September 16, 1964

103 – Vivekananda, exalting Sannyasa\(^1\), has said that in all Indian history there is only one Janaka\(^2\). Not so, for Janaka is not the name of a single individual, but a dynasty of self-ruling kings and the triumph-cry of an ideal.

104 – In all the lakhs of ochre-clad Sannyasins\(^3\), how many are perfect? It is the few attainments and the many approximations that justify an ideal.

105 – There have been hundreds of perfect Sannyasins, because Sannyasa had been widely preached and numerously practiced; let it be the same with the ideal freedom and we shall have hundreds of Janakas.

106 – Sannyasa has a formal garb and outer tokens; therefore men think they can easily recognise it; but the freedom of a Janaka does not proclaim itself and it wears the garb of the world; to its presence even Narada was blinded.

107 – Hard is it to be in the world, free, yet living the life of ordinary men; but because it is hard, therefore it must be attempted and accomplished.

It seems so obvious!

*It's obvious, but difficult too.*

You see, to be free from all attachments doesn't mean to run away from opportunities for attachment. All those people who assert their asceticism not only run away, but warn others that they shouldn't try!

It seems to me so obvious. When you need to run away from a thing in order not to experience it, it means you aren't above it, you are still on that level.

All that eliminates and diminishes or lessens doesn't free. Freedom must be experienced in the totality of life and sensations.

In this connection, there has been a whole period of study of this subject, on the purely physical level.... To rise above all possibility of error, you tend to eliminate the opportunities for error; for instance, if you don't want to utter unnecessary words, you stop speaking. People who make a vow of silence imagine it gives a control over speech — that's not true! It only eliminates the opportunities to speak, and therefore of saying unnecessary things. For food, it's the same problem: how to eat only just what is needed?... In the transitional state we find ourselves in, we no longer want to live that wholly animal life based on material exchanges and food, but it would be folly to think we have reached the state in which the

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1  *Sannyasa*: renunciation of works and worldly life.
2  King of Mithila at the time of the Upanishads, famed for his spiritual knowledge and divine realization, even though he led a worldly life.
3  *Sannyasin*: a wandering monk who has renounced works and worldly life.
body can live on without any food at all (still, there is already a big difference, since they are trying to find the nutritional essence in foods in order to reduce their volume); but the natural tendency is fasting — which is a mistake!

For fear of acting wrongly, we stop doing anything; for fear of speaking wrongly, we stop saying anything; for fear of eating for the pleasure of eating, we stop eating anything — that's not freedom, it's simply reducing the manifestation to its minimum. And the natural outcome is Nirvana. But if the Lord wanted only Nirvana, there would be only Nirvana! He obviously conceives the coexistence of all opposites and that, to Him, must be the beginning of a totality. So, of course, you may, if you feel that you are meant for that, choose only one of His manifestations, that is to say, the absence of manifestation. But that's still a limitation. And it's not the only way of finding Him, far from it!

It's a very widespread tendency, which probably comes from an old suggestion, or perhaps from a poverty, an incapacity: to reduce and reduce — reduce one's needs, reduce one's activities, reduce one's words, reduce one's food, reduce one's active life, and it all becomes so cramped! In the aspiration not to make any mistakes, you eliminate the opportunities of making them — that's no cure.

But the other path is far, far more difficult.

Yes, I am thinking, for instance, of those who live in the West, who live the Western life: they are constantly swamped with work, with appointments, with telephones... they don't have one minute to purify what constantly falls on them and to collect themselves. In those conditions, how can they be free men? How is it possible?

This is the other extreme.

(silence)

No, the solution is to act from the divine impulse alone, to speak from the divine impulse alone, to eat from the divine impulse alone. That's what is difficult, because, naturally, you immediately confuse the divine impulse with your personal impulses!

That was the idea, I think, of all the apostles of renunciation: eliminate all that comes from outside or from below, so that if something from above manifests, you will be in a fit state to receive it. But from the collective point of view, it's a process that may take thousands of years! From the individual point of view, it's possible; but then the aspiration to receive the true impulse should be kept intact — not the aspiration to total ‘libreation’, but the aspiration to the ACTIVE identification with the Supreme, in other words, to want only what He wants, to do only what He wants, to exist only through Him, in Him.

