January 12, 1968

I have a question, but ...

A question?

There is a fact you are probably aware of ...

Which one?

You had the visit of E., that Italian, and his wife?

So then?

He asked me questions on “left-hand Tantrism,” you know, the “Vama Marga”....

What's that?

It's those so-called Tantrics who make a ‘yoga’ out of sexuality. And he asked me all sorts of questions on the place of sexuality in yoga, adding that for a year, he and his wife have been trying to live on another level and in a different way. So I tried to tell him the true standpoint, and I gave him a letter I had written a year earlier on the subject — a letter I was really inspired to write on the problem of sexuality in yoga, at the end of which I gave two excerpts from Sri Aurobindo showing the ‘vital error’ behind this so-called yoga. I sent him my letter, and three days later, I saw him come back with it. He was troubled. First he told me, “Are you aware that there is in the Ashram an ‘occult center’ working with Mother's blessings?”

What? What on earth is that!

Yes, it's like that. So I asked him, “But whatever is that occult center?” He said, “Yes, it's an inner center for the ‘more advanced’ disciples, those who are more ‘in the know,’ and there is in it a sort of high priestess”— that was Y. [a European disciple].

Oh, it's Y.

Then he said, “I am very worried and shocked. I am a foreigner who came here four days ago, and I have already been solicited from several sides. What does it mean? Does it really have Mother's blessings?” Then he gave me my letter back, saying, “But what they do there, the way they see things, doesn't at all agree with what you

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1 The day Satprem wrote this letter, Mother saw him as if seated between the two violet wings of a V of victory (see Agenda 8 of February 4, 1967). See in Addendum the text of this letter.
write in this letter.” And he gave me an example. He said, “Look at this little R.² They imagine they are creating a supramental being — that's obviously not the way to create a supramental being, but at least they could try to create a nice little being....” So their method is like this: they take the child, little R., and while he listens to music, they caress him, and caress his sex organ also.³ And he asked me, “What does this mean? Is the transformation really worked out at this level?... Here is a child that ought to be made into a nice little being, and they are corrupting him or drawing God knows what onto him — does Mother approve of this?...”

Have you seen the child?

No, I haven't.

The parents brought him to me a few days ago, because ... he is more and more ill, so they are worried and brought him to me. I think the child is in a bad way. At any rate, he looks like someone living in a perverse dream. A dream of vital sexuality, as a matter of fact. He is wan, with lifeless eyes, no reactions. So the poor kid ... You know that the first time I took him, I wanted to see the effect of silence on him: he started howling.⁴ This time, I had decided I would talk to him from the start, so I started talking and talking to him ... He was dazed, like that; but I took him in my arms, he stayed put there, didn't want to move. What they're doing is ... I don't know if they will kill him, but at any rate ...

I know, mon petit, I know! But what can I do?... You see, Sri Aurobindo and I belong to the ‘past’; the Bulletin is an organ of the ‘past’ — as for them, they are ‘ahead.’ And they're a whole band.

Yes, you see, this man had been there for just four days when ...

Yes, that's how it is.
He is leaving, besides.

He was shocked. “Really,” he told me ...

That I understand! I understand.
They say ... No, they go one better, they say I am ‘Y.’s disciple.’ It's like that, you understand, I 'am learning through Y., I am learning life and yoga!

I know! I've known it for a long time. There are people here who have common sense, but had difficulty getting out of that. And they don't want to say anything because the ‘disciples’ (who believe they have a fantastic power) fly into great rages and make such scenes! Of course you don't like to have scenes, so you don't say anything. You simply abstain from going there. But it's been going on for a long time, more than a year.

