This talk is based on Chapter 3 of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

“The more complete your faith, sincerity and surrender, the more will grace and protection be with you. And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. Its touch can turn difficulties into opportunities, failure into success and weakness into unfaltering strength. For the grace of the Divine Mother is the sanction of the Supreme and now or tomorrow its effect is sure, a thing decreed, inevitable and irresistible.”

What does “decreed” mean?

It comes from the word “decreed”. It is a law, it is something which is... It is decreed that such and such a thing will be done in such and such a way, for example. Governments pronounce decrees on what ought and ought not to be done. They are official orders. So, in this case, it is an order from the Supreme, it is an inevitable order.

“Surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is hers.”

It is the same way. From the moment you are surrounded by
the divine grace and are in a fit state to receive the divine grace, your way and hers have become one and the same.

What are the “invisible worlds”? That is a formidable question!

You have heard and read that we are made up of various states of being: physical, vital, mental, psychic, spiritual, etc. Well, all these inner states of being correspond to invisible worlds. There is a physical world, a vital world, a mental world, a psychic world, and many spiritual worlds, a whole range of more and more subtle worlds approaching nearer and nearer to the Supreme. So, since you carry within yourself a corresponding range, by studying and becoming aware of your inner being you gradually make yourself capable of becoming aware also of these invisible worlds. For example, the mind: if the mind is conscious, coordinated, well controlled, it can move about it in the mental world just as the body does in the physical world and see what this mental world is like, what is going on there, what are its characteristics and so on. These things are not invisible in themselves — they are invisible to the physical consciousness and the physical senses, but not to the corresponding inner states of consciousness or the corresponding inner senses. For, by a systematic development one can acquire senses in these worlds and one can then live a similar life with different characteristics. I mean that one can live an objective life in these worlds if one is sufficiently developed oneself. Otherwise, they wouldn’t exist for us. If we did not carry in ourselves something corresponding to all that exists in the universe, this universe wouldn’t exist for us. And it is only a matter of systematic and methodical development. Some people have it spontaneously for various reasons, usually as a result of a long preparation in previous lives, sometimes because of specially favourable circumstances — they are born in a certain environment, of parents who had developed these faculties, and they were helped to develop them.
from childhood. Other people have to acquire them systematically by inner discipline; it takes time, a long time, but after all it doesn’t take much longer than for the brain of a child to grasp abstract mathematics. That takes years.

*Do these invisible worlds exist in a fixed place in the universe?*

They form part of the universe, of course. Yes, one can say that they exist in a fixed place. But to understand that, to understand these things requires a mind capable of understanding that there are other dimensions than the purely material dimensions. For when you are told that your psychic being is in your body, that doesn’t mean that if you open up your body you will find your psychic being inside. You will find your heart, your stomach and the rest, but not your psychic being. And yet it is correct to say that it is within you. It extends beyond you too, but it is in another dimension. And one can say that there are as many dimensions as there are different worlds. Certainly all these invisible worlds — so-called invisible worlds — are contained, so to say, in the material universe. But they don’t occupy the place of other things. To make an imperfect comparison — it is valid only as a comparison — you can hold countless ideas in your brain and you certainly don’t have the feeling that you have to drive one out so that another one can come in, do you? They don’t occupy any space in that sense.

*“And the conditions needed for its creation.”*

They are innumerable and vary with the person and the circumstances. But, ultimately, they can be reduced to what he said in the beginning or a little further on, I forget... Here:

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1 “Ask for nothing but the divine, spiritual and supramental Truth, its realisation on earth and in you and in all who are called and chosen and the conditions needed for its creation and its victory over all opposing forces.”

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“faith, sincerity and surrender”. These are the required conditions. And afterwards, he describes what kind of faith, what kind of sincerity and what kind of surrender. These are the required conditions so that her victory may be won over the hostile forces — the conditions on your side. Her conditions — I suppose she fulfils them spontaneously — are to respond to the aspiration, to have power, clear-sightedness, knowledge and will. That is obvious. So, one has to give her a field for her work and conditions under which she may work. And these conditions are: faith, sincerity and surrender — a pure, unmixed faith, a perfect, integral sincerity and an unconditional surrender. This is what he has described for you.

Is there a limited number of dimensions?

Limited? Or unlimited? What are you asking? How many dimensions? Ah, should we ask the mathematicians or the occultists? The occultist!

