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

Sweet Mother, how can one draw on “the universal vital Force”?

One can do it in many ways.

First of all, you must know that it exists and that one can enter into contact with it. Secondly, you must try to make this contact, to feel it circulating everywhere, through everything, in all persons and all circumstances; to have this experience, for example, when you are in the countryside among trees, to see it circulating in the whole of Nature, in trees and things, and then commune with it, feel yourself close to it, and each time you want to deal with it, recall that impression you had and try to enter into contact.

Some people discover that with certain movements, certain gestures, certain activities, they enter into contact more closely. I knew people who gesticulated while walking... this truly gave them the impression that they were in contact — certain gestures they made while walking... But children do this spontaneously: when they give themselves completely in their games, running, playing, jumping, shouting; when they spend all their energies like that, they give themselves entirely, and in the joy of playing and moving and running they put themselves in contact with this universal vital force; they don't know it, but they spend their vital force in a contact with the universal vital force and that is why they can run without really feeling very tired, except after a very long time. That is, they spend so much that if they were not in contact with the universal force, they would be absolutely exhausted, immediately. And that is why, besides, they grow up;

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it is also because they receive more than they spend; they know how to receive more than they spend. And this does not correspond to any knowledge. It is a natural, spontaneous movement. It is the movement... a movement of joy in what they are doing — of joyful expenditure. One can do many things with that.

I knew young people who had always lived in cities — in a city and in those little rooms one has in the big cities in which everyone is huddled. Now, they had come to spend their holidays in the countryside, in the south of France, and there the sun is hot, naturally not as here but all the same it is very hot (when we compare the sun of the Mediterranean coasts with that of Paris, for example, it truly makes a difference), and so, when they walked around the countryside the first few days they really began to get a terrible headache and to feel absolutely uneasy because of the sun; but they suddenly thought: “Why, if we make friends with the sun it won’t harm us any more!” And they began to make a kind of inner effort of friendship and trust in the sun, and when they were out in the sun, instead of trying to bend double and tell themselves, “Oh! How hot it is, how it burns!”, they said, “Oh, how full of force and joy and love the sun is!” etc., they opened themselves like this (*gesture*), and not only did they not suffer any longer but they felt so strong afterwards that they went round telling everyone who said “It is hot” — telling them “Do as we do, you will see how good it is.” And they could remain for hours in the full sun, bare-headed and without feeling any discomfort. It is the same principle.

It is the same principle. They linked themselves to the universal vital force which is in the sun and received this force which took away all that was unpleasant to them.

When one is in the countryside, when one walks under the trees and feels so close to Nature, to the trees, the sky, all the leaves, all the branches, all the herbs, when one feels a great friendship with these things and breathes that air which is so good, perfumed with all the plants, then one opens oneself, and

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by opening oneself communes with the universal forces. And for all things it is like that.

Can one do the same thing when it is cold?

Yes, I think so. I think one can always do the same thing in all cases.

The sun is a very powerful symbol in the organisation of Nature. So it is not altogether the same thing; it possesses in itself an extraordinary condensation of energy. Cold seems to me a more negative thing: it is an absence of something. But in any case, if one knows how to enter the rhythm of the movements of Nature, one avoids many discomforts. What makes men suffer, what disturbs the balance of the body is a narrowness, it is always a narrowness. It happens because one is shut up in limits, and so there is, as Sri Aurobindo writes here, a force which presses too strongly for these limits — it upsets everything.

Sweet Mother, what is “the inner physical”?

Well, the other day we had this question in connection with the subliminal. It is the same thing, you see.

The outer physical, what we see of the body, the appearance is, so to say, supported, upheld by a kind of inner existence and substance, which is expressed through the outer thing. You feel this clearly when something from outside hits you, and it is not pleasant; then when you draw back from that, you recoil from that contact with circumstances or things; well, the first impression is of drawing back inside into your physical being itself, a physical being which is there, which presses, so to say, on the outer form in order to create a new form.

