

4 November 1958

Do the gods of the Puranas and the gods of Greek and Egyptian mythology have any real existence?

Between the gods of the Puranas and the gods of Greek and Egyptian mythology, all kinds of similarities are found; it could be an interesting subject for study. To the modern Western world, all these divinities — the Greek gods and other “pagan” gods, as they call them — are simply a product of human imagination and correspond to nothing real in the universe. But this is a gross error.

To understand the mechanism of universal life, even that of terrestrial life, one has indeed to know that all these are real and living beings, each in its own realm, and have an independent reality. They would exist even if men did not exist. The majority of these gods existed before man existed.

In a very old tradition, probably dating before the Chaldean and Vedic traditions, which are its two branches, the history of creation is narrated not from the metaphysical or psychological point of view, but from an objective point of view, and this history is as real as our history of historical epochs. Of course, this is not the only way of looking at the thing, but it is quite as legitimate as any other; and in any case it recognises the concrete reality of these divine beings.

These are beings who belong to the progressive creation of the universe and have themselves presided over its formation, from the most ethereal or subtle to the most material regions; it is a descent of the divine creative Spirit. And they descended progressively, through realities more and more — one cannot say dense, because it is not dense, one cannot even say material, because matter as we know it does not exist on those planes — through realities more and more concrete.

Words of the Mother – III

According to traditions and occult schools, all these zones of realities, these planes of realities have got different names; they have been classified in a different way, but there is an essential analogy, and if you go back far enough into the traditions, you see only the words changing according to the country and the language. Even now, the experiences of Western occultists and those of Eastern occultists offer great similarities. All who set out on the discovery of these invisible worlds and make a report of what they saw, give a very similar description, whether they be from here or there; they use different words, but the experience is very similar and the handling of forces is the same.

This knowledge of the occult worlds is based on the existence of subtle bodies and of subtle worlds corresponding to those bodies. They are what the psychological method calls “states of consciousness”, but these states of consciousness really correspond to worlds. The occult procedure consists then in being aware of these various inner states of being or subtle bodies and in becoming sufficiently a master of them so as to be able to go out of them successively, one after another. There is indeed a whole scale of subtleties, increasing or decreasing according to the direction in which you go, and the occult procedure consists in going out of a denser body into a subtler body and so on again, up to the most ethereal regions. You go, by successive exteriorisations, into bodies or worlds more and more subtle. It is somewhat as if every time you passed into another dimension. The fourth dimension of the physicists is nothing but the scientific transcription of an occult knowledge. To give another image, one can say that the physical body is at the centre — it is the most material, the densest and also the smallest — and the inner bodies, more subtle, overflow more and more the central physical body; they pass through it, extending themselves farther and farther, like water evaporating from a porous vase and forming a kind of steam all around. And the greater the subtlety, the more the extension tends to unite with that of the universe: one ends by universalising oneself. And it is

altogether a concrete process which gives an objective experience of invisible worlds and even enables one to act in these worlds.

There are, then, only a very small number of people in the West who know that these gods are not merely subjective and imaginary — more or less wildly imaginary — but that they correspond to a universal truth.

All these regions, all these domains are filled with beings who exist, each in its own domain, and if you are awake and conscious on a particular plane — for instance, if on going out of a more material body you awake on some higher plane, you have the same relation with the things and people of that plane as you had with the things and people of the material world. That is to say, there exists an entirely objective relation that has nothing to do with the idea you may have of these things. Naturally, the resemblance is greater and greater as you approach the physical world, the material world, and there even comes a time when the one region has a direct action upon the other. In any case, in what Sri Aurobindo calls the overmental worlds, you will find a concrete reality absolutely independent of your personal experience; you go back there and again find the same things, with the differences that have occurred during your absence. And you have relations with those beings that are identical with the relations you have with physical beings, with this difference that the relation is more plastic, supple and direct — for example, there is the capacity to change the external form, the visible form, according to the inner state you are in. But you can make an appointment with someone and be at the appointed place and find the same being again, with certain differences that have come about during your absence; it is entirely concrete with results entirely concrete.