So the method of renunciation may be tried, but it's a method for someone who wants to cut himself off from others. And can there be an integrality in that case? ... It doesn't seem possible to me.

Announcing publicly what you intend to do helps considerably. It may give rise to objections, contempt, conflicts, but that's largely made up for by the public 'expectation', if we may say so: by what others expect from you. That was certainly the reason for those robes: to let people know. Obviously, you may incur the contempt and ill will of some people, but there are all those who feel, “I mustn't touch this, I mustn't have anything to do with it, it's not my concern.”
I don't know why, it has always seemed to me to be showing off — it may not be that, and in certain cases it isn't, but still it's a way of telling people, “Ah! Here is what I am.” And as I said, it may help, but there are drawbacks.

It's still childish.

All those things are methods, stages on the way, but ... true freedom is being free from everything — including from all methods.

(silence)

It's a restriction, a narrowing, while the True Thing is a blossoming, a widening, an identification with everything.

When you reduce and reduce and reduce yourself, you don't feel you're losing yourself, it takes away the fear of losing yourself — you become something solid and compact. But the method of widening — maximum widening — there, you must ... you mustn't be afraid of losing yourself.

It's far more difficult.

What do you have to say?

I was wondering, in fact, how this can be done in an external world that's constantly absorbing you.

Ah, we must pick and choose.

Certainly monasteries, retreats, running away to the forest or to caves, are necessary to counterbalance modern overactivity, and yet that exists less today than one or two thousand years ago. But it seems to me it was a lack of understanding — it didn't last long.

It is clearly the excess of activity that makes the excess of immobility necessary.

But how to find the way to be what you should be in ordinary conditions?

The way not to fall into either excess?

Yes, to live normally, to be free.

Mon petit, that's why we started the Ashram! That was the idea. Because when I was in France, I was always asking myself, “How can people have the time to find themselves? How can they even have the time to understand the way to free themselves?” So I thought: a place where material needs are sufficiently satisfied, so that if you truly want to free yourself, you can do so. And it was on this idea that the Ashram was founded, not on any other; a place where people's means of existence would be sufficient to give them the time to think of the True Thing.

(Mother smiles) Human nature is such that laziness has taken the place of aspiration (not for everyone, but still fairly generally), and license or libertinism has taken the place of freedom. Which would tend to prove that the human species must go through a period of brutal handling before it can be ready to get away more sincerely from the slavery to activity.
The first movement is indeed like this: “At last, to find the place where I can concentrate, find myself, live truly without having to bother about material things....” This is the first aspiration (it's even on this basis that the disciples — at least in the beginning — were chosen), but it doesn't last! Things become easy, so you let yourself go. There are no moral restraints, so you do stupid things.

But it cannot even be said it was a mistake in recruiting — it would be tempting to believe this, but it's not true, because the recruiting was done on the basis of a rather precise and clear inner sign.... It's probably the difficulty of keeping the inner attitude unalloyed. That's exactly what Sri Aurobindo wanted and attempted; he used to say, “If I can find a hundred people, it will be enough for my purpose.”

But it wasn't a hundred for long, and I must say that when it was a hundred, it was already mixed.

Many people came, attracted by the True Thing, but ... one slackens. In other words, an impossibility to remain firm in one's true position.

Yes, I've noticed that in the extreme difficulty of the world's external conditions, the aspiration is far more intense.

Isn't it!

It's far more intense, it's almost a question of life and death.

Yes, that's right! Which means that man is still so crude that he needs extremes. That's what Sri Aurobindo said: for Love to be true, Hate was necessary; true Love could be born only under the pressure of hate.\(^4\) That's it. Well, we have to accept things as they are and try to go farther, that's all.

It is probably why there are so many difficulties (difficulties are piling up here: difficulties of character, difficulties of health and difficulties of circumstances), it's because the consciousness awakens under the impulse of difficulties.

If everything is easy and peaceful, you fall asleep.

That's also how Sri Aurobindo explained the necessity of war: in peace, people become flabby.

It's too bad.

I can't say I find it very pretty, but it seems to be that way.

Basically, that's also what Sri Aurobindo says in The Hour of God: “If you have the Force and Knowledge and do not seize the opportunity, well ... woe to you.”