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2 This child has already been mentioned in relation with Paul Richard's ‘reincarnation.’
3 Satprem omitted the explanation given by the ‘high priestess,’ which was that “the she-monkey caresses its young all over the body, including its sex organ, therefore ...”
4 See Agenda 8 of September 13, 1967.
5 The child died ‘accidentally’ four months later.
Without mentioning names, A., G., etc. [Western disciples]. Again, it's the non-Indian disciples who go there.\textsuperscript{6}

Yes! That's what this Italian said to me, and he added, “That Canadian and his so-called ‘girl,’ what does it all mean?... When I was in the Pacific I was proposed the same sort of initiation: they leave you in a hut with a girl for three days. Is it the same thing in the Ashram?”

The ‘girl’ is beginning to feel disgusted.

You see, without knowing much I felt there was something going on; but that it should have assumed such almost public proportions ...

Oh, it has assumed tremendous proportions, tremendous ... The first who told me about it was S. M. — that was long ago, more than a year ago. Then there have been others. Naturally, F. was solicited and so was R. [Western disciples].

Yes, the Indians have discernment for such things.

Ah, their spirituality is true (Mother touches her heart), so they don't swallow the bait!

But you understand, when Y. supposedly had typhoid (which she never had — it was part of the high drama, it was the ‘illness of transformation’), she wanted to go to the Vellore hospital with M. So she wrote me a letter asking for everything to be arranged and for them to be in the same room. And in her letter she literally wrote, “For me M. is God....” So the poor chap, he finds it somewhat a heavy load! ... (Mother laughs) And he fell ill! ... Oh, it's better to laugh. Ultimately, these things sink into ridicule. As for me, I simply do this (gesture of bringing the Light). We'll see. I tell you, the first result is that this poor M. is ill: he had a pain in his back; his fever is over ... but he's left without a spine! And the funniest part is that when things go wrong, it's to me that they write (laughing), me who belong to an ‘outdated past’! So he asked for my advice: should he do this, should he do that?... I must confess I treated myself to the satisfaction of answering him (through Y.) that his illness was mostly psychological and I didn't see how the doctor could help him! Since then, silence.

But still, it's sad for the kid.

For the little one ... no. I don't know if I told you about the little one: I hadn't seen anything, hadn't foreseen anything, above all hadn't formed anything, I was simply looking at these two [the child's father and mother]; she hadn't yet got her divorce, anyway they were living on the fringe of society; so I thought the best was to have the child born in Auroville, where there is full freedom. That was all. It began there and ended there. I never thought it would be an ‘extraordinary being,’ nothing of the sort — just a child. But then, the evening before the child was born (he was born around one in the morning, I think), the evening before, I got a telegram from America announcing Paul Richard's death. Now, I don't know what became of him, but I had taught him occultism: he knew occultism, he knew how to enter another body. And I also knew (through other people) that for a long time he had had a

\textsuperscript{6} There were also two Indian women from the Ashram.
sort of ambition to come back here. So the two things together made me ... “Well,” I said, “this is surprising!” You understand, just enough time to go out of his body normally and enter another normally. I didn't say anything, but it was Amrita who brought me the telegram; we looked at each other, and I said, “Well, well!” That's all. The next day, the whole Ashram knew that Paul Richard had reincarnated in R.! Someone even wrote to me, “I hear you have reincarnated Richard ...” “Oh,” I said, “enough, enough!” (Mother laughs) There.

So the result is ... Paul Richard had a quite unhealthy sexual side, not at all healthy, far from it. He had much mental knowledge (a great deal, a very strong intelligence), but no spiritual life. So he wasn't an exceptional being — what's happening to him is what must happen.

I have been trying to do something about the little one, but ... Something in his vital make-up is going to be warped, that's for sure. We'll see.

We'll see.

But they've already put (luckily there's less credulity on this side), they've already put a formation on the other child, A.F. [another baby the same age]: they say he is Ramses of Egypt.... As for me, I know nothing about it (!), I haven't seen anything. He is very nice, at any rate — for the moment he is very nice.

I hope they're not going to that group?

I don't think so, but ... I don't think they've swallowed the bait.

Because this one, I mean the father; is nice.

