7 July 1954

A few days before this class, Mother told the children that she would proceed differently with the new book they were to study, Sri Aurobindo’s The Mother. She herself (not the children as previously) would read out passages from the book. Each child was asked to read beforehand the chapter to be taken up in class and to prepare a question based upon it.

The following talk is based upon Chapter I of The Mother.

Sweet Mother, it is written here: “A... submission... of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood.”

Who is this “inner Warrior”?

It is the vital being when it is converted. The vital turned completely to the Divine is like a warrior. It has even the appearance of a warrior. The vital is the place of power and it is this power which impels it to fight, which can fight and conquer, and of all things this is the most difficult, for it is precisely these very qualities of fighting which create in the vital the sense of revolt, independence, the will to carry out its own will. But if the vital understands and is converted, if it is truly surrendered to the divine Will, then these fighting capacities are turned against the anti-divine forces and against all the darkness which prevents their transformation. And they are all-powerful and can conquer the adversaries. The anti-divine forces are in the vital world; from there, naturally, they have spread out into the physical, but their true seat is in the vital world, and it is the converted vital force which has the true power to vanquish them. But of all things this conversion is the most difficult.

1 The complete sentence is:

“A glad and strong and helpful submission is demanded to the working of the Divine Force, the obedience of the illumined disciple of the Truth, of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood, of the faithful servant of the Divine.”
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What are “subterfuges”?

Subterfuges? They are tricks. You know what a trick is? — Yes? Well, subterfuges are ways of deceiving, means employed to deceive. One hides what one wants to do under other appearances, in order to deceive; these are subterfuges.

“Irrevocable transformation”?  

Irrevocable— it means a transformation on which one cannot go back, which is achieved once and for all.

_Sweet Mother, here it is written:_ “It is not enough that the psychic should respond and the higher mental accept or even the lower^2_ vital submit and the inner physical consciousness feel the influence.” Does this mean that there is also a higher vital?

Yes, the higher vital is usually much less difficult to surrender, for it is under the influence of the mind and at times even of the psychic; so it understands more easily. It is much easier to convert this than the lower vital which is essentially the vital of desires and impulses. So, you see, what he means is that the lower vital can submit, it agrees to obey, to do what it is asked, but it is not at all satisfied. It is not happy; sometimes it even suffers; it pushes its revolt down into itself through obedience, but it does not collaborate. And unless the vital collaborates with joy and true love, nothing can be done; the transformation cannot come.

_Sweet Mother, here it is written..._

Wait, wait, your turn will come!

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^2_ Sri Aurobindo’s word here is “inner”. In the French translation this word translated as “intérieur” was by mistake printed as “inférieur” which means “lower”. The question arises due to this mistake.
There is a mistake! Here, in French, we have “the lower (inférieur) vital”, but in English it is “the inner vital”!

Inner? The inner vital? Yes. But here the mistake has been carefully reproduced! This edition is ours. (Mother shows the book printed at the Ashram Press.) Exactly! Yes, it is “inner”. It is the inner vital. Yes, it should be “inner” here, as “the inner physical”. (Pavitra asks whether the error has been reproduced in all the editions.) In all the editions there seems to be (“inférieur”) instead of “intérieur”). But this is our own edition, and we should have corrected it. This one is the first edition that was printed in France;3 not this; this one, the small one, was printed in France. Of course, the letters are very similar, aren’t they? The t and f are very similar.

(To the child who has just spoken) So you think you are going to escape your question? (Laughter)
(To another child) You don’t have one? No! Then it will be for next week. Today I am not saying anything, because you were not informed. Not long enough in advance.
(To another child) And you? You don’t have one?
(To another) And you?

Here, I don’t understand this: “For if it [the supreme Grace] were to yield to the demands of the Falsehood, it would defeat its own purpose.” What does the defeat of its own purpose mean?