Well, in a certain way the number is limited, but since in each dimension there is another limited number of subdivisions and since in these subdivisions there is again a considerable number of subdivisions, we can say that it is unlimited — and yet limited. So, if you understand anything, you are lucky!

If the number is limited, how many are there?

Twelve.

How can there be “an egoistic faith in the mental being”?²

He has described it very well: “tainted by ambition”, etc. I

² “An egoistic faith in the mental and vital being tainted by ambition, pride, vanity, mental arrogance, vital self-will, personal demand, desire for the petty satisfactions of the lower nature is a low and smoke-obscured flame that cannot burn upwards to heaven.”
find that if you put it differently, it is much more true. Is there any faith which doesn’t have a little of all that? For it is said, it has been repeated that faith, if it is pure, is capable of... nothing can resist it. This means that if one were to have an absolutely pure faith, untainted by all these things, a true faith, let’s say the true faith, well, nothing would be impossible. One could be transformed overnight, one could bring down the Supermind in a moment, one could... do anything, one could do anything if one had faith. But it must be a pure faith, it should not be mixed with any personal reactions or any personal will.

A pure faith is something all-powerful and irresistible. One doesn’t often find a faith that is all-powerful and irresistible, and this shows that it is not quite pure. The question should be put like this: each one of us has a faith, for example, a faith in something, say a faith in the divine Presence within us. If our faith were pure, we would at once be aware of this divine Presence within us. This example is very easy to understand. You have faith, it is there, but you don’t have the experience. Why? Because the faith is not pure. If the faith were quite pure, immediately, the thing would be done. This is very true. So, when you become aware that the thing is not realised at once, you can begin to look: “But why isn’t it realised? What is there in my faith?” And if you go on looking with the same sincerity, you will find that there are many little things in it, so many little things — not big, as big as this — which are repulsive. Little things. So many times a little conceit comes in, and then a desire, not a very violent one — it doesn’t show itself very much. The importance it gives you, the power it will give you and the satisfaction it will give you...

*In the invisible worlds, are things seen as in the physical world or as in dreams?*

We have to agree on what dreams are! There are dreams where
you see things so precisely, so concretely that the material world seems rather unreal in comparison. There are dreams like that where things are so intense, so precise, so concrete, so objective and leave you with such a vivid impression that the material world seems rather misty, not very clear, not very distinct. So, if it is a dream like that, yes. But if it is a dream where things clash incoherently, inconsistently with one another, no.

The first step: you must be able to discern the various inner states of being and know for sure: this belongs to the vital, this belongs to the mind, this belongs to the psychic, this belongs to matter. And as I said earlier, there are subdegrees in all that. There is a material vital, a vital vital, a mental vital, a vital under the psychic influence. You must be able to classify things very clearly and not allow any mixtures, any vague confusions in yourself: “Oh, where does this movement come from? What is it?” — indistinct impressions. That is the first step.

Second step: you learn to concentrate in one of these inner states. You choose the one which you feel to be the most alive, the most developed in yourself and you learn to concentrate there. And then you do the same exercises... I wonder whether you remember the exercises you used to do when you were very young in order to walk, to drink, to talk, to hear, to feel. You used to do many exercises. All children do exercises without knowing it, but they do them. So you have to do something on the same lines. You must build up senses and develop them, make them conscious, independent and precise in their perceptions. That is the second stage. It may take time, it may come quickly, it depends on the degree of development of your inner being.

After that — this is only a beginning — after that, you must learn to isolate yourself from all the other parts of the being, to concentrate on the one where you want to have the experience and concentrate in such a way that you come into contact with the corresponding outer world. I don’t mean that it is an exteriorisation that leaves your body in a state of coma. No, a very intense concentration is enough, a power to isolate yourself.
from everything except the place where you are concentrating. And then you come into contact with the corresponding world. You must want that and little by little you learn how to do it. And there you have the exercise required to improve the senses you have gradually developed and give them a field of action. At first, you may be rather lost in this outer world, you won’t feel quite at ease. But little by little you will get used to it and start moving about there in the way that is appropriate to each of these worlds.

