23 December 1953

If the mind “is incapable of finding knowledge”\(^1\) what part of the being finds knowledge?

One must enter the knowledge which belongs to the supramental region.

*But in order to bring it down?*

Every time something attracts this knowledge (something which is evidently ready to receive it), it comes.

*It does not come down into the mind, Sweet Mother?*

Yes, it descends into the mind. Into a higher part of the mind or rather into the psychic. One may have knowledge from the psychic — though it is of another kind and is not formulated as in the mind. It is a sort of inner certitude which makes you do the right thing at the right moment and in the right way, without necessarily passing through the reason or mental formation.

For instance, one may act with a perfect knowledge of what should be done, and without intervention — the least intervention — of the reasoning mind. The mind is silent: it simply looks on and listens in order to register things, it does not act.

*Here you have said: “Knowledge belongs to a much higher domain than that of the human mind, far above the region of pure ideas.”*

*On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 5*

*Sweet Mother, what do you mean by “pure ideas”?*

\(^1\) *On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 5.*
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We have already spoken about this once, and not so long ago. Pure ideas are those which are translated into numerous thoughts. One idea may give birth to many thoughts, and can be expressed in many different ways; and yet it remains what it is.

*Sometimes we look fixedly at a point; one forgets everything at that moment and if there is a noise one is disturbed. What is this state?*

Concentration! It is exactly the very principle of concentration. Can you do it spontaneously?

*Yes, many times.*

Indeed, that’s very good!

*Yes, Sweet Mother, but what I thought at that moment I cannot capture.*

Ah!... If you are suddenly pulled out from it, thought vanishes?

*Yes.*

That’s because you enter a state of consciousness which is different from your ordinary state of consciousness and probably the link between the two is not established very well. That takes time. It is as though one had to build a bridge. Otherwise one takes a sudden jump to one side or the other, and then in jumping one forgets what was there. One leaves behind the experience one had. But if the thing is done methodically, that is, if every day one keeps a particular time for this, and meditates for ten or fifteen minutes in order to establish a contact between that and the outer life, well, after some time one succeeds and then one remembers, and this becomes very useful. It is very useful. And

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if your power of concentration is complete, then there is not a problem you cannot solve — I don't mean arithmetic problems (laughter), I mean problems about leading one’s life, about decisions to be taken, psychological problems which need solving. There is not one that can resist this power of concentration.

And in fact it is very convenient to take a point: one looks steadily at the point, and so steadily that at a certain moment one becomes the point. One is no longer somebody looking at the point; one is the point. And then, if you continue with sufficient strength and quietness, without anything disturbing you, you may suddenly find yourself before a door which opens and you pass to the other side. And then you have the revelation.

Since when have you been doing this? This has always happened? Or is it recent?

_I don’t know._

You don’t know? Perhaps you were doing it and were not aware of it!

_I didn’t know._

But you don’t do it deliberately? It just comes upon you, takes hold of you?

_Yes._

Ah! this is perhaps also one of the reasons why you don’t remember.

(Again another child) _Sweet Mother, when one passes into the region of knowledge, is it necessary to pass through the intermediary regions?_

Intermediary? But you see, if one does it by a methodical discipline, generally one is obliged to pass from one plane to another:
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one wakes up in a particular plane, and then there one enters a sort of sleep and wakes up in another plane, and so on. And if one does it this way, then one remembers, for one does it with one’s conscious will and witnesses the working — these movements for quietening the being, precisely, in order to enter somewhere and see what is happening there, and the movement of taking notes of what is happening and preparing oneself for another higher opening, all this establishes conscious contact between the different parts of the being, and then one can have experiences without forgetting anything, and even at will.