Yes. This means that it would be going against its work, its own work. The Grace has come; well, it works for the realisation of the truth. If it accepts the conditions laid upon it by the falsehood, it can no longer do anything. Of this, you know, I could give you countless examples — of people who insist that

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things should happen in a particular way as far as they are concerned. They implore, at times even demand that things should be like that; and what they ask for is absolutely contrary to the truth; and if the Grace obeyed their demand, it would go against its own purpose and defeat its own purpose, that is, it would go against its own work and aim. It comes here to realise the truth; if it obeys the falsehood, it turns its back on truth. And people, you see, very often put the cart before the horse—most often through ignorance and stupidity; but sometimes it is also through bad will that they insist on having their conditions fulfilled, that they go in for a kind of bargaining in exchange for their surrender, and they do it... Yes, many do it unconsciously—I said through ignorance and stupidity. There are others who do it consciously, and so they want their conditions fulfilled. They say, “If it is like this and like that...” And finally they go as far as to say to the Divine, “If you are like this and like that, if you fulfil the conditions I lay down for you, I shall obey you!” They don’t put it in this way because that would be too ridiculous, but they almost constantly do it. You see, they say, “Oh, the Divine is like this. The Divine does this. The Divine must respond like this.” And they continue in this way, and they are not aware that they are quite simply imposing their conceptions and also their desires on what the Divine ought to be and do. And so, when the Divine does not do what they want or does not fulfil the conditions they lay down, they say, “You are not the Divine!” (Laughter) It is very simple. “You do not fulfil the conditions I lay down, so you are not the Divine!” But they do it constantly, you know. So, naturally, if to please people, the Divine Grace were to submit to their demands, it would be working entirely against its own purpose and would destroy its own Work.

(To another child) Now, do you have a question?

It is not my turn! (Laughter)

Oh, how very convenient! (Laughing) So now whose turn is it?
Yours? Your question?

_Here it is written: “... it is only the very highest supramental Force descending from above and opening from below that can victoriously handle the physical Nature and annihilate its difficulties.” I don’t understand the last part._

Which words exactly don’t you understand?

_“And opening from below that can victoriously handle the physical Nature.”_

Handle victoriously!... You don’t know what this means? (Pavitra re-reads the sentence which had been incorrectly pronounced.) Opening from below — that is, something which comes from above and forces itself up from below, forces its way, makes a kind of road, a path through the resistance that’s below, by opening a way, as when one enters a virgin forest and cuts down trees, one opens up a way. Well, it is like that, you see; there is a resistance in the lower levels of matter, and by the pressure from above, it opens the road and makes a passage through the resistance. And then, do you understand what follows?

_No. “That can victoriously handle.”_

“Handle” — that means... “deal with”; that is, which can deal with all the resistances of the physical world. It is only the highest force which can overcome the difficulties of matter. That’s what it means. All the resistances and difficulties of the physical world can be overcome only by the highest force — the highest supramental force. Do you understand now?

Yes.
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(To another child) Nothing?
(To another) You?

Mother, it is said: “Reject the false notion that the divine Power will do and is bound to do everything for you at your demand and even though you do not satisfy the conditions laid down by the Supreme.” Then...

But, you know, there are people who are told, “You should surrender.” Then they answer you with a smile, “Well, make me surrender!” Why, this is very simple!

When one wants to make some progress...

Yes!

One tries but finds that something doesn’t want to advance, doesn’t want to progress.

Yes, to progress.

Then, if one asks the Divine to...

To help?

Yes.

That’s something quite different. To help, that’s understood, He is there to help. But what is said here means to sit idly not doing anything, not making the shadow of an effort, not even aspiring or willing, nothing, and then say, “Well, God will do this for me; the Divine will do everything for me. The Divine Grace will give me aspiration. If I need aspiration, It will give it to me. If I need surrender, It will give me that”, and so on. “I have to do nothing except to remain passively seated, without stirring and without
willing anything.” Well, there are people like that, many! They are told “Aspire.” “Give me aspiration.” \textit{(Laughter)} They are told, “Be generous.” “Oh, make me generous; and I shall give everything!” \textit{(Laughter)}

And then? \textit{(To another child)} Now, you!

\textit{I am repeating a question. Sweet Mother, here in French it is written “opening the passage from below”, but in English the word “passage” is not there.}

Yes. Who has the English?

\textit{I.}

Read it, read your English!

\textit{“... and it is only the very highest supramental Force descending from above and opening from below that can victoriously handle the physical nature and annihilate its difficulties.”}

Opening from below? \textit{(Long silence)}

This can mean allowing the force which is hidden at the core of matter to manifest itself. It gives the idea of the supramental Presence which is at the centre of all things but is hidden and incapable of manifesting itself, so to say, and which, then would be as if awakened by the force coming from above and would manifest.

It can mean this, that is to say, it may want to express the fact that the two extremities meet, as in a circle, you know, the beginning and the end touch. It can mean this.

Pavitra: \textit{Mother, that’s what the French means — the French translation!}

Obviously! Only, it is not said in these very words. It means,
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fact — whether it is said in this way or another, it means that the two extremities join, you see, they unite, the Supreme who is in matter and the Supreme who is outside matter unite and join. That’s what it means. In both cases it means the same thing.

