This aphorism is magnificent. There is nothing to say, it says everything.

3 March 1965

110 – To see the composition of the sun or the lines of Mars is doubtless a great achievement; but when thou hast the instrument that can show thee a man’s soul as thou seest a picture, then thou wilt smile at the wonders of physical Science as the playthings of babies.

This is the continuation of what we were saying before about those who want to “see”. Ramakrishna is supposed to have said to Vivekananda, “You can see the Lord just as you see me and hear His voice just as you hear mine.” Some people understood this as an announcement that the Lord was on earth in flesh and blood. I said (laughing): “No, it is not that! What he meant is that if you enter the true consciousness, you can hear Him — I say, hear much more clearly than you hear physically and see much more clearly than you see physically.” — “Oh! But...” — Immediately they open their eyes wide, it becomes something unreal!

Do the wonders of physical science make you smile?

The “wonders” are all right, that is their business. But it is their overweening self-assurance that makes me smile. They imagine that they know. They imagine that they have the key, that is what makes one smile. They imagine that with everything they have learnt they are the masters of Nature — that is childishness. Something will always escape them so long as they are not in touch with the creative Force and the creative Will.

It is an experiment you can easily make. A scientist can explain all visible phenomena, he can even use physical forces and
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make them do what he wants — and they have achieved stag-
gering results from the material point of view — but if you just
ask them this question, this simple question, “What is death?”
— in fact they know nothing about it. They can describe the
phenomenon as it happens materially, but if they are sincere,
they are obliged to say that it explains nothing.

There always comes a time when it no longer explains
anything. Because to know... to know is to have power.

(Silence)

Ultimately, what is most accessible to materialistic thought, to
scientific thought, is the fact that they cannot foresee. They
can foresee many things, but the unfolding of terrestrial events
is beyond their prevision. I think that this is the only thing
they can admit — there is a problematical element, a field of
unpredictability which eludes all their calculations.

I have never talked with a typical scientist who had the most
up-to-date knowledge, so I am not quite sure, I do not know how
far they admit the unpredictable or the incalculable.

What Sri Aurobindo means, I think, is that when one is in
communion with the soul and has the knowledge of the soul, that
knowledge is so much more wonderful than material knowledge
that there is almost a smile of disdain. I do not think he means
that the knowledge of the soul teaches you things about material
life that one cannot learn through science.

The only point — I do not know whether science has reached
it — is the unpredictability of the future. But perhaps they say it
is because they have not yet reached perfection in their instru-
bments and methods. For example, perhaps they think that when
man first appeared on earth, if they had had the instruments
which they have now, they would have been able to foresee the
transformation of the animal into man or the appearance of
man as a consequence of “something” in the animal — (Mother
smiles). I don’t know about their most modern claims. In that
case, they ought to be able to measure or perceive the difference in the atmosphere now, after the intrusion of something which was not there before, because that still belongs to the material domain. But I do not think this is what Sri Aurobindo meant; I think he meant that the world of the soul and the inner realities are so much more wonderful than physical realities, that all physical “wonders” make you smile — it is more like that.

But the key you mention, this key which they do not have, isn’t it precisely the soul? A power of the soul over Matter, to change Matter and to work physical wonders too. Doesn’t the soul have this power?

It has that power and exercises it constantly, but the human consciousness is not aware of it; and the big difference is that it is becoming aware. But it is becoming aware of something that is always there, and which others deny because they cannot see it.

For example, I have had the opportunity to study this. For me, circumstances, characters, all events and all beings move according to certain “laws”, so to say, which are not rigid, but which I can perceive and which enable me to see: this will lead to that and that will lead there, and since this person is like that, this will happen to him. It is more and more precise. Because of this, I could, if necessary, make predictions. But this relation of

16 When the disciple asked Mother whether this “something” was in fact the supramental force, she answered: “I would rather not give it a name, because people will make a dogma out of it. That is what happened when what is called ‘the first supramental manifestation’ occurred in 1956. I tried my best to prevent it from being made into a dogma. But if I say, ‘On such a date, such a thing happened’, it will be written in big letters and if anyone says anything else he will be told, ‘You are a heretic.’ So I do not want that. But it is indisputable that the atmosphere has changed, there is something new in the atmosphere — we can call it the ‘descent of the supramental truth’, because for us these words have a meaning, but I do not want to make a declaration out of it, because I do not want that to be the classical or ‘true’ way of describing the event. That is why I leave my phrase vague, purposely.”
cause and effect in that domain is quite obvious for me and it is corroborated by the facts; for them — those who do not have this vision and consciousness of the soul, as Sri Aurobindo says — circumstances unfold according to other superficial laws, which they consider as the natural consequences of things, completely superficial laws that do not stand up to deep analysis. But they do not have the inner capacity, so it does not worry them, it seems obvious to them.

