24 March 1954

This talk is based upon Mother’s essay “The Four Austerities and the Four Liberations”, Part I.

*If one eats a heavy meal, why is the sleep disturbed by nightmares?*

Because there is a very close connection between dreams and the condition of the stomach. Observations have been made and it has been noticed that in accordance with what is eaten, dreams are of one kind or another, and that if the digestion is difficult, the dream always turns into a nightmare — those nightmares which have no reality but still are nightmares all the same and very unpleasant — seeing tigers, cats, etc.... Or else you experience things like... for instance, you are facing a great danger and must hurry up, get dressed quickly and go out, and then you can’t dress, try as you will, you can’t put on your things, you don’t find your things any more, and if you want to put on your shoes they never fit you, and if you want to go somewhere very fast, the legs don’t move any longer, they are paralysed and you are stuck there making formidable efforts to advance, and you can’t move. It is this kind of nightmare that comes from a disordered stomach.

*Why do tobacco and alcohol destroy the memory and will?*

Why? Because they do so. There is no moral reason. It is a fact. There is a poison in alcohol, there is a poison in tobacco; and this poison goes into the cells and damages them. Alcohol is never expelled, so to say; it accumulates in a certain part of the brain, and then, after the accumulation, these cells no longer
function at all — some people even go mad because of it, that is what is called delirium tremens, the result of having swallowed too much alcohol which is not absorbed but remains in this way concentrated in the brain. And it is so radical even that... There is a province in France, for instance, which produces wine, a wine with a very low percentage of alcohol: I believe it is four or five per cent, a very low percentage, you understand; and these people, because they make it, drink wine as one drinks water. They drink it neat, and after some time they become ill. They have cerebral disorders. I knew people of this kind, the brain was disordered, didn’t function any more. And tobacco — nicotine is a very serious poison. It is a poison that destroys the cells. I have said that it is a slow poison because one doesn’t feel it immediately except when one smokes for the first time and it makes one very ill. And this should make you understand that it ought not to be done. Only, people are so stupid that they think it is a weakness and so continue until they get used to the poison. And the body no longer reacts, it allows itself to be destroyed without reacting: you get rid of the reaction.

It is the same thing physically as morally. When you do something you ought not to do and your psychic tells you in its still small voice not to do it, then if you do it in spite of that, after a while it will no longer tell you anything, and you will no longer have any inner reactions at all to your bad actions, because you have refused to listen to the voice when it spoke to you. And then, naturally, you go from bad to worse and tumble into the hole. Well, for tobacco it is the same thing: the first time the body reacts violently, it vomits, it tells you, “I don’t want it at any cost.” You compel it with your mental and vital stupidity, you force it to do so; it doesn’t react any longer and so lets itself be poisoned gradually until it decomposes. The functioning deteriorates; it is the nerves that are affected; they no longer transmit the will because they are affected, they are poisoned. They no longer have the strength to transmit the will. And finally people begin to tremble, they have nervous
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movements. There are quite a few, one doesn’t need to go very far to find them. And they are like that only because they have committed excesses: they drank and smoked. And when they lift an object, their hands shake (gesture.) That’s what one gets by doing this.

Some people have a well-developed body but in spite of that they are very nervous. Then...?

Usually it is... Perhaps they have a very weak vital build: their nerves may be weak, they may have a weak nervous system; perhaps it is that, perhaps it is a birth defect. But it could also be a mental weakness, because while it is true that a healthy body gives strong nerves, it is still more important to have healthy thoughts in order to have solid nerves. If your thought is not healthy, if your feelings and thoughts are bad so to speak, your nerves become very bad, still worse. For instance, those who entertain all kinds of unhealthy fancies, those who like unhealthy reading, unhealthy conversations — there are many of this kind, there is a large number of them — well, they may lose all control over their nerves, they may become extremely nervous and yet have a body that’s in a fine condition and very healthy. Unhealthy conversations and reading — I can tell you that there’s nothing worse than that, and when you do sadhana truly, when you are really trying to progress, you notice that when you say useless words, no matter how few they are, immediately there is a terrible uneasiness which gets hold of you; you feel as though all the nerves of the head were being pulled and there is also something churning here (gesture) which hurts you, and you feel a great emptiness within and have heartburn, as though you had eaten something very bad — all this only because of some uselessly spoken words. Besides, it is a sure indication: as soon as the uneasiness begins, one knows one must stop: “Now it is finished.” Only, most people are so unconscious that they don’t even notice it, and with their warped will they compel their
system to do what it should not. So, the system is more or less docile, obeys and continues to deteriorate slowly, in this way, without even showing visible reactions.