But there are some rather uneducated people, for instance, who suddenly develop a faculty and have a direct experience somewhere in the higher mind or the psychic being or in some other part of the being. There are many reasons for this: it may be the result of former lives, it may be a phenomenon of consciousness of this life, it could be many things. In any case, for it to be fully useful, it should be done with the will to use it for one’s progress and become conscious of the different parts of the being in order to be able to do what one ought to do to the best of one’s ability. For instance, I have known people who were absolutely ignorant and uneducated but had a gift of vision, and a remarkable gift: they were put into trance and saw marvellously and described things — they knew how to see and describe all they saw whilst they were seeing it. But when they came out of that condition, they were absolutely ordinary beings without any education and intelligence. Yet that was a marvellous gift. That means there are beings who can make the greatest progress from the spiritual point of view, and even the intellectual, and who yet are apparently and in their outer life quite ordinary. There are others — I have known some who had an absolutely marvellous spiritual realisation, who lived constantly in the divine Presence and yet never had a vision in all their life! And they used to complain about it.... It is a question of temperament, destiny, and probably of the work one has to do, for evidently one can’t do everything — physically
it is impossible. Consequently one must choose.

When the body falls ill, do the mind and vital also fall ill?

Not necessarily. Illness (I have explained this to you) comes usually from a dislocation between the different parts of the being, from a sort of disharmony. Well, it can very well happen that the body has not followed a certain movement of progress, for instance, that it has remained behind, and that, on the other hand, the other parts of the being have progressed, and so that disequilibrium, that rupture of harmony creates the illness, and the mind may be in a very fine state and the vital also. There are people who have been ill for years — with terrible, incurable diseases — and who have kept their mental capacity marvellously clear and progressed mentally. There is a French poet (a very good poet) called Sully Prudhomme; he was mortally ill; and it was then that he wrote his most beautiful poems. He remained charming, amiable, smiling — amiable with everyone, and yet his body was going to pieces. That depends on people. There are others still — as soon as they feel the least bit ill, everything is upset from top to bottom — they are then good for nothing. For each one the combination is different.

It is said there is a relation between the body and the mind. If the mind is not quite all right, then what?

But certainly there is a relation between the body and the mind! There is even more than a relation: it is a very close tie, for most of the time it is the mind which makes the body ill. In any case, it is the principal factor.

And if the body is not well?

That depends on people, I told you. There are people — as soon
as the least thing happens to their body, their mind is completely upset. There are others still who may be very ill and yet keep their mind clear. It is rarer and more difficult to see a mind that’s upset and the body remaining healthy — it is not impossible but it is much rarer, for the body depends a great deal on the state of the mind. The mind (I have written it there in the book) is the master of the physical being. And I have said the latter was a very docile and obedient servant. Only one doesn’t know how to use one’s mind, rather the opposite. Not only does one not know how to use it, but one uses it ill — as badly as possible. The mind has a considerable power of formation and a direct action on the body, and usually one uses this power to make oneself ill. For as soon as the least thing goes wrong, the mind begins to shape and build all the catastrophes possible, to ask itself whether it could be this, whether it could be that, if it is going to be like that, and how it will all end. Well, if instead of letting the mind do this disastrous work, one used the same capacity to make favourable formations — simply, for example, to give confidence to the body, to tell it that it is just a passing disturbance and that it is nothing, and if it enters a real state of receptivity, the disorder will disappear as easily as it has come, and one can cure oneself in a few seconds — if one knows how to do that, one gets wonderful results.

There is a moment for choice, even in an accident. For instance, one slips and falls. Just between the moment one has slipped and the moment one falls there is a fraction of a second. At that moment one has the choice: it may be nothing much, it may be very serious. Only, the consciousness must naturally be wide awake and one must be in contact with one’s psychic being constantly — there is no time to make the contact, one must be in contact. Between the moment one slips and the moment one is on the ground, if the mental and psychic formation is sufficiently strong, then there is nothing, nothing will happen — nothing happens. But if at that moment, the mind according to its habit becomes a pessimist and tells itself: “Oh! I have slipped....” That
lasts the fraction of a second; that doesn’t take even a minute, it
is a fraction of a second; during a fraction of a second one has
the choice. But one must be so awake, every minute of one’s life!
For a fraction of a second one has the choice, there is a fraction
of a second in which one can prevent the accident from being
serious, can prevent the illness from entering in. One always has
the choice. But it is for a fraction of a second and one must not
miss it. If one misses it, it is finished.

