

29 December 1954

This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 3, "In Difficulty".

So? (*To a child*) No questions? (*To another*) You have a question?

Sweet Mother, why is it said that "those who have the greatest power for Yoga... have too, very often... the greatest imperfections"?

Why is it like that? (*Silence*) Because one must have a very strong, very powerful nature, with great inner strength in order to have a great capacity for yoga; and very strong natures have also very strong difficulties.

People who are neutral, dull, unimportant, usually go their own little way without being disturbed very much. But they cannot do anything very much, their road is very small and very short; they reach the end very quickly. They can't do much. But people who have a strong nature have also strong difficulties. For it is absolutely impossible in this world to be without difficulties. So long as the world remains what it is and one participates in the world, one necessarily participates in its difficulties.

It is only by a very persistent effort that one can succeed in overcoming his difficulties; and yet it seems impossible to cut oneself off completely from one's solidarity with the rest of the world. Therefore a perfect purity, a perfect perfection seem impossible so long as the world has not reached at least a certain degree of perfection. Even the ascetic, the solitary, who goes and sits in a cave or under a tree or in the jungle, cannot completely free himself from solidarity with the rest of the world. The air he breathes is full of all the vibrations of the world, the food he eats, whatever it may be, even if it is reduced to the minimum,

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contains the vibrations of the world; and so, it is enough for him to exist to be in solidarity with the difficulties of the world.

That is why, in fact, the way is so long. Even without having any other consideration than that of what one is absorbing constantly into oneself when breathing or eating, all these things one must constantly transform as one goes on absorbing them. It is a continuous alchemy in which one absorbs a particular kind of vibration containing all the possible disorders and must transmute this into something which is ready to receive the light from above. And this work is perpetual, and perpetually renewed. So it is impossible to live in this world, in the world as it is, and become perfect without the world itself making a great progress.

(Long silence)

So? There are no questions today?

Mother, does an individual's life depend on the experience his psychic being wants to have?

Very much!

I was just speaking about this with someone today, and I said that if one can become fully conscious of one's psychic being, at the same time one understands, necessarily, the reason of one's present existence and the experience this psychic being wants to have; and instead of having it somewhat half consciously and more than half unconsciously, one can shorten this experience and so help one's psychic being to cover in a limited number of years the experiences it would perhaps take several lifetimes to go through. That is to say, the help is mutual. The psychic, when it has an influence on the outer life, brings to it light, order and quietude and the joy of the divine contact. But also the physical being, the body-consciousness — if it is identified with the psychic consciousness, and through that learns what kind of experience the psychic being wants to have — can help it to have

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these experiences in a very brief time, and not only save time but save many lives for the psychic being. It is a mutual help.

In brief, this is what yoga means. Yoga helps you to become fully conscious of your destiny, that is, your mission in the universe, and not only at the present moment but what it was in the past and what it will be in the future. And because of this knowledge you can gather by a concentration of the consciousness all these experiences in a very short time and gain lives, do in a few years what could take a fairly considerable number of lives to achieve. The psychic being goes progressively through all these experiences towards its full maturity and complete independence, its liberation — in the sense that it no longer needs any new life. If it wants to come back to the physical world, it returns, because it has something to do there and it chooses freely to return. But till then, till this liberation, it is compelled to return to have all the experiences it needs. Well, if it happens that once the physical being is developed and conscious enough and has enough goodwill to be able to become fully aware of the psychic being, it can then and there create all the circumstances, the outer experiences necessary for the psychic being to attain its maturity in this very life.

(Long silence)

Do people who roam about in the lower vital domain during the night suffer much after death?

Not necessarily more than those who don't do it. Because by the very fact that they roam there, they are a little more armed, they are a little accustomed to this world, it is not for them an altogether unknown domain; they have already gone there and, for instance, they might have had quite a few unpleasant experiences and learnt how to defend themselves. It is true that usually the only defence one has in these cases is to rush back into one's body, and this is just the thing one can no longer

do. But all the same, they have a little bit of experience, while those who go there without knowing anything about it, and who have never had this consciousness, when they are thrown into this world, it is like being thrown into an altogether unpleasant unknown with a total unawareness of the means of defending oneself. I think that those who have dreams, what they call dreams, and who are conscious of them, are in a much better position; even if their dreams are not very beautiful, they are in a much more favourable condition than those who are quite unconscious. Because once one has left his body, whether one is conscious or unconscious, whether one is developed or not, one always goes out into the same domain to begin with — unless one is a yogi who can do what he likes with himself, but that, you know, is so rare a case that one can't consider it. All men when they leave their body are flung into a domain of the lower vital which has nothing particularly pleasant about it.

