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On this date Mother began the reading of *Elements of Yoga* by Sri Aurobindo. The book contains his answers to elementary questions about Yoga which were asked during the years 1933 to 1936.

The following talk is based upon Chapter 1, “The Call and Fitness” and Chapter 2, “The Foundation”.

You have asked some questions. Now you are going to put questions on your questions. Yes?

Mother, here it is written: “In our Yoga our aim is to be united [with the Divine] in the physical consciousness and on the supramental plane”; then, when the physical consciousness is united with the Divine, does transformation follow?

Yes, “follow”, but not instantaneously. It takes time. Only if the Divine descends into the physical consciousness — or rather, to put it more precisely, if the physical consciousness is totally receptive to the Divine — the transformation follows naturally. But transformation does not come about by waving a magic wand. It takes time and is done progressively.

But it is sure to come once the physical consciousness is united, isn't that so?

I shall tell you this a little later!

For, if so, it is not the final aim¹ — if transformation does not follow!

¹ “To be in full union with the Divine is the final aim.”

Questions and Answers

No. It is not what *we* call the final aim. But transformation *must* follow, it must follow automatically. But what I mean is the degree of totality, so to speak, of integrality, which is not assured, in the sense that probably there are many stages in this transformation. We speak of transformation vaguely, in this way; it gives us the impression of something that is going to happen which will see to it that all is well—I think it comes to that approximately. If we have difficulties, the difficulties will disappear; those who are ill—their illness will vanish; and again, if there are physical shortcomings, these will disappear, and so on. But it is all very hazy, it's just an impression.

There is something quite remarkable: the physical consciousness, the body-consciousness, cannot know a thing with precision, in all its details, except when it is *on the point* of being realised. And this will be a sure indication when, for instance, one can understand the process: through what sequence of movements and transformations will the total transformation come about, in what order, in what way, to put it thus? What will happen first? What will happen later?—all that, in all its details. Each time you see a detail with exactitude, it means that it is on the point of being realised.

One can have the vision of the whole. For instance, it is quite certain that the transformation of the body-consciousness will take place first, that a progress in the mastery and control of all the movements of the body will come next, that this mastery will gradually change (here it becomes more vague), gradually, into a sort of transformation of the movement itself: alteration and transformation—all that is certain. But what must happen in the end, what Sri Aurobindo has spoken about in one of his last articles² in which he says that even the organs will be transformed, in the sense that they will be replaced by centres of concentration of forces (of concentration and action of forces) of different qualities and kinds which will replace all the organs

² “The Divine Body”, *The Supramental Manifestation*, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 20–40.

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of the body — that, my children, is much more distant, that is, it is something which... one cannot yet grasp the means of doing it. Take, for instance, the heart: by what means is this function of the heart which makes the blood flow through the whole body going to be replaced by a concentration of forces? By what means will the blood be replaced by a certain kind of force, and all the rest? By what means will the lungs be replaced by another concentration of forces, and what forces, and with what vibrations, and in what way?... All that will come much later. It cannot yet be realised. One can have an inkling of it, foresee it, but...

For the body, to know is to have the power to do. I shall give you an example that's just at hand. You do not know a gymnastic movement except when you do it. When you have done it well, you know it, understand it. But not before that, don't you? Physical knowledge is the power of doing. Well, that applies to everything, including transformation.

A certain number of years must pass before we can speak with knowledge of how this is going to happen, but all that I can tell you is that it has begun. If you read attentively the next issue of the *Bulletin* which you will get on the 24th of April, you will see that it has begun. But in fact we shall see later if I can explain to you what it means. *Voilà*.

Another question?

Sweet Mother, "later" means when? When will you explain?

Explain when? I don't know, my children!

I did not understand very well "the real meaning of activity and passivity in sadhana".

You don't know what activity and passivity are? Do you know what the two words mean?

Questions and Answers

Yes.

Yes! So, when you are active, what does it mean?

When I work.

