

Practical Affairs

GENERAL

Under no pretext should the cycles be left outside in the sun.

27 February 1933

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Do not worry about the French; you will learn it little by little.

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Hydrogen Peroxide is costly. I should like to know if I can prescribe it.

You might prescribe it *for the moment* and later, when X is better, replace the Peroxide by Potassium Chlorate.

31 March 1935

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The trees planted in the Subbu house do not belong to us but to the *house owner* and they cannot be cut without the *house owner's* permission.

Any other action than the above one could lead us to great trouble.

1937

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As you are ordering the tweezers, it might be better to order at the same time the few things you require. The need for them can come suddenly and then there is no time to order. By buying like that little by little, we will one day be properly equipped.

Blessings.

6 July 1938

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Practical Affairs

I do not see much necessity of your learning sitar — but if it amuses you, you can continue.

With my blessings.

28 March 1940

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Mother,

The house I have taken for my people belonged to a patient with tuberculosis. I came to know this only after I had already paid for the house. But then we got the whole house washed and burnt sulphur in some rooms. The thought that a T.B. patient lived here did not trouble me because he had gone away nearly six months back.

However, a suggestion about the danger of infection has been thrown into the atmosphere, so I pray to you for the protection of those who will stay there.

As the house has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, there is no danger at all. People need not fear.

My blessings.

19 February 1940

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If the pains do not disappear tonight, it would be better to take rest tomorrow.

My love and blessings.

27 July 1939

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Who are the angels? What is their function in the cosmos? How can one come in contact with them? Are there books which can give a starting-point? Please tell me something about these things.

Your questions are impossible to answer in brief.

Words of the Mother – III

I know no books that say anything of value on the subject.
My love and blessings.

2 June 1940

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(About the legend of the Dalai Lama's rebirth and discovery)

At one time I knew their legend, but now I have forgotten it, so I can say nothing about it, except this general statement — that man can imagine nothing that has not happened at least once; so there is always a truth behind the statement. The mistake is to generalise and make a rule of it.

*

Mother,

My parents very often ask me to keep a few rupees for pocket money, but I have been refusing it because I did not want them to feel that I suffer here for want of anything. Do you think it desirable for me to keep a few rupees for small expenses?

You can keep a few rupees as pocket money.
My love and blessings.

25 September 1940

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When you say “*Bonjour*” to someone, you are wishing him a *good day*. If you do it consciously, thinking about what you are saying, the word “*Bonjour*” takes on a great force and helps to make the day a good one.

7 October 1951

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(Someone wrote to the Mother about an acquaintance. The letter ended:)

On my arrival in India in 1957, I dreamed vividly that this man would give me \$50,000 — the price of X House (as I now know). Do you see anything interesting here? I have tried to present a clear mental picture for you to contact.

You can always write to him about this — and wait with a quiet faith for the *result* which is — “bien entendu”¹ — in the hands of the Lord.

With love and blessings.

14 April 1963

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Mother,

I am informed that on the north and south walls of the studio only plain glass will be used. It will be a pity if this is done. These two sides are completely covered with glass and as the sun goes to the north we get a strong light coming in from the north-east. The same thing happens when the sun moves south. The glasses are so high that even curtains cannot be used at that height.

It is not a big problem to convert the plain glass into ground glass. It is only a question of one or two months more. It has taken eighteen months to secure the glass, two months more should not matter.

I am quite sure that if you have frosted glasses everywhere, the room will be so dark that it will be impossible to work in it.

That is why I did not answer to X on the subject.

¹ Of course.

Words of the Mother – III

But now I must tell you frankly what I see. In any case, it might be wiser to have the glasses sprayed lightly, so that if it is found too dark, the spray can be removed.

Blessings.

7 August 1963

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Beloved Mother:

The new tenants in X House have locked all the downstairs doors so that I am now unable to use the toilet facilities. Since there are none for my room, what shall I do?

From the beginning I had said to put a commode and a zinc tub in your second room for your personal use, so that you could be quite independent of everybody. I know that the water arrangement is made. How is it that the commode and the tub are not there?

The downstairs arrangement belongs to the downstairs accommodation, and it is the full right of the people living there to keep it locked.

Blessings.

23 August 1963

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I ask you to move at once, but for a short time only, to one of the places put at your disposal.

Your refusal would put me in an awkward position as I have given my word.

Blessings.

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Here are some of the printer's proofs received from Calcutta. They are not all very good. I am asking for some corrections to be made.