It isn't at all vengeance, it isn't at all punishment, it's just that you attract a necessity, the necessity of a violent impulse — of a reaction to a violence.

(silence)

It's an experience I have more and more clearly: for the contact with that true divine Love to be able to manifest, that is, to express itself freely, it requires a POWER in beings and in things ... which doesn't exist yet. Otherwise, everything breaks apart.

\(^4\) See Aphorisms 88 to 92 (Essays Divine and Human, p.433).
There are scores of very convincing details, but, naturally, as they are ‘details’ or very personal things, I can't talk about them.

But on the basis of the proof or proofs of repeated experiences, I am forced to say this: when that Power of PURE Love — a wonderful Power, beyond any expression — as soon as it begins to manifest fully, freely, a great many things seem to collapse instantly: they can't hold on. They can't hold on, they're dissolved. Then ... then everything comes to a stop. And that stop, which we might believe to be a disgrace, is on the contrary an infinite Grace!

Just the ever so slightly concrete and tangible perception of the difference between the vibration in which we live normally and almost continuously and that Vibration, just the realization of that infirmity, which I call nauseous — it really gives you a feeling of nausea — is enough to stop everything.

No later than yesterday, this morning ... there are long moments when that Power manifests, and then, suddenly, there is a Wisdom — an immeasurable Wisdom — which makes everything relax in a perfect tranquillity: “What is to be will be, it will take the time it will take.” Then, everything is fine. With this, everything is immediately fine. But the Splendor goes.

We can only be patient.

Sri Aurobindo, too, wrote it: “Aspire intensely, but without impatience....” The difference between intensity and impatience is very subtle (everything is a difference of vibration); it's subtle, but it makes the whole difference.

Intensely, but without impatience.... That's it: that's the state in which we must be.

And then, for a long, a very long time, we should be content with the inner results, that is, results of personal and individual reactions, of inner contacts with the rest of the world, and not hope for or will things to materialize too soon. Because that haste people have generally delays things.

If this is the way things are, it's the way things are.

We — people, I mean — live a harried life. It is a sort of semiconscious feeling of the shortness of their life; they don't think about it, but they feel it semiconsciously. So they are forever wanting to go — quickly, quickly, quickly — from one thing to another, to do one thing quickly in order to go on to the next, instead of each thing living in its own eternity. We are forever wanting to go forward, forward, forward ... and we spoil the work.

That is why some have preached that the only important moment is the present moment — which isn't true in practice, but from the psychological point of view, it should be true. In other words, let us live every minute to the utmost of our possibility, without foreseeing or wanting or expecting or preparing the next minute. Because we are forever in a hurry-hurry-hurry ... and we do everything wrong. We live in an inner tension which is totally false — totally false.

All those who tried to be wise have always said it (the Chinese have preached it, the Indians have preached it): live with the sense of Eternity. In Europe, too, they said you should contemplate the sky, the stars, identify with their infinitude — all of which makes you wide and peaceful.

They are methods, but they are indispensable.

And I have observed it in the body's cells: they would seem to be forever in a hurry to do what they have to do for fear of not having the time to do it. So they do nothing properly. Clumsy people (there are people who bump into everything, their gestures are brusque and clumsy) have this to a high degree — this sort of haste to do things quickly, quickly, quickly.... Yesterday, someone was complaining of rheumatic pains in his back and said to
me, “Oh, it makes me waste so much time, I do things so slowly!” I said to him (Mother laughs), “So what!” He wasn't happy. You understand, to complain if you have pain means you're soft, that's all, but to say, “I'm wasting so much time, I do things so slowly!” was the very clear picture of that haste in which people live — they hurtle through life ... where to? ... to end up in a crash!

What's the use?

(silence)

Basically, the moral of all these aphorisms is that it is far more important to BE than to be seen to be — you must live, not pretend — and that it is far more important to realize a thing entirely, sincerely and perfectly than to let others know you're realizing it!

It's the same thing again: when you feel the need to proclaim what you are doing, you spoil half of your action.

And yet, at the same time, it helps you to take stock and know exactly where you stand.

It was Buddha's wisdom when he said, “The middle path”: not too much on this side, not too much on that side, don't fall on this side, don't fall on that side — a bit of everything, and a balanced ... but PURE path.

Purity and sincerity are the same thing.