8 June 1955

Mother reads from Sri Aurobindo’s *Lights on Yoga*, “The Goal”.

Now then! We shall have impromptu, improvised questions, not prepared ones. *(To a child)* You have any?

_Sweet Mother, here it is written: “This liberation, perfection, fullness too must not be pursued for our own sake, but for the sake of the Divine.” But isn’t the sadhana we do done for ourselves?*_

But he stresses precisely that. It is simply in order to stress the point. It means that all this perfection which we are going to acquire is not for a personal and selfish end, it is in order to be able to manifest the Divine, it is put at the service of the Divine. We do not pursue this development with a selfish intention of personal perfection; we pursue it because the divine Work has to be accomplished.

But _why do we do this divine Work? It is to make ourselves_...

No, not at all! It is because that’s the divine Will. It is not at all for a personal reason, it must not be that. It is because it’s the divine Will and it’s the divine Work.

So long as a personal aspiration or desire, a selfish will, get mingled in it, it always creates a mixture and is not exactly an expression of the divine Will. The only thing which must count is the Divine, His Will, His manifestation, His expression. One is here for that, one is that, and nothing else. And so long as there is a feeling of self, of the ego, the person, which enters,
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well, this proves that one is not yet what one ought to be, that’s all. I don’t say that this can be done overnight but still this indeed is the truth.

It is just because even in this field, the spiritual field, there are far too many people (I could say even the majority of those who take to the spiritual life and do yoga), far too many of these who do it for personal reasons, all kinds of personal reasons: some because they are disgusted with life, others because they are unhappy, others still because they want to know more, others because they want to become spiritually great, others because they want to learn things which they may be able to teach others; indeed there are a thousand personal reasons for taking up yoga. But the simple fact of giving oneself to the Divine so that the Divine takes you and makes of you what He wills, and this in all its purity and constancy, well, there are not many who do that and yet this indeed is the truth; and with this one goes straight to the goal and never risks making mistakes. But all the other motives are always mixed, tainted with ego; and naturally they can lead you here and there, very far from the goal also.

But that kind of feeling that you have only one single reason for existence, one single goal, one single motive, the entire, perfect, complete consecration to the Divine to the point of not being able to distinguish yourself from Him any longer, to be Himself entirely, completely, totally without any personal reaction intervening, this is the ideal attitude; and besides, it is the only one which makes it possible for you to go forward in life and in the work, absolutely protected from everything and protected from yourself which is of all dangers the greatest for you — there is no greater danger than the self (I take “self” in the sense of an egoistic self).

This is what Sri Aurobindo meant there, nothing else.

Now, who has found a question?

It is not in the words of the book that you must find the question, it is in the reaction that you had to what I read. If you have listened, it has had a certain effect on you, you must have
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had some reactions: it is this, these reactions which you must elucidate in yourself and if you could tell me one day, “Why! I felt like that, what does it mean, this sensation? Why did I think like that?” These surely are the questions! For then it would be the opportunity to elucidate something in your consciousness. When I read you surely must have some reaction somewhere, even were it only in your head. Well, this is what you should note and ask: “When I heard that sentence, why did I suddenly feel like this? When that was said, why did it make me think of this?” These would be interesting questions.

Mother, you said just now that we must do everything for the Divine.

Yes.

But why does the Divine want to manifest Himself on earth in this chaos?

Because this is why He has created the earth, not for any other motive; the earth is He Himself in a deformation and He wants to establish it back again in its truth. Earth is not something separated from Him and alien to Him. It is a deformation of Himself which must once again become what it was in its essence, that is, the Divine.

Then why is He a stranger to us?

But He is not a stranger, my child. You fancy that He is a stranger, but He is not, not in the least. He is the essence of your being — not at all alien. You may not know Him, but He is not a stranger; He is the very essence of your being. Without the Divine you would not exist. Without the Divine you could not exist even for the millionth part of a second. Only, because you live in a kind of false illusion and deformation, you are not
conscious. You are not conscious of yourself, you are conscious of something which you think to be yourself, but which isn’t you.

Then what is myself, Sweet Mother?

The Divine!

Sweet Mother, when you speak of the reactions when you are reading, personally I feel that all that I do is funny! From top to bottom everything has to be reorganised.

I didn’t catch the end of the sentence.

(Pavitra) Everything has to be reorganised.

Yes. Why?

