21 July 1954

This talk is based upon Chapter 3 of The Mother by Sri Aurobindo.

Which of you did not ask questions last time?... The first one!

*What is the difference between “the divine, spiritual and supramental Truth?”*

If I could only hear what you are saying, it would be easier!

(*The child repeats the same question more distinctly.*)

The divine truth...

“... spiritual and supramental.”

I don’t think there is much difference!

*Sweet Mother, what does a “candid” faith mean?*

Candid? It is simple, sincere and does not doubt. We speak mostly of the candour of a child, who has a simple faith without any doubts.

*Sweet Mother, do we push the divine Grace away from us every time we make a mistake?*

Eh? You push it away every time you make a mistake?

Well, there are two different kinds of mistakes. There is the fault committed through ignorance. That remains a fault, and it puts a veil between the Grace and you, but it is a fault made
without knowing that one is making a mistake. But as soon as one knows that it is a mistake, one must absolutely refrain from making it, because each time one makes it, it is true that one builds a wall between oneself and the divine Grace.

There is a very big difference between the mistake made through ignorance which one will not make again as soon as one knows it is a mistake, and the mistake made knowing that it is a mistake. And this, indeed, is called obstinacy! And this is more serious, it is even very serious! It veils the consciousness very much, veils it so much that after some time one no longer knows at all that one is making mistakes. One makes them thinking that one doesn’t. One gives so many excuses and justifications for everything one does, that one ends up by believing that one is no longer making any mistakes at all. Then, here, it becomes very serious, because one is incorrigible!

*What is the difference between receptivity and opening?*

We have already spoken about this once. I have already answered. And I have told you I won’t repeat twice the same thing, because I want you to get into the habit of remembering what I have said.

*Mother, what does “an egoistic faith... tainted by ambition” mean?*

Yes, for instance, if one wants to become somebody very important, to have a high position or attract the admiration of people around him, to become a great sadhak, a great sannyasi, a great yogi, etc., somebody quite important, that is called having a faith full of ambition. You have the faith that this may happen, you have faith in the Divine, but it is for your own small personal vainglory; and this is no longer something pure, sincere and true. It is something that’s entirely for personal profit. Naturally, there is no question in this of any self-giving; it is a hoarding of forces
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as much as it is possible for you to hoard them, that is to say, the very opposite of the true movement. This happens much oftener than one would think.... This movement of ambition is often hidden right in the depths of the being and it pushes you, like this, from behind.... It whips you so that you get on. It is a kind of veiled pride.

Mother, why do these people receive the force, since the Divine knows that they are not sincere?

Listen, my child, the Divine never goes by human notions in His ways of acting. You must get that well into your head, once and for all. He probably does things without what we call reasons. But anyway, if He has reasons they are not the same as human reasons, and certainly He does not have the sense of justice as it is understood by men.

For example, you imagine very easily that a man who is craving for wealth and tries to deceive people in order to get money... According to your idea of justice, this man ought to be deprived of all his wealth and reduced to poverty. We find that usually just the opposite happens. But that, of course, is only a matter of appearances. Behind the appearances, there is something else.... He exchanges this for other possibilities. He may have money, but he no longer has a conscience. And, in fact, what almost always happens is that when he has the money he desired, he is not happy.... And the more he has, usually the less happy he is! He is tormented, you see, by the wealth he has gained.

You must not judge things from an outer success or a semblance of defeat. We may say — and generally this is what almost always happens — we could say that the Divine gives what one desires, and of all lessons this is the best! For, if your desire is inconscient, obscure, egoistic, you increase the unconsciousness, the darkness and egoism within yourself; that is to say, this takes you farther and farther away from the truth, from consciousness.
and happiness. It takes you far away from the Divine. And for the Divine, naturally, only one thing is true — the divine Consciousness, the divine Union. And each time you put material things in front, you become more and more materialistic and go farther and farther away from full success.

But for the Truth that other success is a terrible defeat.... You have exchanged truth for falsehood!

To judge from appearances and apparent success is precisely an act of complete ignorance. Even for the most hardened man, for whom everything has apparently been successful, even for him there is always a counterpart. And this kind of hardening of the being which is produced, this veil which is formed, a thicker and thicker veil, between the outer consciousness and the inner truth, becomes, one day or another, altogether intolerable. It is usually paid for very dearly — outer success.