I did not understand this passage from the text: “Continence is therefore the rule for all those who aspire for progress. But especially for those who want to prepare themselves for the supramental manifestation, this continence must be replaced by a total abstinence, achieved not by coercion and suppression but by a kind of inner alchemy, as a result of which the energies that are normally used in the act of procreation are transmuted into energies for progress and integral transformation.”

This is quite well known in yogic disciplines in India, when one begins to become conscious of one’s energies and have control over them. You know, don’t you, the theory of the different “centres” where the energies are concentrated? Generally, it is said that there are five. But the true number is seven or even twelve. Anyway, these centres are centres of accumulation of energy, energies which control certain activities. Thus, there is an accumulation of energy at the sex-centre, a great accumulation of energy, and those who have control over these energies succeed in mastering them and raising them up, and they place them here (Mother points to the centre of the chest). And here is the centre of the energies of progress. This is what is called the seat of Agni, but it is the energies of progress, the will to progress, that are here. So the energies concentrated in the sex-centre are pulled upwards and placed here. And they increase considerably, so that the sex-centre becomes absolutely calm, peaceful, immobile.

The ordinary practice for controlling these energies is to manage to “uncoil” the Kundalini which is coiled up at the base of the spine and raise the energies through the spinal column to the different centres, and awaken the centres, open them, wake
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them up and set them in motion one after another right up to the
top of the head, and then, go out from up there. And when one
has succeeded in doing this (this is the first practice), when one
has uncoiled the Kundalini, next to master it, guide and develop
it, to guide it to all the centres, awaken all these centres. Once
that has been done, one is master of the functioning. Once one
is master of the functioning, instead of leaving the energies in
places where they are not wanted, one pulls them up and puts
them in places where they are useful, and uses them in this way
for progress, for transformation.

All this is the result of enlightened, assiduous, very patient
practice; this is not done just like that, while thinking of other
things or playing about. These are disciplines. Naturally, once
one is master of the working, it becomes very interesting. But
this is not done in a flash without one’s doing what is necessary.

Once you said that human love was distorted and dis-
figured by men. What was love in its origin?

What?

Human love.

Human? Why, haven’t I said it? It is Love. When it becomes
human love, it is as I have described it. Love in its origin is
divine love. Love in man, that is, love grown human, is distorted,
deformed; it is only divine love which is pure.

How can the senses be used for self-development?

Developing through sensations? It is very much in fashion.
It is much in fashion. Now in the schools certain disciplines
are invented to develop children’s power of observation, the
quickness of decision, of choice, the capacity to reckon with the
eyes, appreciation, all that. All kinds of games are made for children now, to teach them all that. The sense of hearing can also be developed, the sense of smell, the sense of sight — all these can be methodically developed. If, instead of merely living in one's sensations — this is “pleasant or unpleasant”, this is “pleasing or displeasing” and all kinds of things which are perfectly useless — one succeeds in calculating, measuring, comparing, noting, studying in detail all the vibrations.... You see, human beings live like blind men, constantly, absolutely unconscious, and they plunge into sensations and reactions, all the impulses, and so it is pleasant, it is unpleasant, it is pleasing, it is displeasing, all that. What is all that, then? What's the sense in it? — None at all. One ought to be able to appreciate, calculate, judge, compare, note, know exactly and scientifically the full value of the vibrations, the relations between things, study everything, everything — for instance, study all sensations in connection with the reactions they produce, follow the movement from the sensation to the brain, and then follow the movement of response from the brain to the sensations. And in this way one succeeds in controlling one's will, one's sensations completely, to such an extent that if there is something one does not want to feel, it is enough, with one's will, to cut it off: one feels it no longer. There are many disciplines of this kind. Some of them keep you busy for a lifetime, and if they are well followed, you don't waste a moment and are altogether interested. You no longer have time for impulses, this takes away all impulses. When you become scientific in these studies, you are no longer like a cork: one wave sending you here, another sending you there! There is a passing movement of Nature. Nature, oh how she plays with men! Good heavens, when you see how it is, oh! Truly it is enough to make you revolt. I don't understand how they do not revolt.... She sends round a wave of desire, and they are all like sheep running after their desires; she sends round a wave of violence, they are once again like other sheep living in violence, and so on, for everything. Anger — she just does “poof”, and
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everybody gets into a rage. She has but to make a gesture — a
gesture of her caprice — and the human mobs follow. Or else
it passes from one to another, just like that; they don’t know
why. They are asked, “Why?” — “Well, suddenly I felt angry.
Suddenly I was seized by desire.” Oh! It is shameful.

Good night.