But if you know beforehand what they are like — the mind is such a magnificent instrument of formation that it can build up a whole experience for you, and unfortunately, it will never be the genuine experience — it will be merely a mental construction. So, normally, when you want to instruct someone about these occult matters, you never tell him what is going to happen, in the beginning. The only thing is that if something happens to him, if he says, “This is what happened to me,” you tell him, “Yes, this is correct” or “No, that is not correct.” You can help him. But you don’t tell him beforehand, “You will go to such and such a place. It will be like that. You will have such and such an experience,” etc., for then all these things may happen only because of a well-built mental construction in which you move about with ease. In that case it is really a dream!

_If one is not aware of the divine presence, can one enjoy the divine protection?_

There too it depends on the case. It may occur; it is not always like that, but it may occur. It may happen that the divine grace is given to someone without his knowing anything about it. This even happens more often than one thinks.

_Is an emotion always a vital movement?_

It depends on the emotion and it also depends on what you
call an emotion. For example, there is a state where, if you find
yourself in the presence of a very precise, very clear psychic
movement, a distinctly psychic movement — this happens quite
often — the emotion is so powerful that tears come to your eyes.
You are not sad, you are not happy, neither one nor the other;
it doesn’t correspond to any particular feeling, but it is an in-
tensity of emotion which comes from something that is clearly,
precisely psychic. It may be in yourself, but it is even more
often in someone else. When you are in contact with an act, a
movement, a manifestation which belongs to the psychic, then,
all of a sudden, the eyes are filled with tears. If you call that an
emotion... obviously it is an emotion. But usually, it comes from
one thing: the physical being has a not very conscious but very
intense longing for a contact with the psychic life. It feels poor,
derstitute, isolated and abandoned when it is not in contact with
the psychic being. Not one physical being in a million is aware
of this. But this kind of impression of being lost, left hanging,
without protection, without support, of lacking something and
not knowing what it is, something you don’t understand but
which you lack, an emptiness somewhere: well, this comes more
often than one thinks — people have no idea what it is. But
then, when for some reason or other this consciousness sud-
denly comes into contact with a clearly psychic phenomenon,
with psychic forces, psychic vibrations, the feeling is so strong,
so strong that certainly, most often, the body can hardly hold it.
It is like a joy that is too great, that overflows on all sides, that
you can’t contain, can’t hold in yourself. It is like that. There
is suddenly a sort of revelation, not very conscious, not clearly
expressed, the revelation of... this is it, this is what I must have.
And it is so powerful, so powerful that it gives you an emotion,
which is made up of so many things that you can hardly say
what it is. These are emotions that are not vital.

Vital emotions are of an altogether different nature — they
are very clear, very precise, you can express them very dis-
tinctly; they are violent, they usually fill you with an intensity,
a restlessness, sometimes a great satisfaction. And then the opposite comes with the same force. And so people, many people think — we have mentioned this several times already — some people imagine they experience love only when it is like that, when love is in the vital, when it comes with all the movements of the vital, all this intensity, this violence, this precision, this glamour, this brightness. And when that is absent they say, “Oh, this is not love.”

And yet that is exactly how love gets distorted: already it is no longer love, it is beginning to be passion. And this is an almost universal error among human beings.

Some people are full of a very pure, very high, very selfless psychic love and yet they know nothing about it and think they are cold, dry and without love because this admixture of vital vibration is absent. For them love begins and ends with this vibration.

And as it is something highly unstable which has movements and reactions and violences of all kinds, in depression as in satisfaction, love is something very ephemeral for these people: they have minutes of love in their lives. It may last a few hours and then it becomes dull and flat again and they imagine that love has deserted them.

As I said, some people are quite beyond that, they have been able to control it in such a way that it does not get mixed up with anything else; they have in themselves this psychic love which is full of self-forgetfulness, of self-giving, compassion, generosity, nobility of life, and is a great power of identification. So most of these people think they are cold or indifferent — they are very nice people, you see, but they do not love — and sometimes they themselves do not know. I have known people who thought they had no love because they didn’t have this vital vibration. Usually, when people speak of emotions, they are speaking of vital emotions. But there is another kind of emotion which is of an infinitely higher order and doesn’t express itself in the same way, which has just as much intensity, but an intensity that is
under control, contained, condensed, concentrated, and is an extraordinary dynamic power.

True love can achieve extraordinary things, but it is rare. All kinds of miracles can be done out of love for the person one loves — not for everyone, but for the people or the person one loves. But it has to be a love free from all vital mixture, an absolutely pure and selfless love which demands nothing in return, which expects nothing in return.