_Sweet Mother, what does “inert passivity” mean?_

Inert passivity? It means... Passivity, we said the other day, didn’t we, is what does not move, does not act, vibrate, respond — well, an inert passivity is just this, what is absolutely unconscious, inactive, what does not respond; whereas the other day we described a passivity which responds, which opens and is receptive, but doesn’t move, doesn’t act, which is the opposite of... Let us take passivity as the opposite of activity, something that does not act but is receptive and receives.

But an inert passivity is a passivity that receives nothing, it is like a stone; for instance, we say the stone has an inert passivity, don’t we?... like the soil or sand. It is not quite true, for there is nothing which is not at least a little receptive to forces. But still, the more we go towards something we call unconscious, the more is it inert and passive at the same time. That is it.

So, an inert passivity in someone is a kind of incapability of vibrating, receiving, opening himself, responding, something that’s quite unconscious and does not move in any way!

_Sweet Mother, how can we make our submission gladly?_

It must be sincere. If it is truly sincere, it becomes happy. So long as it is not — you may reverse the thing — so long as it is not happy, you may be sure it is not perfectly sincere; for if it is perfectly sincere, it is always happy. If it is not happy, it means that there is something which holds back, something which would like things to be otherwise, something that has a will of its own, a desire of its own, its own purpose and is not satisfied, and therefore is not completely surrendered, not
sincere in its surrender. But if one is sincere in one’s surrender, one is perfectly happy, automatically; rather, one automatically enjoys an ineffable happiness. Therefore, as long as this ineffable happiness is not there, it is a sure indication that you are not sincere, that there is something, some part of the being, larger or smaller, which is not sincere.

_Sweet Mother, how to discover this part?

Aspire, insist, put the light on it, pray if necessary. There are many ways. Sometimes surgical operations are necessary, putting a red hot iron on the wound, as when there is a nasty abscess somewhere which will not burst.

_(To another child) _Did you say something?

_No, it is not my turn!

(Laughing) Oh, it is not your turn! (Laughter) So...

_Here it is said: “The Supreme demands your surrender to her, but does not impose it: you are free at every moment, till the irrevocable transformation comes, to deny and to reject the Divine or to recall your self-giving....”_

Yes, this is something that happens every minute!

_(The child repeats the last phrase) _“To deny and to reject the Divine” — “deny” means?

“Deny”? That’s what I was just saying. People who find that the Divine does not want all that they want or that He does not comply with their own will, deny Him. They say, “It is not the Divine!” Or else, there are others who go still further. They say, “There is no Divine, it does not exist, the Divine, for it is not consistent with...” It is a nuisance that a Divine should be there: they say there’s no such thing!
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*Sweet Mother, what does “an inert automaton” mean?*

Automaton — it’s just a little more than inert passivity. Automaton — it’s a mechanical movement; and “inert” means unconscious. So it is an unconscious mechanical movement, something that has no soul, no spirit, no will, no urge, something that is merely a machine, that has no consciousness; and inert, absolutely without any consciousness and any receptivity. It is yet... I don’t think even a watch, for example, could be called an inert automaton. A watch has something like a soul: a machine, when it is very well made, has something like a soul, it responds, it has a certain receptivity. But the other is something which has no receptivity, no consciousness, and is only like a machine which one rewinds and which does just this (Mother makes automatic movements), you see, without knowing why or how!

*Mother, what does “helpful submission” mean?*

Submission... helpless? (Laughter) It can’t be that. It is a helpful submission. A helpful submission, we all know what that is, don’t we? A helpful submission.

Where is the text? We can’t say a helpless submission. (Laughter) (Mother looks for the text.)

Helpful, it is not helpless! (Laughter)

A glad submission, as I was just saying. Strong, you understand, not something weak and without energy; strong, powerful, and helpful, that is, which acts, is active, produces results, a submission which makes itself useful, a submission which, for example, wants to collaborate in the work, collaborate in the progress. It is the opposite of the inert automaton, the very opposite.