(Pavitra) Everything is funny. “All that I do is funny!”

Funny! Ah! That is why I didn’t understand. Funny, yes; but from a certain point of view it is true; what everybody does, from a certain point of view, is funny.

There is an enormous wastage. All that I receive from you is lost all the time. Apparently everything is all right, and this continues, and it can so continue eternally. But if it has to change it will be a revolution, immediately, and that is why one doesn’t want to risk it. There is hypocrisy: everything is all right, but it isn’t true, there is an enormous loss of consciousness.

Is it possible to change this at once, change this consciousness?

Change?...

(Pavitra) Change this, change this consciousness at once?
Immediately?

(Pavitra) *In a few minutes. One feels that it will be a revolution to change that.*

Yes, but a revolution can occur in half a second; it can also take years, even centuries, and even many lives. It can be done in a second.

One can do it. Precisely, when one has this inner reversal of consciousness, in one second everything, everything changes... precisely this bewilderment of being able to think that what one is, what one considers as oneself is not true, and that what is the truth of one’s being is something one doesn’t know. You see, this should have been the normal reaction, the one she had, of saying, “But then what is myself? If what I feel as myself is an illusory formation and not the truth of my being, then what is myself?” For that she doesn’t know. And so when one asks the question like that...

There is a moment — because it is a question which becomes more and more intense and more and more acute — when you have even the feeling, precisely, that things are strange, that is, they are not real; a moment comes when this sensation that you have of yourself, of being yourself, becomes strange, a kind of sense of unreality. And the question continues coming up: “But then, what is myself?” Well, there is a moment when it comes up with so much concentration and such intensity that with this intensity of concentration suddenly there occurs a reversal, and then, instead of being on this side you are on that side, and when you are on that side everything is very simple; you understand, you know, you are, you live, and then you see clearly the unreality of the rest, and this is enough.

You see, one may have to wait for days, months, years, centuries, lives, before this moment comes. But if one intensifies his aspiration, there is a moment when the pressure is so great and the intensity of the question so strong that something turns
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over in the consciousness, and then this is absolutely what one feels: instead of being here one is there, instead of seeing from outside and seeking to see within, one is inside; and the minute one is within, absolutely everything changes, completely, and all that seemed to him true, natural, normal, real, tangible, all that, immediately,—yes, it seems to him very grotesque, very queer, very unreal, quite absurd; but one has touched something which is supremely true and eternally beautiful, and this one never loses again.

Once the reversal has taken place, you can glide into an external consciousness, not lose the ordinary contact with the things of life, but that remains and it never moves. You may, in your dealings with others, fall back a little into their ignorance and blindness, but there is always something there, living, standing up within, which does not move any more, until it manages to penetrate everything, to the point where it is over, where the blindness disappears for ever. And this is an absolutely tangible experience, something more concrete than the most concrete object, more concrete than a blow on your head, something more real than anything whatever.

This is why I always say... when people ask me how one may know whether he is in contact with his psychic being or how one may know whether he has found the Divine, well, it makes me laugh; for when it happens to you it is over, you can no longer ask any questions, it is done; you do not ask how it happens, it is done.

I want to ask about this point: falling back into the ordinary consciousness, which is becoming more and more obstinate in me, personally; I feel it.

That’s a purely personal question.

But why is it like that, when I know that it is absurd?
It is because, I think, you have kept the division in your being, that is, there is one part of your being which has refused to go along with the rest. It is usually like this that it happens. There is one part which has progressed, one part which holds on and doesn’t want to move; so you feel it more and more as something which persists in being what it is. That’s because you have dropped some of your baggage on the way and left it on the roadside instead of carrying it along with you. That will always pull you backward. Sometimes, unfortunately, one has to turn back, go and pick it up and bring it along; so one loses much time. This is how, indeed, one loses time. It’s because one shuts one’s eyes to so many things in the being. One doesn’t want to see them, because they are not so pretty to see. So one prefers not to know them. But because one is ignorant of the thing it doesn’t mean that it doesn’t exist any longer. One does this: one puts it down on the way and then tries to go forward, but it is bound by threads, it pulls one back like a millstone drag, and so one must courageously take it up and hold it up like this (gesture) and tell it: “Now you will walk along with me!” It’s no use playing the ostrich. You see, one shuts the eyes and doesn’t want to see that one has this fault or that difficulty or that ignorance and stupidity; one doesn’t want to see, doesn’t want, one looks away to the other side, but it remains there all the same.

