**11 May 1955**

This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Who is going to ask questions today?

_Sweet Mother, how can we make the body immune to every attack?_

Well, Sri Aurobindo has written it later, hasn’t he? He says that only the descent of the supramental Force can make the body immune to every attack. He says that otherwise it is only momentary and that it doesn’t always work. He says that it can be practically immune but not absolutely so; and to be absolutely so, it is only by transforming the nature as it is into a supramental nature that one can make the body absolutely immune to all attacks.

_Sweet Mother, is the subconscient stronger than the mind, vital and physical?_

What do you mean by stronger?

_Here it is written..._

It has a greater power. Well, just because it is subconscient it is everywhere, everything seems steeped in the subconscient. And so, “subconscient” means half conscious: not conscious and not unconscious. It is just between the two; it is like that, half-way; so things slide down into it, one doesn’t know that they are there, and from there they act; and it is because one doesn’t know that they are there that they can remain there. There are many things
which one doesn’t wish to keep and drives out from the active consciousness, but they go down there, hide there, and because it is subconscious one doesn’t notice them; but they haven’t gone out completely, and when they have a chance to come up again, they come up. For example, there are bad habits of the body, in the sense that the body is in the habit of upsetting its balance — we call that falling ill, you know; but still, the functioning becomes defective through a bad habit. You manage by concentrating the Force and applying it on this defect, to make it disappear but it doesn’t disappear completely, it enters the subconscious. And then, when you are off your guard, when you stop paying attention properly and preventing it from showing itself, it rises up and comes out. You thought for months perhaps or even for years, you thought you were completely rid of a certain kind of illness which you suffered from, and you no longer paid any attention, and suddenly one day it returns as though it had never gone; it springs up again from the subconscious and unless one enters into this subconscious and changes things there, that is, unless one changes the subconscious into the conscious, it always happens like this. And the method is to change the subconscious into the conscious — if each thing that rises to the surface becomes conscious, at that moment it must be changed. There is a more direct method still: it is to enter the subconscious in one’s full consciousness and work there, but this is difficult. Yet so long as this is not done, all the progress one has made — I mean physically, in one’s body — can always be undone.  

(Sweet Mother, when one sees an illness coming, how can one stop it?)

Ah! First of all, you must not want it and nothing in the body must want it. You must have a very strong will not to be ill. This is the first condition.
The second condition is to call the light, a light of equilibrium, a light of peace, quietude and balance, and to push it into all the cells of the body, enjoining them not to be afraid, because that again is another condition.

First, not to want to be ill, and then not to be afraid of illness. You must neither attract it nor tremble. You must not want illness at all. But you must not because of fear not want it; you must not be afraid; you must have a calm certitude and a complete trust in the power of the Grace to shelter you from everything, and then think of something else, not be concerned about this any longer. When you have done these two things, refusing the illness with all your will and infusing a confidence which completely eliminates the fear in the cells of the body, and then busying yourself with something else, not thinking any longer about the illness, forgetting that it exists... there, if you know how to do that, you may even be in contact with people who have contagious diseases, and yet you do not catch them. But you must know how to do this.

Many people say, “Oh, yes, here I am not afraid.” They don’t have any fear in the mind, their mind is not afraid, it is strong, it is not afraid; but the body trembles, and one doesn’t know it, because it is in the cells of the body that the trembling goes on. It trembles with a terrible anxiety and this is what attracts the illness. It is there that you must put the force and the quietude of a perfect peace and an absolute trust in the Grace. And then, sometimes you are obliged to drive away with a similar force in your thought all suggestions that after all, the physical world is full of illnesses, and these are contagious, and because one was in contact with somebody who is ill, one is sure to catch it, and then, that the inner methods are not powerful enough to act on the physical, and all kinds of stupidities of which the air is full. These are collective suggestions which are passed on from one person to another by everybody. And if by chance there are two or three doctors, then it becomes terrible. *(Laughter)*
Questions and Answers

When Sri Aurobindo says that illness comes from outside, what exactly is it that comes?

It is a kind of vibration made up of a mental suggestion, a vital force of disorder and certain physical elements which are the materialisation of the mental suggestion and the vital vibration. And these physical elements can be what we have agreed to call germs, microbes, this and that and many other things.

It may be accompanied by a sensation, may be accompanied by a taste, also by a smell, if one has very developed subtle senses. There are these formations of illness which give a special taste to the air, a special smell or a slight special sensation.

People have many senses which are asleep. They are terribly tamasic. If all the senses they possess were awake, there are many things they would perceive, which can just pass by without anyone suspecting anything.