Practical Affairs

These proofs are *not good*. Why do you want them to do some more? They are simply spoiling the work and it is a big loss of time and money. Almost all of these pictures are unusable as they are and have to be remade.

I cannot agree to your giving them any more work to do.
Blessings.

12 January 1966

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Mother,

Should we rebuild our agricultural project at Ras-sendren Gardens, or instead move our project to Ehny House, or thirdly attempt to do both?

If you have the capacity to do both well, do both. If one alone suffices to take your energies, concentrate on Ehny House.

Blessings.

4 May 1966

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Sweet Mother,

We would like to have — as the expression of what You want — a message from You about the new life for Sanskrit, of which You gave us a glimpse in Your talk of 11 November 1967. We would like to translate this message and publish it in the Ashram journals, for some disciples would like to know what You have said about this matter.

I see no need for any message. Messages only convince those who are already convinced.

It would be better to learn Sanskrit and try to make it a truly living language.

Blessings.

16 August 1969

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Words of the Mother – III

Mother, I want to experiment with gunpowder rockets, but X told me to ask You before doing anything with these explosive and dangerous devices. Will You allow it?

It is primitive and undeveloped natures that like noise. As for explosives, they are always dangerous; all this cannot be an object of curiosity.

2 September 1971

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You should not use paper and envelopes with a printed letter-head to write to me — it is a waste.

Inform the school.

*

There are a lot of ants in the walls of the bakery. They come onto the table and get into the baking tins.

You must find out where they are coming from, which hole they are coming out of, and put a little pile of sugar near the hole. They will keep themselves busy carrying it away and will not bother you any more.

*

Mother, today I found a honey-comb on the Patience tree. We work in the shade of this tree. The honey-comb will get bigger and the tree is not very high. What could be done?

I don't think that the bees will sting you if you do not disturb them. But if you are afraid...

*

COOKING AND EATING

When you want to add wheat flour to the vegetables, it is better to mix it first in a separate sauce-pan with a small quantity of water or, better, of vegetable soup. You give it a first boiling in this sauce-pan, stirring it all the time, very carefully, with a circular movement. After it has reached the boiling point you can safely add it to the vegetables, it will no more stick to the bottom of the pan.

8 February 1932

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Too strong a fire burns the food, spoils the vessel and wastes the fuel. A slow fire means a little longer time for the cooking but also a nicer result in cooking.

Hurried work is always bad work; time must be given if you want good result.

*

To say that your cooking is bad would not be fair. At most what I can say is that it is not always equally good, but bad it is not, and some dishes are *quite successful*. It may be that a period of inner difficulty has passed over you, but you are bound to come out of it stronger than before. When the inner difficulty is removed, the cooking will be as regularly good as it was before.

24 December 1937

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I have heard so many contradictory reports on the effects of food, spices, etc. that logically I have come to the conclusion that it must be — like all the rest — a personal affair and consequently no general rule can be made and, still less, enforced. This is the cause of my leniency.

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Words of the Mother – III

Nothing was told to me about the aluminium vessels of which I do not approve because aluminium is *not* good for cooking. I am speaking of my own experience.

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You know that I am not enthusiastic about servants handling the food — but many people seem to like it, through laziness I suppose!!

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In the kitchen, *cleanliness* is *the most* indispensable thing.

To avoid hair falling in the cooking, it is better to cover the head while cooking.

Special care must be taken to prevent insects from falling into the pans.

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If you do not like the atmosphere created by taking food with others I do not see why you should do it.

13 September 1940

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From the physical point of view, it is obviously better to eat quietly and without hurry, and I am quite sure that most often one can manage to get time for it. It is all a question of organisation.

27 September 1943

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All quarrels in the place where food is prepared make food indigestible. The cooking must be done in silence and harmony.

March 1969

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A childish question: Do animals and birds get the taste of food as we do?

Yes, but they do not *think* about it as we do.

*

BORROWING BOOKS
FROM THE ASHRAM LIBRARY

Dear Mother,

*I am told I need your permission for the following:
(1) Borrow books from the library; (2) Purchase bread
from the bakery. May I have your approval?*

Bread you can receive freely unless you want an unusual quantity.

As for the books, we have been obliged to stop lending them because too big a number of them had disappeared — but if you keep them only for a *short time* and promise to be extra careful, I can give the permission.

Blessings.

11 January 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

May I borrow books from our library from time to time for my studies? You had already given me permission some years ago.

