26 August 1953

“Love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness sent down from itself into an obscure and darkened world that it might bring back that world and its beings to the Divine. The material world in its darkness and ignorance had forgotten the Divine. Love came into the darkness; it awakened all that lay there asleep; it whispered, opening the ears that were sealed: ‘There is something worth waking to, worth living for, and it is love!’ And with the awakening to love there entered into the world the possibility of coming back to the Divine. The creation moves upward through love towards the Divine and in answer there leans downward to meet the creation the Divine Love and Grace.’”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (2 June 1929)

Where does love come from?

Where does love come from? From the Origin of the universe. Besides, I say that there. That’s what I say. I say that love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness has emanated in order to send it into the world. Love comes from that. (Mother takes the Bulletin of August 1953 and reads a passage from “The Four Austerities and the Four Liberations”.) This answers the question:

“Love is, in its essence, the joy of identity: it finds its supreme expression in the bliss of union. Between the two there are all the phases of its universal manifestation.”

First, it is the joy of identity. Something must be there already which can become conscious of the identity, and that precisely is
love. Then comes the manifestation of love. And in its supreme form, that is, when it returns to its source crossing all the phases of its manifestation, it becomes the bliss of union. For the feeling of union comes as a consequence of the feeling of separation. The passage through the whole manifested universe gives the feeling of separation from the Origin; and the return to the Origin is the bliss of union, that is, the two things that were separated are united once again. And it is still Love; it is Love after the great circuit of the manifestation. When it returns to its Origin, it becomes the bliss of union. (Mother continues reading the passage from “The Four Austerities”):

“At the beginning of this manifestation, Love is, in the purity of its origin, composed of two movements, two complementary poles of the impulsion towards complete fusion. On one side, it is the supreme power of attraction and on the other the irresistible need of absolute self-giving. No other movement can do better in throwing a bridge over the abyss that was dug in the individual being when its consciousness separated from its origin and became inconscience.

“What was projected into space had to be brought back to itself without, however, destroying the universe so created. Therefore Love burst forth, the irresistible power of union.

“It has been soaring over darkness and inconscience; it has scattered itself, pulverised itself in the bosom of unfathomed night. And from that moment began the awakening and the ascent, the slow formation of matter and its endless progression.”

That is the answer to your question. That is, no matter how high you may climb back, at the Origin you will find love. But not what men call love.
Mother, what kind of love is that which says, “If you love me, I shall love you”?

If you love me, I shall love you? That’s exactly the way men speak: “If you love me, I love you, if you don’t love me, I don’t love you.” This is just the most human expression of love. And it goes still farther, they apply it also to their relation with the Divine. They say to the Divine: “If you do what I want, I shall say that you love me, and I shall love you. But if you don’t do what I want, then I won’t think at all that you love me, and I certainly will not love you.”

That’s how it is. That means that it becomes commercial.

But “If you don’t love me, I shall love you”?

That begins to be better!

And what is better still is not to ask oneself whether one is loved or not, one should be absolutely indifferent to that. And that begins to be true love: one loves because one loves, not at all because one receives a response to one’s love or because the other person loves you. All those conditions—that is not love. One loves because one cannot do otherwise but love. One loves because one loves. One doesn’t care at all about what will happen; one is perfectly satisfied with the feeling of one’s love. One loves because one loves.

All the rest is bargaining, it is not love.

And, moreover, one thing is certain: the moment one experiences true love, one doesn’t even put the question any longer. It seems altogether childish and ridiculous and insignificant to ask this question. One has the complete plenitude of joy and realisation the moment one experiences true love and one doesn’t at all need any kind of response. One is love, that’s all. And one has the plenitude of the satisfaction of love. There is no need at all of any reciprocity.

I tell you, so long as there is this calculation in the mind or
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the feelings and sensations, so long as there is some calculation, more or less acknowledged, it is bargaining, it is not love.

You can’t manage to understand?... I hope it will come one day!

