Jnana

One must hold firm, because it has consequences, it brings a sensation of Power, and very few people can feel it, experience it, without their balance being more or less disturbed, because they do not have a sufficient basis of peace, of vast and very, very quiet peace. Many times I have said: There is only one answer, one single answer: one must be quiet, quiet, and even more quiet, more and more quiet, and not trying to find a solution with the head, because it cannot. One must only be quiet — quiet, quiet, immovably quiet. Calm and peace, calm and peace — that is the only answer.

I do not say that it is the cure, but it is the only answer: to endure in calm and peace, to endure in calm and peace....

Then something will happen.

25 March 1964

103 – Vivekananda, exalting Sannyasa, has said that in all Indian history there is only one Janaka. Not so, for Janaka is not the name of a single individual, but a dynasty of self-ruling kings and the triumph-cry of an ideal.

104 – In all the lakhs of ochre-clad Sannyasins, how many are perfect? It is the few attainments and the many approximations that justify an ideal.

105 – There have been hundreds of perfect Sannyasins, because Sannyasa has been widely preached and numerously practised; let it be the same with the ideal freedom and we shall have hundreds of Janakas.

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11 Renunciation of the life and works of the world.
12 Ancient king of Mithila, famous for having attained spiritual knowledge while leading the life of the world.
13 Monks who have renounced the life and works of the world.
On Thoughts and Aphorisms

106 – Sannyasa has a formal garb and outer tokens; therefore men think they can easily recognise it; but the freedom of a Janaka does not proclaim itself and it wears the garb of the world; to its presence even Narada\textsuperscript{14} was blinded.

107 – Hard is it to be in the world, free, yet living the life of ordinary men; but because it is hard, therefore it must be attempted and accomplished.

It seems so obvious!

\textit{It is obvious, but difficult.}

To be free from all attachment does not mean running away from all occasion for attachment. All these people who assert their asceticism, not only run away but warn others not to try!

This seems so obvious to me. When you need to run away from a thing in order not to experience it, it means that you are not above it, you are still on the same level.

Anything that suppresses, diminishes or lessens cannot bring freedom. Freedom has to be experienced in the whole of life and in all sensations.

As a matter of fact I have made a whole series of studies on the subject, on the purely physical plane.... In order to be above all possible error, we tend to eliminate any occasion for error. For example, if you do not want to say any useless words, you stop speaking; people who take a vow of silence imagine that this is control of speech — it is not true! It is only eliminating the occasion for speech and therefore for saying useless things. It is the same thing with food: eating only what is necessary. In the transitional state we have reached, we no longer want to lead this entirely animal life based on material

\textsuperscript{14} A famous Devarshi or divine seer.
exchange and food; but it would be foolish to believe that we have reached a state where the body can subsist entirely without food — nevertheless there is already a great difference, since they are trying to find the essential nutrients in things in order to lessen the volume. But the natural tendency is to fast — it is a mistake!

For fear of being mistaken in our actions, we stop doing anything at all; for fear of being mistaken in our speech, we stop speaking; for fear of eating for the pleasure of eating, we do not eat at all — this is not freedom, it is simply reducing the manifestation to a minimum; and the natural conclusion is Nirvana. But if the Lord wanted only Nirvana, nothing but Nirvana would exist! It is obvious that He conceives of the co-existence of all opposites, and that for Him this must be the beginning of a totality. So obviously, if one feels meant for that, one can choose only one of His manifestations, that is to say, the absence of manifestation. But it is still a limitation. And this is not the only way to find Him, far from it!

It is a very common tendency which probably originates from an ancient suggestion or perhaps from some lack, some incapacity — reduce, reduce, reduce one’s needs, reduce one’s activities, reduce one’s words, reduce one’s food, reduce one’s active life — and all that becomes so narrow. In one’s aspiration not to make any more mistakes, one eliminates any occasion for making them. It is not a cure.

But the other way is much, much more difficult.

(Silence)

No, the solution is to act only under the divine impulsion, to speak only under the divine impulsion, to eat only under the divine impulsion. That is the difficult thing, because naturally, you immediately confuse the divine impulsion with your personal impulses.

I suppose this was the idea of all the apostles of renunciation:
On Thoughts and Aphorisms

to eliminate everything coming from outside or from below so that if something from above should manifest one would be in a condition to receive it. But from the collective point of view, this process could take thousands of years. From the individual point of view, it is possible; but then one must keep intact the aspiration to receive the true impulsion — not the aspiration for “complete liberation”, but the aspiration for active identification with the Supreme, that is to say, to will only what He wills, to do only what He wants: to exist by and in Him alone. So one can try the method of renunciation, but this is for one who wants to cut himself off from others. And in that case, can there be any integrality? It seems impossible to me.