*Sweet Mother, what does “an exclusive self-opening to the divine Power” mean?*
Instead of self-opening we could put receptivity, something that opens in order to receive. Now, instead of opening and receiving from all sides and from everyone, as is usually done, one opens only to the Divine to receive only the divine force. It is the very opposite of what men usually do. They are always open on the surface, they receive all the influences from all sides. And then this produces inside them what we might call a *pot-pourri* (*Mother laughs*) of all kinds of contradictory movements which naturally create countless difficulties. So here, you are advised to open only to the Divine and to receive only the divine force to the exclusion of everything else. This diminishes all difficulties almost entirely. Only one thing remains difficult. It is... One can do it and, unless one is in a state of total alchemy, well, it is difficult to be in contact with people, to speak to them, for example, to have any kind of exchange with them without absorbing something from them. It is difficult. If one is in a kind of... if one is in an atmosphere that’s like a filter, then everything that comes from outside is filtered before it touches you. But it is very difficult; it requires a very wide experience. That is why, also, people who wanted the easiest path went into solitude to sit under a tree, did not speak any more and saw nobody; for this helps to diminish undesirable exchanges. Only, it has been noticed that these people begin to become enormously interested in the life of little animals, the life of plants, for it is difficult not to have any exchange with anything at all. So it is much better to face the problem squarely and be surrounded by an atmosphere so totally concentrated on the Divine that what comes through this atmosphere is filtered in its passage.

And then again, even when this has been done, there is still the problem of food; as long as our body is compelled to take in foreign matter in order to subsist, it will absorb at the same time a considerable amount of inert and unconscious forces or those having a rather undesirable consciousness, and this alchemy must take place inside the body. We were speaking of the kinds of consciousness absorbed with food, but there is
also the inconscience that’s absorbed with food — quite a deal of it. And that is why in many yogas there was the advice to offer to the Divine what one was going to eat before eating it 

(Mother makes a gesture of offering, hands joined, palms open). It consists in calling the Divine down into the food before eating it. One offers it to Him — that is, one puts it in contact with the Divine, so that it may be under the divine influence when one eats it. It is very useful, it is very good. If one knows how to do it, it is very useful, it considerably reduces the work of inner transformation which has to be done. But, you see, in the world as it is, we are all interdependent. You cannot take in the air without taking in the vibrations, the countless vibrations produced by all kinds of movements and all kinds of people, and you must — if you want to remain intact — you must constantly act like a filter, as I was saying. That is to say, nothing that is undesirable should be allowed to enter, as when one goes to infected areas, one wears a mask over the face so that the air may be purified before one breathes it in. Well, something similar has to be done. One must have around oneself so intense an atmosphere in a total surrender to the Divine, so intensified around oneself that everything that passes through is automatically filtered. Anyhow, it is very useful in life, for there are — we spoke about this too — there are bad thoughts, bad wills, people who wish you ill, who make formations. There are all kinds of absolutely undesirable things in the atmosphere. And so, if one must always be on the watch, looking around on all sides, one would think only of one thing, how to protect oneself. First of all, it is tiresome, and then, you see, it makes you waste much time. If you are well enveloped in this way, with this light, the light of a perfectly glad, totally sincere surrender, when you are enveloped with that, it serves you as a marvellous filter. Nothing that is altogether undesirable, nothing that has ill-will can pass through. So, automatically, these things return where they came from. If there is a conscious ill-will against you, it comes, but cannot pass; the door is closed, for it is open only to divine
things, it is not open to anything else. So it returns very quietly to the source from where it came.

But all these things are... One can learn how to do them through a kind of study and science. But they can be done without any study or science provided the aspiration and surrender are absolute and total. If the aspiration and surrender are total, it is done automatically. But you must see to it that they are total; and besides, as I was saying just now, you become very clearly aware of it, for the moment they are not total, you are no longer happy. You feel uneasy, very miserable, dejected, a bit unhappy: “Things are not quite pleasant today. They are the same as they were yesterday; yesterday they were marvellous, today they are not pleasing!” — Why? Because yesterday you were in a perfect state of surrender, more or less perfect — and today you aren’t any more. So, what was so beautiful yesterday is no longer beautiful today. That joy you had within you, that confidence, the assurance that all will be well and the great Work will be accomplished, that certitude — all this, you see, has become veiled, has been replaced by a kind of doubt and, yes, by a discontent: “Things are not beautiful, the world is nasty, people are not pleasant.” It goes sometimes to this length: “The food is not good, yesterday it was excellent.” It is the same but today it is not good! This is the barometer! You may immediately tell yourself that an insincerity has crept in somewhere. It is very easy to know, you don’t need to be very learned, for, as Sri Aurobindo has said in Elements of Yoga: One knows whether one is happy or unhappy, one knows whether one is content or discontented, one doesn’t need to ask oneself, put complicated questions for this, one knows it! — Well, it is very simple.

