14 July 1954

This talk could not be recorded very clearly because of the noise of the fireworks celebrating the French Republic Day.

The talk is based upon Chapter 2 of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

*Sweet Mother, does Sri Aurobindo make a difference between the Divine and the Shakti? Here he speaks of “surrender of oneself and all one is and has and every plane of the consciousness and every movement to the Divine and the Shakti.”*

He has said that the Divine is the Supreme. That’s the origin. He has said, hasn’t he? at the very beginning of this chapter, I think, he has said, “The Divine…”

(The child reads the text) “... through his Shakti is behind all action...”

He takes the Shakti as the executive power, the creative Consciousness.

*What is the meaning of “surrender” and of “every plane of the consciousness”?*

It means surrender of the physical, surrender of the vital, surrender of the mind and surrender of the psychic. And if you are conscious of other parts of your being... You must first begin by distinguishing between the different parts of your being, and

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1 The complete sentence is: “In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yoga Maya and works through the ego of the Jiva in the lower nature.”

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then, when you can distinguish them clearly, you offer them one by one.

*What does “Yoga Maya” mean?*

Yoga Maya? Maya, I don’t know in what sense he takes it, whether it is as the most external manifestation... Does he speak of Yoga Maya?

(A child reads the last part of the phrase) “...he is veiled by his Yoga Maya...”

Yes, veiled by his external manifestation. Truly, that’s what it means, the outer form of the world; and also the egoism of the Jiva, that is, the individual being.

He “works through the ego of the Jiva...”

Yes, it’s the same thing. Yes, “through” — that means the ego is there.

_Sweet Mother, here it is written: “But so long as the lower nature is active the personal effort of the sadhaka remains necessary.” I didn’t understand here “so long as the lower nature is active”. How?_"
longer any need of personal effort. But so long as one feels that one is a separate being, one must make a personal effort. This is what he calls the activity of the lower consciousness.

(Silence)

*Why are we so afraid of telling the truth?*

Yes, why? I, too, ask: Why? I would like to know very much! But it is like that. Things are like that. I think the chief reason is that the nature, in its outer and personal form, doesn’t wish to change. It doesn’t want to change; so one is hostile to the force that would like you to change, to the truth.

(Suddenly the noise of the fireworks bursts out, drowning all voices. Mother laughingly remarks:)

Ah, that’s good! Now all our speeches will be punctuated by this noise! *(Turning to Vishwanath)* You can stop it, we do not want to record the fireworks! *(Laughter)*

“A *tamasic surrender refusing to fulfil the conditions*”
— *if it refuses to fulfil the conditions, it is no longer surrender, is it?*

Exactly. But there are many who think that they have surrendered and tell you, “I no longer do anything myself, I have given myself to the Divine, the Divine ought to do everything for me.” This they call surrender.... That is to say, it is a movement of laziness and tamas which doesn’t want to make any effort and would very much like the Divine to do everything for you, because that is much more comfortable!

*What is “the heart’s seeking”?*

The heart’s seeking — it is the emotional being trying...
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(The class is again interrupted by loud exclamations from the children of the Boarding House who can see the fireworks from their terrace.)

We can't see anything.... It is from that side.... Eh? We can only hear the noise!

“Seeking” means that the affective centre is trying to find an emotional contact with the Divine. It is truly this.

(The noise continues and Mother tells Vishwanath once again): I think you had better stop.

(A child) No, Mother! No, Mother!

I can hardly even speak! (To another child) And now?

Why does one always go in for useless talking? Why do we speak uselessly?

Why do people speak uselessly? Yes, that's probably because man is instinctively very proud of being able to formulate words. He is the first being on earth who can speak, who emits articulate sounds. So it is a kind of... it is like a child who has a new toy it likes to play with very much. Man is the only animal on earth who has articulate sounds at his disposal, so he plays with them, you see... I think it's that....

And then there's all the stupidity.... You know, I also said that some people could begin to think only when they talked.... When they do not speak, they do not even think! They are not able to think in silence, so they get into the habit of speaking. But the more developed one is, the more intelligent one is and the less need one has to express oneself. It is always at a lower level that one needs to talk. And truly, a being who is very conscious, who is mentally, intellectually, very developed, talks only when it is necessary. He does not utter useless words. In the social scale it is like this.... Take people right at the
bottom of the scale: they talk the most, they spend their time in talking. They can't stop! Whatever happens to them they express immediately in words. And to the extent that one is developed and on a higher level of evolution, one feels much less need to speak.

