3 February 1951

“What do you want the Yoga for? To get power? To attain to peace and calm? To serve humanity?

“None of these motives is sufficient to show that you are meant for the Path.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (7 April)

The main trouble is that you think with words, but these words are empty of meaning; most of the time they are mere words — you talk of the Divine, you talk of the Supreme, you talk of Yoga, you say many things, but does all that correspond in your head to something concrete, to a thought, a feeling, a clear idea, an experience? Or are they simply words?

It is said that Yoga is the “final goal of life”, but what do you expect from this final goal? Some say it means to know oneself; that is the personal and individual aspect. If it is pushed a little farther it means to be conscious of the truth of one’s being: why are you born and what should you do? And if it is pushed still farther, you may become conscious of your relations with other human beings; and a little farther yet, you may ask what is the role, the aim of humanity in the world? And yet again, what is the condition of the earth from the psychological standpoint? What is the universe, what is its goal, its role? In this way, you move from stage to stage and finally you see the problem in its totality. You must see the thing, the experience behind the words. Here we speak of Yoga but elsewhere one would speak differently; some would say, “I am seeking my raison d’être”, and so on. Those who have a religious bent will say, “I want to find the divine Presence.” There are fifty ways of saying the thing but it is the thing which is important; you must feel it in your head, in your heart, everywhere. It must be concrete, living, otherwise you cannot advance. You must come out of words and
get into action — get into the experience, get into life. (Mother turns to a child) Do you intend to do Yoga?

Yes, Mother.

Why do you want to do Yoga?

To feel the Presence of the Divine.

And you?

To realise the Divine, and for that one must perfect oneself.

And you, why does Yoga interest you?

Because I am able to know myself.

And you?

To do what one feels as the inner truth.

And you, are you doing Yoga?

At times.

You are honest, but why at times?...

(Addressing another child) Do you have any idea as to what Yoga is?

I think it is a way by which...

What is there at the end of the way?

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_The constant Presence of the Divine._

(Turning to another child) In Yoga what is it that interests you most?

_I do not understand what Yoga is. Is it in concentrating on you?

It is a good symbol.

Anyway, happily nobody has said that he desired Yoga to obtain power. There are countries and people who know vaguely that there is something called yoga, and they begin it with the idea that they will become superior to others, will get a greater power than others and consequently will be able to dominate others — this is the worst reason, the most selfish, that which brings the most harmful consequences. Others who are greatly troubled, who have a very difficult life, who have worries, sorrows, many cares, say, “Oh, I shall find something that will give me peace, tranquillity, and I shall be able to get a little rest.” And they rush into Yoga thinking they are going to be quite happy and satisfied. Unfortunately, it is not altogether like that. When you begin the Yoga for reasons of this kind, you are sure to meet great difficulties on the way. And then there is this great virtue in men’s eyes: “philanthropy”, “love of humanity”; so many people say, “I am going to do Yoga to be able to serve humanity, make the unhappy happy, organise the world in the happiest way for everybody.” I say this is not sufficient — I do not say that this is bad in itself, although I have heard an old occultist say wittily: “It won’t be so very soon that there will be no more misery in the world, because there are too many people who are happy to live on this misery.” It was a witticism but it is not altogether wrong. If there were no misery to soothe, the philanthropist would no longer have any reason for his existence — he is so satisfied with himself, he has so strong an impression that he is not selfish! I knew such people who would be very
unhappy if there were no more misery upon earth! What would they do if there were no longer any misery to relieve, what would be their activity and what their glorification? How would they be able to show people “I am not selfish!”, and that they are generous, full of kindness?

“Do you want the Yoga for the sake of the Divine?... If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path.

“This is the first thing necessary — aspiration for the Divine.”

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The first movement of aspiration is this: you have a kind of vague sensation that behind the universe there is something which is worth knowing, which is probably (for you do not yet know it) the only thing worth living for, which can connect you with the Truth; something on which the universe depends but which does not depend upon the universe, something which still escapes your comprehension but which seems to you to be behind all things.... I have said here much more than the majority of people feel about the thing, but this is the beginning of the first aspiration — to know that, not to live in this perpetual falsehood where things are so perverted and artificial, this would be something pleasant; to find something that is worth living for.

“The next thing you have to do is to tend this aspiration, to keep it always alert and awake and living.”

Ibid.

