The other day I said that most of the time people do not have their psychic being within them. I would like to explain this in greater detail.... You must remember that the inner beings are not in the third dimension. If you open up your body you will find only the viscera of the body which are in the third dimension. The inner beings are in another dimension, and when I say that some men do not have their psychic being within them, I do not mean that it is not at the centre of their being, but that their outer consciousness is so small, so limited, so obscure that it is not able to keep a contact, not only conscious but intimate, with the psychic being which extends beyond it in every way; it is so much higher and deeper than the other outer consciousness that there is no relation either of quality or of nature between them. Religions say that you have a divine spark in you — it is well they call it a “spark”, for it is so small indeed that it can be placed anywhere in the body without difficulty. But this does not mean that it is in the body; it is within the consciousness in another dimension, and there are beings who have a contact with it, others who haven’t. But if you come to the divine Presence in the atom, the image is easier to understand, for there you touch so infinitesimal a domain that you are on the border-line where you can no longer distinguish between two, three, four or five dimensions. If you study modern physics you will understand what I mean. The movements constituting an atom are, in the matter of size, so imperceptible that they cannot be understood with our three-dimensional understanding, the more so as they follow laws which elude completely this three-dimensional idea. So if you take refuge there, you may say that the divine spark is at the centre of each atom and you won’t be far from the truth; but I was not speaking of the divine spark, I was speaking of the being,
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the psychic consciousness, which is another thing. The psychic being is an entity which has a form; it is organised around a central consciousness and, having a form it has a dimension, but a dimension of another kind than the third dimension of the outer consciousness.

*It is often said that children enter into possession of their psychic being when they are about seven. What does this mean exactly?*

This is not correct. There are people whose psychic being watches over their formation before their birth, even before they are in the womb of their mother. There are children whose psychic being comes into contact with them at the very moment they utter their first cry. There are also people whose psychic being comes a few hours after their birth, or some days after, or some weeks, some months, some years after or... never!

*You told me once that one must not ask a child to make a mental effort before the age of seven.*

That is quite different. There it is a question only of the formation of the physical brain which develops slowly, little by little. If you ask of a brain in formation an effort beyond its capacity, you tire it, you overwork it or you make it ill.

*You say that the psychic being is the same thing as the divine spark...*

No, I never said that — it would be foolish! The psychic being is organised *around* the divine spark. The divine spark is one, universal, the same everywhere and in everything, one and infinite, of the same kind in all. You cannot say that it is a being — it is *the being*, if you like, but not *a* being. Naturally, if you go back to the origin, you may say that there is only one soul, for the
origin of all souls is the same, as the origin of the whole universe is the same, as the origin of the entire creation is the same. But the psychic being is an individual, personal being with its own experience, its own development, its own growth, its own organisation; only, this organisation is the product of the action of a central divine spark.

But the day an external being (physical, mental, vital) enters into direct and constant contact with the psychic being, one may say in the same way that the physical being of this person is organised by the central divine consciousness. The moment you put yourself in contact with it, submit yourself to it, you are organised by it, by the central divine consciousness; one may say that the body is organised by it, but it is a body, not a soul. The fact of being organised by this divine spark does not make it a soul.

**Is there a psychic being in the atom?**

No, it is not yet there. It can be said that there is a possibility of psychic consciousness in Matter — the diffusion of the divine Consciousness had only one object: to make possible an organisation which would be under the direct influence of the Divine. That is why it passes over all the worlds of disorder. It may hence be said that the Origin of the soul is also in the atom, in all the elements constituting the atom, but it is only the Origin.... I must tell you that when it is fully formed, the psychic being has a distinct form which corresponds to our physical form. It is not altogether similar, but it has a definite form. Every psychic being is different from another — they are not all cut out, modelled

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1 At the time of the publication of this talk, Mother added the following note for the sake of precision: “Some parts of the vital are worlds of disorder and the beings inhabiting the vital have no psychic being. The psychic being exists only upon earth, in the physical world. That is why I said in brief that the divine spark, which organises the psychic, passed over the worlds of disorder and manifested itself directly in the physical world to create there this possibility of organisation around the divine spark.”

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to one pattern. They are different, each has an individuality, a personality.

Mother reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

“Do many remember that they have passed over [to the other side] and are back again?”

Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)

I was seriously ill, unconscious for two hours, and I had the impression that I had gone over to the other side, that I was in a different world. When I came back to myself, I had the impression of having made a long journey in a world quite different from the one where I normally lived.