To proclaim publicly what one wants to do is a considerable help. It may give rise to objections, scorn, conflict, but this is largely compensated for by public “expectation”, so to say, by what other people expect from you. This was certainly the reason for those robes: to let people know. Of course, that may bring you the scorn, the bad will of some people, but then there are all those who feel they must not interfere or meddle with this, that it is not their concern.

I do not know why, but it always seemed to me like showing off — it may not be and in some cases it is not, but all the same it is a way of saying to people, “Look, this is what I am.” And as I say, it may help, but it has its drawbacks.

It is another childishness.

All these things are means, stages, steps, but... true freedom is to be free of everything — including means.

(Silence)

It is a restriction, a constriction, whereas the True Thing is an opening, a widening, an identification with the whole.

When you reduce, reduce, reduce yourself, you do not have any feeling of losing yourself, it takes away your fear of losing yourself — you become something solid and compact. But if you
choose the method of widening — the greatest possible widening — you must not be afraid of losing yourself.

It is much more difficult.

*Then how can one do this in an external world which absorbs you constantly? I am thinking of people who live in the West, for example; they are constantly swallowed up by their work, their appointments, the telephone, they don’t even have a minute to purify what comes pouring in on them all the time, and recover. In such conditions, how can one do this?*

Oh, you must know what to take and what to leave!

That is the other extreme.... Certainly, monasteries, retreats, escape into the forests or caves are necessary to counterbalance modern hyper-activity; and yet there is less of all that now than there was one or two thousand years ago. But to me this seems to have been a lack of understanding — it did not last.

Of course, it is this excessive activity which makes an excessive immobility necessary.

*But how can one find a way to be what one should be, in normal conditions?*

How can one avoid falling into one kind of excess or the other?

*Yes, to live normally and to be free.*

My child, that is why the Ashram was created! That was the idea. Because, in France, I was always asking myself: How can one find the time to find oneself? How can one even find the time to understand how to become free? So then I thought: a place where material needs will be sufficiently provided for, so that if one truly wants to become free, one can do so. And the
Ashram was founded on this idea, not on any other — a place where people would have enough to live on so as to have time to think of the True Thing.

(Mother smiles) Human nature is such that laziness has taken the place of aspiration — not for everyone, but anyway in quite a general way — and licence or libertinism has taken the place of freedom — which would tend to prove that the human race has to pass through a period of rough handling before it is ready to pull itself away more sincerely from its slavery to activity.

Indeed, the first movement is this: “Oh! To find the place where one can concentrate, find oneself, truly live without being preoccupied with material things.” That is the first aspiration. It was even on this basis, at any rate in the beginning, that disciples were chosen — but it does not last! Things become easy and so one lets oneself go. There are no moral restraints and so one acts foolishly.

But one cannot even say that there was a mistake in the selection — one would be tempted to believe it, but it is not true; because the selection was made according to a very precise and clear inner indication.... It is probably the difficulty of keeping the inner attitude unmixed. This is exactly what Sri Aurobindo wanted, what he was trying for. He said: “If I could find one hundred people, that would be enough.” But it did not stay one hundred for long, and I must say that even when it was a hundred, it was already mixed.

Many came, attracted by the True Thing, but... one lets oneself go. That is, it is impossible to hold firm in one’s true position.

Yes, I have noticed that in the extreme difficulty of the outer conditions of the world, the aspiration was much more intense.

Yes, of course!
It is much more intense, it is almost a question of life and death.

Yes, that’s it! That is to say, man is still so crude that he needs extremes. That is what Sri Aurobindo said: For love to be true, hatred was necessary; true love could be born only under the pressure of hatred. That’s it. Well, one must accept things as they are and try to go further. That is all.

That is probably why there are so many difficulties — difficulties accumulate here: difficulties of character, health and circumstances. It is because the consciousness awakens under the stress of difficulties. If everything is easy and peaceful, one falls asleep.

That is also how Sri Aurobindo explained the necessity of war. In peacetime, one becomes slack.

It is a pity.

I cannot say that I find it very pretty, but it seems to be like that.

This is just what Sri Aurobindo said in *The Hour of God*: If you have the Force and the Knowledge and misuse the moment, woe to you.

It is not revenge, it is not punishment, not at all, but you draw upon yourself a necessity, the necessity for a violent impulsion — to react to something violent.

(Silence)

This is an experience I am having more and more: for the contact with this true divine Love to be able to manifest, that is, to express itself freely, it demands an extraordinary strength in beings and things, which does not yet exist. Otherwise everything falls apart.

