of curiosity. It is interesting only for people who are precisely not yogis and who want to have certain powers which, in fact, they have in a very limited way — it is always limited.

What is special about it is that it has a direct action upon matter; while usually, apart from some rare exceptions, with people who have spiritual powers, yogic powers, it acts through the intermediary of the mental forces usually — either spiritual or mental forces — sometimes of the vital forces (more rarely), but not directly upon matter, except naturally with those who have done yoga in matter, but these are exceptional cases of which one doesn’t speak. These things put into motion certain small entities which are usually the result of the decomposition of human beings and yet have a sufficient contact with the material world to be able to act there. But anyhow, if the action is of a lower order, the power is of a lower order, and it is something almost repugnant for one who is truly in relation with the higher forces.
To act in order to accomplish a work with the spontaneous powers of spiritual realisation, that is well understood. But one may say that everybody does that, because just the fact of thinking means that you are acting invisibly; and according to the power of your thought your action is more or less widespread. But to use small magical formulas to obtain a result is something that has no true relation with the spiritual life. From the spiritual point of view it appears even surprising that these things can always prove effective, because for each case the need is different; and how putting together certain words and making certain signs can always have an effect seems surprising.

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

What opens the door to the action of these forces is fear, a kind of apprehension, the feeling that something is going to happen; and it is these vibrations of fear which put out certain forces from you, forces which give these entities the power to act.

_Sweet Mother, there are people who do hypnotism. Then, when they always practise it on the same person, does that person fall ill after a while?_

Not necessarily ill. It depends on the kind of hypnotism and
hypnotiser. Not necessarily ill. One thing is certain, that this person loses his personal will, that the hypnotiser’s will takes the place of the personal will, otherwise it would not work. But not necessarily ill, terribly dependent! It creates almost a kind of slavery.

(Long silence)

It is very difficult to say, because it depends entirely on the hypnotiser and the hypnotised, and how it is done. In its ordinary outer form it is something that can cause much disturbance.

But there can be a spontaneous hypnotism which may be the expression of a divine force, but then that does not work in the ordinary way.

I think there are as many cases as people. It’s like every other thing. If you put scientific knowledge in the hands of ignorant and stupid people, it can produce catastrophes. And if to this is added the fact that they are people with ill-will or those who have personal motives, then the results are as bad as can be. It’s the same with hypnotism. It depends exclusively upon the one practising it and how he practises it.

It’s not something genuine; like all so-called human knowledge, it is not true, but the deformation of something.

It could be said that if the divine Will works in you, you can call it hypnotism, if you like, and yet it is the supreme Good, you see.

But what is usually called hypnotism is a completely blind and ignorant action: the use of the power of a force which one doesn’t even know very well. So naturally it has unfortunate results; and then, as I say, if it falls into the hands of someone who is unscrupulous or has bad intentions, it becomes altogether disastrous.