30 December 1950

This talk is based upon the Mother’s essay entitled “Foresight” (On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, pp. 77–79).

“To foresee destiny! How many have attempted it, how many systems have been elaborated, how many sciences of divination have been created and developed only to perish under the charge of charlatanism or superstition. And why is destiny always so unforeseeable? Since it has been proved that everything is ineluctably determined, how is it that one cannot succeed in knowing this determinism with any certainty?”

Foresight means seeing beforehand; but can you tell me what is going to happen tomorrow? I don’t think you can. Of course you can say, we shall sleep, eat, etc. — general things. But you can’t say whether something unexpected is going to happen. Why? Someone has said, “For this a special eye is needed.” It is possible to foresee without receiving images: there is a mental knowledge without images. Seers are usually able to foresee — not always, but often. I don’t suppose you were thinking of an extra eye in the middle of the forehead like the Cyclops! No, you mean an inner eye belonging to another world. One doesn’t normally see material things with this eye, or if one does, it is from a very special angle. There are people who can see at a distance what is going on in another country or in a place that is far away from them.

Are these things seen by the psychic vision?

No, the psychic vision doesn’t usually deal with material things.

Isn’t it mental vision?

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It could be, but then what you receive is the thoughts of the people in the place you see, because these people are focusing their thoughts on what is going on there.

Usually, “determinism” is taken to mean a logical chain of cause and effect; if you do one thing, a certain result will follow. For instance, if you eat a certain kind of food you will fall ill, if you swallow some poison you will die, and so on. But it often happens that the effects of certain determinisms cancel out the effects of other determinisms.

“Here again the solution is to be found in Yoga. And by yogic discipline one can not only foresee destiny but modify it and change it almost totally. First of all, Yoga teaches us that we are not a single being, a simple entity which necessarily has a single destiny that is simple and logical. Rather we have to acknowledge that the destiny of most men is complex, often to the point of incoherence. Is it not this very complexity which gives us the impression of unexpectedness, of indeterminacy and consequently of unpredictability?”

There are people whose destiny is very complex, giving the impression that the things which happen to them are quite unexpected and unforeseeable, unless one can “see” by some means other than the ordinary.

“To solve the problem one must know that, to begin with, all living creatures, and more especially human beings, are made up of a combination of several entities that come together, interpenetrate, sometimes organizing themselves and completing each other, sometimes opposing and contradicting one another.”

An “entity” is a personality or an individuality. There are many such “personalities” in each one of us. If these personalities agree
and are complementary with one another, they make up a human being, a rich and complex “person”. But that is not what usually happens. These personalities do not agree with one another. For example, one of them might wish to make some progress, to become more and more perfect, to get a deeper knowledge of things, to realise more and more, to proceed towards the perfection of the being, while another one may simply want to have fun and enjoy itself as much as it can; one day it will do this, the next day something else, etc. If the personalities do not agree, this person’s life will be incoherent, and that is not unusual: in fact, these cases are very common.

“Each one of these beings or states of being belongs to a world of its own and carries within it its own destiny, its own determinism. And it is the combination of all these determinisms, which is sometimes very heterogeneous, that results in the destiny of the individual.”

A person may have a great many personalities within him — ten or twenty, for example — and each one has its own destiny. In the physical world, an individuality means a human body; so, in a human body there are many individualities, each one with its own destiny. What happens then? Conflicts, friction, inner disorder created by these individualities which are unable to get on with one another. The strongest one gets the upper hand; it is not only dominant over the others but curbs them to stop them from rebelling. So, in the end, the unlucky ones, the repressed ones, go to sleep. They bide their time, and when that time comes, they suddenly jump up and turn everything upside down. If that happens very often, that person’s life will be a very disorderly one. He will take up one thing today and go on with another tomorrow and so on.

I don’t think it is true to say that a person is “harmonious” if he has no inner complexity. People who have this kind of illusory harmony are usually deeply immersed in material life, so
that the slightest unpleasantness upsets them completely, because they have nothing else. No, a truly harmonious personality implies a conscious arrangement of the inner individualities. This arrangement may be effected spontaneously before birth, but that is rare. The arrangement is achieved later, by means of a discipline, a proper education. But to succeed in this one must consciously take the psychic being as the centre and arrange, harmonise the various individualities around it. True harmony, inner organisation is the result of such a persistent effort.

“But as the organisation and relationship of all these entities can be altered by personal discipline and effort of will, as these various determinisms act on each other in different ways according to the concentration of the consciousness, their combination is nearly always variable and therefore unforeseeable.”

