4 August 1954

This talk is based upon Chapter 5 of The Mother by Sri Aurobindo.

*Sweet Mother, what is the difference between a servant and a worker?*

I don’t think there is much difference; it is almost the same thing. Perhaps the attitude is not quite the same, but there is not much of a difference. In “servant” there seems to be something more: it is the joy of serving. The worker — he has only the joy of the work. But the work that is done as a service brings still greater joy.

*What does “self-love” mean?*

I think self-love is a pleasant word for vanity. Self-love means that one loves oneself more than anything else; and what he implies by this, you see, are exactly those reactions of a vanity which is vexed when one is not appreciated at one’s true worth, when one does not receive the praise one thinks one deserves, or the reward one believes one has earned, and when one is not complimented for everything one does. Indeed, all these movements come from dissatisfaction, because one doesn’t receive what one hoped to, what one thought one deserved to receive!

*Sweet Mother, what is a “dynamic identification”?*

It is the opposite of a passive or inert identification. It is an identification that is full of energy, will, action, enthusiasm; whereas one can be identified also in a kind of torpor.
Um! So! We justify all our weaknesses? It is not a positive want of self-confidence; it is a lack of confidence in what the divine Grace can do for us. To justify one's weaknesses is a kind of laziness and inertia.

Well, when one doesn't want to make an effort to correct oneself, one says, “Oh, it is impossible, I can't do it, I don't have the strength, I am not made of that stuff, I don't have the necessary qualities, I could never do it.” It is absolute laziness, it is in order to avoid the required effort. When you are asked to make progress: “Oh, it is beyond my capacity, I am a poor creature, I can do nothing!” That's all. It is almost ill-will. It is extreme laziness, a refusal to make any effort. One accepts all one's defects and incapacities in order not to have to make the necessary effort to overcome them. One says, “I am like that, I can't be otherwise!” It is a refusal to let the divine Grace work in you. It is a justification of your own ill-will.

Has someone there a question? Or isn't there any?

*Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: “You will know and see and feel that you are a person and power formed by her out of herself, put out from her for the play....” What play?* 

The universe is called the play of the Divine!

*Why?*

Why? That's a way of speaking! You feel that it is not an amusing game? There are many who don't (*laughter*), who find that the play is not amusing. But still, it's a way of speaking.... One speaks of — without thinking that it is joyful — one speaks of “the play
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of forces”; it is the movement, the interaction. All activities are the play of forces. So one can take it in that sense. But, you see, it means that the divine Force, the divine Consciousness, has exteriorised itself to create the universe and all the play of forces in the universe. That’s what it means, nothing else. I don’t mean necessarily playing in the Playground! It can mean many other things!

(Turning to the other children to induce them to ask questions) Nothing? You don’t have anything either?

What is the meaning of “keep yourself free from all taint of the perversions of the ego”?

Perversions of the ego?

(After a silence) Perversion is something that goes astray from the divine truth and purity. The moment you start living in ignorance and falsehood, you live in perversion; and the whole world is made of ignorance and falsehood at present. So this means that if you remain in the ordinary consciousness, you are necessarily in the perversion of the ego.

Mother, here it is said: “Even if the idea of the separate worker is strong in you and you feel that it is you who do the act, yet it must be done for her.” For example, our study of sports— we must think that it is for the Divine?

But surely...

How?

It is not even very difficult. You can first do it as a preparation so as to become capable of receiving the divine forces, and then, as a service, so that you may help in constructing the whole organisation of the Ashram. You can do it not with any personal
gain in view, but with the intention of making yourselves ready to accomplish the divine work! This seems to me even quite indispensable if you want to profit fully from the situation. If you keep the ordinary point of view, well, you will always find yourselves in conditions which are not quite satisfactory, and incapable of receiving all the forces you can receive.

Mother, if for instance in the long jump one makes an effort to jump a greater and greater distance, how does one do the divine work?

Eh? Excuse me, it is not for the pleasure of doing the long jump, it is to make your body more perfect in its functioning, and, therefore, a more suitable instrument for receiving the divine forces and manifesting them.