It comes from two causes: one, because it is a new faculty which naturally and instinctively has the attraction of new faculties; the other, because it helps you to become aware of your own thought. Otherwise one doesn't think, one is not able to formulate his thought unless he expresses it in words, aloud.... Except those who are talkers by profession — that is, those who are in the habit of giving lectures or political speeches, or taking classes, giving lessons — except these people who, obviously, can be both intellectual and talkative at the same time, as a general rule, the more talkative people are, the less are they intellectually developed!

What should be done to refrain from talking?

Think! You have only to reflect a little more. If only you make it a habit to think before speaking, that saves you at least half of what you say. To think before speaking and to say only what seems absolutely indispensable to you — then you very quickly become aware that very few words are indispensable, except from the practical point of view, in work, when one is working with somebody and is obliged to use words: “Do this”, “Give me that”, or “Like this”, or “Like that”. And even so, this can be reduced to a minimum. Otherwise, you see... (Once again a loud noise of fireworks) These are flying saucers! They go far! How long will all this go on?

Half an hour.

(Another child) It goes on till ten o'clock.

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Ten o’clock!... So, I continue!

Who has a question to ask? Whose turn is it?

_Sweet Mother, sometimes one knows that it is the truth but still doubts this truth. Why does one doubt?_ (Loud noise. Nothing else is heard.)

What did you say? Speak very clearly, it will be a good exercise. _Laughers_

_One knows that something is true but still doubts. Why does one doubt the truth?_

The usual answer, it is because one is foolish! _Laughers_

But the truth is that the physical mind is truly completely stupid! You can prove it very easily. It is constructed probably as a kind of control, and in order to make sure that things are done as they ought to be. I think that this is its normal work.... But it has made it a habit to doubt everything.

I think I have already told you about the small experiment I made one day. I removed my control and left the control to the physical mind — it is the physical mind which doubts. So I made the following experiment: I went into a room, then came out of the room and closed the door. I had decided to close the door; and when I came to another room, this mind, the material mind, the physical mind, you see, said, “Are you sure you have locked the door?” Now, I did not control, you know... I said, “Very well, I obey it!” I went back to see. I observed that the door was closed. I came back. As soon as I couldn’t see the door any longer, it told me, “Have you verified properly?” So I went back again.... And this went on till I decided: “Come now, that’s enough, isn’t it? Closed or not, I am not going back any more to see!” This could have gone on the whole day. It is made like that. It stops being like that only when a higher mind, the rational mind tells it, “Keep quiet!” Otherwise it goes
on indefinitely.... So, if by ill-luck you are centred there, in this mind, even the things you know higher up as quite true, even things of which you have a physical proof — like that of the closed door, it doubts, it will doubt, because it is built of doubt. It will always say, “Are you quite sure this is true?... Isn’t it an idea of yours?... You don’t suppose it is like that?” And it will go on until one teaches it to keep quiet and be silent.

“Note that a tamasic surrender refusing to fulfil the conditions and calling on God to do everything...”

Yes, but we have just been speaking about this! I have already answered this question. Someone asked me... I have already answered....

How is the Divine the Sadhana?

Because it is the Divine who does the sadhana in the being. Without the Divine there would be no sadhana. Only, you know nothing about it... you think — you are under the illusion — that it is you. And precisely, so long as you are under this illusion, you must make an effort; but the truth is that it is the Divine who does the sadhana in you, and that without the Divine there would be no sadhana.

Here it is written: “... the Divine... is the Sadhaka and the Sadhana.”

Yes, He is everything, isn’t He?

Yes.

2 “In Yoga also it is the Divine who is the Sadhaka and the Sadhana.”

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(Another child) Then, Mother, why the personal effort? If it is the Divine who does the sadhana, let the Divine do it; and where is the personal effort?

Yes, this is precisely what people say in their laziness! But if you were not lazy, you wouldn’t say it! (Laughter)

What does personal effort mean?

Effort which thinks it is personal. You have the sense of your separate person. Do you feel that you are the Divine, and only the Divine? No! (Laughter) Well, the Divine is this... Precisely, so long as you feel that you are Manoj, well, Manoj must make an effort. If you can completely get rid of the notion of Manoj, there is no longer anything but the Divine, and it is the Divine who will make the effort, naturally!... But so long as there is a Manoj, it is Manoj who has to make the effort.