One day you have to face the thing, you have to. Otherwise you can never reach the end, it will always pull you backward. You may feel ahead, may see the goal there, drawing near, all this more and more, you may have something which goes before and has almost the feeling that it is going to touch, but you will never touch it if you have these millstones pulling you back. One day you must make a clean sweep of everything. It sometimes takes very long but one must burn one’s bridges; otherwise you go in a round, progress bit by bit until the end of your life, and then, when the time to leave has come you suddenly feel: “Ah! But... well, it will be perhaps for another time.” This is not pleasant; why, it must be something frightful; for if one has known
nothing, understood nothing, if one has never tried... People are
born, live, die and are reborn and live and die again, and it
goes on, continues indefinitely, they don’t even put the problem
before themselves. But when one has had the taste, the foretaste
of what life is, and why one is here, and what one has to do
here, and then in addition one has made some effort and tries
to realise, if one doesn’t get rid of all the baggage of what does
not follow, then it will be necessary to begin again yet another
time. Better not. It is better to do one’s work while one can do
it consciously, and indeed this is what is meant by “Never put
off for tomorrow what you can do today.” This “today” means
in this present life, because the occasion is here, the opportunity
here; and perhaps one will have to wait many thousands of years
to find it once again. It is better to do one’s work, at any cost.
There!... Losing as little time as possible.

Every time you are afraid to face yourself and hide carefully
from yourself what prevents you from advancing, well, it is as
though you were building a wall on the way; later you must
demolish it to pass on. It is better to do your task immediately,
look yourself straight in the face, straight in the face, not try
to sugar-coat the bitter pill. It is very bitter: all the weaknesses,
uglinesses, all kinds of nasty little things which one has inside
— there are, there are, there are, oh! lots of them. And so you
are on the point of attaining a realisation, on the point of touch-
ing a light, having an illumination, and then suddenly you feel
something pulling you back like this (gesture), and you suffo-
cate, you cannot advance further. Well, in these moments some
people weep, some lament, some say, “Oh, poor me, here it is yet
once again!” All this is a ridiculous weakness. You have only to
look at yourself like this and say, “What petty meanness, small
stupidity, little vanity, ignorance, bad will is still there, hidden
in the corner, preventing me from crossing the threshold, the
threshold of this new discovery? Who is there in me, who is so
small, so mean and obstinate, hiding there like a worm in a fruit
so that I may not be able to see it?” If you are sincere you find
it; but above all it is this, absolutely this: you always sugar-coat
the pill. The sugar-coating is a kind of what is called mental
understanding of oneself. So one coats as thickly with sugar as
possible in order to hide well from oneself what is there, the
worm in the fruit; and one does it always, always gives oneself
an excuse, always, always.

What prevents me from opening myself to the influence
is the suggestion, “Why hurry, why so soon, since the
others are not doing it?”

This is a frightful platitude!
It is one of the most foolish excuses imaginable. No, there
are others much more subtle and much more dangerous than
that.

But even if you must be the one and only being in the whole
creation who gives himself integrally in all purity to the Divine,
and being the only one, being naturally absolutely misunder-
stood by everybody, scoffed at, ridiculed, hated, even if you
were that, there is no reason for not doing it. One must be either
a tinsel actor or else a fool. Because others don’t do it? But what
does it matter whether they do it or not? “Why, the whole world
may go the wrong way, it does not concern me. There is only one
thing with which I am concerned, to go straight. What others
do, how is it my concern? It is their business, not mine.”
This is the worst of all slaveries!

Here, it is said: “One must not enter on this path, far
vaster and more arduous than most ways of yoga, unless
one is sure of the psychic call and of one’s readiness to go
through to the end.” Does this mean, Mother, that those
who are accepted or those who are here in this Ashram
are sure to go through and succeed?

