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Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “The Four Aids”.

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’s 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 don’t I succeed in doing it?” and when you don’t succeed immediately in doing it and fall into despair, then it is your enemy. But when you tell yourself, “It is all right, I didn’t 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.

Is time only subjective or it is something concrete like a personality?

Perhaps this also depends on how you consider it. All forces are personal; all things in Nature are personal. But if we consider them as impersonal things, our relation with them is impersonal.

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

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

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

In Algeria I saw not a few things like that, very interesting ones. And there, just because there was a certain atmosphere of a little more real knowledge it could be said, there were little entities, as for example entities which handled snow, you see, which produced snow, and which could come, enter a room and tell someone, "Now snow should fall here!" (It had never snowed in that country, never.) "Snow! You are joking. So near the Sahara it is going to snow?" "It must, because they have planted fir trees on the mountain, and when we see fir trees, we come. The fir trees are there to call us; so we come." And so, you see, there was a discussion, and the little being went away with the permission to bring snow, and when it had gone, there was a little pool of snow water on the floor, melted snow which had turned into water. It was physical... and the mountain was

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covered with snow. In Algeria! It is *very near* the Sahara, you go down a few kilometres and you are at the Sahara. Someone had playfully covered all the hills with fir trees. “The fir tree belongs to cold countries. Why do you call us? We are coming.” All this is a true story, it is not an invention.

All depends on your relation. This too, it is quite possible the meteorologist scholars would have been able to explain, I know nothing about it, they explain everything one wants.

(A question was put to Mother about the regularity of the seasons, but was not recorded clearly enough for transcription.)

What, in fact, is regularity? I know that from the time I have come here I have seen all possible things, and only on a few days — very few — I could say, “Look! We are at the height of summer, it’s summer weather”, and that was at the beginning of November. It was much hotter than it was in May this year. Only we think like that: “Now it is summer; after that comes autumn, then winter will come.” And so we adapt ourselves, but it is not true. Well, look! There are things like that. The people of the country told me... I came in the month of April the second time... the first time, the first time, as we know it was on the 29th of March, that is, April follows. In those days it was understood: it *never* rained here for at least three months — not a drop of water; all used to become dry, the leaves which are put on the roofs used to dry up so much that suddenly one day they burst into flames, it was like that. I come, and a *terrific* rainfall! Then the people looked at me (here they have a little of something like a feeling that things are not altogether mechanical, you see). “How does it happen to rain?” Then I answered, “I don’t know, it’s not I, but I have friendship with the rain.”

I went to Pau in the South of France at a time when it never rains there — that is, people who could remember from

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their very infancy had never seen a drop of water — it rained in torrents.

I went to South Algeria, naturally it was dry and there was torrid heat — it began to rain! (*Laughter*)

And then here the same thing happened, and they said that it had been seen only once before... I don't know any more... something like two hundred years ago. They remembered this, and that someone had come and it had rained, and they had taken it as an absolutely auspicious sign, you see, that it was the sign of an exceptional destiny. They have ideas here about auspicious and inauspicious hours, and auspicious events and inauspicious events. Well, when someone arrives at a time when it does not rain and the rain falls, it seems to be a very auspicious event.

Therefore things are as one looks at them. But I have seen other things which are like this, but not very pleasant. It is from the time men have invented — not invented but discovered — and begun to play like babies with things they did not know, and have made atom bombs and other worse things still. This has truly disturbed *terribly* all these little entities which lived indeed according to a certain rhythm which was their own, and were in the habit of commanding at least events that can be foreseen. This has disturbed them very very much, they have suffered terribly from it, and it has made them lose their heads, they no longer know what they are doing.

There was a time at the end of the War, when things had truly become *terribly* chaotic up there, they lived in a kind of absurdity; and as these unfortunate experiences continue, they have not yet come out of their panic. They are panic-stricken. Truly men play with things which they know only from outside, that is, don't know at all. They know just enough to make a wrong use of them. Anything may happen, including, alas, catastrophes which were foretold long ago. It may happen... It depends... on what will intervene.

There is something to be done. I told you this. I said, "If you don't want it to rain, pray." You took it as a joke.

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What is the cause of this rain?

Ah! It seems... there must have been a fault somewhere. Someone has been displeased... Who is displeased?

What we do on the first¹ can anger somebody?