But when Manoj makes the effort, it is the Divine in Manoj who is making the effort!

Perhaps, but Manoj knows nothing about it! (Laughter) I say simply that if there were no Divine, Manoj could not make the effort. But Manoj is not yet in a state to know that, so he knows that he is making an effort.

But now you have told me! Today I know, so...

(Instantaneously) Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!... (Laughter) Mental knowledge is not enough, you must have the practical experience. Otherwise, my children, we would all have been transformed long ago, because for a long time we have had the knowledge that the transformation must come about. (Laughter) Is that all? Go on!
Sweet Mother, what is the difference between self-giving, consecration and surrender?

Self-giving, consecration and surrender? I believe we have read this somewhere, haven’t we? There was already some explanation like that, wasn’t there? We have already spoken about it. It was in Elements of Yoga also. Someone had asked about it and the reply was in this book. Sri Aurobindo has given the answer, the difference between... So, my children, if you...

That was about belief.

Eh? In Elements of Yoga; wasn’t it?

In Elements of Yoga; it was the difference between trust, faith and belief.

Oh, it was between these three! It was not between surrender, self-giving and consecration? But I have read this somewhere.

Mother, Parul says she had asked this question.

(Another child) It was in Prayers and Meditations.

Oh, it was in Prayers and Meditations?

Yes, Sweet Mother.

And so, what did I tell you? Ah, it’s going to be interesting! (Laughter) What did I tell you?

(Long silence)

Pavitra: We could add “offering” also!

I think they are closely synonymous, that they are rather shades
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than differences. Because one can very well replace one by another in a sentence. It depends on how the sentence sounds and on the word that fits best into it. It is a literary point. If one wants, one can find a difference, but all this depends entirely on what one wants to put into the words.

I said, didn’t I, that “soumission” is not a good word? We use in French “soumission” to translate “surrender”, because there is no word which translates “surrender”. “Soumission” always gives the impression of something which accepts reluctantly, which does not give complete adherence, does not collaborate fully. And so, that is what makes the difference with the word in the sense of “surrender” in which there is the meaning of a perfect adherence. Which means that though one uses this word “soumission”, it is not a good one....

(Silence)

One can — if one wants to split hairs, as it is said — one can make a distinction between self-giving, consecration and offering. These are three... they may be three different phases. But that is if truly one wants to create complications; because in writing, as I said, one can very well use one word in place of another, according to the rhythm of the sentence, and this keeps the meaning intact. For if you want to make a distinction, you are immediately obliged to put adjectives, aren’t you?... Take the word in itself, “self-giving, offering, consecration”... Now, if you want to make a distinction, you say “a total consecration”, “a partial self-giving”... You see, you are obliged to use adjectives: they are synonyms.

Who asked the question? It was you? Now, it depends on the sentence you are going to write — you will use one word or another. But you must know: the word “soumission” does not have the precise meaning that’s necessary. “Soumission” (“submission”) compared with “surrender” gives the same difference that there is — perhaps less strongly — but a difference
analogous to that between obedience and collaboration. In one case there is a perfect adherence, and in the other there is an acceptance which perhaps reserves itself; it accepts because it realises that it can’t do otherwise, but it does not collaborate entirely.... One does not give total adherence.

Any other questions?

_Sweet Mother, last time you said that stones have a kind of receptivity._

Yes.

_What kind of receptivity?_

Perhaps they have even something resembling sensitivity. For instance, if you have a precious stone — precious stones of course have a much more perfect structure than ordinary ones, and with perfection consciousness increases — but if you take a precious stone, you can charge it with consciousness and force; you can put, accumulate force within it. So it is receptive, otherwise it will not receive it, it could not keep it. You can charge it. As one charges an electric battery, you can charge a stone with force, put conscious force into a stone; it keeps it and can transmit it to someone. Therefore this stone has a receptivity. Otherwise it could not do this.

Flowers are extremely receptive. All the flowers to which I have given a significance receive exactly the force I put into them and transmit it. People don’t always receive it because most of the time they are less receptive than the flower, and they waste the force that has been put in it through their unconsciousness and lack of receptivity. But the force is there, and the flower receives it wonderfully.