Work? Good! And when are you passive, when you sleep?
(*Laughter*)

When I am lazy, I cannot do...

No, my child, not necessarily. Passivity is not laziness. An active movement is one in which you throw your force out, that is, when something comes out from you — in a movement, a thought, a feeling — something which goes out from you to others or into the world. Passivity is when you remain just yourself like this, open, and receive what comes from outside. It does not at all depend on whether one moves or sits still. It is not that at all. To be active is to throw out the consciousness or force or movement from within outwards. To be passive is to remain immobile and receive what comes from outside. So it is said here... I don't know what is written... (*Mother turns the pages of the book.*) It is very clear! "Activity in aspiration", that means that your aspiration goes out from you and rises to the Divine — in the tapasya, the discipline you undertake and when there are forces contrary to your sadhana you reject them. This is a movement of activity.

Now, if you want to get true inspiration, inner guidance, the guide, and if you want to have the force, to receive the force which will guide you and make you act as you should, then you do not move any longer, that is — I don't mean not move physically but nothing must come out from you any more and, on the contrary, you remain as though you were quite still, but open, and wait for the Force to enter, and then open yourself as wide as possible to take in all that comes into you. And it is

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this movement: instead of out-going vibrations there is a kind of calm quietude, but completely open, as though you were opening all your doors in this way to the force which must descend into you and transform your action and consciousness.

Receptivity is the result of a true passivity.

But Mother, to be able to become passive an effort has to be made, hasn't it?

Not necessarily, that depends upon people. An effort? One must, yes, one must want it. But is the will an effort?... Naturally, one must think about it, must want it. But the two things can go together, you see, there is a moment when the two — aspiration and passivity — can not only be alternate but simultaneous. You can be at once in the state of aspiration, of willing, which calls down something — exactly the will to open oneself and receive, and the aspiration which calls down the force you want to receive — and *at the same time* be in that state of complete inner stillness which allows full penetration, for it is in this immobility that one can be penetrated, that one becomes permeable by the Force. Well, the two can be simultaneous without the one disturbing the other, or can alternate so closely that they can hardly be distinguished. But one can be like that, like a great flame rising in aspiration, and at the same time as though this flame formed a vase, a large vase, opening and receiving all that comes down.

And the two can go together. And when one succeeds in having the two together, one can have them constantly, whatever one may be doing. Only there may be a slight, very slight displacement of consciousness, almost imperceptible, which becomes aware of the flame first and then of the vase of receptivity — of what seeks to be filled and the flame that rises to call down what must fill the vase — a very slight pendular movement and so close that it gives the impression that one has the two at the same time.

Questions and Answers

(*Silence*)

This is one of the things one discovers gradually as the body becomes ready for transformation. It is quite a remarkable instrument in the sense that it can experience two contraries at the same time. There is a certain state of body-consciousness which brings things together, adds up things that in other states of consciousness alternate or even in certain others oppose each other. But if one has reached up there, in the vital and the mind, a development sufficient for harmonising opposites (that of course, is quite indispensable), when one has succeeded in doing this, there are moments when it alternates, you see, one thing comes after the other; but what is remarkable in the consciousness of the body is that it can feel (“feel”, can we say “feel”? — “experience” — the word “aware” expresses it best) all things simultaneously, as though you were hot and cold at once, as though you were active and passive at once, and everything becomes like that. Then you begin to grasp the totality of movements in the cells. It is something much more concrete naturally, but much more perfect in the body than in any other part of the being. This means that if things continue in this way, it will be proved that the physical, material instrument is the most perfect of all. That is why perhaps it is the most difficult to transform, to perfect. But of all, it is the one most capable of perfection.

That’s enough for today, isn’t it?

So, my children, if we go at this rate, we shall finish the book in three or four lessons, and we must already think about what we shall take up next....

The Mother, *Sweet Mother*.

Ah! You want to take up *The Mother*? Good, we shall read *The Mother*. That is decided.

Good night!