There are lots of very convincing details, but of course, because they are “details” or very personal things, one cannot
On Thoughts and Aphorisms

speak of them; but on the evidence of repeated experiences, I have to say this: when this Power of pure Love—which is so wonderful, which is beyond all expression—as soon as it begins to manifest abundantly, freely, it is as if quantities of things crumbled down immediately—they cannot stand. They cannot stand, they are dissolved. Then... then everything stops. And this stopping, which one might think is a disgrace, is just the opposite! It is an infinite Grace.

Simply to perceive, a little concretely and tangibly, the difference between the vibration in which one lives normally and almost continually, and that vibration—simply to observe this infirmity, which I call sickening—it really makes you feel sick—that is enough to stop everything.

Only yesterday, this morning, there are long moments when this Power manifests; then suddenly, there is a kind of wisdom, an immeasurable wisdom which causes everything to subside in perfect tranquillity: what must be shall be, it will take the time that is needed. And then everything is all right. In this way, everything is all right immediately. But the splendour fades.

One has only to be patient.

Sri Aurobindo also has written this: Aspire intensely, but without impatience.... The difference between intensity and impatience is very subtle—it is all a difference in vibration. It is subtle, but it makes all the difference.

Intensely, but without impatience. That’s it. One must be in that state.

And for a very long time, a very long time, one must be satisfied with inner results, that is, results in one’s personal and individual reactions, one’s inner contact with the rest of the world—one must not expect or be premature in wanting things to materialise. Because our hastiness usually delays things.

If it is like that, it is like that.

We—I mean men—live harassed lives. It is a kind of half-awareness of the shortness of their lives; they do not think of it, but they feel it half-consciously. And so they are always
wanting — quick, quick, quick — to rush from one thing to another, to do one thing quickly and move on to the next one, instead of letting each thing live in its own eternity. They are always wanting: forward, forward, forward.... And the work is spoilt.

That is why some people have preached: the only moment that matters is the present moment. In practice it is not true, but from the psychological point of view it ought to be true. That is to say, to live to the utmost of one’s capacities at every minute, without planning or wanting, waiting or preparing for the next. Because you are always hurrying, hurrying, hurrying.... And nothing you do is good. You are in a state of inner tension which is completely false — completely false.

All those who have tried to be wise have always said it — the Chinese preached it, the Indians preached it — to live in the awareness of Eternity. In Europe also they said that one should contemplate the sky and the stars and identify oneself with their infinitude — all things that widen you and give you peace.

These are means, but they are indispensable.

And I have observed this in the cells of the body; they always seem to be in a hurry to do what they have to do, lest they have no time to do it. So they do nothing properly. Muddled people — some people turn everything upside down, their movements are jerky and confused — have this to a high degree, this kind of haste — quick, quick, quick.... Yesterday, someone was complaining of rheumatic pains and he was saying, “Oh, it is such a waste of time. I do things so slowly!” I said (Mother smiles), “So what!” He didn’t like it. You see, for someone to complain when he is in pain means that he is soft, that is all; but to say, “I am wasting so much time, I do things so slowly!” It gave a very clear picture of the haste in which men live. You go hurtling through life... to go where?... You end with a crash!

What is the use of that?
On Thoughts and Aphorisms

(Silence)

In reality, the moral of all these aphorisms is that it is much more important to be than to seem to be — one must live and not pretend to live — and that it is much more important to realise something entirely, sincerely, perfectly than to let others know that you are realising it!

It is the same thing again: when you are compelled to say what you are doing, you spoil half your action.

And yet, at the same time, this helps you to take your bearings, to find out exactly where you are.

That was the wisdom of the Buddha who spoke of “the Middle Way”: neither too much of this nor too much of that, neither falling into this nor falling into that — a little of everything and a balanced way... but pure. Purity and sincerity are the same thing.

16 September 1964

108 – When he watched the actions of Janaka, even Narada the divine sage thought him a luxurious worldling and libertine. Unless thou canst see the soul, how shalt thou say that a man is free or bound?

This raises all sorts of questions. For example, how is it that Narada could not see the soul?

For me, it is very simple. Narada was a demi-god, he belonged to the overmind world and he was able to materialise himself, but these beings have no psychic. The gods do not have within them the divine spark, which is the core of the psychic, because only on earth — I am not even speaking of the material universe — only on earth did this descent of divine Love take place, which was the origin of the divine Presence in the core of Matter. And naturally, since they have no psychic being, they do not know the psychic being. Some of these beings have even