Very nice. Only, the trouble for the child is that the mother's blood and the father's don't agree. There's a difficulty there, but anyway I think he'll pull through.

(silence)

Under the pretext of freedom ...

So they propagandize actively?

Yes, you see, it was this Italian who told me, “In just four days that I've been here, I have already been solicited, and from several sides.” And it's after he read my letter that he told me, “Well, what's going on there is very different from this, it can’t have Mother's blessings.” And he questioned me.

No, I tell you, they've gone one better: I am a 'disciple’!

Never mind. Never mind, everything is seen like this (gesture from above). In reality, it's the Lord having fun! (Mother laughs)

What quite disarmed me was that I had become a disciple — that was delightful! After that, all you can do is laugh.

But I said to this Italian, “Listen, don't worry about it, falsehood swallows itself.”
Yes, absolutely! That's it, exactly. One sees, in fact, how one just has to go a little like this (gesture of pressure with the thumb) ... For this poor M., the result was instantaneous! All there was to do was this (same gesture).

I am going to see this Italian. He is going away, and he wrote me a very sweet note asking if he could see me before he left. But he mustn't speak, because I can't hear!

I can't hear... That's an odd phenomenon: people speak to me in a DIFFERENT state of consciousness — not on the same level of consciousness — and I feel exactly as if it were like this (gesture from below), like vibrations that don't make contact with my consciousness. I see the vibrations like this (same gesture), but ... At times I hear sounds, but they make no sense whatsoever. So it's no use his speaking.

(silence)

Do you know how they behave at their ‘séances’?...

No.

(Laughing) I hope they behave decently! If it's words, it's all right; otherwise I may be forced to intervene.

No, I don't want to say anything, because it means going down to the same level.

But it began long ago. Long ago. When Y. writes me a letter, she writes “Sweet Mother” on the envelope, and at the back, at the very top of the envelope, there is “Y.” So when I reply, I send back the same cover... Once, I played a good joke (laughing): after “Sweet Mother” I drew an arrow that rose to the top and turned the edge of the cover all the way to “Y.” (Mother laughs).

It's quite comical!

And she is (is or will be, I don't know, that depends on the people she speaks to) the incarnation of ... You know that in the book The Mother, Sri Aurobindo said there was the Mother's ‘aspect of Love,’ which hadn't yet incarnated because the world wasn't ready. And that's Y.7

When you look at her you don't get that feeling.

Oh, (poking fun at Satprem) but that's superficial, it's a superficial vision!

(silence)

People say I've given her ‘full freedom’ to organize Auroville. So she calls it “the university town.” She was told that the phrase was used in a precise sense; she said to me, “Oh, I've explained it.” And on the invitation cards for the 28th [February, for Auroville's inauguration], she wanted “the university town” to be put; but they didn't ask for her advice and issued the invitations with “The city of universal culture.”

7 See Agenda 8, October 11, 1967.
That's it, it's always a sign in people who have a purely mental constructive power: they want to bend words to express what they want. I told her, “It doesn't matter, whatever you may say, everyone will take the phrase to have its usual meaning.”

(In an aggressive tone) “But THIS IS what it means....”

She wanted to have a small orangutan, because it seems the orangutan species is disappearing from the earth, and she wanted one to perpetuate the species — I don't know why.... So when M. went to Tahiti, she asked him to bring an orangutan back. Poor M! ... Not a very enjoyable task. And before leaving, he told me, “It seems I am supposed to bring an orangutan back?” I answered him, “I won't be sorry if you don't find it!”

And he didn't find it!

* * *

ADDENDUM

(A letter from Satprem to a friend on the ‘Yoga of sexuality.’)

January 28, 1967

I will try to answer your questions as simply as possible, that is, without wrapping the problem in the sibylline mists of mysterious traditions, but directly from my experience. And after all, that is the best way to rediscover the truth of traditions, which were born from an experience, too. There is a plane of simple truth where all those experiences meet.