One can make it afterwards? (laughter)

No. Afterwards there is yet another moment.... One has fallen,
one is already hurt; but there is still a moment when one can
change things for the better or worse, so that it may be something
very fugitive the bad effects of which will quickly disappear or
something which becomes as serious, as grave as it can be. I don’t
know if you have noticed that there are people who never miss
the opportunity of an accident! Every time there is the possibility
of an accident, they have it. And never is their accident ordinary.
Every time the accident can be serious, it is serious. Well, usually
in life one says: “Oh! he is unlucky, he is unfortunate, indeed
he has no luck.” But all that is ignorance. It depends absolutely
on the working of his consciousness. I could give you examples
— only I would have to speak about certain people and I don’t
want to. But I could give you striking examples! And this — this
is the sort of thing one sees all the time, all the time here! There
are people who could have been killed and who come out of it
unscathed; there are others for whom it was not serious, and it
becomes serious.

But that does not depend on thought, on the working of
the ordinary thought. They may apparently have thoughts as
good as the others — it is not that. It is the second of the choice
— people knowing how to react just in the right way at the
right time. I could give you hundreds of examples. It is quite
interesting.
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This depends absolutely on character. Some have such an awakened consciousness, so alert, that they are not asleep, they are awake within. Just at the second it is required they call the help. Or they invoke the divine Force. But just at the second it is needed. So the danger is averted, nothing happens. They could have been killed: they come out of it absolutely unhurt. Others, on the contrary, as soon as they have the least little scratch, something gets dislocated in their being: a sort of fright or pessimism or defeatism in their consciousness which automatically comes up — it was nothing, they had just twisted their leg and the next minute they break it. There is no reason for it. They could very well have not broken their leg.

There are others who climb up to a first floor on a ladder which gives way under them. They could have collapsed — they come out of that without the least hurt. How did they manage it? Apparently this seems wonderful, and still this is how things happen to them. They find themselves lying on the ground in an altogether fine state; nothing has happened to them. I could give you the names, I am telling you exact facts.

So, on what does this depend? It depends on whether one is sufficiently awake for the second of the choice to... And note that this is not at all mental, it is not that: it is an attitude of the being, it is the consciousness reacting in the right way. It goes quite far, very far, it is formidable, the power of this attitude. But as it is just a fraction of a second, it implies an altogether awakened consciousness which never sleeps, never enters the inconscient. For one does not know when these things are going to happen, isn’t that so? Hence, one does not have the time to wake up. One must be awake.

I knew someone who, indeed, should have died and did not die because of this. For his consciousness reacted very fast. He had taken poison by mistake: instead of taking one dose of a certain medicine, he had taken twelve and it was a poison; he should have died, the heart should have stopped (it was many years ago) and he is still quite alive! He reacted in the right way.
If these things were narrated they would be called miracles. They are not miracles: it is an awakened consciousness.

*How were we saved the other day when working down there with the crane?*\(^2\)

I suppose you ought to know!

*We know partly.*

Very partially, vaguely, a sort of impression “like that” — an impression, almost an attitude, but not knowledge. How that works, one would not be able to say!

*It was by Grace.*

But if you can explain to me how that works, it would be interesting for everybody. It would be very interesting to know who exactly had that wakeful consciousness, had faith and a sort of... something that answered automatically, and perhaps not consciously.

