

18 May 1955

This talk is based upon Mother's article "The Problem of Woman"¹.

Now, no questions! I have nothing to add. I have said everything. You wanted to ask something?

You have given the title "The Problem of Woman", but you speak equally about the problem of man.

Yes, because it is difficult to separate them. I didn't mean that it is a problem that women have to solve; I meant that it is the problem which life on earth has posed because of women.

Men, until not very long ago, were perfectly satisfied with themselves and what they had done. It is a little more than a century ago that women began to protest. Before, they seemed to say nothing or in any case they had no opportunity to say something. However, quite recently — it is not so long ago — women began to say, "Excuse us, but we indeed are not satisfied." Formerly, if ever they dared to say such a thing, probably they received a knock and were told, "Keep quiet, it's no business of yours." Yet things went on in spite of everything, and it was at the end of the century that there began a public protest of women against the way men treated them; because all the laws made by men were to man's advantage, and all the social organisations made by men were to man's advantage, and woman always had a lower position and sometimes an absolutely detestable one. In certain countries it is still like that...

However, till then, if they had protested it must have been either individually or in a rather hidden fashion, because it did

¹ First published in the *Bulletin* of April 1955, now published in *On Education*, CWM, Vol. 12, pp. 102–06

Questions and Answers

not become a public question. But at the end of the last century there was a movement called feminism and women began to protest violently against things as they were, saying, "Excuse us, we find that you have failed in all your affairs, and you have not managed anything well. All that you have done seems absolutely bad. You have not succeeded in doing anything, except in fighting among yourselves, killing one another and making life unbearable for everybody. We are beginning to say that we have something to say, and we mean that this won't do and that it must improve." That is how it began. Then, you see, protestations, fights, mockery... They tried to stifle them with ridicule. But it was the men who made fools of themselves, it was not the women (*Mother laughs*), and finally, they gained one thing: they can now put in their word in the affairs of State.

It began... it was a frightful scandal but now it is a recognised fact, and we even find that in certain countries, slightly less backward than others, women are admitted in the government. And I must say that, as far as I know, the first country where this happened was Sweden. I knew it at the beginning of this century. It was then that it happened. Women were admitted into Parliament in Sweden, and in the government, and the first thing they did, that they managed to do, was to abolish drunkenness.

That is...?

Drunkenness, you don't know what drunkenness is? Drunkenness means to drink alcohol, and it is something very widespread, unfortunately, over the whole earth, and it is men who drink, usually. Among the working classes, as soon as they have received their pay they go and drink away more than half of it, and when the wife goes to ask them for money to get food for them, she gets a beating. That's how things usually occur. And the Swedish Government had tried for a very long time, because these people were quite reasonable and found that it was one of the things which most harmed social peace; but they had never

18 May 1955

succeeded. But it seems that within something like two or three years of government, women succeeded in doing it. And it was finished, one heard no more about it. How they did it I don't remember now. Someone had told me then. Naturally, not by prohibition, because wherever that has been tried, it has never succeeded. But they succeeded. It is there. Now it is there. It took more than half a century to spread. Now there are many countries in which women are in the Government.

(To Pavitra) Are there any in France? Are there women members of Parliament?

(Pavitra) Yes.

There are?

(Pavitra) Yes. *Ministers. There was one.*

No. Secretary of State, not minister. There were some, they have tried.

(Pavitra) *There is a Minister of Education.*

No, not that, but Secretary of State; there was one. In fact I say this because France was one of the most backward countries, and it is still so. And this is something very interesting: it is perhaps the country which had the most advanced ideas from the political point of view; it is from France that the ideas of Equality, Fraternity and Liberty have come; it is there that this has taken birth and from there it has spread over the world, but from the point of view of the relations between man and woman, it was certainly the most backward of all. There are psychological reasons for this, but I don't want to speak about them here. There, then!

Sweet Mother, here it is said: "All men are feminine in

Questions and Answers

many respects and all women are masculine in many traits, especially in modern societies.”

Yes, there is no pure type.

Then why is there a complex still?

Because they don't know themselves. They don't know themselves and then they are the slaves of their form. Because when they look at themselves in a mirror they see that they are men, and the women see that they are women — and they are slaves of the physical form. It is only because of that.

But moreover, I have often met men who were extremely feminine from certain points of view, but not in a very pleasant way, and it was they who asserted most their masculine rights and had most the sense of their superiority. Besides, I have also met, especially at the beginning of the feminist movement... all the women who wanted to take part in feminism used to wear false collars, cravats, vests, they cut their hair, they looked... they tried to look as masculine as they could. But they were deplorably feminine, *deplorably!* (*Laughter*) They wanted to please, wanted to attract attention; and if by ill-luck a man treated them like men, they were extremely angry. (*Laughter*) For this — much time is needed to be transformed.