You may borrow books if you take great care of them and follow the library rules.

Blessings.

12 March 1964

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Words of the Mother – III

Mother Dear,

May I have your permission to take the book “The Puppet Theatre”, by Jan Bussell to show to X for making hand-puppets for gifts to the children for Christmas?

Yes, on loan and with care.

26 November 1964

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Sweet Mother,

Could I take books from the library to read at home? I need them for my English and other studies.

If Y [the head librarian] agrees, and if you take scrupulous care of them.

23 December 1964

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Mother,

Will you allow the students in my class to borrow books from the Library during the 1965 vacation and the 1966 school year? These books (list attached) will be useful to them for their French classes.

Very well.

P.S. Of course they must take great care of these books and return them clean and in good condition before the new term begins.

11 October 1965

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(To the head librarian)

Z would like to borrow some books from the library. He says he will take *great care* of them. Are you willing to lend them to him?

13 February 1966

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PAINTING

It seems to me that a few sketches from nature would be useful, especially from the point of view of the proportion of legs and arms and the harmony of form.

25 January 1934

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(About a design for a crown for the Mother)

The design is very pretty indeed and will surely make a very successful crown.

7 September 1934

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This idea of fresco seems to be a very good one and the wall of A's room on B's terrace quite an ideal place. There is only one point: will the lime hold on that wall which is now painted? This is to be asked of C.

It would be very nice to have a sea view there.

7 September 1934

*

(About some cards done for people associated with the artist in his work, whose names were sent along with the cards)

The cards are all very nice, some extremely pretty. I am sending them back for distribution except one that D has chosen and kept with great pleasure.

All the names are all right.

27 October 1935

*

Words of the Mother – III

(About sketches for paintings on asbestos sheets to be fixed on the walls of the Town Hall)

Yes, it is all right. When the sketches are ready they will have to be shown to the Mayor and the Governor and this will take some time. That is to say between the sketches and the actual beginning of the painting there will be plenty of time for the exhibition and the Darshan.

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As I told you, it would be good to show the sketches to the Governor on the 10th of this month or about — because the “Conseil Général” is sitting just now and the final decision has to be taken by this “Conseil”. Four sketches and the elevation of the room will be sufficient.

1 November 1935

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(About the sketches for the Town Hall painting)

They are truly very fine. I see no change to suggest.

3 November 1935

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(About the exhibition of paintings by Ashram artists held at the end of December 1935. Some paintings were presented to the French Governor.)

I forgot to tell you that the two pictures for the Governor have to be signed before they are framed. Will you inform E of this?

The exhibition seems to have been a great success.

With our blessings.

6 January 1936

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Practical Affairs

(I am sending you some art books for your opinion. I want to know your opinion about Cézanne and Van Gogh, because they are praised so much by modern critics.)

The pictures by Cézanne and Van Gogh in the books you have sent are very beautiful (especially those of Cézanne). I shall return the books in one or two days—I want to look at them carefully.

12 March 1936

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If you feel no true urge to paint, I see no necessity of your painting.

Blessings.

April 1939

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Your way of approaching art is the right one and if you continue, keeping an absolute sincerity in your attitude and your attempt, you are bound to succeed.

There is something correct in your appreciation of oriental art, but it is incomplete. However we shall leave the subject for the moment, for I have no time to explain all that just now. As for Léonard de Vinci, Michel Ange² and Raphael, I cannot put them on the same level. The two first are far greater than the last. They both belong to the world of creative force, Léonard with more subtlety and quiet, deep vision and purity, Michel Ange with more force and power especially in his sculptures which are incomparably magnificent. Raphael is more mental and superficial.

30 June 1939

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² The Mother spelled these two names in the French way.

Words of the Mother – III

X told me that you have given permission for the decoration of the meditation hall. I had intended to decorate only the room where you used to sit for Pranam. I hear you would like the whole hall and the space up the staircase to be done. This is a very big scheme. But Y also intends to do the work and, if asked, X may also join.

What I wish to tell you is that to make the work harmonious and quiet only one person must design the whole thing, and all must work in the same manner. I would like to know from you if you have any subject matter. I wish to know from you how the thing should be done. Please let me know your idea.

I agree that one person alone must design the whole thing, the others can join in the execution only.

I have no subject or scheme. I only wish that the decoration should be *quiet* from the point of view of colour and also of composition.

Do some sketches and projects, and send them to me.

Blessings.

31 July 1939