It was a partial exteriorisation; it was not a total exteriorisation which indeed causes death. If one goes out entirely, that is, if there is a complete separation from the body and one is really dead, and then one comes back, that causes such an intense suffering that one cannot forget it. It is said that babies cry when they come into the world because the first contact with air makes them cry, but I think it is something else. The re-entry into the body causes a kind of friction, for what goes out has to be something very material if it is to bring about death, something even more material than the subtle physical, and this friction is extremely painful. Otherwise one may be externally unconscious, but one is not dead for all that. It is only when something extremely material goes out of the body and all ties are broken that there is truly “death”. And that is why (I believe we are beginning to discover it) people do not die till six or seven days after their death. That is, they are not “dead” as long as the body remains intact, but only when a part of the body begins to decompose. Hence during this period, someone who has the necessary knowledge, power and capacity may “raise”
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a person in such a state. I believe this explains most of the cases of “miraculous” resurrection.

* A person was dead. The doctors massaged the heart and after some time the person revived.*

Yes, in that sphere they are beginning to work “miracles”!

“When you reach a certain state of consciousness, you remember [passing over to the other side]. It is not so difficult to touch this state partially for a short time; in deep meditation, in a dream or a vision one may have the feeling or the impression that he has lived this life before, had this realisation, known these truths. But this is not a full realisation; to come to that, one must have attained to a permanent consciousness within us which is everlasting and holds together all our existences in past or present or future time.”

*Questions and Answers 1929 (28 April)*

You must always distrust people who go rambling in some kind of mental or vital domain, and then tell you stories imagining that they remember their past lives. You know the classical example of that well-known lady who narrated her lives from the time she had been a monkey! I may assure you that it is pure imagination, for it is impossible to remember like that.

This is what happens. Let us take a divine spark which, through attraction, through affinity and selection, gathers around it a beginning of psychic consciousness (this work is already very perceptible in animals — don’t think you are exceptional beings, that you alone have a psychic being and the rest of creation hasn’t. It begins in the mineral, it is a little more developed in the plant, and in the animal there is a first glimmer of the psychic presence). Then there comes a moment when this psychic being is sufficiently developed to have an independent
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consciousness and a personal will. And then after innumerable
lives more or less individualised, it becomes conscious of itself,
of its movements and of the environment it has chosen for its
growth. Arriving at a certain state of perception, it decides —
generally at the last minute of the life it has just finished upon
earth — the conditions in which its next life will be passed. Here
I must tell you a very important thing: the psychic being can
progress and form itself only in the physical life and upon earth.
As soon as it leaves a body, it enters into a rest which lasts for a
more or less long time according to its own choice and its degree
of development — a rest for assimilation, for a passive progress
so to say, a rest for passive growth which will allow this same
psychic being to pass on to new experiences and make a more
active progress. But after having finished one life (which usually
ends only when it has done what it wanted to do), it will have
chosen the environment where it will be born, the approximate
place where it will be born, the conditions and the kind of life
in which it will be born, and a very precise programme of the
experiences through which it will have to pass to be able to
make the progress it wants to make.

I am going to give you quite a concrete example. Let us
take a psychic being that has decided, for some reason or other,
to enter the body of a being destined to become king, because
there is a whole series of experiences it can have only under
those conditions. After having passed through these experiences
of a king, it finds that there is a whole domain in which it
cannot make a progress due to these very conditions of life
where it is. So when it has finished its term upon earth and
decides to go away, it decides that in its next life it will take
birth in an ordinary environment and in ordinary conditions,
neither high nor low, but such that the body which it will
take up will be free to do what it likes. For I do not tell you
anything new when I say that the life of a king is the life of
a slave; a king is obliged to submit to a whole protocol and
to all kinds of ceremonies to keep his prestige (it is perhaps
very pleasant for vain people, but for a psychic being it is not pleasant, for this deprives it of the possibility of a large number of experiences). So having taken this decision, it carries in itself all the memories which a royal life can give it and it takes rest for the period it considers necessary. (Here, I must say that I am speaking of a psychic being exclusively occupied with itself, not one consecrated to a work, because in that case it is the work which decides the future lives and their conditions; I am speaking of a psychic being at work completing its development.) Hence it decides that at a certain moment it will take a body. Having already had a number of experiences, it knows that in a certain country, a certain part of the consciousness has developed; in another, another part, and so on; so it chooses the place which offers it easy possibilities of development: the country, the conditions of living, the approximate nature of the parents, and also the condition of the body itself, its physical structure and the qualities it needs for its experiences. It takes rest, then at the required moment, wakes up and projects its consciousness upon earth centralising it in the chosen domain and the chosen conditions — or almost so; there is a small margin you know, for in the psychic consciousness one is too far away from the material physical consciousness to be able to see with a clear vision; it is an approximation. It does not make a mistake about the country or the environment and it sees quite clearly the inner vibrations of the people chosen, but there may happen to be a slight indecision. But if, just at this moment, there is a couple upon earth or rather a woman who has a psychic aspiration herself and, for some reason or other, without knowing why or how, would like to have an exceptional child, answering certain exceptional conditions; if at this moment there is this aspiration upon earth, it creates a vibration, a psychic light which the psychic being sees immediately and, without hesitation it rushes towards it. Then, from that moment (which is the moment of conception), it watches over the formation of the child, so that this formation may be
as favourable as possible to the plan it has; consequently its influence is there over the child even before it appears in the physical world.

