

5 June 1957

Do you have any questions? No?

Sweet Mother, should one ask questions which don't come spontaneously?

What do you mean by a question that doesn't come spontaneously?

For, usually, in class, we often feel that if we don't ask questions you won't tell us anything, so we think and think, and we have to ask questions!

It depends on what you find! If the question is interesting... Because you make an effort to find it, it doesn't mean that it is necessarily bad.

Do you have a question of this kind?

No.

Then....

(Long silence)

In fact, if one reads attentively what Sri Aurobindo has written, all that he has written, one would have the answer to every question. But there are certain moments and certain ways of presenting ideas which have a dynamic effect on the consciousness and help you to make a spiritual progress. The presentation, to be effective, must necessarily be the spontaneous expression of an immediate experience. If things which have already been said are repeated in the same manner, things which belong to

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past experiences, it becomes a sort of teaching, what could be called didactic talk, and it sets off some cells in the brain, but in fact is not very useful.

For me, for what I am trying to do, action in silence is *always* much more important.... The force which is at work is not limited by words, and this gives it an infinitely greater strength, and it expresses itself in each consciousness in accordance with its own particular mode, which makes it infinitely more effective. A certain vibration is given out in silence, with a special purpose, to obtain a definite result, but according to the mental receptivity of each person it is expressed in each individual consciousness exactly in the form which can be the most effective, the most active, the most immediately useful for each individual; while if it is formulated in words, this formula has to be received by each person in its fixity — the fixity of the words given to it — and it loses much of its strength and fullness of action because, first, the words are not always understood as they are said and then they are not always adapted to the understanding of each one.

So, unless a question immediately gives rise to an experience which can be expressed as a new formula, in my opinion it is always better to keep silent. Only when the question is living can it give rise to an experience which will be the occasion of a living teaching. And for a question to be alive, it must answer an inner need for progress, a spontaneous need to progress on some plane or other — on the mental plane is the most usual way, but if by chance it answers an inner aspiration, a problem one is tackling and wants to solve, then the question becomes interesting and living and truly useful, and it can give rise to a vision, a perception on a higher plane, an experience in the consciousness which can make the formula new so that it carries a new power for realisation.

Apart from such cases I always feel that it is much better not to say anything and that a few minutes of meditation are always more useful.

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What I read at the beginning ought to serve to canalise the thought, to direct and focus it on a particular problem or a set of ideas or a new possibility of understanding which comes from the passage read; and in fact it is almost like a subject of meditation suggested for the silence which follows the reading.

To speak for the sake of speaking is not at all interesting — there are schools for that! Not here.

But when you speak, Sweet Mother, it is different!

(Silence)

(Another child) Mother, when you speak we try to understand with the mind, but when you communicate something in silence, on what part of the being should we concentrate?

It is always better, for meditation — you see, we use the word “meditation”, but it does not necessarily mean “moving ideas around in the head”, quite the contrary — it is always better 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, but taking good care not to try to know what is happening while it is happening, for if one wants to understand or even to observe actively, it keeps up a sort of cerebral activity which is unfavourable to the fullness of the receptivity — 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

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one comes out of meditation, some time later — usually not immediately — from within the being something new emerges in the consciousness: a new understanding, a new appreciation of things, a new attitude in life — in short, a new way of being. This may be fugitive, but at that moment, if one observes it, one finds that something has taken one step forward on the path of understanding or transformation. It may be an illumination, an understanding truer or closer to the truth, or a power of transformation which helps you to achieve a psychological progress or a widening of the consciousness or a greater control over your movements, over the activities of the being.

And these results are never immediate. For if one tries to have them at once, one remains in a state of activity which is quite the contrary of true receptivity. One must be as neutral, as immobile, as passive as one can be, with a background of silent aspiration not formulated in words or ideas or even in feelings; something that does this (*gesture like a mounting flame*) in an ardent vibration, but which does not formulate, and above all, does not try to understand.

With a little practice one reaches a state which may be obtained at will, in a few seconds, that is, one doesn't waste any of the meditation time. Naturally, in the beginning, one must slowly quieten the mind, gather up one's consciousness, concentrate; one loses three-quarters of the time in preparing oneself. But when one has practised the thing, in two or three seconds one can get it, and then one benefits from the whole period of receptivity.

Naturally, there are still more advanced and perfected states, but that comes later. But already if one reaches that state, one profits fully by the meditation.

We are going to try.

(*Meditation*)