Instead of telling yourself once in a while, “Oh, yes! I am thinking of finding the Divine”, just when there is something unpleasant, when you are a little disgusted because you feel tired — indeed, there are very many flimsy reasons — all of a sudden you remember that there is such a thing as yoga, something like
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the Divine to know who can get you out of this flatness of life.

“And for that what is required is concentration — concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose.”

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This is the second step. That is to say, you begin wanting to find and know the Divine and live it. You must feel at the same time that the thing is so precious, so important that your entire life is not sufficient for acquiring it. Then, the first movement is a self-giving; you tell yourself, “I do not want any longer to belong to myself, for the sake of my little personal satisfaction, I wish to belong to this marvellous thing which one must find, must know, must live and for which I aspire.”

“Concentrate in the heart. Enter into it; go within and deep and far, as far as you can. Gather all the strings of your consciousness that are spread abroad, roll them up and take a plunge and sink down.”

Ibid.

Naturally, when I speak of the heart, I do not mean the physical organ, the viscera, but the psychological or psychic centre of the being.

Mother then reads a question asked during her talk in 1929:

“What is one to do to prepare oneself for the Yoga?”

Ibid.

I replied to the person who put this question to me: “Become conscious first of all.” So the person tried to become conscious and a few months later came and told me, “Oh, what a nasty present you gave me! Formerly, in my relations with people,
they all used to seem so nice; I had goodwill, they were so nice towards me, and now, since becoming conscious, I see all kinds of things in myself that are not quite pretty, and at the same time I see in others things that are not at all beautiful!” I answered her, “Quite possible! If you do not want trouble, it is better not to come out of your ignorance.”

The first step therefore is to find out whether one wants to see and know the truth or wants to remain comfortably in one’s ignorance.

“What is the attitude today of the average man?... Does he not rise in anger and revolt directly he meets something that partakes of the genuinely divine? Does he not feel that the Divine means the destruction of his cherished possessions?”

Ibid.

This means very clearly that so long as you remain in your small individual egoism, you will never be ready to make the gesture, to take the plunge, which will enable you to identify yourself with the Divine.

In this connection I could tell you something: long ago there were people who came here because they thought that joining the Ashram was sufficient to make one immortal. And they aspired much for immortality. Naturally, they were old people who did not see a very long road before them and desired to extend it indefinitely — for that is what men understand by “immortality”, an indefinite prolongation of what they are. So, to the first person who made this remark, I replied, “I do not know if everyone can become immortal — probably not — but even among those who have the capacity of becoming immortal, how many are ready to pay the price for it?” Because the number of things which have to be left behind is so considerable that perhaps half-way they would say, “Ah, no, the price is too much.” I remember a painter with whom I had a talk about the possibility of immortality and
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who asked me what a new world would be like. I told him things would be, for instance, luminous in themselves and there would no longer be this kind of reflected light which comes here upon earth from the sun. And as I was speaking I saw his face becoming longer, more and more grave; finally he said, “But then how can one do painting without the shadow which brings out the light of things?...” I told him, “You have given exactly the key to the problem.”

There were many people, a very large number, who asked me what the new life would be like and to whom I said, “There will be an interchange of forces, a circulating energy; the structure of the body will be quite different, all these ungainly organs will disappear and be replaced by psychological functions; and the necessity of eating, always eating, will disappear.” Once again I saw faces getting longer and longer! People said, “Oh! And all the good things we eat, all that will go?”

These are small instances, there are many others, things more important. The most important, the most difficult thing is to renounce one’s ego, for to somebody who is not ready, to renounce his ego is like dying and dying much more than a physical death, for to him the death of the ego is like a dissolution of the being — this is not correct but it begins by giving this sort of impression. To be immortal one must renounce all limitations and the ego is the greatest of limitations; hence if “I” am not immortal, what is the good of that?

In the same talk someone had asked Mother how all those then present had happened to meet, and Mother had answered:

“We have all met in previous lives. Otherwise we would not have come together in this life.”

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It can be said that it is chance or that it is because we have always been together, and both are equally true. As this lady
liked occultism I told her also, “We have met in a previous life” and that is true, isn’t it? But it is a way of seeing things. Also, “We all belong to the same family”, this too is true but not in the way in which human beings look at it.

I also said, “We have worked together through the ages for the victory of the Divine and His manifestation upon earth.” This is quite evident, for the universe has been created for that and therefore every part of the universe, whatever it be, works for it, knowingly or unknowingly, but works for it all the same.