For example, many people have a certain kind of influenza at the moment. It is very wide-spread. Well, when it comes close, it has a special taste, a special smell, and it brings you a certain contact (naturally not like a blow), something a little more subtle, a certain contact, exactly as when you pass your hand over something, backwards over some material... You have never done that? The material has a grain, you know; when you pass your hand in the right direction or when you pass it like this (gesture), well, it makes you... it is something that passes over your skin, like this, backwards. But naturally, I can tell you, it doesn't come like a staggering blow. It is very subtle but very clear. So if you see that, you can very easily...

Besides, there is always a way of isolating oneself by an atmosphere of protection, if one knows how to have an extremely quiet vibration, so quiet that it makes almost a kind of wall around you. But all the time, all the time one is vibrating in response to vibrations which come from outside. If you become aware of this, all the time there is something which does this (gesture), like this, like this, like this (gestures), which
responds to all the vibrations coming from outside. You are never in an absolutely quiet atmosphere which emanates from you, that is, which comes from inside outward (not something which comes from outside within), something which is like an envelope around you, very quiet, like this — and you can go anywhere at all and these vibrations which come from outside do not begin to do this (gesture) around your atmosphere.

If you could see that kind of dance, the dance of vibrations which is there around you all the time, you would see, would understand well what I mean.

For example, in a game, when you play, it is like this (gesture), and then it is like the vibrations of a point, it goes on increasing, increasing and increasing until suddenly, crash!... an accident. And it is a collective atmosphere like that; we come and see it, you are in the midst of a game — basketball or football or any other — we feel it, see it, it produces a kind of smoke around you (those vapours of heat which come at times, something like that), and then it takes on a vibration like that, like that, more and more, more and more until suddenly the equilibrium is broken: someone breaks his leg, falls down, is hit on the mouth by a ball, etc. And one can foretell beforehand that this is going to happen when it is like that. But nobody is aware of it.

Yet, even in less serious cases, each one of you individually has around him something which instead of being this very individual and very calm envelope which protects you from all that you don’t want to receive... I mean, your receptivity becomes deliberate and conscious, otherwise you do not receive; and it is only when you have this conscious extremely calm atmosphere, and as I say, when it comes from within (it is not something that comes from outside), it is only when it's like this that you can go with impunity into life, that is, among others and in all the circumstances of every minute...

Otherwise if there is something bad to be caught, for example, anger, fear, an illness, some uneasiness, you are sure to
catch it. As soon as it starts doing this (*gesture*), it is as though you called all similar vibrations to come and get hold of you.

What is to be wondered at is the unconsciousness with which men go through life; they don’t know how to live, there’s not one in a million who knows how to live, and they live like that somehow or other, limping along, managing, not managing; and all that for them, bah! What is it? Things that happen.

They don’t know how to live. All the same one should learn how to live. That’s the first thing one ought to teach children: to learn how to live. I have tried but I don’t know if I have succeeded very much. I have told you all these things very often, I think, haven’t I? Haven’t I?

Yes.

That’s all? Still another question?

_Sweet Mother, I did not understand the last part._

The last part speaks of the Supermind, doesn’t it?

Ah, yes, you mean you did not understand the difference between yogic forces and the supramental nature. But Sri Aurobindo explains it.

_I did not understand._

In the outer consciousness, mental and physical — corporal — in order to get a result like the one we were speaking about just now (for example, to have a protective personal atmosphere which can keep you safe from any undesirable contact), you must have the yogic force, that is, the force given by the practice of yoga; whereas if your body were supramentalised, if it had the supramental nature instead of the ordinary physical nature, there would be no need of the intervention of any yogic knowledge or any yogic force to protect you, because you would be quite
naturally protected by the very fact of this supramental nature. That's what Sri Aurobindo says.

But the supramental nature in the body is something yet to be realised. In the physical consciousness it is possible but in the body, not yet.

Besides, Sri Aurobindo has told us that it would take three hundred years, so we have time to wait. We must only learn to wait, learn to last it out.

That's all?

_Sweet Mother, how can one transform pain into forms of pleasure?

Ah! But that's not something to be done, my children. I shall certainly not give you the method! It is a perversion.

The first thing and the most indispensable is to nullify the pain by cutting the connection. You see, one becomes conscious of the pain because it is there.