Not what we do. Surely not that. Perhaps something in the way we do it. You want me to tell you something... my experience of things... because all this interests me, and I observe it. Unfortunately I am a spectator, I don't intervene. It is very difficult to make me intervene in these things. Still, I wanted to know and I observed... and this... today I saw, saw this... how to put it?... it is neither heard nor seen, it is at once heard and seen and known and everything else you may like.

All this work which you have done, which has taken almost a year, all these efforts you have made, all the difficulties you have overcome, all this you have done as an offering to the divine Work, you see, with all your sincerity and goodwill, the best of your ability and a complete good-heartedness. Yes, you have put into it all that you could, you have succeeded to a certain extent, in any case you have done things as well as you could. Then "this" added with a smile which, indeed, was a little impish: "What is it to you whether a few stupid fools see what you have done or not? Now you have done the work, you have accomplished it, you have shown what you could do. What is it to you whether a few foolish spectators see it or not?" It was *clear*, you see. I am expressing it; in expressing it I take away something from it. It was a state of consciousness, and then, indeed, it troubled me a little, because... trouble! that's a way of speaking... I told myself: "Heavens! If it is like that after all, we can't be sure that the rain will stop. For if truly it is of no

¹ December 1 is the day of the Annual Programme of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. In 1955 it took place in the Playground where the spectators had to sit in the open.

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importance that some thousand odd people should see what we have done, if our offering has been accepted as an offering made as well as possible and with all our heart, the attitude is not to be anxious about the result — we do not care for the result. Then, perhaps, the rain will continue.”

I am continuing my investigation, I don't know what is going to happen. But in any case, I ought to tell you that I have not yet taken any decision to stop the rain. I am still at the stage of looking on. We shall see. In any case, it was charming. I said, “Was there someone who introduced an egoistic or self-interested feeling into this, and who did not do the thing as it ought to be done, in the right spirit? Where is the fault?” and all that. There was nothing of all this. We were perfectly satisfied with what we had done. It was work well done, done in the right spirit, as well as we could do it. Everybody was happy. There was some impishness somewhere. Was it impishness? It was something much higher than that: it was an observation. So we are going to see. As for me, it interests me, these things. Unfortunately it is like this, I can't take sides, I look on, and it amuses me. (*Laughter*)

I ought to say that if I consider all the effort you have made, and made so well, I tell myself, “Oh, they are very sweet. Truly they should be able to show it.” But it's like that, you see, it's like that, it is not a will which wakes up and says, “Now that's it!” When *that* wakes up, everything goes well, everybody obeys, even the little entities up there. And that is why I told you, “You must pray to them”, because if you begin praying, you, I shall naturally be with you in your prayer. That is it, that's the trick. (*Laughter*)

Was the effort really satisfactory?

Well, you see, if I place myself at the outward point of view of human capacity and of what can be done, I am obliged to say, “One can do better.” But *this* thing does not look at that. It's

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the thing I spoke to you about yesterday, which, you see, takes the effort in its deeper sense, as the offering that's made.

We know, we have said this many a time, that all work is a prayer made with the body and that the true attitude in work is an offering to the Divine. Well, *this* was satisfied with the way the thing was done. For I was looking on, to see, as I said, if there were things which were not as they should have been. But in any case, to the eye of this consciousness which was looking on, it was satisfying. Materially, you see, I said, "In the outer human consciousness this can be done much better." That of course is understood, we haven't reached the height of perfection, far from that, but it must also be said that it is only a very small part of our activity... that we are trying much more than this, that it is only one of the movements of our sadhana, you see. We are busy with many other things besides this... one thing among many others... and to put up something like this according to the accomplishment which the laws of human perfection demand, infinitely more time, infinitely more work and infinitely more means would have been necessary. But we are not seeking an exclusive perfection in one thing or another, we are trying to make everything go forward together to a common, integral perfection. And these things have their place and importance, but they don't have an exclusive place and importance. Therefore, from the external point of view, one may criticise and find something to say and all that; but it is not that, the true point of view. Inwardly, it is well.