I knew this a very long time ago. Fifty years ago.... There was that occultist who later gave me lessons in occultism for two
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years. His wife was a wonderful clairvoyant and had an absolutely remarkable capacity — precisely — of transmitting forces. They lived in Tlemcen. I was in Paris. I used to correspond with them. I had not yet met them at all. And then, one day, she sent me in a letter petals of the pomegranate flower, “Divine’s Love”. At that time I had not given the meaning to the flower. She sent me petals of pomegranate flowers telling me that these petals were bringing me her protection and force.

Now, at that time I used to wear my watch on a chain. Wristwatches were not known then or there were very few. And there was also a small eighteenth century magnifying-glass... it was quite small, as large as this (gesture)... And it had two lenses, you see, like all reading-glasses; there were two lenses mounted on a small golden frame, and it was hanging from my chain. Now, between the two glasses I put these petals and I used to carry this about with me always because I wanted to keep it with me; you see, I trusted this lady and knew she had power. I wanted to keep this with me, and I always felt a kind of energy, warmth, confidence, force which came from that thing.... I did not think about it, you see, but I felt it like that.

And then, one day, suddenly I felt quite depleted, as though a support that was there had gone. Something very unpleasant. I said, “It is strange; what has happened? Nothing really unpleasant has happened to me. Why do I feel like this, so empty, emptied of energy?” And in the evening, when I took off my watch and chain, I noticed that one of the small glasses had come off and all the petals were gone. There was not one petal left. Then I really knew that they carried a considerable charge of power, for I had felt the difference without even knowing the reason. I didn’t know the reason and yet it had made a considerable difference. So it was after this that I saw how one could use flowers by charging them with forces. They are extremely receptive.

(The noise continues.) Now that’s enough, I suppose? Enough of that noise!
Another question? (A loud noise) Boom!

*Do flowers retain the force always, even when they decay?*

Decay? No, my child; when they dry up, yes. Decayed flowers are just nothing. A decomposition takes place, so the thing disappears. Perhaps it brings energy to the soil, that's quite possible; but still, when it decays it is good only to make manure to grow other flowers. But if it dries up, it is preserved, it can remain for quite a long time.

Those small packets which I give on Kali Puja day are made to be preserved for one year. For a year they keep their force intact and I renew them every year to make sure that... I know that there isn’t one in ten among you who makes a proper use of it... but still, I give it on the off-chance for those who know how to use it. It is prepared to keep the force for one year. And when I give the new one, you can dispose of the other. Usually it has fallen to dust. Not always.... But these little packets keep their charge of force exactly for one year.

*Sweet Mother, what should we do with the flowers which you give us every day?*

Flowers? You ought to keep them as long as they are fresh, and when they are no longer so, you must collect them and give them to the gardener (any gardener you know), so that he can put them in the earth to produce other flowers. Yes, one must give back to the earth what it has given us, for otherwise it will become poor.

*Mother, certain flowers come in a particular season; does this mean that during that season a greater force is at work?*
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This is a question which is difficult to answer. But I have made a rather interesting experiment in this way.

I don’t know if you remember — if you were there — if you remember the time when flowers used to be counted; you see, it was a kind of agreement between me and Nature. To each of these flowers I had given a particular value, not only its significance but its value. For example — it was understood — I had made an agreement with Nature. Take, for instance, the “transformation” flowers; note that if one is quite attentive, one will see that in different seasons one flower is replaced by another with a similar or close significance, and you can go all round the year in this way — if you know how to make use of things! There are also permanent things which are always there.... But flowers, for example, like the “transformation” flowers, have a season, quite a long one, but still a season. The “realisation” flower has a fairly long season, but it doesn’t come at the same time as the “transformation” flower.... They... how shall I put it?... overlap. One begins before the other finishes. But the seasons when they come abundantly are not the same, and all flowers are like that. Yes, it is arranged. This answers your question, doesn’t it? These are shades in the meaning and it is possible that some seasons are more favourable; one may lay greater stress on one movement than on another.

But each of these flowers had a numerical value, and I used to write it down; I had them counted, because I was noting the numerical value. I stopped when my pages... I had long pages like this, you see (Mother stretches out her arms to indicate the length of the pages), because I was totalling up the numerical values. I had my reasons for it, it was not just like that.... I did a great deal of work with it.... I had to stop because it was taking too much time. You see, when I had to write figures on a paper at least as long as this, and then later, suddenly it had to be still bigger, it was impossible! (Mother stretches out her arms again.) So I had to stop. I stopped because of this. But not only did I
have a numerical value and did some work upon it, there was also the meaning of the flower.