In mathematics, one sometimes takes a great many numbers to try and find all the possible combinations of them. At once one finds that it becomes impossible, for there are many numbers that are beyond expression. Similarly, if you have a great many destinies that come together in you and occur in various combinations, depending on the part of the being that predominates at the time, if you try to foresee what is going to happen, it is extremely difficult. It is the same thing with states of consciousness. A destiny represents an individual; they all react on one another and the number of things that may happen is frightening! So how will you foresee that? The “laws” of the universe always work independently, and that is the “secret” of the composition of the universe.

“The art of living would then consist in maintaining oneself in one’s highest state of consciousness and thus allowing one’s highest destiny to dominate the others in life and action. So one can say without any fear of
making a mistake: be always at the summit of your consciousness and the best will always happen to you. But that is a maximum which is not easy to reach. If this ideal condition turns out to be unrealisable, the individual can at least, when he is confronted by a danger or a critical situation, call upon his highest destiny by aspiration, prayer and trustful surrender to the divine will. Then, in proportion to the sincerity of his call, this higher destiny intervenes favourably in the normal destiny of the being and changes the course of events insofar as they concern him personally. It is events of this kind that appear to the outer consciousness as miracles, as divine interventions.”

I shall give you an example of how consciousness, a higher consciousness, intervenes.

A man steps out of his house to go to his office. He goes a certain way. Suddenly he remembers that he has left something behind. He steps back to go and get it and just then, in the place where he would have been if he had stepped forward, a lead pipe falls. Something in this man’s consciousness, by telling him to go back, has saved his life. That is what we mean when we say that an intervention of consciousness can change destiny. In this man there were two destinies — among others, probably, — one which wanted him to die and one which wanted him to live.

Can’t this be called “chance”?

No, because chance is something quite incoherent, something that occurs for no reason, and if you believe that life is something incoherent, you still have much to learn. On the contrary, it is quite coherent, each little thing is exactly determined and if something makes you feel that it is “chance” it is because you know nothing about the determinisms. They are completely beyond you, because there are innumerable interweaving laws and you know nothing about them. So if something happens
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according to these laws you say it is a “miracle” or “chance”!

Pavitra has said: “In mathematics it has been shown that if
the number of intervening factors is very high, and if they act
independently, the result appears to be what is called ‘chance’.”

I have just explained that this is only an “appearance”.

People who make an effort to progress and grow in con-
sciousness, realise that what at one time in their lives they took
to be a disaster or a calamity may appear fifteen years later like
a blessing, an effect of Grace, some highest good. From a higher
standpoint, it is quite obvious that if you bring your highest
consciousness down into your ordinary life, it will bring the
greatest good into your life.

People who have made some progress always have this ex-
perience. They see clearly that the so-called “disaster” was in
fact the starting-point of their ascension, an ascension which
could not have taken place without it. If someone has the inner
vision and is able to enter his higher consciousness at will, he
will see that it is the greatest good that happens to him when he
is in contact with his highest consciousness.

But, to be able to understand this, there are two conditions.
You must make an effort for progress and be utterly sincere, for
if you are not sincere, you will never have any insight into your
own life. You must be able to look at yourself and say, “How
tiny I am.”

If something is ineluctably determined, how can it be
changed?

I shall give you a simple example — but it may occur in any state
of consciousness.

A stone falls. If it fulfils its destiny, it will fall to the ground,
won’t it? But you are there and you have a vital or a mental
will — one or the other — and you catch the stone in your hand.
You have changed the destiny of the stone. A leaf falls — onto
the ground if it follows its normal destiny. You have a vital will,
you take the leaf in your hand. You have changed the destiny of the leaf. This happens millions of times in the universe and nobody notices it because it is so common.

But imagine that you have a very high range of consciousness. If into the determinism down here you can bring, by aspiration, an urge, a prayer, a higher consciousness, if you can get hold of your higher consciousness, so to say, and bring it into the material destiny, everything would immediately be changed. But because you do not see or do not understand what is happening, you say that it is chance or a miracle.

Not every destiny is active in a material destiny, and if you want to change this material destiny, you must be able to bring down another one from above. In this way, something new will enter into it — these “descents” of the higher consciousness take place all the time, but because we do not understand them, this “something new” that comes is turned by ordinary people into a “miracle”.

This is precisely what we want to do by bringing down into the physical and material world the supramental force and consciousness. At first it works by diffusion, not directly. Its working is more or less veiled, more veiled and distorted as it descends into the physical world, until it becomes almost imperceptible. If it could work here directly, without this distortion and this veiling, it would change everything in an absolutely unexpected way.

I hope you will get this concrete example one day!