10 March 1951

“The power of money is at present under the influence or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world. It is because of this influence that you never see money going in any considerable amount to the cause of Truth. Always it goes astray, because it is in the clutch of the hostile forces and is one of the principal means by which they keep their grip upon the earth. The hold of the hostile forces upon money-power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task. Each time that you try to draw a little of this money away from its present custodians, you have to undertake a fierce battle.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (12 May)

It is often said in fairy tales that a treasure is guarded by serpents. Is this true?

Yes, but it is not a physical serpent, it is a vital serpent. The key to the treasures is in the vital world and it is guarded by an immense black serpent — a tremendous serpent, ten times, fifty times larger than an ordinary one. It keeps the gates of the treasure. It is magnificent, black, always erect and awake. I happened once to be standing before it (usually these beings obey me when I give them an order), and I said to it, “Let me pass.” It replied, “I would willingly let you pass, but if I do, they will kill me; so I cannot let you pass.” I asked, “What must I bring you in order to gain entrance?” It said, “Oh, only one thing would oblige me to give way to you: if you could become master of the sex impulse in man, if you succeeded in conquering that in humanity, I could no longer resist, I would allow you to pass.”
Questions and Answers

It has not yet allowed me to pass. I must admit that I have not fulfilled the condition, I have not been able to obtain such a mastery of it as to conquer it in all men.

That is quite difficult.

Before cutting one’s relations with beings who are linked with a vital entity, one must be sure of their connection. How can one be sure?

Evidently it is difficult to know, unless one has direct vision of the vital, that is to say, unless one is able to see directly into the vital world. I have seen many, many times... that two things may happen, and generally do happen. When, for some reason or other, you do not agree with someone — if there is a conflict of interests, if there has been a quarrel — there is a tendency to say of him, “He is a vital being.” One ought to mistrust oneself first, and afterwards what the other says. There is another case, still more interesting: I knew two persons at least who were not only under the vital influence but incarnations of beings of the vital world. Well, it was these very persons who constantly denounced others as possessed by beings of the vital world! So then, it is better not to jump to conclusions. There are instances where ignorance is better than half-knowledge, for if you do not know that you are dealing with a being of the vital world, you can act as you do with an ordinary human being, that is, protect yourself sufficiently, not give yourself up if it is an enemy, be on your guard, have great patience. And afterwards you don’t pay any attention to what this man does or does not do to you. Only those who possess a perfected vital being and are completely disinterested can tell you, “This person or that one is a dangerous being.”

“The human being is at home and safe in the material body; the body is his protection. There are some who are full of contempt for their bodies and think that things
will be much better and easier after death without them. But in fact the body is your fortress and your shelter. While you are lodged in it the forces of the hostile world find a difficulty in getting any direct hold upon you. What are nightmares? These are your sorties into the vital world. And what is the first thing you try to do when you are in the grip of a nightmare? You rush back into your body and shake yourself into your normal physical consciousness.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (12 May)

What becomes of the vital being after death?

It is dissolved. Rarely does it happen otherwise. But if you have had a very strong passion, if you were divided by fixed impulses, the vital being would break up into small pieces. Instead of going off like a vapour or a liquid, it goes off by little bits. Each of these pieces of vital substance is gathered around the central impulse, the central desire, the central passion of that piece, thus creating little entities which don’t have a human form but take at times an indefinite form; at times they resemble the body to which the pieces belonged, at other times they take a form expressing the desire they represent. And naturally their sole concern is to satisfy their desire or passion and they search everywhere for the means of self-satisfaction.

Take, for instance, the passion of a miser for his fortune. He dies. His vital being is dissolved, but his passion for his money remains alive. It gathers around itself a certain number of elements to form a living and conscious entity in the vital world. If this man has in his lifetime hidden a treasure somewhere, that entity goes and installs itself just above the place where the treasure is, as if to guard it and stop people from coming near it. But there are sensitive people who, when they know that a treasure is hidden somewhere, feel the presence and say, “The treasure is there.” That is the first effect. The other
Questions and Answers

effect is that the entity, not wanting the treasure to be touched, always brings about some catastrophe to guard its property. It makes those who approach it ill or it causes an accident, even an assassination; any means is good for it; or if the person is very sensitive, it gives him such a fright that he goes mad.