For example, you have cut your finger, there’s a nerve that has been affected, and so the nerve quickly goes to tell the brain, up there, that something has happened which is wrong, here. That is what gives you the pain to awaken your attention, to tell you: “You know, there’s something wrong.” Then the thought immediately feels anxious: “What is wrong? Oh! How it hurts”, etc., etc. — then returns to the finger and tries to arrange what is not yet destroyed. Usually one puts a small bandage. But in order not to have the pain, if it hurts very much, you must quite simply cut the connection by thought, saying to the nerve, “Now remain quiet, you have done your work, you have warned me, you don’t need to say anything any longer; ploff! I am stopping you.” And when you do it well, you suffer no longer, it is finished, you stop the pain completely. That is the best thing. It is infinitely preferable to telling yourself that it is painful.

I knew someone who had... I don’t know if you have ever had an ingrowing nail — an ingrowing nail means a nail which
enters the skin, it hurts very much when it is in the foot; it grows into the skin; so naturally, especially if one wears tight shoes, it hurts very much. Well, I knew a boy who started pressing his nail, like this (gesture), with the idea that pain is simply an incapacity to bear certain intensities of vibrations, you see; so he went beyond the measure, and in fact he pressed, it hurt abominably at first, he pressed until his hurt was changed into a kind of pleasure, and this succeeded very well.

If you have some pain, and you give yourself much more pain still, then finally there’s a moment when you either faint away (people who are a little weak and not very enduring faint) or else it changes into pleasure; but this is not recommendable. I am just telling you that it can be done. I saw a boy — he was twelve — who was doing that, and he was doing it very deliberately, very consciously. He had never heard of yoga but he had found it out all by himself. But this is not recommendable because his toe became worse. This didn’t make it better at all.

But my own method which consists in saying to the nerve, “Now you have done your job, keep quiet, you don’t need to tell me anything more”, is much better. One cuts it and then it’s over.

When one has a very bad toothache (I don’t know if you have a toothache sometimes or not; a toothache hurts terribly because the nerve is quite, quite close to the brain, so it doesn’t lose its intensity on the way, it is very direct and hurts very much), the best way — in fact there’s no other — the best way is to cut it: “It is good, you have done your work, you told me that something was wrong there, that’s enough, don’t move now.” And one cuts, cuts it like this (gesture), cuts the connection, it doesn’t transmit again. Naturally you must think of something else. If afterwards you start saying, “Do I still have the pain?...” (Laughter)

*Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said that pain is a degradation of an original Ananda...*
Yes, but everything, everything is a degradation. He has said, pleasure also. Pleasure and pain are equally a degradation of Ananda. Besides, the capacity for balance of the human physical consciousness is very small. If you have a pleasure which you push a little too far, whatever it may be, it immediately becomes a pain — whatever it may be. And there is always a place where one no longer knows whether it is a pleasure or a pain, it can as well be this or that. But wait a bit, eat something that’s too sweet and you will see the effect. At first you say that it’s very good, then suddenly it becomes something which... oh! it is almost unbearable. For everything it is like that, for everything. They are very close relations, you see.

That’s all? You still have something to ask?

Mother, there are periods when there is a collective illness in the Ashram...

Yes, not only in the Ashram. Unfortunately, first it comes in the town and then someone very kindly... people who spend their time frequenting the town, you see, bring it along here, and then here people are like Panurge’s sheep, when there’s one who has caught it, it is considered smart, it is an elegance, everybody catches it.

(Silence)

What did you want to ask?

I wanted to ask why it is...

Why? There! I have answered you.

Spirit of imitation! Panurge’s sheep!

Do you know what Panurge’s sheep are? You don’t? Oh! It is... I think the first story... I don’t know if he took it from old traditions, it is possible, but still... you have heard of Rabelais?
Questions and Answers

Yes? Well, it was told in France by Rabelais in a book — it is... (Mother turns to Pavitra, who doesn't know, then to Nolini) Perhaps Nolini knows!

(Nolini) "Pantagruel".

"Pantagruel"! Well, I know nothing about it. It is one of the famous books of Rabelais... which I haven't read, besides... but he tells the story of a flock of sheep which were transported on a boat and then... I don't know whether it did so deliberately or it happened by chance, I don't remember this now because I have read the story as told by several different persons... I mean, there are even old Hindu traditions like this, I think, there are Persian stories like this, there are Arab stories like this; so I don't exactly know what Rabelais has said; however, the story goes like this:

For some reason or other one of the sheep falls from the boat into the sea, and all the rest follow one after another (Laughter). Because one has gone over, all rush headlong into the water. So it has become famous. They are called Panurge's sheep.

But there is only one way, it is to do as I said, it is the individual atmosphere, calm, luminous, quiet... Then one no longer becomes the sheep of Panurge.

There we are, my children. That's all?