10 October 1956

Some days ago, during the Translation Class¹ I found a passage in The Life Divine which, I thought, might interest you this evening. Sri Aurobindo is speaking of the movement of Nature and he explains how from matter which seems inert came life, then how from life mind emerged and also how from mind will emerge the supermind or the spiritual life; and he gives a kind of brief survey of the time it takes. I am going to read this passage to you and shall tell you later what connection it has with our present situation:

“The first obscure material movement of the evolutionary Force is marked by an aeonic graduility; the movement of life-progress proceeds slowly but still with a quicker step, it is concentrated into the figure of milleniums; mind can still further compress the tardy leisureliness of Time and make long paces of the centuries; but when the conscious spirit intervenes, a supremely concentrated pace of evolutionary swiftness becomes possible.”


I am reading this to you because I have been asked about the action of the Supermind, and I had compared this manifestation of the Supermind to that of the mind which, according to all modern scientific discoveries, took nearly a million years to evolve from the animal brain, the ape-brain, to the first human brain. And I told you that, consequently, one should not expect this to take place in a few months or a few years, that it would

¹ Until 1958, three times a week, in another class, Mother used to translate into French certain books of Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, The Human Cycle, the last six chapters of The Life Divine and the first part of The Synthesis of Yoga.
Questions and Answers

obviously take much longer. Some people, it seems, thought that I was announcing that the superman would not come before another million years! I want to correct this impression.

Sri Aurobindo has said that as the development rises in the scale of consciousness, the movement becomes more and more rapid, and that when the Spirit or the Supermind intervenes, it can go much faster. Therefore we may hope that in a few centuries, the first supramental race will appear.

But even that is rather disconcerting for some people, for they think it contradicts what Sri Aurobindo has always promised: that the time has come for the supramental transformation to be possible.... But we must not confuse a supramental transformation with the appearing of a new race.

What Sri Aurobindo promised and what naturally interests us, we who are here now, is that the time has come when some beings among the elite of humanity, who fulfil the conditions necessary for spiritualisation, will be able to transform their bodies with the help of the supramental Force, Consciousness and Light, so as no longer to be animal-men but become supermen.

This promise Sri Aurobindo has made and he based it on the knowledge he had that the supramental Force was on the point of manifesting on the earth. In fact it had descended in him long ago, he knew it and knew what its effects were.

And now that it has manifested universally, I could say, generally, the certainty of the possibility of transformation is of course still greater. There is no longer any doubt that those who will fulfil or who now fulfil the conditions are on the way to this transformation.

The conditions Sri Aurobindo gives in detail in The Synthesis of Yoga and in still greater detail in his last articles on the Supramental Manifestation.2 So now it is only a question of realisation.

Now, if someone wants to ask me a question on the subject....

The method of these realisations, formerly, used to be an integral surrender to you. Now it is still the same thing; so, in these new conditions, should not this surrender be still more rigorous than before?

What I read today\(^3\) seems to be the most essential condition for starting, because it is the most universal.

\((\text{After a silence})\) Everyone must follow his path in accordance with his own nature, and there is always a preference for one way rather than another. As we read in one of our recent classes, for one who follows the path of action, it is much more difficult to feel that the human personality does not exist and that only the divine Force works. For one who follows the path of knowledge it is relatively very easy, it is something one discovers

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\(^3\) “It is then by a transformation of life in its very principle, not by an external manipulation of its phenomena, that the integral Yoga proposes to change it from a troubled and ignorant into a luminous and harmonious movement of Nature. There are three conditions which are indispensable for the achievement of this central inner revolution and a new formation; none of them is altogether sufficient in itself, but by their united threefold power the uplifting can be done, the conversion made and completely made. For, first, life as it is is a movement of desire and it has built in us as its centre a desire-soul which refers to itself all the motions of life and puts in them its own troubled hue and pain of an ignorant, half-lit, baffled endeavour; for a divine living, desire must be abolished and replaced by a purer and firmer motive-power, the tormented soul of desire dissolved and in its stead there must emerge the calm, strength, happiness of a true vital being now concealed within us. Next, life as it is is driven or led partly by the impulse of the life-force, partly by a mind which is mostly a servant and abettor of the ignorant life-impulse, but in part also its uneasy and not too luminous or competent guide and mentor; for a divine life the mind and the life-impulse must cease to be anything but instruments and the inmost psychic being must take their place as the leader on the path and the indicator of a divine guidance. Last, life as it is is turned towards the satisfaction of the separative ego; ego must disappear and be replaced by the true spiritual person, the central being, and life itself must be turned towards the fulfilment of the Divine in terrestrial existence; it must feel a Divine Force awaking within it and become an obedient instrumentation of its purpose.”

almost immediately. For one who follows the path of love it is elementary, since it is by giving himself that he progresses. But for one who follows the path of action it is much more difficult, and consequently for him the first step is to do what is said here in the passage of The Synthesis of Yoga which we have just read: to create in himself this complete detachment from the fruit of action, to act because this is what must be done, to do it in the best possible way, and not to be anxious about the consequences, to leave the consequences to a Will higher than his own.

One can’t make a general rule for the order of importance of the paths, it is an exclusively personal affair. And there is a time when one understands very well, it is apparent, that no two paths are alike, no two paths can be alike, and that every man follows his own path and that this is the truth of his being. One can, if one looks from a sufficient height, see a difference in the speed of advance, but it does not always conform to the external signs; and one could say a little humorously, that it is not always the wisest who goes fastest!

(Silence)

It seems to me no longer possible to make general rules. Indeed, the Grace is upon all. And what is necessary to let it act? It is very difficult to say.

If one can see it, feel it, experience its action, so to say, be conscious of its presence and movement, then one has the joy of the movement, the progress, the realisation; but this does not mean that if one doesn’t feel this joy, the action of the Grace is not there, the realisation not there.

And after all, all the ways of being of the Divine, all the forms of being in the manifestation are necessary to express the Divine. It is this manifestation as a whole, in its totality, which progresses towards a growing, infinite, eternal perfection. It is not each separate element, individually, it is all together, as a
collective and total expression of the divine Truth. All this is moving forward constantly, eternally, towards a greater perfection. The universe of tomorrow will necessarily be more divine, if one may say so, than the universe of yesterday; and that of yesterday was more divine than the one preceding it. And so, it could be said that the Divine, in his expression of Himself, is in perpetual progress towards a more and more perfect, a more and more divine manifestation.

And in that case, each element has only to manifest, as perfectly as possible, its own law, what it should be in the whole, in order to do the utmost of what ought to be done. It is thus a conscious, an enlightened, one could almost say a disinterested, discovery of this truth of each being, which for it is the first and most important necessity.