23 March 1955

This talk is based upon Bases of Yoga, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Here Sri Aurobindo says: “As for the things in our nature that are thrown away from us by rejection but come back, it depends on where you throw them. Very often there is a sort of procedure about it.” What is this procedure, Sweet Mother?

It is what he describes later. He explains afterwards that what is in the mind is thrown out into the vital, what is in the higher vital is thrown out into the lower vital, and what is in the lower vital is thrown out into the physical, and what is in the physical is thrown out into the subconscious. He says it — all this.

But I thought there was a procedure for rejection?

No, this is the procedure, to reject always into a lower part of the being, and finally the last refuge, he says, is in the inconscient; and in order to get rid of something, to tell the truth, you must go right into the inconscient; if one pursues it there, it cannot go lower down. So there is only one solution for it, to transform itself.

Can’t one transform it without going further?

One can. But it is quite difficult. But one can do it, because rejecting is not the best method. You see, to do this (gesture) is the easiest way; something troubles you, you do this (gesture), as you do for flies; but it is a little as with the flies, it takes a round and then comes back.
But what is necessary is what I explained to you last time in detail: to find out why it comes, why it is there, and change it — the cause itself. Then it no longer returns, there is no affinity any longer.

Things come to you because they have an affinity. There is something to which they can cling, a kind of sympathy somewhere, which may not be very conscious or very open, but there is one. And if it were not there, the thing would no longer come. There is a whole set of things which never come to bother you any longer, once you have changed the essential points in your nature.

I wanted to ask, I... I ask you a question: What is the difference between the subliminal and the superconscient? Nolini is going to tell us this.

(Nolini) *The subliminal is what is behind...*

Inside, and the superconscient is above. Good, that’s what I thought. But I wasn’t sure.

Now then! No questions this evening?

*Sweet Mother, when we learn something by heart to recite it, what is the true way of learning, so that it remains?*

The true way so that it remains is to understand, it is not to learn by heart. You learn something by heart, it is mechanical, you see; but after some time it will be effaced, unless you make use of it constantly. For example, you are made to learn by heart the multiplication tables; if you constantly use them, you will remember them, but if by chance for years you remain without using them, you will forget them completely. But if you understand the principle, you will be able to remember them. You see, the principle of multiplication, if you understand it with a mathematical sense, you will no longer need to learn
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if you understand the thing, if you have the sense of the principle which is behind, you can remember it indefinitely, for hundreds of years if you live for hundreds of years; whereas something you have learnt by heart... after some time the brain-cells multiply, are replaced, and some things are wiped out. You are still too small for experiences of this kind, but later one realises that in one’s life there are things which remain like landmarks, there are others which are totally effaced to the extent that one doesn’t remember them at all, they are gone. But there are things like that, truly like milestones, like landmarks in life. Well, these things were conscious experiences, that is, they were understood; so the experience remains indefinitely, and with just a tiny movement of the consciousness you can bring it forward. But something that is learnt mechanically — unless, I tell you, you make use of it daily, it is effaced.

_Sweet Mother, things which come “from the general Nature” means...?_

What does it mean?

_I shall ask later!_

There are movements of certain vibrations which are vibrations of the species, you see, movements peculiar to the species to which you belong — there is the human species as there are all kinds. Now, some of these movements are not personal movements at all, they are movements of the species.

The human species has certain ways of being which are particular to it, which we reproduce almost automatically, as for example, walking upright, like this (gesture), whereas a cat goes on four feet, you see. This instinct of standing on one’s two hind feet, upright, is peculiar to man, it is a movement that
belongs to the species; to sit as we do with the head up, you see, to lie down as we do on the back...

You have only to watch animals: they lie down curled up, don't they? Almost all. It is with man that this way of lying on one's back, stretched out, begins, I think; I don't at all think that monkeys sleep like that, I think they sleep doubled up, that it is man who has started habits of this kind. And this reminds me...