Why, everything, everything one does in this place must be done in this spirit, otherwise you do not even profit by the opportunity given to you, the circumstances given to you. I explained to you the other day, didn’t I, that the Consciousness is here, penetrating all things and trying to manifest in all movements? But if you, on your side, tell yourself that the effort you are making, the progress you are making, you make in order to become more capable of receiving this Consciousness and of manifesting it, the work will naturally be much better and much quicker. And this seems to me even quite elementary, to tell you the truth; I am surprised that it could be otherwise! Because your presence in an Ashram organised as it is organised would have no meaning if it were not that! Of what use would it be? There are any number of universities, schools in the world which are very well organised!

But if you are here, it is for a special reason! It is because here there is a possibility of absorbing consciousness and progress which is not found elsewhere. And if you don’t prepare yourselves to receive this, well, you will lose the chance that’s given to you!
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Why, I have never spoken of this before, because it seemed so obvious to me that it was not at all necessary to say it.

Like that, Mother, one knows one must do all that! But when one does it, then the intention is different!

No, but... (Silence) What do you think, in a general way? It is by some kind of chance or luck — or just because your parents are here — that by chance you happen to be here, or what? I don’t know! (Laughing) That you could as well be here as anywhere else, or what?

You are all old enough to have thought a little, and reflected a little. You have never asked yourselves, “Why am I here?” Have you asked yourselves this? Or is it something which... I indeed thought that you ought to take it as something quite... that it was understood, quite natural! So, I never spoke to you about it. Why, I would be interested in knowing... (To a child) Have you thought of this, you there?

I told you, Sweet Mother, the other day!

That’s right, but you can repeat it. (To another child) And you? Have you thought about it? Or do you take it like that... because papa and mamma are here, so I am here? (Laughter) (To another) And you?

When you gave us “To the Children of the Ashram” — after that I understood.

Ah, you understood! Not before that?

I did not think about it before.

But how old are you all, on an average, here? Fifteen or sixteen? Seventeen? Twenty? No? It is not like that? The Red Group is
between fifteen and twenty, isn’t it? Are there some here who are younger?

No!

But one begins to think at thirteen. One begins to think, to ask oneself questions, one even wonders, “What is life, and why do we live?” And still more when one finds oneself in a place like this, which is not quite an ordinary place: “Why am I here?” and “What is the use of being here?” and “What is the reason for being here?” Eh? — You do not think? You do not think? I know two or three of you who think about it because you have told me. But (laughing) the others? You have never asked yourselves these questions, no?... Nobody is saying a word! (Laughter)

(To a child) So you, you have never thought about it? You have. (Nobody replies.) Ah! They don’t want to say anything. All right, let’s not talk any more about it then. (Laughter)

That’s all? Is that enough?

Mother, what’s interesting is this: What is there in us that has made us come here?

Ah, that is interesting! What is the reason of your being here? Well, it’s for each one to find it. Have you found it, you? No, not yet? Why, that’s another very interesting question!

If you... (Silence) If you asked yourselves this, you would be obliged to seek the answer somewhere, within — because it is within you, the answer. “What is there in us that has made us come here?” The answer is within. There is nothing outside. And if you go deep enough, you will find a very clear answer... (silence) and an interesting answer. If you go deep enough, into a sufficiently complete silence from all outer things, you will find within you that flame about which I often speak, and in this flame you will see your destiny. You will see the aspiration of centuries which has been concentrated gradually, to lead you
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through countless births to the great day of realisation — that preparation which has been made through thousands of years, and is reaching its culmination.

And as you will have gone very deep to find this, all your incapacities, all your weaknesses, everything in you that denies and does not understand, all that — you will feel that it is not yourself, it is just like a garment which serves in some way and which you have put on for the time being. But you will understand that in order to be truly capable of profiting fully by the opportunity to do what you wanted to do, what you have aspired to do for such a long time, you must gradually bring the light, the consciousness, the truth into all these obscure elements of the external garment, so that you may be able to understand integrally why you are here! And not only that you may understand it, but that you may be able to do it. For centuries this has been prepared in you, not in this... (Mother pinches the skin of her forearm) this is quite recent, isn’t it?... but in your true self. And for centuries it has been awaiting this opportunity.

And then you enter immediately into the marvellous. You see to what an extent it is extraordinary... that things which one has so long hoped for, things for which one has prayed so much, made so many efforts, suddenly a moment comes when they are realised.

It is the moment when great things are done. One must not miss the opportunity.

(Long silence)

On the 15th of August I shall give you something written by Sri Aurobindo which is precisely on this subject — it is called The Hour of God.

You will read it carefully and you will understand.

There we are.