This talk is based upon the Mother's essay “The Science of Living” (On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, pp. 3–8).

The psychic being is formed by the inner Truth and organised around it.

The vital is the dynamism of action. It is the seat of the will, of impulses, desires, revolts, etc.

The physical is the concrete domain that crystallises and defines the thoughts, the movements of the vital, etc. It is a solid foundation for action.

Finding one's psychic being implies a kind of conviction, a faith in the existence of this psychic being. One must become aware of it and then allow it to take up the direction of life and action; one must refer to it and make it one's guide. One becomes aware of the movements of one's being by referring more and more to the psychic being.

Having an aim is not sufficient. One must have the will to attain it by trying always to trace all one's movements back to their origin.
Self-mastery means being conscious of oneself and one’s movements, doing what one has decided to do and not what others want one to do.

“In various times and places many methods have been prescribed for attaining this perception [of the psychic presence in us] and ultimately achieving this identification [with it]. Some methods are psychological, some religious, some even mechanical. In reality, everyone has to find the one which suits him best, and if one has an ardent and steadfast aspiration, a persistent and dynamic will, one is sure to meet, in one way or another — outwardly through reading and study, inwardly through concentration, meditation, revelation and experience — the help one needs to reach the goal.”

What is the difference between mechanical, religious and psychological methods? Religious methods are those adopted by the various religions. Not many religions speak of the inner Truth; for them, it is more a matter of coming into contact with their God. Heaven and hell: this is a roundabout way of saying...

Psychological methods are those that deal with states of consciousness, that try to realise the inner self by withdrawing from all activity and attempting to create the conscious inner conditions of detachment, self-abstraction, concentration, higher Reality, renunciation of all the outer movements, etc. A psychological method is one which acts on the thoughts, feelings and actions.

Mechanical methods are those which are based on purely mechanical means — one can benefit from them by using them

1 Words missing in the transcription.
in a certain way. Take breath-control, for example: it acts more or less mechanically, but it is sometimes recommended to add to this a concentration of one’s thought, to repeat a word, as in Vivekananda’s teaching. This works up to a certain point, but then it fades away. These human attempts in various times and places have been more or less successful individually but they have never given a collective result.

The psychological method is far more difficult but far more effective: through your actions, to be in a state of inner will to express nothing in yourself but the Truth of your being, and to make everything dependent on that Truth. Of course, if you do nothing, it is easier, but it is also easier to deceive yourself. When you sit down in isolation, in complete silence and far away from everybody, and examine yourself with more or less indulgent eyes, you may imagine that you are realising something wonderful. But when you are put to the test at every minute of your life, when you have the occasion to become aware of your imperfections, your infirmities, your little movements of bad will a hundred times a day, you soon lose the illusion of being...\(^2\) and so your efforts are more sincere.

That is why, instead of deciding that we would have an Ashram in a solitary forest where everything is very beautiful, very restful, instead of being aloof from the world and attending only to our own little selves, we are trying on the contrary to take up all the activities of life and make them as conscious as we can, and, in our contacts with other people, to become more clearly aware of all the inner movements.

Running away from difficulties is never a way of surmounting or overcoming them. If you flee from the enemy you won’t be able to defeat him and he has every chance of defeating you. That is why we are here in Pondicherry and not on some Himalayan peak. Although I admit that a

\(^2\) Words missing in the transcription.
Himalayan peak would be delightful — but perhaps not so effective.

Next time I shall speak about mental discipline, for I have quite a lot of things to say on this subject. It is a terrible stumbling-block: people think they have a superior intellect and on that basis judge things which they know nothing about. This is, if not the greatest, at least one of the greatest obstacles for mankind. For it so happens that mankind is, of all animals — pardon me, but we are still animals! — the only one who can make use of articulate language and turn out pages and pages of... He thinks he is so superior because he can write down and make others read what he thinks and feels. And from this eminence of mental greatness, of mental nobility, he dismisses as so much childishness things that are infinitely superior to him.

*Does the psychic being identify itself with the inner Truth?*

It organises itself around it and enters into contact with it. The psychic is moved by the Truth. The Truth is something eternally self-existent and dependent on nothing in time or space, whereas the psychic being is a being that grows, takes form, progresses, individualises itself more and more. In this way it becomes more and more capable of manifesting this Truth, the eternal Truth that is one and permanent. The psychic being is a progressive being, which means that the relation between the psychic being and the Truth is a progressive one. It is not possible to become aware of one’s psychic being without becoming aware at the same time of the inner Truth. All those who have had this experience — not a mental experience but an integral experience of contact with the psychic being, not a contact with the idea they have constructed of it, but a truly concrete contact — all say the same thing: from the very minute this contact takes place, one is absolutely conscious of the eternal Truth within oneself and one sees that it is the purpose of life and the guide of the world. One
can’t have one without the other; in fact, it is this that makes you realise that you are in contact with your psychic being. It may not be a conscious contact, but something that governs your life.

Some people say there is something outside their own will that organises their whole life, that puts them in the required condition, that attracts favourable circumstances or people, that arranges everything outside them, so to say. In their outer consciousness, perhaps they wanted something and worked for it, but something else came. Well, after some years, they realise that this is what really had to happen. You may know nothing of the existence of a psychic being within you and yet be guided by it. For, in order to become aware of something, you must first of all admit that this thing exists. Some people don’t. I have known people who had a genuine contact with their psychic being without knowing at all what it was, because there was nothing in them that corresponded to the knowledge of this contact.

Can one be in contact with the eternal Truth without having any contact with one’s psychic being?

Some beings in the universe may have this direct contact with the eternal Truth without any contact with the psychic being, because they don’t have any psychic being. But in man there is always a psychic being, and it is always through it that he comes into contact with the eternal Truth. And this contact with the psychic being is usually disclosed to him in the same way, for it carries with it its own grace, its own splendour and beatitude. The psychic being is characteristic of man, and if one goes to the bottom of the matter, perhaps this is what gives man his superiority.

Many of the old philosophies did not have a complete knowledge of the classification of the being — the psychic being, the inner Truth were not known to them. These systems had very simplistic notions, such as the outer and the inner consciousness,
the waking and the sleep consciousness. They had no detailed knowledge of human psychology, or if they had one, they did not think it advisable to impart it to everybody. In former times, knowledge was not given to just anyone. A person first had to demonstrate his goodwill very clearly; he had to show sufficient capacities, a sufficient degree of development before he was taught certain kinds of knowledge. But now, in modern life, this knowledge is printed and anyone can buy books and read them. And of course you meet hundreds of people who have learned a lot of words without knowing anything of what they mean. At one time we had people here who claimed to have realised the Supermind, but did not even know what it was.

With the democratic organisation of things, this popularisation of knowledge is inevitable. Perhaps there are other methods of selection, more concealed, less obvious, but more effective.