Well, it was an agreement like this: the numerical value corresponded to something that it was understood Nature would give me for my work, but the significance of the flower also was something agreed upon between me and Nature. For example, take “transformation”. When there was a computation — it was sometimes by thousands during the season, you know — well, it represented (it was an understanding with Nature) that the same number of men would be transformed.... And it was even much better than this. It was that when I gave somebody one, two, three, four, five flowers I gave him at the same time the power to transform as many elements within him. But naturally, for this to work in all sincerity, it had not to pass through the head; because when their head starts working — not always in the right way — men spoil everything. That is why I never used to say anything about this.

It was the same thing for all flowers, “aspiration”, for example: the “aspiration” flowers which used to come in large basketfuls, you know; there were thousands and thousands of them, all counted.... Well, each one represented an aspiration; and even now, sometimes, when I have flowers like “prayer”... I have at times told you when I distribute “prayer” flowers, “It is a prayer. Be careful, this prayer is granted.” I did that, you remember, don’t you? And I told you, “Take care of your ‘prayer’. Pray only for what you want should be! Take great care! Because this prayer is granted. I give the flower, but at the same time the possibility of [ . . . ]³ the prayer you will make. Well, it will be granted.” It was very interesting, in the sense that I always used to tell Nature, “You know, if you don’t want me to have these things, you need not give them to me.” There were fluctuations, there were times when things came in abundance, when I insisted; there were times when they stopped abruptly,

³ Word missing in transcript.
why one couldn’t tell, one did not understand.... She did not agree to give us... Other things, on the contrary, she gave in great abundance.

But all this is what goes on behind the scene, behind the stage....

*When we have a ring or some ornament with your image, does it give us protection?*

My child, all I can hear is the fireworks!

*(The child repeats the question.)*

It depends above all on what you think about it! Something I give you with my own hands — there I put in something; but if it is of your own choice that you have taken a ring or a portrait, something, and you wear it... if you have the trust, the faith that it protects you, it protects you. When *I* give it, I give it with something completely different from the thing itself. It can contain this thing if I put it in, but if I don’t, it does not contain it.

Sri Aurobindo used to say, you know, that to wear a ring with his portrait and think that it protects you, is a superstition! He would tell you it is a superstition! That is, it depends on what you think about it.... It depends solely on what you think about it. If he had given you a ring, saying, “Wear this, my force will be with you”, then it would have been altogether different; there’s a world of difference.

I shall tell you another little story. Long ago some people used to believe that a perforated coin... It was in the days when coins were not perforated... now we have perforated coins, don’t we, some countries have perforated coins, but in those days they were not perforated, and yet sometimes there were holes in a coin. And there was indeed a superstition like this, that when one found a perforated coin, it brought good luck. It brought you good luck and success in what you wanted to do.
There was a man working in an office whose life was rather poor and who was not very successful, and one day he found a perforated coin. He put it in his pocket and said to himself, “Now I am going to prosper!” And he was full of hope, courage, energy, because he knew: “Now that I have the coin, I am sure to succeed!” And, in fact, he went on prospering, prospering more and more. He earned more and more money, he had a better and better position, and people said, “What a wonderful man! How well he works! How he finds all the solutions to all problems!” Indeed, he became a remarkable man, and every morning when he put on his coat, he felt it — like this — to be sure that his coin was in his pocket.... He touched it, he felt that the coin was there, and he had confidence. And then, one day, he was a little curious, and said, “I am going to see my coin!” — years later. He was having his breakfast with his wife and said, “I am going to see my coin!” His wife told him, “Why do you want to see it? It’s not necessary.” “Yes, yes, let me see my coin.” He took out the little bag in which he kept the coin, and found inside a coin which was not perforated!

“Ah,” he said, “this is not my coin! What is this? Who has changed my coin?” Then his wife told him, “Look, one day there was some dust on your coat.... I shook it off through the window and the coin fell out. I had forgotten that the coin was there. I ran to look for it but didn’t find it. Someone had picked it up. So I thought you would be very unhappy and I put another coin there.” (Laughter) Only, of course, was confident that his coin was there and that was enough.

It is the faith, the trust that does it, you see.... The perforated coin gives you nothing at all. You can always try. When one has confidence...

There! now... and that's enough.