We may begin by looking at the problem in the wide sense, that of evolution. Species have evolved from the mineral to the plant, to the animal, and on to man. Everything points to the fact that the progress of evolution is not a progress in forms but a progress of consciousness. Forms are only an increasingly fit support for the progress of consciousness. We have reached the human stage, but there is no reason to assume that it is final or supreme (otherwise there would be no evolution), no more than an objective observer one hundred million years ago would have been right to assume that the chameleon or the baboon was the highest term of evolution. We have simply reached the decisive evolutionary stage when we can consciously intervene to accelerate the natural process, which might otherwise require a few more millions of years, with much wastage. Yoga and all spiritual disciplines are ultimately nothing but processes of conscious acceleration of evolution in the true sense.

There may be here some debate on this ‘true sense’: some, along with the religions we know, will tell you that the true sense isn't here, but in goodness knows what heaven beyond. It's a point of view; but if this material evolution does not hold its own sense within itself, it means we are in the presence of a sinister farce invented by goodness knows what divine masochist. If God exists, he must be a little less foolish than that, and we are entitled to think that this material evolution has a divine sense and that it is the field of a divine manifestation in Matter. Our spiritual discipline must therefore aim at gaining this divine man or perhaps that other, still unknown being who will emerge from us just as we emerged from hominid infancy.
What is the place of the sexual function in this evolution? Until now, the progress of consciousness has made use of the progress of species, which means that sexual reproduction has been the key to the proliferation of species so as to reach the form most fit for the manifestation of consciousness. Since the appearance of man two or three million years ago, Nature hasn't produced new species, as if she had found in man the fittest mode of expression. But evolution cannot remain stagnant, or else it no longer is evolution. So it means that the key of evolution no longer lies in the proliferation of species by means of sexual reproduction, but directly in the very power of consciousness. Before man, consciousness was still too buried in its material support; with man, it has disengaged itself sufficiently to assume its true mastery over material Nature and work out its own mutations by itself. From the standpoint of evolutionary biology, this is the end of sexuality. We have reached the stage at which we can switch from natural evolution through sexual power to spiritual evolution through the power of consciousness. Nature generally does not let organs linger that no longer serve her evolutionary design, so we can foresee that the sexual function will atrophy in those who will be able to channel their energy no longer for reproduction but to develop their consciousness. Quite obviously, not all of us have reached that stage, and for a long time Nature will still need sexual power to pursue her evolution in the midst of the human species, that is to say, to lead the rather brute man we still are to a more conscious man, more capable of grasping the true sense of his evolution, and finally wholly capable of switching from natural to spiritual evolution. The inequality of development in individuals is the obvious reason why we cannot make general rules or hand out infallible prescriptions. To each stage its law. But after however long a time, it is equally obvious that, from the point of view of evolutionary biology, the sexual function comes to its end when it has fulfilled its purpose, that is, when it has succeeded in giving birth to a sufficiently conscious man. So we cannot reasonably base a spiritual discipline of accelerated evolution on a principle that runs counter to evolution. Moreover, anyone who has even barely crossed the difficult line, the point X of the transition from natural to spiritual evolution, cannot but realize that all the pseudo-mystic attempts to prettify the sexual relations between man and woman are shams. I have nothing against sexual relations (God knows!), but trying to coat them with a yogic or mystic phraseology is a deceitful illusion, a self-deception. Therefore, in that sense, there is no ‘key’ to be ‘recovered’ — it does not exist. There is a key in the relationship between man and woman, but not in their sexual relations. The so-called “left-hand Tantrics” (of the Vama Marga) are to true Tantrism what Boccaccio's tales are to Christianity, or what the sodden Roman Bacchus is to Dionysos of the Greek mysteries. I know Tantrism, to say the least. As for the Cathars, whom I hold in the highest esteem, it would be doing them little honor to believe that they followed a sort of 'yoga of sexuality.' Through my own experience I have often had the feeling of reliving the Cathars' experience, and I see plainly that if some of them attempted to mix sexual relations into the true relationship between man and woman, they soon realized their error. It is a dead-end road, or rather its only end is to show you that it leads you nowhere forward. The Cathars were too sincere and conscious men to persist in a burdening experience. For ultimately, and that is the crux of the matter, the sexual experience in its very nature (whether or not there is ‘backward flow’ or whatever its mode) automatically fastens you again to the old animal vibrations — there is nothing you can do about it: however much love you may put into it, the very function is tied to millennia of animality. It is as if you wanted to plunge into a swamp without stirring up any mud
— it cannot be done, the ‘milieu’ is like that. And when one knows how much transparency, clarification and inner stillness it takes to slowly rise to a higher consciousness, or to allow a higher light to enter our waters without being instantly darkened, one fails to see how sexual activity can help you attain that still limpidity in which things can start happening?? The union, the oneness of two beings, the true and complete meeting of two beings does not take place at that level or through those means. That is all I can say. But I have seen that in the silent tranquillity of two beings who have the same aspiration, who have overcome the difficult transition, something quite unique slowly takes place, of which one can have no inkling as long as one is still stuck in the ‘struggles of the flesh,’ to use a preacher’s language! I think the Cathars’ experience begins after that transition. After it, the man-woman couple assumes its true meaning, its ‘effectiveness,’ if I may say so. Sex is only a first mode of meeting, the first device invented by Nature to break the shell of individual egos — afterwards, one grows and discovers something else, not through inhibition or repression, but because something different and infinitely richer takes over. Those who are so eager to preserve sex and to mystify it in order to move on to the second stage of evolution are very much like children clinging to their scooters — it isn't more serious than that. There is nothing in it to do a yoga with, nothing also to be indignant about or raise one's eyebrows at. So I have nothing to criticize, I am merely observing and putting things in their place. All depends on the stage one has reached. As for those who want to use sex for such and such a sublime or not-so-sublime reason, well, let them have their experience. As Mother told me on the very same subject no later than yesterday, “To tell the truth, the Lord makes use of everything. One is always on the way towards something.” One is always on the way, through any means, but what is necessary is, as much as possible, to keep one's lucidity and not to deceive oneself.