Excuse me! But there is... I don’t exactly know the proportion,
but still it is certainly not most of the people here who are doing yoga. They happen to be here for many reasons; but those who have taken the resolution to do yoga, sincerely, do not form the majority. And as I told you, for you, children, those of you who have come here as children, how could you at the moment have even the least idea of what yoga is and come for the yoga? It is impossible. For all those who have come quite small, there is an age when the problem comes up; it is then that you must reflect, and then at that time I ask them. Well, have I asked you often about it? Since I am giving you these lessons, I speak to you about the thing, but it is very rarely that I have taken you individually and asked you, “Do you want to do it or not?” — Only those who have within themselves, who have had an impulsion, a kind of instinct, who have come and said, “Yes, I want to do yoga.” Then it is finished. But I tell them, “Good, these are the conditions, this is how it is. And you know, it is not something easy. You have to start with an inner certitude that you are here for that and you want that; that’s enough.” You see, one may have a very good will, a life oriented towards a divine realisation, in any case, a kind of more or less superficial consecration to a divine work, and not do yoga.

To do Sri Aurobindo’s yoga is to want to transform oneself integrally, it is to have a single aim in life, such that nothing else exists any longer, that alone exists. And so one feels it clearly in oneself whether one wants it or not; but if one doesn’t, one can still have a life of goodwill, a life of service, of understanding; one can labour for the Work to be accomplished more easily — all that — one can do many things. But between this and doing yoga there is a great difference.

And to do yoga you must want it consciously, you must know what it is, to begin with. You must know what it is, you must take a resolution about it; but once you have taken the resolution, you must no longer flinch. That is why you must take it in full knowledge of the thing. You must know what you are deciding upon when you say, “I want to do yoga”; and that is
why I don’t think that I have ever pressed you from this point of view. I can speak to you about the thing. Oh! I tell you a lot about it, you are here for me to speak to you about it; but individually it is only to those who have come saying, “Yes, in any case I have my idea about the yoga and want to do it”; it is good.

And then for them it’s something different, and the conditions of life are different, specially inwardly. Specially within, things change.

There is always a consciousness there acting constantly to rectify the situation, which puts you all the time in the presence of obstacles which prevent you from advancing, make you bump against your own errors and your own blindnesses. And this acts only for those who have decided to do the yoga. For others the Consciousness acts like a light, a knowledge, a protection, a force of progress, so that they may reach their maximum capacities and be able to develop as far as possible in an atmosphere as favourable as possible — but leaving them completely free in their choice.

The decision must come from within. Those who come consciously for the yoga, knowing what yoga is, well, their conditions of living here are... outwardly there is no difference but inwardly there is a very great difference. There is a kind of absoluteness in the consciousness, which does not let them deviate from the path: the errors one commits become immediately visible with consequences strong enough for one not to be able to make any mistake about it, and things become very serious. But it is not often like that.

All of you, my children — I may tell you this, I have repeated it to you and still repeat it — live in an exceptional liberty. Outwardly there are a few limitations, because, as there are many of us and we don’t have the whole earth at our disposal, we are obliged to submit to a certain discipline to a certain extent, so that there may not be too great a disorder; but inwardly you live in a marvellous liberty: no social constraint, no moral constraint, no intellectual constraint, no rule, nothing, nothing
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but a light which is there. If you want to profit by it, you profit
by it; if you don’t want to, you are free not to.

But the day you make a choice — when you have done it in
all sincerity and have felt within yourself a radical decision — the
thing is different. There is the light and the path to be followed,
quite straight, and you must not deviate from it. It fools no one,
you know; yoga is not a joke. You must know what you are
doing when you choose it. But when you choose it, you must
hold on to it. You have no longer the right to vacillate. You must
go straight ahead. There!

All that I ask for is a will to do well, an effort for progress
and the wish to be a little better in life than ordinary human
beings. You have grown up, developed under conditions which
are exceptionally luminous, conscious, harmonious, and full of
goodwill; and in response to these conditions you should be in
the world an expression of this light, this harmony, this goodwill.
This would already be very good, very good.

To do the yoga, this yoga of transformation which, of all
things, is the most arduous — it is only if one feels that one has
come here for that (I mean here upon earth) and that one has
to do nothing else but that, and that it is the only reason of
one’s existence — even if one has to toil hard, suffer, struggle, it
is of no importance — “This is what I want, and nothing else”
— then it is different. Otherwise I shall say, “Be happy and be
good, and that’s all that is asked of you. Be good, in the sense of
being understanding, knowing that the conditions in which you
have lived are exceptional, and try to live a higher, more noble,
more true life than the ordinary one, so as to allow a little of
this consciousness, this light and its goodness to express itself in
the world. It would be very good.” There we are.

But once you have set foot on the path of yoga, you must
have a resolution of steel and walk straight on to the goal,
whatever the cost.

There!