And then?

Sweet Mother, here you speak of the Supreme Mother. Is she the same as the one Sri Aurobindo speaks of in “The Mother”?

Yes.

Then the conception of the Supreme Mother is purely human? Or she too in her origin has no gender?

No.

18 May 1955

But I have never said that it was purely human. I said that it was the formulation which was human. I haven't said that it was purely human; nowhere have I said that it was purely human. One could say that this explanation is a little too human but I don't mean that she is purely human.

Then in her origin she has a gender?

Beyond the manifestation there is no differentiation, that is, there are not *two*, there is only *one*. It was at the moment of creation that it became two. But before that it was one, and there was no difference; as it was one, it was only one. There were countless possibilities, but it was one, in fact it was one, and it was only in the creation that it became two. The differentiation is not something eternal and co-existent. It is for the creation, and in fact for the creation of this world only. There were perhaps many worlds created in an absolutely different way from this our universe. Not only were they there, but perhaps at this moment there are countless universes with which we have no contact and of which therefore we are totally ignorant and which may exist.

Are there any, Sweet Mother?

I am telling you it is possible. (*Laughter*) We can say nothing about it. We know nothing about it. All that we know, if we know it at all, is our own universe, that's all. But there is no reason why there could not be others — one can't say, "There aren't any others", one knows nothing about it — where all things are absolutely different, perhaps so different that we have no relation. What I say at the end is this, isn't it? I say at the end that... There will be a new creation, the supramental creation. Well, there's no reason why this creation may not have... may not take a different form from the one which has been here up till now. And as for me, what I say there is that this is the only solution to the problem, that instead of there being this division,

Questions and Answers

it may be a creation, a being which will be... which will unite “conception and execution, vision and creation in one single consciousness and action” — because that’s what has produced the differentiation, the fact that there was the conception and then the execution of this conception, the vision of what had to be and the creation of this vision, that is, the objective realisation of this vision; well, there is no reason why it should be divided; the two things can be done by the same being and therefore there should be only one single being.

Instead of there being two lines, one masculine and one feminine, there should be one single being, and that’s what I conceive as the solution of all problems — all problems, not only this one — and as the prototype of the supramental creation.

Sweet Mother, here you have said that the Supreme Mother is the creatrix of the universe. But in India usually it is said that Brahma is the creator.

But Sri Aurobindo has said that the Supreme Mother is the mother of Brahma. She is the Mother of all the gods.

The genders of the gods and goddesses are also human formations?

No, no! Why should they be human formations? I have never said that they were of human formation. The gods and goddesses of the Overmind are gods and goddesses differentiated in their form. It is not man who has created the gods of the Overmind, the gods of the Overmind come of a direct creation. I don’t know if they preceded men, but I think so. I think terrestrial creation, the terrestrial formation was made by the godheads of the Overmind, and that in fact there are many godheads of the Overmind who were fashioners upon earth, not incarnated upon earth but fashioners of what occurred upon earth, who gave the ideas, the forms. Sri Aurobindo always used to say that

18 May 1955

what was formerly called “god” was a being of the Overmind, that the supreme godhead was a being of the Overmind.

Mother, if there is a differentiation between the forms of the gods and goddesses, does the same problem come up for them also?

Ah! This, my child, you may ask them; but if we are to believe the stories we have been told, between them there are disputes and difficulties and quarrels and all kinds of things, things like that and even jealousies. There are times when they are not much wiser than men.

Sweet Mother, how were the gods and goddesses born?

But it is precisely... it is part of the creation. What we call “Aditi” here, that is, the Creative Consciousness, well, the Creative Consciousness...

I am going to tell you about this in an absolutely childish way:

She formed at first four beings; when she received the mission to create she put out four emanations from her being; and these four emanations were made and given the charge to develop the universe. And then — I think I have already spoken to you about this once — it turned out badly, we could put it like that; and so when things went wrong, she made another creation of all the beings who became the gods; and parallel to the disorder created by the first four emanations, there was the development in order, that is, under the guidance of the Supreme, the creation in order of all the worlds descending further and further towards Matter. And it is to this line that the gods belong who were manifested later, a formation, a greater and greater materialisation in the domain which Sri Aurobindo has termed the Overmind. And from there they presided over the creation of the material universe and the earth. And one of the proceedings

Questions and Answers

was the formation of the earth as a symbolic creation representative of the whole universe, in order to condense and concentrate the problem so that it might be solved more easily. And this earth, though it may be from the astronomical point of view something infinitesimal and as unimportant as can be, from the occult point of view of the universal creation it is a symbol which represents the universe so perfectly that by transforming the earth one can through contagion or analogy transform the universe, because the earth is the symbol of the universe. This was the procedure adopted by the gods. And the place that's the seat of existence of these gods Sri Aurobindo has called the Overmind.

