5 April 1967

(Mother writes a note.) It is an answer to a question. Do you know what I told the teachers of the school? I have been asked another question. Here is the beginning of my reply:

“The division between ‘ordinary life’ and ‘spiritual life’ is an outdated antiquity.”

Did you read his question? Read it again to me.

“We discussed the future. It seemed to me that nearly all the teachers were eager to do something so that the children could become more conscious of why they are here. At that point I said that in my opinion, to speak to the children of spiritual things often has the opposite result, and that these words lose all their value.”

“Spiritual things” — what does he mean by spiritual things?

Obviously, if the teachers recite them like a story...

Spiritual things... They are taught history or spiritual things, they are taught science or spiritual things. That is the stupidity. In history, the Spirit is there; in science, the Spirit is there — the Truth is everywhere. And what is needed is not to teach it in a false way, but to teach it in a true way. They cannot get that into their heads.

He adds: “I have suggested that it might be better to meet and listen to Mother’s voice,¹ for even if we don’t understand everything, your voice would accomplish its own inner work, which we are not in a position to evaluate. About this, I would like to know what is the best

¹ Tape-recordings of Mother’s classes during the 1950s.
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way of bringing the child into relation with you. For all
the suggestions, including mine, seemed arbitrary to me
and without any real value.

“Mother, wouldn’t it be better if the teachers were
to concentrate solely on the subjects they are teaching,
for you are taking care of the spiritual life?”

I shall give him this reply: There is no “spiritual life”! It is still the
old idea, still the old idea of the sage, the sannyasin, the... who
represents spiritual life, while all the others represent ordinary
life — and it is not true, it is not true, it is not true at all.

If they still need an opposition between two things — for
the poor mind doesn’t work if you don’t give it an opposition —
if they need an opposition, let them take the opposition between
Truth and Falsehood, it is a little better; I don’t say it is perfect,
but it is a little better. So, in all things, Falsehood and Truth are
mixed everywhere: in the so-called “spiritual life”, in sannyasins,
in swamis, in those who think they represent the life divine on
earth, all that — there also, there is a mixture of Falsehood and
Truth.

It would be better not to make any division.

(Silence)

For the children, precisely because they are children, it would
be best to instil in them the will to conquer the future, the will
to always look ahead and to want to move on as swiftly as they
can towards... what will be — but they should not drag with
them the burden, the millstone of the whole oppressive weight
of the past. It is only when we are very high in consciousness
and knowledge that it is good to look behind to find the points
where this future begins to show itself. When we can look at
the whole picture, when we have a very global vision, it be-
comes interesting to know that what will be realised later on
has already been announced beforehand, in the same way that
Sri Aurobindo said that the divine life will manifest on earth, because it is already involved in the depths of Matter; from this standpoint it is interesting to look back or to look down below — not to know what happened, or to know what men have known: that is quite useless.

The children should be told: There are wonderful things to be manifested, prepare yourself to receive them. Then if they want something a little more concrete and easier to understand, you can tell them: Sri Aurobindo came to announce these things; when you are able to read him, you will understand. So this awakens the interest, the desire to learn.

_I see very clearly the difficulty he is referring to: most people — and in all the things that are written, or in the lectures they give — use inflated speech, without any truth of personal experience, which has no effect, or rather a negative effect. That is what he is referring to._

Yes, that is why they should do as I have said.

_Ah! But not so long ago, most of the teachers were saying, “Oh! But we must do this, because it is done everywhere.” (Smiling) They have already come a little distance. But there is much more to be covered._

_But above all, what is most important is to eliminate these divisions. And every one of them, all of them have it in their minds: the division between leading a spiritual life and leading an ordinary life, having a spiritual consciousness and having an ordinary consciousness — there is only one consciousness._

_In most people it is three-quarters asleep and distorted; in many it is still completely distorted. But what is needed, very simply, is not to leap from one consciousness into another, but to open one’s consciousness (upward gesture) and to fill it with vibrations of Truth, to bring it in harmony with what must be here — there it exists from all eternity — but here, what must be here: the “tomorrow” of the earth. If you weigh yourself down_
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with a whole burden that you have to drag behind you, if you
drag behind you everything that you must abandon, you will
not be able to advance very fast.

Mind you, to know things from the earth’s past can be very
interesting and very useful, but it must not be something that
binds you or ties you to the past. If it is used as a spring-board,
it is all right. But really, it is quite secondary.

(Silence)

It would be interesting to formulate or to elaborate a new
method of teaching for children, to take them very young. It is
easy when they are very young. We need people — oh! we would
need remarkable teachers — who have, first, an ample enough
documentation of what is known so as to be able to answer
every question, and at the same time, at least the knowledge,
if not the experience — the experience would be better — of the
true intuitive intellectual attitude, and — naturally the capacity
would be still more preferable — at least the knowledge that
the true way of knowing is mental silence, an attentive silence
turned towards the truer Consciousness, and the capacity to
receive what comes from there. The best would be to have this
capacity; at least, it should be explained that it is the true thing
—a sort of demonstration — and that it works not only from
the point of view of what must be learned, of the whole domain
of knowledge, but also of the whole domain of what should be
done: the capacity to receive the exact indication of how to do it;
and as you go on, it changes into a very clear perception of what
must be done, and a precise indication of when it must be done.
At least the children, as soon as they have the capacity to think
—it starts at the age of seven, but at about fourteen or fifteen it
is very clear — the children should be given little indications at
the age of seven, a complete explanation at fourteen, of how to
do it, and that it is the only way to be in relation with the deeper
truth of things, and that all the rest is a more or less clumsy
mental approximation to something that can be known directly.

The conclusion is that the teachers themselves should at least have a sincere beginning of discipline and experience, that it is not a question of accumulating books and retelling them like this. One can’t be a teacher in this way; let the outside world be like that if it likes. We are not propagandists, we simply want to show what can be done and try to prove that it must be done.

When you take the children very young, it is wonderful. There is so little to do; it is enough to be.

Never make a mistake.
Never lose your temper.
Always understand.

And to know and see clearly why there has been this movement, why there has been this impulse, what is the inner constitution of the child, what is the thing to be strengthened and brought forward — this is the only thing to do; and to leave them, to leave them free to blossom; simply to give them the opportunity to see many things, to touch many things, to do as many things as possible. It is great fun. And above all, not to try to impose on them what you think you know.

Never scold them. Always understand, and if the child is ready, explain; if he is not ready for an explanation — if you are ready yourself — replace the false vibration by a true one. But this... this is to demand from the teachers a perfection which they rarely have.

But it would be very interesting to make a programme for the teachers and the true programme of study, from the very bottom — which is so plastic and which receives impressions so deeply. If they were given a few drops of truth when they are very young, they would blossom quite naturally as the being grows. It would be beautiful work.