I had a cat — in those days I used to sleep on the floor — which always came and slipped under the mosquito-net and slept beside me. Well, this cat slept quite straight, it did not sleep as cats do; it put its head here and then lay down like this (gesture), alongside my legs with its two forepaws like this, and its two little hind legs quite straight. And there was something very, very curious about it which I saw one night, like that. I used to ask myself why it was like this, and one night I saw a little Russian woman of the people with a fur bonnet and three little children, and this woman had a kind of adoration for her children and always wanted to look for a shelter for them; I don't know, I don't know the story, but I saw that she had her three little children, very small ones, with her... one like this, one like that, one like that (Mother shows the difference in height), and she was dragging them along with her and looking for a corner to put them in safety. Something must have happened to her, she must have died suddenly with a kind of very animal maternal instinct of a certain kind, but all full of fear — fear, anguish and worry — and this something must have come from there and in some way or other had reincarnated. It was a movement — it was not a person, you know, it was a movement which belonged to this person and must have come up in the cat. It was there for some reason or other, you see, I don't know how it happened, I know nothing about it, but this cat was completely human in its ways. And very soon afterwards it had three kittens, like that; and it was extraordinary, it didn't want to leave them, it refused to leave them, it was entirely... it did not eat, did not go
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to satisfy its needs, it was always with its young. When one day it had an idea — nobody had said anything, of course — it took one kitten, as they take them, by the skin of the neck, and came and put it between my feet; I did not stir; it returned, took the second, put it there; it took the third, it put it there, and when all three were there, it looked at me, mewed and was gone. And this was the first time it went out after having had them; it went to the garden, went to satisfy its needs and to eat, because it was at peace, they were there between my feet. And when it had its young, it wanted to carry them on its back like a woman. And when it slept beside me, it slept on the back. It was never like a cat.

Well, these things are habits of the species, movements of the species. There are many others of the kind, you see, but this is an example.

*These animals which are extraordinary like this one, after death do they come back in a human body?*

Ah!

There was a cat... what its name was I don’t know; and I had many cats, you know, so I don’t remember now; there was one called Kiki, it was the first son of this cat, and then there was another, its second son (that is to say, born another time) which was called Brownie.

This one was admirable and it died of the cat disease — as there is a disease of the dogs, there is a disease of the kittens — I don’t know how it caught the thing, but it was wonderful during its illness and I was taking care of it as of a child. And it always expressed a kind of aspiration. There was a time before it fell ill... we used to have in those days meditation in a room of the Library House, in the room there — Sri Aurobindo’s own room — and we used to sit on the floor. And there was an armchair in a corner, and when we gathered for the meditation this cat came every time and settled in the armchair and literally it entered
into a trance, it had movements of trance; it did not sleep, it was not asleep, it was truly in a trance; it gave signs of that and had astonishing movements, as when animals dream; and it didn’t want to come out from it, it refused to come out, it remained in it for hours. But it never came in until we were beginning the meditation. It settled there and remained there throughout the meditation. We indeed had finished but it remained, and it was only when I went to take it, called it in a particular way, brought it back into its body, that it consented to go away; otherwise no matter who came and called it, it did not move. Well, this cat always had a great aspiration, a kind of aspiration to become a human being; and in fact, when it left its body it entered a human body. Only it was a very tiny part of the consciousness, you see, of the human being; it was like the opposite movement from that of the woman with the other cat. But this one was a cat which leaped over many births, so to say, many psychic stages to enter into contact with a human body. It was a simple enough human body, but still, all the same...

There is a difference in the development of a cat and of a human being...

It happens... I think these are exceptional cases, but still it happens.

*In these cases is the psychic conscious?*

The aspiration is conscious, yes, conscious. The aspiration was very conscious in it, very conscious. It is not a formed psychic as when the psychic becomes a completely independent being, it is not that; but it is an aspiration, it is an ardent aspiration for progress — as we, you know, we have the aspiration to become supramental beings instead of remaining human beings, well, it was something absolutely similar: it was a cat doing yoga — exactly — to become a man.

It was perhaps because its mother had in it a movement, a
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formation, an emanation of consciousness which had belonged to a human being; it is probably that which had left a kind of nostalgia for the human life which gave it this intensity of aspiration. But truly it did yoga for that.