If all goes well, if there is no accident (accidents can always happen), if all goes well at the moment the child is about to be born, the psychic force (perhaps not in its totality, but a part of the psychic consciousness) rushes into the being and from its very first cry gives it a push towards the experiences it wants the child to acquire. The result is that even if the parents are not conscious, even if the child in its external consciousness is not quite conscious (a little child does not have the necessary brain for that, it forms slowly, little by little), in spite of that, it will be possible for the psychic influence to direct all the events, all the circumstances of the life of this child till the moment it becomes capable of coming into conscious contact with its psychic being (physically it is generally between the age of four and seven, sometimes sooner, sometimes almost immediately, but in such a case we deal with children who are not “children”, who have “supernatural” qualities, as they say — they are not “supernatural”, but simply the expression of the presence of the psychic being). But there are people who have not had the chance or rather the good fortune if one may call it that, of meeting someone, physically, who could instruct them. And yet they have the feeling that every step of their existence, every circumstance of their life is arranged by someone conscious, so that they may make the maximum progress. When they need a certain circumstance, it comes; when they need to meet certain people, they come; when they need to read certain books, they find them within their reach. Everything is arranged like that, as if someone was watching over them so that their life may have the maximum possibilities of development. These people may very well say: “But what is a psychic being?”, for no one has ever used these words in speaking to them or they have not found anybody who could explain to them all that; but for them often just one meeting is sufficient, just one look, in order
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to wake up; one word suffices to make them remember: “But I knew all that!”

This is exactly what happens to a psychic being which has reached the last stage of its development. After that, it will no longer be bound by the necessity of coming upon earth, it will have completed its development and will be able to choose freely either to consecrate itself to the divine Work or go elsewhere, that is, in the higher worlds. But generally, having come to this stage, it remembers all that has happened to it and understands the great necessity of coming to the help of those who are yet struggling in the midst of difficulties. These psychic beings give their whole existence to the divine Work — this is not absolute, inevitable, they choose freely, but ninety times out of a hundred this is what they do.

But in ordinary lives — and by that I mean the life of a certain elite of sufficiently well-developed people — the contact between the external being and the psychic is quite intermittent; it is the result of certain experiences or certain inner needs. At that moment the psychic being is “in front”, as Sri Aurobindo says, that is, it comes to the surface of the consciousness, it is in direct contact with material circumstances, with forms and words and sounds, etc., for a very short time; so it records all that like a photograph or a cinema, but it is just a minute, a few moments in a lifetime. These moments may repeat themselves several times, but they do not last; and it is this the psychic being remembers; and when you have real psychic memories, sincere, spontaneous, not fabricated by the mind or the vital, that is, purely psychic, exact, your memory is intermittent. And it is often very difficult to locate your past lives, to say: “I was this or that.” It is only when the psychic experience has taken place at a very important moment of your life and a whole set of circumstances gives you, so to say, the key to the story (dresses, spoken words, customs or an environment giving you the key) that you can say: “Oh! That life, I have lived it.” But if someone comes and narrates to you all his previous lives from the monkey
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onwards, with a mass of details, you may be sure that he is a humbug!

_You spoke of the “chance” of a psychic being meeting what will be its physical being._

No, I said “accident”; an accident is not a chance.

In life there is always a conflict between opposing forces, and the result of this conflict is not always foreseen except when one is conscious in the highest consciousness. One cannot foresee the result of a conflict with a consciousness which does not go beyond the human consciousness, so one calls it an “accident”. It is not chance, it is not even an accident without reason, but an accident caused by reasons which one is not in a condition to foresee.