(Mother’s voice becomes extremely deep.) One must be very great, very pure, have a very high and very disinterested spiritual consciousness in order to be successful without being affected by it. Nothing is more difficult than being successful. This, indeed, is the true test of life!

When you do not succeed, quite naturally you turn back on yourself and within yourself, and you seek within yourself the consolation for your outer failure. And to those who have a flame within them — if the Divine really wants to help them, if they are mature enough to be helped, if they are ready to follow the path — blows will come one after another, because this helps! It is the most powerful, the most direct, most effective help. If you succeed, be on your guard, ask yourself: “At what price, what cost have I bought success? I hope it is not a step towards...”

There are those who have gone beyond this, those who are conscious of their soul, those who have given themselves entirely, those who — as I said — are absolutely pure, disinterested, and can succeed without its affecting and touching them; here, then, it is different. But one must be very high to be able to bear
success. And after all, it is perhaps the last test which the Divine gives to anyone: “Now that you are noble, you are disinterested, you have no egoism, you belong only to me, I am going to make you triumph. We are going to see if you will hold out.”

In what way does the divine Shakti act against the Asuras?

I don’t hear a thing!... Acts against the Asuras? Why do you want to know that?

It is interesting! (Laughter)

Perhaps to them also She gives what they want to have.... (Silence) And usually this hastens their end. There are Asuras and Asuras... that is to say... no, the Asuras are Asuras, but there are all those who have come out of them, and who are beings of an inferior kind.

An Asura is generally a conscious being and he knows he has an end. He knows that the attitude he has taken up in the universe is bound to destroy him after a certain time. Naturally, the time of an Asura is extremely long if we compare it with the lifetime of man. But still, he knows there is an end, because he has cut himself off from Eternity. And so he tries to realise his plan as totally as he can until the day of his complete defeat. And it is possible that if he is allowed to do it, the defeat will come sooner. It is perhaps for this reason that at the time great things are about to be accomplished — it is at this time that the adverse forces are most active, most violently active, and apparently the most fully successful. They seem to have a clear field: it is perhaps in order that things may be more rapidly finished.

(Long silence)

Is that all?
Sweet Mother, what does “mental arrogance” mean?

My children, speak distinctly! You don’t need to shout loudly... You must articulate clearly!

(The child repeats the same sentence distinctly.)

Mental arrogance? That means... what all of you have! (Laughter)

I don’t know a human being who does not have mental arrogance. There are those who have a little, there are those who have much, there are those who are entirely made up of it.... The mind, by its very nature, is something essentially arrogant. It fancies that it can know, it imagines that it can judge, and it spends its time passing judgments on everything — within you, on yourself, on others, on all things!

Recently, a very amusing incident happened. Someone wrote and began to express a doubt about something said by Sri Aurobindo. But then, afterwards, he added, “But we should not forget that he who wrote this is at least as intelligent as we!” (Mother laughs.) When people spend their time judging things, if they tell themselves, “But perhaps the other person is at least as intelligent as I am!”, they would be less...

But you have only to observe yourselves... you can observe yourself, catch yourself at least a hundred times a day, with a mind which decides everything, knows everything, judges everything, knows very well what is good, what bad, what is true, what false, what is right.... And also how one should act, what this person should have done, how to resolve that problem.... All men know, you see.... If they were at the head of governments, for instance, they would know very well how to manage everything! But people don’t listen to them... that’s all!

You have only to look at yourself, you will see, you will catch yourself all the time.... Not to speak of those who have long ago decided about all the errors God has committed and how the
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world would be if it were they who had been commissioned to make it! There.

With the touch of the divine Grace, how do difficulties become opportunities for progress?

Opportunities for progress? Yes! Well, this is something quite obvious. You have made a big mistake, you are in great difficulty: then, if you have faith, if you have trust in the divine Grace, if you really rely on It, you will suddenly realise that it is a lesson, that your difficulty or mistake is nothing else but a lesson and that it comes to teach you to find within yourself what needs to be changed, and with this help of the divine Grace you will discover in yourself what has to be changed. And you will change it. And so, from a difficulty you will have made great progress, taken a considerable leap forward. This, indeed, happens all the time. Only, you must be truly sincere, that is, rely on the Grace and let It work in you—not like this: one part of you asking to be helped and another resisting as much as it can, because it doesn’t want to change... this is the difficulty.

All that he is saying, all the time, is: completely, totally, sincerely, without reserve. For there is one part of the being which has an aspiration, there is one part of the being which gives itself, and there are other parts—sometimes a small part, some times a big one which hides nicely, right at the bottom, and keeps absolutely quiet so that it may not be found out, but which resists with all its might, so as not to change.