One must have at least a little of this experience in order to understand these things. Otherwise, those who are convinced that all this is mere human imagination and mental formation, who believe that these gods have such and such a form because men have thought them to be like that, and that they have certain

Words of the Mother – III

defects and certain qualities because men have thought them to be like that — all those who say that God is made in the image of man and that he exists only in human thought, all these will not understand; to them this will appear absolutely ridiculous, madness. One must have lived a little, touched the subject a little, to know how very concrete the thing is.

Naturally, children know a good deal if they have not been spoilt. There are so many children who return every night to the same place and continue to live the life they have begun there. When these faculties are not spoilt with age, you can keep them with you. At a time when I was especially interested in dreams, I could return exactly to a place and continue a work that I had begun: supervise something, for example, set something in order, a work of organisation or of discovery, of exploration. You go until you reach a certain spot, as you would go in life, then you take a rest, then you return and begin again — you begin the work at the place where you left off and you continue it. And you perceive that there are things which are quite independent of you, in the sense that changes of which you are not at all the author, have taken place automatically during your absence.

But for this, you must *live* these experiences yourself, you must see them yourself, live them with sufficient sincerity and spontaneity in order to see that they are independent of any mental formation. For you can do the opposite also, and deepen the study of the action of mental formation upon events. This is very interesting, but it is another domain. And this study makes you very careful, very prudent, because you become aware of how far you can delude yourself. So you must study both, the dream and the occult reality, in order to see what is the *essential* difference between the two. The one depends upon us; the other exists in itself; entirely independent of the thought that we have of it.

When you have worked in that domain, you recognise in fact that once a subject has been studied and something has been learnt mentally, it gives a special colour to the experience; the

4 November 1958

experience may be quite spontaneous and sincere, but the simple fact that the subject was known and studied lends a particular quality. Whereas if you had learnt nothing about the question, if you knew nothing at all, the transcription would be completely spontaneous and sincere when the experience came; it would be more or less adequate, but it would not be the outcome of a previous mental formation.

Naturally, this occult knowledge or this experience is not very frequent in the world, because in those who do not have a developed inner life, there are veritable gaps between the external consciousness and the inmost consciousness; the linking states of being are missing and they have to be constructed. So when people enter there for the first time, they are bewildered, they have the impression they have fallen into the night, into nothingness, into non-being!

I had a Danish friend, a painter, who was like that. He wanted me to teach him how to go out of the body; he used to have interesting dreams and thought that it would be worth the trouble to go there consciously. So I made him “go out” — but it was a frightful thing! When he was dreaming, a part of his mind still remained conscious, active, and a kind of link existed between this active part and his external being; then he remembered some of his dreams, but it was a very partial phenomenon. And to go out of one’s body means to pass gradually through *all* the states of being, if one does the thing systematically. Well, already in the subtle physical, one is almost de-individualised, and when one goes farther, there remains nothing, for nothing is formed or individualised.

Thus, when people are asked to meditate or told to go within, to enter into themselves, they are in agony — naturally! They have the impression that they are vanishing. And with reason: there is nothing, no consciousness!

These things that appear to us quite natural and evident, are, for people who know nothing, wild imagination. If, for example, you transplant these experiences or this knowledge to

Words of the Mother – III

the West, well, unless you have been frequenting the circles of occultists, they stare at you with open eyes. And when you have turned your back, they hasten to say, “These people are cranks!”

Now to come back to the gods and conclude. It must be said that all those beings who have never had an earthly existence — gods or demons, invisible beings and powers — do not possess what the Divine has put into man: the psychic being. And this psychic being gives to man true love, charity, compassion, a deep kindness, which compensate for all his external defects.

In the gods there is no fault because they live according to their own nature, spontaneously and without constraint: as gods, it is their manner of being. But if you take a higher point of view, if you have a higher vision, a vision of the whole, you see that they lack certain qualities that are exclusively human. By his capacity of love and self-giving, man can have as much power as the gods and even more, when he is not egoistic, when he has surmounted his egoism.

If he fulfils the required condition, man is nearer to the Supreme than the gods are. He can be nearer. He is not so automatically, but he has the power to be so, the potentiality.

If human love manifested itself without mixture, it would be all-powerful. Unfortunately, in human love there is as much love of oneself as of the one loved; it is not a love that makes you forget yourself.