You see, it happens all the time to the newcomers, strangers, visitors, to those who come with all ordinary human mental constructions. They come here and say, "Bah, bah, bah, there is nothing so remarkable, it's not so extraordinary, all their capacities are of the average kind." But this is because they think like what I call dull-witted fellows, with an altogether ordinary consciousness; but if they could see behind the appearances the reality of things, they would see that it is not as easy as that, that there is something else which is advancing all together towards

a realisation which goes infinitely beyond all their little conceptions; this they cannot see. And that is why, probably... this thing which was answering me said, "But what is it to you whether a thousand odd fools see or not the effort you have made?" For it is truly... one thing is certain, that if you see the deep law of things and are in contact with a higher consciousness in order to realise something that far surpasses all human conceptions, what can a human opinion mean to you? It is as though you asked a dog the value of a problem of science you have solved. It wouldn't occur to you, would it? You know that the dog doesn't have the elements necessary for judging your scientific problem. But here there's a still greater difference... people haven't even the slightest notion of what the spiritual life is and the divine realisation, and naturally because of their very ignorance they come and judge all this with a perfect ease, what you do or don't do and the way of doing it and how you live, because they understand nothing about it and see nothing at all.

That is why to those who come and ask what qualifications are obtained at Sri Aurobindo International University,² I reply: "Go then, go and see, there are numerous universities which are *infinitely* better than ours, much better equipped, much better organised. Ours is nothing, you see, it is just a drop of water in the ocean. Go then, there are others everywhere, there are many even in India, there are many in all the great countries, infinitely more important universities, better than ours. Go there then. You will have much more of what you need." This is why we do not try to enter into competition with other institutions.

Then, Mother, what attitude should we have before these spectators?

To love them with all your heart, my children, and wish that they may be born to the light, that's the only thing, that's the only

² Now the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

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way of solving the problem. If they begin to talk thoughtlessly, you can be polite and not contradict them — not say anything at all to them. You must avoid above all discussing and trying to convince them, because that's an impossible attempt. You must be absolutely indifferent to their compliments and their criticisms. It is much easier to be indifferent to criticism than to compliments.

When Mme. David-Neel — I have spoken to you about her, haven't I? Mme. David-Neel who is a militant Buddhist and a great Buddhistic luminary — when she came to India she went to meet some of those great sages or gurus — I shan't give you the names, but she went to one who looked at her and asked her... for they were speaking of yoga and personal effort and all that... he looked at her and asked her, "Are you indifferent to criticism?" Then she answered him with the classical expression, "Does one care about a dog's barking?" But she added to me when telling me the story, very wittily: "Fortunately he did not ask me whether I was indifferent to compliments, because *that* is much more difficult!"

Still, there we are. Naturally you must avoid thinking that you are in the least superior, and I am going to tell you why. For I have just spoken to you about something and about an inner realisation, but except for a few vague and imprecise phrases, you would be almost absolutely incapable of telling me what I spoke about. You know vaguely, like that, that we are in the course of doing something, but what it is and what it's leading to and what are the inner changes which can set us a little apart from ordinary humanity, you are not conscious of, and you would feel extremely uneasy if I asked you to explain to me what it is. So, as in a being it is only the consciousness which counts, you must not think yourselves at all superior.

For — one of two things — you cannot think yourselves superior unless you are unconscious. The minute you are truly conscious you lose this notion of superiority and inferiority completely. So, in both the cases, you must not feel yourselves

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superior — for it is a smallness and a meanness — but feel full of goodwill and sympathy and not care at all for what people say or don't say, but be polite, because it is always preferable to be polite rather than impolite, for you put yourself into contact with more harmonious forces and can fight much better against the forces of destruction and ugliness, for no other reasons than these, because we like harmony and it is better to keep that; but essentially you should be far above all this and feel interested only in your relation with the Divine, what He expects from you and what you want to do for Him. For *this* is the only thing which matters. All the rest has no importance.

There are people who want to show their superiority. This proves that they are quite small. The more one wants to show his superiority, the more it proves that he is quite small. You see, a little child who lives simply without looking at itself and how it lives, is much greater than you because it is spontaneous.

There, then. Now, you have something to ask me?

No, nothing?

How is it possible that something almost perfectly done by a mass of goodwills can be spoilt by one single little ill-will?

That the little ill-will disturbs all the work of goodwill? Who said that?

It happens very often.

(Mother did not hear the disciple well.)

It always happens?

In the Letters Sri Aurobindo says it: The Supermind could have descended but because of the ill-will of the people in the Ashram it was obliged to withdraw.

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But surely I have never seen this. I admit that I don't understand. I rather find it just the other way, that even when there is a mass of bad wills, if there is only one good will somewhere (*laughter*), it makes the Grace act and everything goes well.