All the rest is exactly what men have made of love. And besides it is not very pretty and leads to all kinds of things which are still less pretty, like jealousy, for instance, or envy, and in violent natures it goes as far as hatred. The small beginning is this: the need, when one loves, that what one loves or the person one loves should know that he is loved. But in the relation with the Divine: one loves the Divine but insists that the Divine should know that one loves Him! That’s the beginning of the fall. One does not even think about the real thing. It doesn’t even slightly touch the mind.

One doesn’t think: one loves, that’s all. One loves and is in the plenitude of love and the intense joy of love, and then, that’s all.

It is a long, long, long way to go from what men call “love” to true love — a long way.

I am not even speaking here about all the repulsive forms it takes in the ordinary human consciousness; I am telling you about the best conditions, about love in its best form, even the most disinterested. I don’t know, if you question human beings, I would like to know very much the percentage of those who don’t even care for reciprocity. Simply that. Not those who say: “If you love me, I love you”, that indeed is at the very bottom of the ladder, right at the bottom, almost in the pit.... There is a still lower rung: “Love me and then I shall see if I love you.” There you have to deal with altogether disgusting people. I am speaking only of the need of reciprocity: that is the first step of the descending scale.

However, you will understand this one day. You are still very young.

What kind of love do animals have for men?
It is almost the same as that of rather unintellectual men for the Divine. It is made of admiration, trust and a sense of security. Admiration: it seems to you something really very beautiful. And it is not reasoned out: an admiration from the heart, so to speak, spontaneous. For instance, dogs have this in a very high degree. And then, trust — naturally this is sometimes mixed with other things: with the feeling of some need and dependence, for it is that person who will give me to eat when I am hungry, give me shelter when it is rough weather, who will look after me. This is not the most beautiful side. And then, unfortunately, it gets mixed up (and I believe — I consider it entirely man’s fault) with a kind of fear; a feeling of dependence and a kind of fear of something which is much stronger, much more conscious, much more... which can harm you, and you have no strength to defend yourself. It is a pity, but I believe it is altogether man’s fault.

But if men really deserved the love of animals, it would be made of a feeling of wonder and of the sense of security. It is something very fine, this sense of security; something that’s able to protect you, to give you all that you need, and near which you can always find shelter.

Animals have an altogether rudimentary mind. They are not tormented by incessant thoughts like human beings. For example, they feel a spontaneous gratitude for an act of kindness towards them, whilst men, ninety-eight times out of a hundred, begin to reason and ask themselves what interest one could have in being good. This is one of the great miseries of mental activity. Animals are free from this and when you are kind to them they are grateful to you, spontaneously. And they have trust. So their love is made of that, and it turns into a very strong attachment, an irresistible need to be near you.

There is something else. If the master is really a good one and the animal faithful, there is an exchange of psychic and vital forces, an exchange which becomes for the animal something wonderful, giving it an intense joy. When they like to be quite close to you in that way, when you hold them, it is that they
vibrate internally. The force one gives them — the strength of affection, of tenderness, protection, all that — they feel it, and it creates a deep attachment in them. Even fairly easily, in some of the higher animals like dogs, elephants, and even horses, it creates quite a remarkable need for devotion (which indeed is not thwarted by all the reasonings and arguments of the mind), which is spontaneous and very pure in its essence, something that's very beautiful.

The working of the mind in man in its rudimentary form, its first manifestation has spoilt many things which were much finer before.

Naturally, if man rises to a higher level and makes good use of his intelligence, then things can take on a much greater value. But between the two, there is a passage where man makes the most vulgar and low use of his intelligence; he makes it an instrument for calculation, domination, deception, and there it becomes very ugly. I have known in my life animals I considered much higher than many people, for that sordid calculation, that wish to cheat and profit was precisely not there in them. There are others that catch it — through contact with man they catch it — but there are those who don’t have it.

The unselfish movement, uncalculating, is one of the most beautiful forms of psychic consciousness in the world. But the higher one rises in the scale of mental activity, the rarer it becomes. For with intelligence come all the skill and cleverness, and corruption, calculation. For instance, when a rose blossoms it does so spontaneously, for the joy of being beautiful, smelling sweet, expressing all its joy of living, and it does not calculate, it has nothing to gain out of it: it does so spontaneously, in the joy of being and living. Take a human being, well, apart from a very few exceptions, the moment his mind is active he tries to get some advantage out of his beauty and cleverness; he wants it to bring him something, either men’s admiration or even much more sordid gains yet. Consequently, from the psychic point of view, the rose is better than human beings.
Only, if you climb a rung higher and consciously do what the rose does unconsciously, then it is much more beautiful. But it must be the same thing: a spontaneous flowering of beauty, uncalculating, simply for the joy of being. Little children have this at times (at times, not always). Unfortunately, under the influence of their parents and the environment, they learn to be calculating when yet very young.