There are also lots of little entities, quite repugnant, in very large numbers, which originate from that wretched sexual desire. If this desire (with its corresponding entities) is not dissolved at the time of death, these entities continue to exist and they come and settle in the atmosphere of sensitive persons to goad them, spur them on. These entities feed upon the vital force emanated at the time of the act and naturally their only desire is to get as much nourishment as they can. I have seen people enringed by dozens of these beings. It is a very concrete thing.... I don’t know if you have heard of Maurice Magre, the writer who had come here. He has said in one of his books that people who have a very strong sexual instinct are surrounded by a swarm of these small beings, who plague them to satisfy themselves, to feed upon the vital force. He knew the thing quite well, he had observed it. To those who are ever so little sensitive, it is very perceptible. Even the people who are tormented very often feel that the impulse comes from outside — it arouses something inside them, but they feel that the excitation comes from outside. And there are hundreds of thousands of them, for unfortunately it is one of the greatest difficulties of mankind, it is a terrible slavery.

In vital nightmares, which part of the being goes out of the body?

Your vital — not the whole of it for that would produce a cataleptic state, but a portion of the vital goes out for a stroll. Some always go to the nastiest places and so have very bad nights — the possibilities in these nightly rambles are innumerable. It may be a very small thing, just a little portion of your being,
but if it is conscious, that is enough to give you a fine little nightmare!

You know, when you sleep, the inner beings are not concentrated upon the body, they go out and become more or less independent — a limited independence, but independence all the same — and they go to live in their own domains. The mind more so, for it is hardly held within the body, it is only concentrated but not contained in the body. The vital also goes beyond the body, but it is more concentrated upon the body. The mind however is such a supple substance that it is sufficient to think about a person in order to be with that person, at least partially, mentally. If you think strongly of a place, a part of your mind is there; distance, so to say, does not exist. Of course, to have a mind centralised around the body requires good training. Few people have a mind with a well-defined form: it is like clouds which roll, come and go. Even to have a vital with a form similar to that of your physical body, an analogous form, it must be very much individualised, very much centralised. The mind still more; it must be completely individualised, centralised, organised around the psychic centre in order to have a definite form.

There are people who spend their life organising their mind. I have known some who had made of their mind a kind of fortress, a huge construction (I am speaking of people who had uncommon mental capacities). They had made of their mind quite a big edifice, very powerful and of such a fixity, with such solid walls that they had lost all contact with the outer mental world: they lived completely within their own construction and all the phenomena of their consciousness were of their own making — they had no longer any contact with the outside mental world. They retained contact with their own vital and their body, in a way, but all the phenomena of their consciousness were lodged within their mental construction — they could no longer get out of it. Well, this happens very strongly to people who seek for a spiritual life through the classical methods of
a renunciation of the material consciousness, a concentration on their inner being and identification with it. If I gave you the names of some, you would be quite astonished. They construct for themselves a conception in which one finds all the gradations of the mind, a construction so solid and so fixed that they become imprisoned within it and when they believe they have reached the supreme Truth, they have only reached the centre of their own mental construction.

And they have all the experiences they used to foresee: the experience of liberation, the experience of going out of the body, the experience of identification with the Supreme, all, all, but all of their own making; this has no contact with the universal reality. Then if someone touches it, if for some reason or other someone has the power to touch it or simply to make a breach in one of the walls, at first they are completely upset, then they come to regard the force that could do this as a force of terrible destruction, a manifestation of a hostile force of the worst kind!

What is a “mental nightmare”? 