What you just said...

That has nothing to do with this.

*If there is a concentration...*³

What did I say? Why, I am forgetting... I am hearing impossible things. What was it?

(Pavitra) *An observation.*

An observation of what?

(The disciple mutters an answer which Mother does not hear.)

Do you understand what he is saying? I don't.

(A child) *He took this for ill-will.*

He hasn't understood anything at all, understood absolutely nothing of what I said. Absolutely nothing. It is not at all that. It is not at all that. It did not come from below, it came from a much higher plane than your consciousness can reach. It is not ill-will, infinitely far from that...

That's how people understand what I say! I must be really careful! Is there anyone else who has understood in this way? (*To a child*) You too understood it like this, didn't you? (*Laughter*)

³ The disciple having only vaguely heard the French word "constatation" mistook it for "concentration".

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Look, it never even occurred to me. I understood *nothing* of what he wanted to say. It was so different. If for a moment I had thought it could be understood like this, I would never have said anything.

Good!

Then, that's all, I think that's enough for today...

How can one become indifferent to criticism?

By climbing somewhere up on the ladder — in one's own consciousness — looking at things a little more vastly, a little more generally. For example, if at a particular moment there is something which holds you, grips you like that, holds you tight, close pressed, and you absolutely want it to happen, and you are fighting against a terrible obstacle, you see, something which is preventing it from happening; if simply just at that moment you begin to feel, to realise the myriads and myriads of years there were before this present moment, and the myriads and myriads of years there will be after this present moment, and what importance this little event has in relation to all that — there is no need to enter a spiritual consciousness or anything else, simply enter into relation with space and time, with all that is before, all that is after and all that is happening at the same time — if one is not an idiot, immediately he tells himself, “Oh, well, I am attaching importance to something which doesn't have any.” Necessarily so, you see. It loses all its importance, immediately.

If you can visualise, you know, simply the immensity of the creation — I am not now speaking of rising to spiritual heights — simply the immensity of the creation in time and space, and this little event on which you are concentrated with an importance... as though it were something of some importance... immediately it does this (*gesture*) and it dissolves, if you do it sincerely. If, naturally, there is one part of yourself which tells you, “Ah, but for me it has an importance”, then, there, you

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have only to leave that part behind and keep your consciousness as it is. But if sincerely you want to see the true value of things, it is very easy.

There are other methods, you know. There is a Chinese sage who advises you to lie down upon events as one floats on one's back upon the sea, imagining the immensity of the ocean and that you let yourself go floating upon this... upon the waves, you see, like something contemplating the skies and letting itself be carried away. In Chinese they call this *Wu Wei* When you can do this all your troubles are gone. I knew an Irishman who used to lie flat on his back and look outside, as much as possible on an evening when stars were in the sky, he looked, contemplated the sky and imagined that he was floating in that immensity of countless luminous points.

And immediately all troubles are calmed.

There are many ways. But sincerely, you have only to... have the sense of relativity between your little person and the importance you give to the things which concern you, and the universal immensity; this is enough. Naturally, there is another way, it is to free oneself from the earth consciousness and rise into a higher consciousness where these terrestrial things take their true place — which is quite small, you see.

But... indeed, once, very long ago, when I was still in Paris and used to see Mme. David-Neel almost every day, she, you see, was full of her own idea and told me, “You should not think of an action, it means attachment for the action; when you want to do something, it means that you are still tied to the things of this world.” Then I told her, “No, there is nothing easier. You have only to imagine *everything* that has been done before and all that will be done later and all that is happening now, and you will then realise that your action is a breath, like this, one second in eternity, and you can no longer be attached to it.” At that time I didn't know the text of the Gita. I had not read it completely yet, you see... (*some words inaudible here*)... not this verse which I translate in my own way: “And detached from

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all fruit of action, act.” It is not like this, but still that’s what it means. This I did not know, but I said exactly what is said in the Gita.

But it is not because you believe in your action that you ought to act; you act because you must act, that’s all. Only, it is a condition which can sometimes be a little dangerous from the external point of view, because instead of willing with a sovereign authority that the rain should stop, one looks on at what is happening. There we are. But I tell you, “If you like to pray, pray.”

We can pray now. (Laughter)

He is very witty!

Good, then, lights off. We shall pray.