There are degrees, many degrees. Human intelligence is such that unless there is a contrast it does not understand. You know, I have received hundreds of letters from people thanking me because they had been saved; but it is very, very rarely that someone writes to thank me because nothing has happened, you understand! Let us take an accident, it is already the beginning of a disorder. Naturally when it is a public or collective accident, the atmosphere of each person has its part in the thing, and that depends on the proportion of defeatists and those who,

\(^2\) A team of young Ashram disciples was trying to lift a tree-trunk into a truck with the help of a crane, when the crane broke apart, flying into pieces on all sides, but without hurting anyone. Then the tree-trunk half lifted in began rolling slowly, causing the truck to lean on one side threatening to crush several boys, when, without any apparent reason or any physical object to hold it back, the trunk suddenly stopped in its course.
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on the contrary, are on the right side. I don’t know if I have written this — it is written somewhere — but it is a very interesting thing. I am going to tell you.... People are not aware of the workings of Grace except when there has been some danger, that is, when there has been the beginning of an accident or the accident has taken place and they have escaped it. Then they become aware. But never are they aware that if, for instance, a journey or anything whatever, passes without any accident, it is an infinitely higher Grace. That is, the harmony is established in such a way that nothing can happen. But that seems to them quite natural. When people are ill and get well quickly, they are full of gratitude; but never do they think of being grateful when they are well; and yet that is a much greater miracle! In collective accidents, what is interesting is exactly the proportion, the sort of balance or disequilibrium, the combination made by the different atmospheres of people.

There was an aviator, one of the great “aces” as they are called of the First [World] War, and a marvellous aviator. He had won numerous battles, nothing had ever happened to him. But something occurred in his life and suddenly he felt that something was going to happen to him, an accident, that it was now all over. What they call their “good luck” had gone. This man left the military to enter civil aviation and he piloted one of these lines — no, not civil aviation: the war ended, but he continued flying military airplanes. And then he wanted to make a trip to South Africa: from France to South Africa. Evidently, something must have been upset in his consciousness (I did not know him personally, so I don’t know what happened). He started from a certain city in France to go to Madagascar, I believe (I am not sure, I think it was Madagascar). And from there he wanted to come back to France. My brother was at that time governor of the Congo, and he wanted to get back quickly to his post. He asked to be allowed as a passenger on the plane (it was one of those planes for professional tours, to show what these planes could do). Many people wanted to dissuade my brother
from going by it; they told him, “No, these trips are always
dangerous, you must not go on them.” But finally he went all
the same. They had a breakdown and stopped in the middle
of the Sahara, a situation not very pleasant. Yet everything was
arranged as by a miracle, the plane started again and put down
my brother in the Congo, exactly where he wanted to go, then it
went farther south. And soon after, half-way the plane crashed
— and the other man was killed.... It was obvious that this had
to happen. But my brother had an absolute faith in his destiny,
a certitude that nothing would happen. And it was translated
in this way: the mixture of the two atmospheres made the dis-
location unavoidable, for there was a breakdown in the Sahara
and the plane was obliged to land, but finally everything was in
order and there was no real accident. But once he was no longer
there, the other man had all the force of his “ill-
luck” (if you
like), and the accident was complete and he was killed.

A similar incident happened to a boat. There were two per-
sons (they were well-known people but I cannot remember their
names now), who had gone to Indo-China by plane. There was
an accident, they were the only ones to have been saved, all
the others were killed, indeed it was quite a dramatic affair.
But these two (husband and wife) must have been what may
be called bringers of bad-luck — it is a sort of atmosphere they
carry. Well, these two wanted to go back to France (for, in fact,
the accident occurred on their way back to France), they wanted
to return to France, they took a boat. And quite unexpectedly,
exceptionally, right in the midst of the Red Sea the boat ran
into a reef (a thing that doesn’t happen even once in a million
journeys) and sank; and the others were drowned, and these two
were saved. And I could do nothing, you know, I wanted to say:
“Take care, never travel with these people!”... There are people
of this sort, wherever they are, they come out of the thing very
well, but the catastrophes are for the others.

If one sees things from the ordinary viewpoint, one does
not notice this. But the associations of atmosphere — one must
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take care of that. That is why when one travels in groups, one
must know with whom one travels. One should have an inner
knowledge, should have a vision. And then, if one sees somebody
who has a kind of small black cloud around him, one must take
care not to travel with him, for, surely an accident will occur
— though perhaps not to him. Hence, it is quite useful to know
things a little more deeply than in the altogether superficial way.

(Looking at the child) He looks as if he found life becoming
very difficult in this way!