When there is a chaos in the brain or a local fever, a particular turmoil in the brain, an overstrain, or if there is a want of control, you let yourself be possessed by mental formations, this is what happens most often — mental formations which, most often, you yourself have made, besides. And as the control of the rational, waking consciousness has gone, all this begins to dance a saraband in the head, with a kind of raging madness; ideas get entangled, collide, fight, it is truly hallucinating. Then, unless you have the power to bring a great peace into your head, a great tranquillity, a very strong and pure light, well, it is ten times worse than a vital nightmare. The worst of a vital nightmare consists generally in fighting with an enemy who wants to kill you, and you strike him terrible blows, and the blows never hit; you exert all your force, all your energy, and you do not
succeed in touching your adversary. He is there in front of you, he threatens you, he is going to strangle you and you gather all your strength, you try to strike, but nothing touches him. When the struggle is like that, hand to hand, with a being who throws himself upon you, it is particularly painful. That is why you are advised not to go out of the body unless you have the necessary power or the purity. You see, in this kind of nightmare the force you want to use is the “memory” of a physical force; but one may have great physical strength, be a first-class boxer, and yet be completely powerless in the vital world because one does not have the necessary vital power. As for the mental nightmares, that kind of frightful saraband in the head, one has altogether the impression of going mad.

At the time of death, the psychic being goes to take rest, doesn’t it? But the vital is stopped in the vital world; does this prevent the psychic from going to rest?

But the vital does not go to rest nor does the mental being. Generally they are dissolved. It is only if one has followed a yoga throughout his whole life, if one has taken great care to individualise, to centralise the vital and the mental around the psychic being that they remain—that happens once in ten million cases, it is very exceptional. Take the case of a philosopher or a writer who has worked considerably in his brain, tried to organise it; that then persists, but as a capacity to think, nothing else. There are these capacities of thinking which persist after death and they try naturally to find another physical brain in which to manifest. It is in this way that the mind of a great thinker may identify itself with another mind and be able to express itself.

From the vital point of view, take the case of a great musician who has worked all his life to make his external being a good instrument for music; he has organised this vital power in his body for playing music; well then, his hands, for instance, are so
Questions and Answers

individualised in their ability to play, that they can persist subtly even after death, with their form, a form analogous to the old physical form. They float in the vital world and are attracted by people who have similar capacities; they try to become identified with them. A person who is sensitive enough, receptive enough, can become identified with these hands and execute wonderful things, profit by all the individualisation of the past life of these hands.

Does the same phenomenon occur in the case of scientists when the results of their work are realised some time after their death?

Yes, in the case of Pierre and Marie Curie, for example, it is certain that the power of work of Pierre Curie passed into his wife at his death.

Men who undertake excavations in the tombs of Egypt often meet with accidents. Why?

They deserve it! When they violate the tombs, you see... There are countless stories of this kind. But that is another phenomenon.

Let me explain: in the physical form is found the “spirit of the form” and this spirit of the form persists for a certain time even when outwardly the person is pronounced dead. And as long as the spirit of the form persists, the body is not destroyed. In ancient Egypt they had this knowledge; they knew that if they prepared the body in a certain way, the spirit of the form would not leave it and the body would not disintegrate. In some cases they have succeeded wonderfully; and if one violates the repose of beings who have remained thus for thousands of years, it is understandable that they may not be very pleased, especially when their repose is violated out of an unhealthy curiosity, legitimised in the “cause of science”.

196
In the Musée Guimet in Paris, there are two mummies. Of one practically nothing is left, but in the other the spirit of the form has remained very conscious, conscious to such an extent that one can make contact with the consciousness. Evidently when a bunch of idiots come to stare at you with their blank, saucer-eyes which understand nothing, and say, “Oh, it is like this, it is like that”, it cannot give much pleasure.

You see, they begin by committing an outrage: these mummies are enclosed in a box of a particular form according to the person, with all that is necessary to preserve them; now, the box is opened, more or less violently, some wrappings are stripped away here and there to provide a better view.... And considering that it was never ordinary people who were mumified, these were beings who had attained an appreciable inner power or who were of royal birth, people more or less initiated.

There is a mummy which has been the cause of a large number of catastrophes; she was a princess, daughter of a Pharaoh, and secretly at the head of a college of initiation at Thebes.

Well, men are like that....