And strange, there is still another thing I was speaking about today.

The most important thing in this case is the last state of consciousness in which one was while both were joined together, when the vital being and the body were still united. So the last state of consciousness, one may say the last desire or the last hope or the last aspiration, has a colossal importance for the first impact the being has with the invisible world. And here the responsibility of the people around the dying man is much greater than they think. If they can help him to enter his highest consciousness, they will do him the greatest service they can. But usually what they do is to cling to him as much as they can, and to pull him towards them with a fierce selfishness; the result, you see, is that instead of being able to withdraw in a slightly higher consciousness which will protect him in his exit, he is gripped by material things and it is a terrible inner battle to free himself from both his body and his attachments.

In fact, you see — I say except for a very few, so few that one can hardly speak about them — all men live in a total ignorance,

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a total ignorance of the way to live, not of the things in the universe but simply of the most elementary knowledge of living. They don't know how to live. All the time they do things they should not do, and I am not speaking of satisfying desires and all that, I am speaking simply of the life of each moment, the movement of each instant; because one is in a state of total ignorance, one does exactly the opposite of what one should do to get the result one wants. One tries to follow some aim, whatever it may be — it may be a selfish aim, it may be a disinterested aim, it may be a material aim, it may be a spiritual aim, but one wants to get somewhere — and one does just the opposite of what is necessary to go there, all the time. And if you are simply just a little attentive and are able to look at yourself at any minute, whatever be the thing you have to do, stop for half a second and look at yourself and ask, "Do I know what I have to do?" If you are sincere you will see that you don't know it at all. You do it automatically, instinctively, by habit or else with some kind of impulse, you see; but to know: "Is this what must be done? Is it in this way that it ought to be done?" — I don't think once in a thousand times you can answer.

And then, when the problem of wanting to help someone comes up... If you have goodwill and want to help someone... You don't know how to help yourself to begin with, but still, you are not selfish; at a particular moment you want to help someone, and then comes this question: "What should I do?" You know nothing at all about it. "What does he need?" I mean not only material things but the feeling you must have, the thought you must have, the word you ought to say. If you just take a step backward, you look at yourself, but you know nothing about it; you do it like that, haphazardly, at random, in the hope that it will succeed, but the knowledge is not there. Without speaking, naturally, about... I am not speaking of people who know nothing at all and who, when they happen to have even a child, don't even know what is to be done to keep it clean and healthy. I am not even speaking of this kind of ignorance,

because this everybody recognises. I knew, you see, countless mothers who hadn't *the faintest idea* of what had to be done to keep their children healthy. I am not even speaking of this. Because this — if one reads a book, works a little, studies, one can at least have a minimum of knowledge.

I am speaking simply of a slightly higher stage: morally, your moral, psychological relation with people. You are with someone who is in difficulty. Do you know what you should say to him? Do you even know the cause, the origin of his difficulty? What is going on in him? You may guess, you may imagine it, you may deduce, may reason, but you don't know!

To have this certitude, the knowledge, the knowledge to know: "That's it", this you don't have. "Is it this, is it like that? If I do this, will that happen? And if I do that, is that what will happen?" And you go on, you may go on and on for hours, hesitating, groping, asking yourself.... And this is exactly what Sri Aurobindo has written in his last article which appeared in the *Bulletin*. He says that if you want to prepare for the descent of the supermind, first of all your mind of ignorance and incapacity must be replaced by a mind of light which sees and knows. And this is the first step! Before this step is crossed, one cannot go forward. It is not to discourage you that I tell you this, but it is for those who believe that one has only to say, "Oh, I want the supramental light", and it will come just like that, as when one says, "I want to drink a glass of water" and drinks it up. Not so easy! There we are.

Now then, has anyone a question? No?

Well, Friday, which is my reading day, is the thirty-first. The thirty-first is the eve of the first. On the eve of the first, usually, a long time ago — you were very small, perhaps you weren't even there — I used to read the prayer at midnight, just when we passed from one year to the next. Now it is too late, we people tire ourselves out very much the whole day and need to sleep quietly. (*The children all ask Mother to read at midnight.*) No, no, I won't do it. (*Laughter*) Only, on that day, at this time,

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instead of reading anything at all, I shall read the prayer for 1955 to you, and you will listen. And if any of you want to ask questions, I shall answer you, and we shall finish our year in this way... not till midnight! (*Laughter*) We shall end our year like this. Here we are.

There, my children, that's all?

Au revoir!