“Our thinking mind is concerned mainly with the statement of general spiritual truth, the logic of its absolute and the logic of its relativities, how they stand to each other or lead to each other, and what are the mental consequences of the spiritual theorem of existence....

“The means by which this need [of intellectual understanding] can be satisfied and with which our nature of mind has provided us is philosophy, and in this field it must be a spiritual philosophy. Such systems have arisen in numbers in the East; for almost always, wherever there has been a considerable spiritual development, there has arisen from it a philosophy justifying it to the intellect. The method was at first an intuitive seeing and an intuitive expression, as in the fathomless thought and profound language of the Upanishads, but afterwards there was developed a critical method, a firm system of dialectics, a logical organisation. The later philosophies were an intellectual account\(^1\) or a logical justification of what had been found by inner realisation; or they provided themselves with a mental ground or a systematised method for realisation and experience.\(^2\) In the West where the syncretic tendency of the consciousness was replaced by the analytic and separative, the spiritual urge and the intellectual reason parted company almost at the outset; philosophy took from the first a turn towards a purely intellectual and ratiocinative explanation of things. Nevertheless, there were systems like the Pythagorean, Stoic, and Epicurean, which were

\(^1\) E.g., the Gita.
\(^2\) E.g., the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali.
dynamic not only for thought but for conduct of life and developed a discipline, an effort at inner perfection of the being; this reached a higher spiritual plane of knowledge in later Christian or Neo-pagan thought-structures where East and West met together. But later on the intellectualisation became complete and the connection of philosophy with life and its energies or spirit and its dynamism was either cut or confined to the little that the metaphysical idea can impress on life and action by an abstract and secondary influence. Religion has supported itself in the West not by philosophy but by a credal theology; sometimes a spiritual philosophy emerges by sheer force of individual genius, but it has not been as in the East a necessary adjunct to every considerable line of spiritual experience and endeavour. It is true that a philosophic development of spiritual thought is not entirely indispensable; for the truths of spirit can be reached more directly and completely by intuition and by a concrete inner contact. It must also be said that the critical control of the intellect over spiritual experience can be hampering and unreliable, for it is an inferior light turned upon a field of higher illumination; the true controlling power is an inner discrimination, a psychic sense and tact, a superior intervention of guidance from above or an innate and luminous inner guidance. But still this line of development too is necessary, because there must be a bridge between the spirit and the intellectual reason: the light of a spiritual or at least a spiritualised intelligence is necessary for the fullness of our total inner evolution, and without it, if another deeper guidance is lacking, the inner movement may be erratic and undisciplined, turbid and mixed with unspiritual elements or one-sided or incomplete in its catholicity. For the transformation of the Ignorance into the integral Knowledge the growth in us of a spiritual intelligence ready to receive a higher
light and canalise it for all the parts of our nature is an intermediate necessity of great importance.”


There’s enough matter here to ask me at least a dozen questions! (To a child) So, the first of the twelve?

(Silence)

I have a question here, but it is a verbal question, which means that it is not very interesting. It is a phrase from the beginning of the passage: What is the meaning of “the mental consequences of the spiritual theorem of existence”?

It is probably from someone who doesn’t know what “theorem” means!

A theorem is the statement of a truth which has been arrived at through reasoning. The word is used quite concretely in mathematics and all the external sciences. From the philosophical point of view it is the same thing. In the present instance, the spiritual theorem of existence may be stated in this way: the Absolute in the relativities or Oneness in multiplicity. But to explain “the mental consequences”, we must go into philosophy and I believe you are rather unprepared for that. And to really understand what it means, one feels that philosophy is always skirting the truth, like a tangent that draws closer and closer but never touches — that there is something that escapes. And this something is in truth everything.

To understand these things... there is only experience — to live this truth, not to feel it in the way the ordinary senses do but to realise within oneself the truth, the concrete existence of both states, simultaneously, existing together even while they are opposite conditions. All words can lead only to confusion; only experience gives the tangible reality of the thing: the simultaneous existence of the Absolute and the relativities, of Oneness and multiplicity, not as two states following each other and one
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resulting from the other, but as a state which can be perceived
in two opposite ways depending on... the position one takes in
relation to the Reality.

Words in themselves falsify the experience. To speak in
words one must take not a step backwards but a step down-
wards, and the essential truth escapes. One must use them simply
as a more or less accessible path to reach the thing itself which
cannot be formulated. And from this point of view no formula-
tion is better than any other; the best of all is the one that helps
each one to remember, that is, the way in which the intervention
of the Grace has crystallised in the thought.

Probably no two ways are identical, everyone must find
his own. But one must not be mistaken, it is not “finding” by
reasoning, it is “finding” by aspiration; it is not by study and
analysis, but by the intensity of the aspiration and the sincerity
of the inner opening.

When one is truly and exclusively turned to the spiritual
Truth, whatever name may be given to it, when all the rest be-
comes secondary, when that alone is imperative and inevitable,
then, *one single moment* of intense, absolute, total concentration
is enough to receive the answer.

The experience comes first, in this case, and it is only later, as
a consequence and a memory that the formulation becomes clear.
In this way one is sure not to make a mistake. The formulation
may be more or less exact, that is of no importance, so long as
one doesn’t make a dogma out of it.

It is good for you, that is all that is needed. If you want to
impose it on others, whatever it may be, even if it is perfect in
itself, it becomes false.

That is why religions are always mistaken — always — be-
cause they want to standardise the expression of an experience
and impose it on everyone as an irrefutable truth. The experience
was true, complete in itself, convincing — for the one who had
it. The formulation he made of it was excellent — for himself.
But to want to impose it on others is a fundamental error which
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has altogether disastrous consequences, always, which always leads far, very far from the Truth.

That is why all the religions, however beautiful they may be, have always led man to the worst excesses. All the crimes, the horrors perpetrated in the name of religion are among the darkest stains on human history, and simply because of this little initial error: wanting what is true for one individual to be true for the mass or collectivity.

(Silence)

The path must be shown and the doors opened but everyone must follow the path, pass through the doors and go towards his personal realisation.

The only help one can and should receive is that of the Grace which formulates itself in everyone according to his own need.