And so one wonders... with, “Oh, I had such a beautiful aspiration, I had so much goodwill, I had such a great desire to change, and then, see, I cannot! Why?” Then, of course, your mental arrogance comes in and says, “I didn’t get the response I deserved, the divine Grace doesn’t help me, and I am left all alone to shift for myself”, etc., etc.

It is not that. It is that hidden somewhere there is a tiny something which is well coiled up, in there, doubled up, turned
in upon itself and well hidden, right at the bottom, as at the bottom of a box, which refuses to stir. (Mother speaks very softly.) So when the effort, the aspiration wane, die down, this springs up like that, gently, and then it wants to impose its will and it makes you do exactly what you did not want to do, what you had decided you would not do, and which you do without knowing how or why! Because that thing was there, it had its turn — for small things, big things, for the details, even for the direction of life.

There are people who see clearly, who know so well what they ought to do, and who feel that they can’t.... They don’t know why. It is nothing else but that. There is a little spot which doesn’t want to change and this little spot awaits its hour. And the day it is allowed, through laxity, fatigue, somnolence, through a little inertia, allowed to show itself, it will show itself with all concentrated, accumulated energy, and will make you do, will make you say, make you feel, make you act ex-act-ly contrary to what you had decided to do! And you will stand there: “Ah, how discouraging this is!...” Then some people say, “Fate!” They think it is their fate. It is not fate, it is themselves!... It is that they don’t have, haven’t used, the light, the searchlight. They have not turned the searchlight into the small hidden corners of their being, they haven’t discovered what was well hidden. They have left it there, and then have done this (Mother turns away her head) so as not to see it. How many times one suddenly feels one is on the point of catching something, “Hup!” It hurts a little.... It is troublesome.... So one thinks of something else, and that’s all! The opportunity has gone. One must wait for another occasion, again commit a few stupidities, before being able to find an opportunity to catch the thing by the tail, like this, or by the ear or the nose, and hold it firmly and say, “No! You won’t hide any longer now, I see you as you are, and you must either get out or change!”

One must have a strong grip and an unshakable resolution. As in our Japanese story of the other day, that soldier who had a
knife in his knee in order to make sure of not falling asleep... and when he felt very sleepy, he turned the knife in such a way that it hurt him still more. One must have something like that. This, this is determination: to know what one wants and to do it.

There we are!

Mother, may I ask something?

Ask!

Mother, last time I didn’t understand something... what you said about the time you used to count the “transformation” flowers. The figure showed the number people who would be transformed?

(After a silence) That, well, that depended on the previous arrangement I had made, you see.... One day it could be one thing, another day it could be another. Sometimes it was only movements, elements, cells.... Sometimes it was people. It depended on what I saw as possible and the arrangement I had made before counting.

It was as when I used to give people a certain number of flowers: at times it meant, “As many movements in you, as many elements of your being can be changed.” At other times I used to give them a certain number of flowers, well: “You will have the power to change, to bring transformation to as many people as there are flowers” — and all kinds of things like that. It was not always the same thing. But it was always a power of transforming something.... It could be the transformation of the will, it could be the transformation of action, it could be the material transformation of the cells, it could be a transformation of yourself... the transformation of stars in the universe... of many things.... It depended on people.

When it was for people was it a total transformation, Sweet Mother?
Sometimes. Usually there were also associations with other flow-
ers.... There were times when one could organise one thing more than another.... There were times... there was a time when I arranged flowers in this way... for some people it was a total transformation. But when...

The time factor sometimes eludes us, it is difficult.... In or-

ganisations of this kind, the most difficult thing to control is the time. One does not know if it will be in a year or in a hundred years.... It is difficult to control. I never had the opportunity to give the time-sense to flowers, and probably it is not possible. Perhaps it will come, but for the moment it is an element difficult to gauge.

_Sweet Mother, “transformation of stars” means?_

What does it mean? What is your question? I spoke of the transformation of stars.... If the whole universe is going to be transformed, the stars will be transformed also! Why do you suppose it will be only on earth?

_There were people here who had a great aspiration, but who for some reason or other revolted and went away. And these are the ones who are specially against the Ashram. But then, could we say that one day they will come back?_

Come back? (Mother makes a movement.) That is... I shall tell you this personally.