The moment you feel unhappy, you may write beneath it: “I am not sincere!” These two sentences go together:

“I FEEL UNHAPPY.”

“I AM NOT SINCERE.”

Now, what is it that is wrong? Then one begins to take a look, it is easy to find out...
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There you are, my children. Is that all?
Have we exhausted the questions or not?
(To a child) You haven’t asked your question, have you?

Mother, in the Letters Sri Aurobindo says somewhere⁴ that the Grace does not choose the just and reject the sinner. It has its own discernment which is different from the mind’s. That is how, for example, the Grace came to St. Augustine’s help. Then, why does Sri Aurobindo say here: “But the supreme Grace will act only in the conditions of the Light and the Truth....”?

Yes, I noticed that. When I read it, I thought about this. I thought about it. I think he wrote the sentence in this way so that it would be more easily understandable. But in fact, what he meant he has said here: you are yourself rejecting the Grace... Isn’t that it? He says — where is it? what page? page four? Yes, “... pushing the divine Grace from you”, yes; “... you are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you.” No, it is not that; it is... (The child begins reading: “the Grace...”) No, after that, my child... “It will not act...” (To another child) This is what we have explained. That is something else. You see, this is what I have explained: you ask the Grace to do something for you, but this thing is a falsehood. It won’t do it, because It always acts only in the truth.

But then how can It come to the help of the sinner?

It doesn’t help the sinner to be a sinner! It helps the sinner to give up his sin; that is to say, It does not push away the sinner, saying, “I won’t do anything for you.” It is there, always, even when he is sinning, to help him to come out of it, but not to continue in his sin.

⁴ See Letters on Yoga, SABCL, Vol. 23, p. 609.
There is a great difference between this and the idea that you are bad and so “I won't look after you, I shall throw you far away from me, and whatever is to happen to you will happen, I am not concerned about it.” This is the common idea. One says, “God has rejected me”, you know. It is not that. You may not be able to feel the Grace, but It will always be there, even with the worst of sinners, even with the worst of criminals, to help him to change, to be cured of his crime and sin if he wants to be. It won’t reject him, but It won’t help him to do evil. It wouldn’t be the Grace any longer. You understand the difference?

But there is a sentence here that's... here we are, it is absolutely true: “You are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you”, and then there is a... (The lamp had to be switched on and this made a noise in the mike. Mother shows a little surprise, then continues turning the pages of the book to find the sentence.) I thought it was here... (She finds the sentence and reads) “Then...” here we are, “... always you will be open to attack and the Grace will recede from you.” You see, this... (silence) It is not the Grace which recedes from you, it is you who recede from the Grace. It is a feeling, and the expression of the fact. For in the sentence... a preceding sentence, we have: “You are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you.” This is just the thing. You are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you. But after having pushed It away, you have the impression that It has receded from you; and it is rather this: “... then always you will be open to attack and the Grace will recede from you.” It is not a fact that It recedes from you, you have the impression that It recedes from you.

While reading it I noticed this. I don’t know what it is in English. Here it is on page seven. I don't know, it must be approximately on the same page, I suppose: “If you call for the Truth...”, something like that.

(Someone looks up the required sentence in the English book and reads: “the Grace will recede from you.”)
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Ah, yes. “Recede from you...” “... then always you will be open to attack and the Grace will recede from you.”

It expresses one’s impression. But it is not that the Grace withdraws. For it is written here, you see, just a little before, “it is not the divine Grace you must blame”, it is you who push It away from you.

In one case he takes the position of the Grace and in the other he takes the attitude of the person who says, “The Grace recedes from me.” But it is not the Grace that recedes, it is he himself who pushes It away, that is, he has put a distance between himself and the Grace. In fact, even “pushing away” doesn’t give the correct picture; you see, this is not written, it was not written to a philosopher, and it is not in philosophical terms. In one case, you see, he has taken this particular attitude, but the phenomenon is the same; that is, there is a kind of psychological distance created between the Grace and the individual. And due to this psychological distance the individual cannot receive the Grace and feels that It is not there. But It is there, in fact; only, as he has established this distance between the two, he doesn’t feel It any longer. This is the real phenomenon. It isn’t that the Grace goes away, it isn’t even that he has the power to push It away, for if It doesn’t want to go, no matter how much he tries, It won’t go. But he makes himself incapable of feeling It and receiving its effect. He creates a psychological barrier between himself and the Grace.

There you are, my children, I think that’s enough for this evening.

Good night.