Of course things are not like that. Don't think that I have just told you the story as it really happened. Things are not like that, but it's a way of speaking, a way of making them understandable to the brain. It appears to have occurred like that.

But the four beings I first spoke to you about are sexless, they were neither man nor woman; and in the vital world there is an entire part of the vital creation which is the result of these beings, an entire part which has no sex. Besides, the gods too made a world which was sexless. It is the world of angels, what are called angels, what in occultism are called fashioners. But these are sexless spirits; they are represented with wings, you know, they are sexless spirits.

There are in the universe, already, beings who have no sex, who are neither men nor women, and there are many of them in the vital world. There are entities with sex in the vital world but in its most material part, the one closest to the earth, and not in its most important part; the most important part is sexless. This does not make them any better, however, since they are all beings hostile to the divine Will and divine realisation, but it gives them a terrific force. And so in return the gods too have created a whole set of beings who have no sex and whom men speak of as angels; how does one call it? "Your guardian angel", or what else? It is especially "angel".

18 May 1955

(Pavitra) *Cherubim, seraphim.*

Yes, yes, that's it. They have given many names. There, then.

Sweet Mother, in the old traditions they always speak of the wives of the gods who are troubled by the asuras.

What, the wives of the gods who were troubled by the asuras?
Yes!

They too are closer to the material world? Is it in the vital world or in...

It is in the vital world.

(Pavitra) *Mother, in the mind also, there are beings of the mind...*

There are beings of the mental world which are also sexless, not all, but many. There are many of them. There are some of these mental formations which are persistent, you see, which are very well made, very well harmonised, persistent, some kind of mental constructions, mental formations which are living beings, but which pass indifferently from a masculine to a feminine body when they incarnate. It is all the same to them, to them it makes no difference.

That's all, or you still have something?

Mother, what is the real reason for the appearance of sex? Because in the study of biology we see that first the unicellular animals were sexless; sex appeared later.

That — it is Nature, my child, who has tried all kinds of methods. These are all means employed by Nature; she wanted... It would seem that for the perfection of the species the dividing

Questions and Answers

was necessary from the point of view of the material evolution; it seems so because obviously it was adopted later. This... Nature... I think she has tried every possible thing, everything.

But you say that even the gods have a sex.

Yes. Well, perhaps it is under their inspiration that Nature made it. It is certainly not because it appeared on earth that it is like that with the gods. So logically we can think that because it was like that among the gods it has become like that on earth. But Nature doesn't seem to have received direct inspirations; she seems to have followed her own path in her own fashion. Yet she has tried all possible things; I don't think there's anything she hasn't tried, and she goes on. But Nature too has created sexless beings, even in human form; it has happened. I have even seen a Greek statue like that. The Greeks knew this.

Everything that one can imagine and much more, Nature has imagined. Only, she doesn't want to be hurried. I think it amuses her. So she wants to go in her own way: trying, demolishing, re-starting, demolishing again. She can destroy an entire species by doing just this (*gesture*), it is quite the same to her; she would simply say, "No, it was not good." And then, there, it is finished. And she doesn't want to be hurried. If she is told that we find it has lasted long enough like this, that it could come to a slightly more harmonious conclusion, she revolts, she is not at all pleased. This is what she always says: "But why are you in a hurry? All that you want to do will happen, but it is not necessary that it should happen so fast. Why are you in such a hurry?" That's what she always answers. She likes to roam about.

What is Nature? That is, what is her relation with the Supreme Mother?

I think that Nature is the most material part of the creative force

18 May 1955

which is concerned with the creation specially of the earth, of the material world as we know it upon earth.

I want some information about the latest astronomical discoveries...

(To Pavitra) Is similar matter known in the other worlds as that on the earth?

(Pavitra) *Everywhere, Mother. Up to now no difference has been found in the matter not only of the solar system but also of the others.*

It is all the same. And then, how is it that we are told that human beings could not live on other planets, not even on Jupiter or Venus?

(Pavitra) *The elements are the same, the chemical elements, for instance, are the same. But those which have been formed, at present — for example in Jupiter there would be an atmosphere of ammonia and carbonic gas...*

Yes. So the formation is not the same after all?

(Pavitra) *The physical body, evidently, organic matter cannot be the same.*

Yes, the one people usually know...

(Pavitra) *... cannot be the same.*

Cannot be the same, you see.

Are there psychic beings up there or are they only in Matter?

I have heard that only on the earth there are psychic beings, precisely because the earth has been created as a symbol for

Questions and Answers

concentrating the problem, and the psychic being, which is the result of the direct intervention of the Supreme, has been created here exactly for the necessities of this symbolic action.

Are there really any beings on Jupiter or Mars?