_In a dream, I thought I saw pictures of a former ascetic life._

There is such a strong suggestion here [in India] that to live the spiritual life, one must take up the life of a sannyasin, that this perhaps is the cause of your pictures. In any case, if it was really a previous life, it was not the last one. You have surely had intermediary lives, for rarely is a being born in the same country several times consecutively — it would not be very profitable. If it had been the ascetic life of the time of the first Christians, for instance, you would have noticed certain details: the different colour of your skin, a dress, etc., whereas you probably saw the usual pictures of Indian life.... Everything is possible, of course. The universe is constituted in such a way that all the possibilities can be realised there: but, as I said, it is rare for one to be born several times in the same country unless it be to accomplish a special work, with a special end in view; and then it is very rare for one not to know it, for this means that the psychic being is fully formed and has itself chosen to come back to the same
country to do a special work or to continue what it had already begun.

Many have had a previous ascetic life, for the collective suggestion is very strong here. It is very rare for a person not to think that to perfect oneself and to live a spiritual life one must leave the world.

There are also symbolic and premonitory dreams, but very rarely do dreams consist of true memories of past lives, because for that one must dream in one’s psychic consciousness and there are not many who are capable of this. One dreams in the mental or vital consciousness but rarely does one dream in the psychic consciousness. That can happen, but it is rare.

At times, there are dreams which one takes for memories, but they are only symbols: what one sees comes from a mental formation which is objectified on an inner screen and which enacts a scene, so to say, in which you are an actor.

*Here in India frequently children are born in a village and they give, while very young, precise information about the village where they have lived before, about their parents, etc. Is this true?*

Yes, but generally these are children who have died as children or very young and whose previous life had not fully run out. This can happen.

*In what does a psychic being’s progress consist?*

Individualisation, the capacity to take up all experiences and organise them around the divine centre.

The aim of the psychic being is to form an individual being, individualised, “personalised” around the divine centre. Normally, all the experiences of the external life (unless one does yoga and becomes conscious) pass without organising the inner
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being, while the psychic being organises these experiences serially. It wants to realise a particular attitude towards the Divine. Hence it looks for all favourable experiences in order to have the complete series of opportunities, so to say, which will allow it to realise this attitude towards the Divine. Take someone, for example, who wants to have the experience of nobility — a nobility which makes it impossible for you to act like an ordinary person, which infuses into you a bravery, a courage which may almost be taken for rashness because the attitude, the experience demands that you face danger without showing the least fear. I was telling you a while ago that I would explain to you what one could acquire by entering into the body of a king. A king is an ordinary man, isn’t he, like all others; he does not have a special consciousness, but through the necessities of his life, because he is a kind of symbol to his people, there are things he is obliged to do which he could never do if he were an ordinary man. I know this by experience, but I saw this also while looking at photographs which represented a king in actual circumstances: something had happened, which might have been an attempt on his life, but was averted. The photographs showed the king inspecting a regiment; all of a sudden someone had rushed forward, perhaps with a bad intention, perhaps not, for nothing had happened; in any case, the king had remained completely impassive, absolutely calm, the same smile on his lips, without moving the least from the place where he was; and he was quite within sight, an easy target for one who wanted to rush forward and hurt him. For all I know, this king was not a hero, but because he was a king, he could not take to flight! That would have been ignoble. So he remained calm, without stirring, without showing any outward fear. This is an example of what one can learn in the life of a king.

There is also a true story about Queen Elizabeth. She had come to the last days of her life and was extremely ill. But there was trouble in the country and, about questions of taxation, a group of people (merchants, I believe) had formed a delegation
to present a petition to her in the name of a party of the people. She lay very ill in her room, so ill that she could hardly stand. But she got up and dressed to receive them. The lady who was attending upon her cried out, “But it is impossible, you will die of this!” The queen answered quietly, “We shall die afterwards”.... This is an example from a whole series of experiences one can have in the life of a king, and it is this which justifies the choice of the psychic being when it takes up this kind of life.

It is memories of this kind which prove the authenticity of the experience; for what generally happens when people tell you about their past lives is this: in these lives there is always a progress, naturally; so they become more and more splendid people in more and more marvellous circumstances! It is wrong, things never happen like that. The psychic being follows a certain line of existence which develops certain qualities, certain powers, etc., but the psychic being always sees what it lacks and it can choose the opposite line in a future life, a negation, so to say, of this experience in order to have complementary experiences.