It depends on something.... We could put it like this: first — the very same question is in the Gita — there are two kinds of Asuric beings. There are those who can be converted and will be converted — after all, perhaps it would be enough if only at one moment, were it just in a passing flash, these beings have conceived the possibility of conversion, for this to happen one day. And there are those who have absolutely consciously and
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wilfully decided that they would prefer to be dissolved and to disappear. So those who want to be dissolved will be dissolved and those who want to be converted will be converted. That’s how it is in life!

There are those who die, those who return. Usually it is something known, almost decided. One could say with certainty, *these will die*. They will die, they will die, that is to say, they cut themselves off from their soul. They may have — as I said a while ago — a life that is quite... that seems to be altogether successful. They are not necessarily unhappy physically, far from it; sometimes, on the contrary, everything turns out successfully for them. And then, on the other hand, there are perhaps others under a special grace, who, in their adventure meet the worst rebuffs, and after some time they realise that they have been foolish, idiotic, stupid. And then... they come back. It depends on people. In fact, when they are successful it means that they are condemned; when they do not succeed, well, it is that the Grace has not left them.

But mostly it will be after their death that there will be a difference, because those human beings who have allowed adverse forces to take hold of them and govern their lives, as soon as they leave their body, they are just swallowed up, that’s all! They have already cut off the connection with their psychic being, so their psychic being often has gone somewhere far off already in other worlds... and so, their vital being, which is the receptacle for these forces, as soon as it leaves the body will be quite simply swallowed, and that’s all. And so they will really die for good. That won’t make much difference in the world. It won’t change things much.

*Sweet Mother, what will swallow them up?*

A still greater vital being! *(Laughter)* You see, they have in them an emanation of adverse vital forces, and the being or power which has emanated this force has done so in order to make
use of the body, to make it do in the material life exactly the
things it wanted to do. But now, when there is no longer a body
left, it is no longer interesting.... You see, it was this body which
was meant to do a certain number of things to act against the
divine action. Once the body has disappeared, the emanation is
withdrawn and all the force that was with it, and it is swallowed
up again for another opportunity.

They spend their time doing this. They emanate and then
reabsorb when it pleases them, at times before death... that is,
this hastens death a bit. It leaves the being like a kind of rag,
powerless, lifeless, without anything.... This happens; it makes
them absolutely mad. Or else, when they die in some sort of
catastrophe, as it happened during the war, suddenly... hup!
It acts like a cupping-glass, it absorbs everything, swallows up
everything again for another occasion. It looks for this, for what
is ready to receive it, and it makes it... There is always someone
who is open to receive it, and who immediately believes himself
a very superior being; because it gives this, it gives people the
feeling that they are truly, exceptionally remarkable... they are
capable of seeing the faults of things which others don’t see;
their judgment is more sane than that of hundreds of other
individuals. Besides, they have decided, they are among those
who have decided what the creation ought to be like and who
try to make it so, to put things in their place as they ought to be.

I had these... people who, in a moment of lucidity or sincer-
ity, a second of sincerity, had asked to be freed from the hostile
emanation which made them act. And then, in that moment of
sincerity this emanation went out of them, and without hurting
the body it could be caught and destroyed. That has happened
several times.

Then for some days the being is so happy... and it feels free,
feels good, feels luminous.... And then suddenly, it tells itself,
“But I no longer have any power! I don’t know any longer, can’t
do anything any longer, I am altogether an ordinary being!” And
then, “But this is not at all good, it was much better before!” And
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so, as these adverse forces are countless — these entities exist in thousands and thousands, you see, they are there swarming around people, only waiting for an opportunity to be able to rush into someone — immediately one reabsorbs one’s dose and becomes once again what one was before, sometimes worse. And so the comedy begins all over again.

But as for me, nothing doing, once is enough! You are far too attached to it! Keep your little hostile being with you! It is useless, in this case. But it is this, it’s the feeling, all of a sudden, of having lost one’s power. But note, this happens to ambitious people, above all to ambitious people who want to have power, want to dominate others, want to be great masters, great instructors, want to perform miracles, have extraordinary powers... it is to these that this happens most often... those who have a kind of ambition, here, turning in their mind. This is dangerous.

It is so good to be simple, simply good-willed, to do the best one can, and in the best way possible; not to build anything very considerable but only to aspire for progress, for light, a peace full of goodwill, and let That which knows in the world decide for you what you will become, and what you will have to do. One no longer has any cares, and one is perfectly happy!

There we are.