But this kind of wish to gain by what one has or does is truly one of the ugliest things in the world. And it is one of the most widespread and it has become so widespread, that it is almost spontaneous in man. Nothing can turn its back on the divine love more totally than that, that wish to calculate and profit.

Do flowers love?

This is their form of love, this blossoming. Certainly, when one sees a rose opening to the sun, it is like a need to give its beauty. Only, for us, it is almost unintelligible, for they do not think about what they do. A human being always associates with everything he does this ability to see himself doing it, that is, to think about himself, think of himself doing it. Man knows that he is doing something. Animals don’t think. It is not at all the same form of love. And flowers, so to speak, are not conscious: it is a spontaneous movement, not a consciousness that is conscious of itself, not at all. But it is a great Force which acts through all that, the great universal Consciousness and the great Force of universal love which makes all things blossom in beauty.

That is what I have written there also (Mother resumes reading “The Four Austerities”):

“Is it not love, under an erring and obscure form, that is associated with all the impulsions of the physical and vital nature as the push towards every movement and every grouping and which has become quite visible in the plant world?”

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You know, crystals which are formed in matter already obey a movement of love; but this becomes quite perceptible in the vegetable kingdom, in the tree and plant. It is the need to grow to get more light. All these trees which are always growing higher—always growing, the smaller ones trying to catch up with the taller, the taller ones trying to climb yet higher; you put two plants side by side, they both try to find an orientation that gives them the maximum light possible—that is the need to grow to get more air, more light, more space (Mother continues reading):

“In the flower it is the gift of beauty and fragrance in a loving efflorescence. And in the animal is it not there behind hunger and thirst, the need for appropriation, expansion, procreation, in brief, behind all desire, whether conscious or not? and, among the higher orders, in the self-sacrificing devotion of the female for her young ones?”

... which in human beings becomes maternal love. The only difference is that it is conscious of itself. And in animals it is often even purer than in human beings. There are instances of the devotion, care, self-forgetfulness of animals for their young, which are absolutely wonderful. Only, it is spontaneous, not thought out, not reflected upon; the animal does not think about what it is doing. Man thinks. At times this spoils the movement (at times—most often), sometimes it can give it a higher worth but that is rare. There is less spontaneity in man’s movements than in an animal’s.

I had a puss, the first time it had its kittens it did not want to move from there. It did not eat, did not satisfy any call of nature. It remained there, stuck to her kittens, shielding them, feeding them; it was so afraid that something would happen to them. And that was quite unthought out, spontaneous. It refused to move, so frightened it was that some harm might come to them.
— just through instinct. And then, when they were bigger, the trouble it took to educate them — it was marvellous. And what patience! And how it taught them to jump from wall to wall, to catch their food; how, with what care, it repeated once, ten times, a hundred times if necessary. It was never tired until the little one had done what it wanted. An extraordinary education. It taught them how to skirt houses following the edge of walls, how to walk so as not to fall, what had to be done when there was much space between one wall and another, in order to cross over. The little ones were quite afraid when they saw the gap and refused to jump because they were frightened (it was not too far for them, but there was the gap and they did not dare) and then the mother jumped, it went over to the other side, it called them: come, come along. They did not move, they were trembling. It jumped back and then gave them a speech, it gave them little blows with its paw and licked them, and yet they did not move. It jumped. I saw it do this for over half an hour. But after half an hour it found that they had learnt enough, so it went behind the one it evidently considered the most ready, the most capable, and gave it a hard knock with its head. Then the little one, instinctively, jumped. Once it had jumped, it jumped again and again and again....

There are few mothers who have this patience. Voilà, my children. That’s all? Nothing more?... Good night.