For me, if you ask me, there are beings everywhere. Everywhere. One doesn't see them, that's all. But they are everywhere. But certainly I don't think they are like what we see in the pictures — the Martians you were shown in the pictures with grotesque forms. I have no reason to think that they are like that.

Have you heard the story of the flying saucer?

Ah, yes! I have studied it also. However, I am waiting to have a physical experience. I indeed saw a flying saucer pass over Pondicherry during the war, I saw it clearly, with open eyes, and going fairly slowly, coming from the sea to the land. It was light blue and had a slightly rounded shape like this. I saw it passing by and said to myself, "Why, I have a vision!" I rubbed my eyes but my eyes were open, completely open... Suddenly I saw a form passing in the sky like this; I told myself, "How strange it is!" but as no one had spoken about it till then, I thought that I had a vision. I see many things which people ordinarily don't see; but when people started speaking about this, then I said to myself, "Why, I have seen a flying saucer pass by." But I think Udar also has seen a flying saucer.

(Udar) *Yes, Mother.* (Laughter)

That it exists is unquestionable. What is it? Each one has his opinion. But what I would like is to find myself face to face with the beings as they have been described. There is someone who has, supposedly... anyway, he said that he has spoken to a being who was in a flying saucer. Well, I would be very happy to meet

18 May 1955

a being like that. After that I shall tell you what it is — when I have met it.

Mother, it is said that there are other solar systems where perhaps one can find a similar situation as on earth. But down there can we find men like us?

You must go there and see. (*Laughter*)

Mother, can we go to the other planets by occult means?

Ah! Yes, one can go everywhere. What prevents us from going? One goes everywhere. Only, you see, we must know that it is not the physical body which goes; it is the most material thing... the most material vital; and this is already very difficult.

Usually it is the mental part of the vital which goes out; not the mind, the vital. For short distances one can go out from his body with the subtle physical, and in these cases one sees things materially as they are. But one can't go long distances. There are practical reasons, but above all there is the reason of safety; because if one goes too far with the subtle physical, the body is not only in a trance, it is in a cataleptic state, and then, unless it is guarded by someone who has a very profound knowledge and a great power, this can turn out badly. Therefore, for these long journeys it is usually the most subtle part of the vital (which corresponds to a kind of mental consciousness of the vital), which goes out.

So one sees everything which has a similar quality. But supposing there is something very material, one doesn't see it as it is. So one can't say with certainty, "It is like this or like that." One can say, "I saw this," that's all. But one can't recount stories like those in the papers about what is happening on the moon or Jupiter or Venus. One can have an experience and know certain things but usually they are things of a more psychological nature.

However, if it is in order to know whether there are some

Questions and Answers

beings there, I don't think there's any place in the universe where there aren't beings, because that's the very principle of this universe: individual creations. Everywhere there are individual creations but they have different densities. Most of them are invisible except to those with a similar density, and only those who have the capacity of coming out of their bodies and going for a stroll can see these things. But so long as you use these eyes you can't see very much.

Such a limited field of vision! In fact, when you think of it, such an absolutely ridiculous limitation! The field of our sense experience has an absolutely ridiculous limitation; while in the mind, if you think of someone or something, a city or a place, you are there immediately, instantaneously, you see. And you are there—it is not that you are not there, you are there, and you can have so precise a mental contact that you can have a conversation, ask questions and receive answers, on condition that the other person is fairly sensitive. Why, this is something which happens constantly, constantly. Only, you must have a little knowledge, naturally, for otherwise you don't even understand what is happening.

Even physically, with this, with the eyes, the nose, the fingers, the mouth, the ears, oh, it is ridiculous! One can develop these if one wants. One can succeed, for example, in hearing something which occurs at a fairly great distance and hearing it physically, not by another means than the physical, but one must have a control over his senses and be able to prolong their vibrations sufficiently. One can see at a distance also, and not by an occult vision. One can manage to stretch his vision, and if he knows how to prolong the vibration of his nerves outside the organ, he can prolong the contact, I don't say some kilometres away, no, but in a certain area, say, for example, through a wall, which is considered something impossible; one can see what is going on in a room which is separated from another by a wall. But a very methodical practice is necessary. Yet this is possible, seeing, feeling, hearing. If one wants to take

18 May 1955

the trouble, one can enlarge his field considerably. But it asks for work, for perseverance, a kind of assiduous effort. Why, it has even been found that one can develop other visual centres than the eye. It has been tried out with people who, for some reason or other, have no vision in the eye. One can develop other centres or another centre of vision, by a continuous, methodical effort. Jules Romain has written a book about it. He himself conducted experiments and obtained very conclusive results.

This means that we have a number of possibilities which we let sleep within us, because we don't take the trouble to develop them very much. We can do infinitely more than we actually do. But we take things like that, as they come.