I will try to find one or two passages from Sri Aurobindo to give you his point of view.

Signed: Satprem

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(From Sri Aurobindo)

“... No error can be more perilous than to accept the immixture of the sexual desire and some kind of subtle satisfaction of it and look on this as a part of the sadhana. It would be the most effective way to head straight towards spiritual downfall and throw into the atmosphere forces that would block the supramental descent, bringing instead the descent of adverse vital powers to disseminate disturbance and disaster. This deviation must be absolutely thrown away, should it try to occur and expunged from the consciousness, if the Truth is to be brought down and the work is to be done. It is an error too to imagine that, although the physical sexual action is to be abandoned, yet some inward reproduction of it is part of the transformation of the sex-centre. The action of the animal sex-energy in Nature is a device for a particular purpose in the economy of the material creation in the Ignorance. But the vital excitement that accompanies it makes the most favourable opportunity and vibration
in the atmosphere for the inrush of those very vital forces and beings whose whole business is to prevent the descent of the supramental Light. The pleasure attached to it is a degradation and not a true form of the divine Ananda. The true divine Ananda in the physical has a different quality and movement and substance; self-existent in its essence, its manifestation is dependent only on an inner union with the Divine. You have spoken of Divine Love; but Divine Love, when it touches the physical, does not awaken the gross lower vital propensities; indulgence of them would only repel it and make it withdraw again to the heights from which it is already difficult enough to draw it down into the coarseness of the material creation which it alone can transform. Seek the Divine Love through the only gate through which it will consent to enter, the gate of the psychic being, and cast away the lower vital error."

Sri Aurobindo

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8 *Letters on Yoga – IV*, p.500.