I mean that this inner knowledge does not have the power to convince them. So that when in connection with any particular event I see: “Oh, but it is quite, quite obvious — for me — I have seen the Force of the Lord at work here, I have seen such and such a thing happen and of course that is what is going to occur” — for me, it is quite obvious, but I do not say what I know, because it does not correspond to anything in their experience; to them it would sound like rambling or pretension. That is to say, when you do not have the experience yourself, another person’s experience is not convincing, it cannot convince you.

It is not so much a power of acting on Matter — that is happening constantly; but, unless hypnotic methods are used, which are worthless, which lead nowhere — it is a power to open the understanding (gesture of piercing through the top of the head); that is what is so difficult.... A thing one has not experienced does not exist.

Even if some kind of miracle were to happen in front of them, they would have a material explanation for it; for them it would not be a miracle in the sense of an intervention of a force or power other than the material forces and powers. They would have their material explanation. For them it would not be convincing.

You can only understand if you yourself have touched this domain in your experience.

And one can see, one can see clearly: there is a possibility of understanding only insofar as something has awakened. That is the support, the basis.
In short, perhaps it is not so much a question of “transforming Matter” as of becoming aware of the true working.

That is exactly what I mean. The transformation can take place up to a certain point without one even being aware of it.

They say that there is a great difference: when man came, the animal had no way of perceiving it. Well, I say it is exactly the same thing: in spite of everything man has realised, man has no way of perceiving it — certain things may occur and he will only know about it much later, when “something” within him has developed enough for him to perceive it.

Even scientific development carried to its extreme, to the point where one really feels that there is almost no difference, where they arrive at this unity of substance, for example, where it seems that there is only an almost indiscernible or imperceptible transition between one state and the other — the material and the spiritual — well, no, it is not like that. To perceive this kind of unity, one must already carry within oneself the experience of the other thing; otherwise one cannot perceive it.

And precisely because they have acquired the capacity to explain, they explain external phenomena to themselves in such a way that they remain in their denial of the reality of inner phenomena — they say that these are, as it were, extensions of what they have studied.

Only, because of his very constitution, because there hardly exists a human being who hasn’t at least a reflection, or a shadow, or a beginning of a relation with his subtle being, his inner being, his soul — because of that there is always a flaw in their denial. But they consider that to be a weakness — it is their only strength.

(Silence)

It is really when one has the experience — the experience and
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knowledge and identity with the higher forces — that one can see the relativity of all external knowledge; but until then, no, one cannot, one denies the other realities.

I think this is what Sri Aurobindo meant: only when the other consciousness has been developed will the scientist smile and say, “Yes, it was all very well, but...”

In reality, one cannot lead to the other — except by an act of grace; if inwardly, there is an absolute sincerity which enables the scientist to see, to sense, to perceive the point at which it eludes him, then that can lead him to the other state of consciousness, but not by his own procedures. Something must abdicate and accept the new methods, the new perceptions, the new vibration, the new state of soul.

So, it is an individual matter. It is not a question of class or category — the question is whether the scientist is ready to be... something else.

(Silence)

One can only state one thing: everything you know, however beautiful, is nothing compared to what you can know if you are able to use the other methods.

(Silence)

This has been the whole object of my work recently: how to touch this refusal to know? It has been there for a long time. It is the continuation of what Sri Aurobindo said in one of his letters: he says that India has done much more for spiritual life with her methods than Europe has done with all her doubts and questionings. That’s exactly it. It is a kind of refusal — the refusal to accept a particular method of knowledge which is not the purely material one, and the denial of experience, of the reality of experience. How can one convince them of that?... And then, there is the method of Kali which is to give a sound thrashing. But
according to me that means a lot of damage without much result. This is another big problem. It seems that the only method which can overcome all resistances is the method of Love. But then the adverse forces have perverted love in such a way that many very sincere people, sincere seekers, have steeled themselves, so to say, against this method, because of its distortion. That is the difficulty. That is why it is taking time. However...

29 May 1965

111 – Knowledge is a child with its achievements; for when it has found out something, it runs about the streets whooping and shouting; Wisdom conceals hers for a long time in a thoughtful and mighty silence.

112 – Science talks and behaves as if it had conquered all knowledge. Wisdom, as she walks, hears her solitary tread echoing on the margin of immeasurable Oceans.

Silence... Oh! It is better to practise it than to talk about it. It is an experience I had here, long ago: the difference between wanting to spread and make use of what one has learnt, immediately, and the contact with higher knowledge, where one remains as quiet as one can so that it can have a transforming effect. I have had the living experience of this — half a day of living experience — but now that seems old to me, old, far behind.

What is the power of this silence? When one rises above, one enters into a kind of great silence, that is frozen, that is everywhere; but what is the power of this silence? Does it do anything?

This is what people used to seek in the past when they wanted to