This is what makes children grow up, it is a kind of inner thing which pushes, pushes for action, pushes for movement, pushes for progress. But it is physical, it is not a vital or mental consciousness, it is purely physical. It is something which pushes

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from within towards manifestation and is concentrated and channelled in the manifestation. It is vaster and more imprecise within. It is what Sri Aurobindo calls “the inner physical”. It is more vague, more imprecise. One can dream there. For example, one dreams, one sees a room, one’s own room. Well, it is one’s own room but still there are little differences; it is not absolutely what one sees with his two eyes when he is completely awake. It is a physical vision but with just a little shade of difference; compared with the most material there are slight changes.

That’s all?

Sweet Mother, do the universal vital forces have any limits?

I don’t think that forces have a limit, because in comparison with us they are certainly unlimited. But it’s our capacity of reception that is limited. We cannot absorb them beyond a certain measure, and then we must keep a balance between the expenditure and the capacity to receive. If one spends suddenly in a kind of impulse — for example, in an impulsive movement — if one spends much more than one has received, one needs a brief moment of concentration, calm, receptivity to absorb universal forces. You must put yourself in a certain condition to receive them; and then, they last for a certain time, and once you have spent them you must begin again to receive them. It is in this sense that there are limits. It isn’t the forces that are limited, it is the receptivity.

Each person has a different receptivity. No two receptivities are the same in quality and quantity, but specially in quality. One enters into contact with very pure, very intense forces — what could be already called converted forces, that is, universal vital forces which are in contact with the Divine and not only receive the Divine but aspire to receive Him. So if you absorb these forces it gives you a great strength for progress. It is in this that the quality is much more important. And for the quality of

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the universal vital forces, it depends naturally a great deal on what one is, but also much on what one does.

If one uses these forces for a purely selfish action of a base kind, well, one makes it almost totally impossible for himself to receive any new ones of as fine a quality. All depends on the utilisation of the forces one receives. If, on the other hand, you use them to make progress, to perfect yourself, it gives you... it increases your capacity of receiving enormously, and the next time you can have a lot more. All depends (in any case, principally) on the use made of them. There are people, for instance, who are short-tempered by nature and haven't succeeded in controlling their anger. Well, if with an aspiration or by some method or other they have managed to receive some higher vital forces, instead of this calming their irritation or anger... because they have no self-control it increases their anger, that is, their irritability, their movement of violence is full of a greater force, a greater energy, and becomes much more violent. So it is well said that to be in contact with universal forces does not make one progress. But this is because they make a bad use of them. Yet naturally in the long run, this bad use diminishes the capacity of receiving; but it takes time, it is not immediate. So it is very important to put yourself in a good condition to receive the higher forces and not the lower ones, and secondly, when you have received them use them for the best thing possible, in order to prepare yourself to receive those which are of a higher quality. But if you open yourself, receive the forces and afterwards, being satisfied with having received them you let yourself fall into all the ordinary movements, well, you close the door and the force no longer returns.

One can increase the receptivity also?...

How can we increase the receptivity? By progressing.

One must first know how to open himself and then, in a great quietude know how to assimilate the forces one has

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received, not to throw them out again. One must know how to assimilate them.

So the progress lies in a normal but progressive equilibrium, periods of assimilation — reception, assimilation — and periods of expenditure, and knowing how to balance the two, and alternate them in a rhythm which is your personal one. You must not go beyond your capacity, you must not remain below it, because the universal vital forces are not something which you could put into a strong box. They must circulate. So you must know how to receive and at the same time to spend, but to increase the capacity of reception so as to have more and more of the things which are to be used up, to be spent. Besides, this is what happens, as I said, this is what happens quite naturally with children. They begin, make a certain effort, receive a certain force spontaneously, assimilate it and then after a few days, two days, ten days, twenty days they can spend more. After a year they can do much more, because quite naturally they alternate the reception and the expenditure, and they progress in their stature. They of course do it unconsciously, but when one is older it becomes more difficult; one stops growing up, for example. So this means that there's a certain period of expansion which has stopped. But it can be prolonged, then, with an inner discipline, a method one finds: it has to be one's own method.