2 April 1951

You have said: “By Yoga the inner transformation that is in slow constant process in the creation is rendered more intense and rapid, but the pace of the outer transformation remains almost the same as in ordinary life. As a result, the disharmony between the inner and the outer being in one who is doing Yoga tends to be all the greater, unless precautions are taken....”

Questions and Answers 1929 (16 June)

What are these precautions?

That depends upon people. Each case is different. Individual precautions would be different according to individual reactions, difficulties, resistances. For each one there is a programme to follow which is good only for him. There is no general rule. These things cannot be distributed as one distributes sweets. If someone asks me “What should I do?” — well that, yes.

What are the causes of accidents? Are they due to a disequilibrium?

If one answers deeply... Outwardly there are many causes, but there is a deeper cause which is always there. I said the other day that if the nervous envelope is intact, accidents can be avoided, and even if there is an accident it won’t have any consequences. As soon as there is a scratch or a defect in the nervous envelope of the being and according to the nature of this scratch, if one may say so, its place, its character, there will be an accident which will correspond to the diminution of resistance in the envelope. I believe almost everybody is psychologically aware of one thing: that accidents occur when one has a sort
of uncomfortable feeling, when one is not fully conscious and well-possessed, when one feels uneasy. In any case, generally, people have a feeling that they are not fully themselves, not fully aware of what they are doing. If one were fully conscious, the consciousness wide awake, accidents would not occur; one would make just the right gesture, the necessary movement to avoid the accident. Hence, in an almost absolute way, it is a flagging of consciousness. Or quite possibly it may be that the consciousness is fixed in a higher domain; for example, not to speak of spiritual things, a man who is busy solving a mental problem and is very concentrated upon his mental problem, becomes inattentive to physical things, and if he happens to be in a street or in a crowd, his attention fixed upon his problem, he will not make the movement necessary to avoid the accident, and the accident will occur. It is the same for sports, for games; you can observe this easily, there is always a flagging of the consciousness when accidents occur, or a lack of attention, a little absent-mindedness; suddenly one thinks of something else, the attention is drawn elsewhere — one is not fully conscious of what one is doing and the accident happens.

As I was telling you at the beginning, if for some reason or other — for example, lack of sleep, lack of rest or an absorbing preoccupation or all sorts of things which tire you, that is to say, when you are not above them — if the vital envelope is a little damaged, it does not function perfectly and any current of force whatever which passes through is enough to produce an accident. In the final analysis, the accident comes always from that, it is what one may call inattentiveness or a slackening of consciousness. There are days when one feels quite... not exactly uneasy, but as though one were trying to catch something which escapes, one can’t hold together, one is as though half-diluted; these are the days of accidents. You must be attentive. Naturally, this is not to tell you to shut yourself up in your room and not to stir out when you feel like that! This is not what I mean. Rather I mean that you must watch all the more attentively, be all the
Questions and Answers

more on your guard, not allow, precisely, this inattentiveness, this slackening of consciousness to come in.

Are there not accidents which are almost inevitable? I just read of a case cited by an American who had the gift of clairvoyance. A child was playing on a railway track, it was in danger. Suddenly the witness saw an apparition beside the child and he breathed a sigh of relief, thinking, “The child will be saved.” But to his great astonishment the apparition put its hand over the eyes of the child and threw it in some way under the train. This man was much troubled, he could not understand why a being whom he had taken for a higher being would push a child to its death.

Certainly this may be true, but without having the vision oneself, one can’t explain it.

It may be a question of two absolutely different things. Perhaps, indeed, it was its destiny, in the sense that it was the end of the life necessary for its psychic being, it was a death which had been predestined for some reason, because that can happen. Or perhaps it could be an adverse force which he took to be an angel of light, for generally people make this mistake — when they see an apparition they always think it is something heavenly. It is heavenly if you like, but it depends on what heaven it comes from!

It is a strange thing because.... Yes, the moment of unconsciousness, the slackening of consciousness may be translated by this someone putting the hand over the eyes.

One of the most common activities of these intolerable little entities which are in the human physical atmosphere and amuse themselves at men’s expense, is to blind you to such an extent that when you look for something, and the thing is staring you in the face, you do not see it! This happens very often. You search in vain, you turn everything over, you look into all possible
corners, but you don’t find the thing. Then you give up the problem and some time later (precisely when “the hand over the eyes” is removed), you come back to the same place and it is exactly there where you have looked, quietly lying there, it had not stirred! Only you were unconscious, you did not see. This is a very, very frequent amusement of these little entities. They also take pleasure in removing things, then they put them back, but at times they also don’t put them back! They displace them, indeed they have all sorts of little pranks. They are intolerable. Madame Blavatsky made much use of them, but I don’t know how she managed to make them so amiable, because generally they are quite unpleasant.

I had the experience — among innumerable instances — but precisely of two very striking cases, of two opposite things, only it was not the same beings.... There are little beings like fairies who are very sweet, very obliging, but they are not always there, they come from time to time when it pleases them. I remember the time I used to cook for Sri Aurobindo; I was also doing many other things at the same time, so I often happened to leave the milk on the fire and go for some other work or to see something with him, to discuss with somebody, and truly I was not always aware of the time, I used to forget the milk on the fire. And whenever I forgot the milk on the fire, I felt suddenly (in those days I used to wear a sari) a little hand catching a fold of my sari and pulling it, like this. Then I used to run quickly and would see that the milk was just on the point of boiling over. This did not happen just once, but several times, and very clearly, like a little child’s hand clutching and pulling.

The other story is of the days Sri Aurobindo had the habit of walking up and down in his rooms. He used to walk for several hours like that, it was his way of meditating. Only, he wanted to know the time, so a clock had been put in each room to enable him to see the time at any moment. There were three such clocks. One was in the room where I worked; it was, so to say, his starting-point. One day he came and asked, “What time
Questions and Answers

is it?” He looked and the clock had stopped. He went into the next room, saying, “I shall see the time there”—the clock had stopped. And it had stopped at the same minute as the other, you understand, with the difference of a few seconds. He went to the third room... the clock had stopped. He continued walking three times like that—all the clocks had stopped! Then he returned to my room and said, “But this is impossible! This is a bad joke!” and all the clocks, one after the other, started working again. I saw it myself, you know, it was a charming incident. He was annoyed, he said, “This is a bad joke!” And all the clocks started going again!

It is said that the material world in its unconsciousness has forgotten the Divine. Has it forgotten Him from the beginning?

It is concomitant. One cannot say that the material world is the result of obscurity and ignorance; one cannot say either that the obscurity and ignorance are the result of the world of Matter; but the two are concomitant, in the sense that both have exactly the same cause. What we call the material world came into being at the same time as the obscurity and ignorance, they are closely bound, but there is no cause and effect in the sense of a sequence in time. It is concomitant, both the things are the concomitant result of another cause: what has brought about obscurity and ignorance has at one go and at one time brought about the material world as we know it.