28 April 1954

This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo’s *Elements of Yoga*, Chapter 3, “Aspiration”.

*Mother, what is an “acute resistance”?*

Acute? Acute is used in a figurative sense. Acute describes something pointed, don’t you know? — and perhaps this means an aggressive, sharp resistance which sinks deep like a claw.

*I did not understand very well the answer to this question: “Does the power of aspiration vary in different sadhaks according to their natures?”*

Ah! Yes.

You see, I think the question has been put badly. I believe the one who asked the question wanted to say “the effect of aspiration” and he put “power”. That is, aspiration in everyone, no matter who it is, has the same power. But the effect of this aspiration is different. For aspiration is aspiration: if you have aspiration, in itself it has a power. Only, this aspiration calls down an answer, and this answer, the effect, which is the result of the aspiration, depends upon each one, for it depends upon his receptivity. I know many people of this kind: they say, “Oh! But I aspire all the time and still I receive nothing.” It is impossible that they should receive nothing, in the sense that the answer is sure to come. But it is they who do not receive. The answer comes but they are not receptive, so they receive nothing.

There are people, you know, who have a lot of aspiration. They call the force. The force comes to them — even enters deeply into them — and they are so unconscious that they don’t

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1 Sri Aurobindo’s answer: “No. Aspiration is the same power in all; it differs only in purity, intensity and object.”
Questions and Answers

know it! That indeed happens quite frequently. It is their state of unconsciousness which prevents them from even feeling the force which enters into them. It enters into them, and does its work. I knew people who were gradually transformed and yet were so unconscious that they were not even aware of it. The consciousness comes later — very much later. On the other hand, there are people who are more passive, so to speak, more open, more attentive, and even if a very slight amount of force comes, they become aware of it immediately and use it fully.

When you have an aspiration, a very active aspiration, your aspiration is going to do its work. It is going to call down the answer to what you aspire for. But if, later, you begin to think of something else or are not attentive or receptive, you do not even notice that your aspiration has received an answer. This happens very frequently. So people tell you: “I aspire and I don’t receive anything, I get no answer!” Yes, you do have an answer but you are not aware of it, because you continue to be active in this way, like a mill turning all the time.

*Mother, doesn’t the Purusha commit mistakes like the Prakriti?*

That depends on the point of view... I don’t know!

*Mother, if there is a part in one’s nature that does not open, what is the method of aspiring so that this part may open?*

You may aspire that this part may open — let the part that is open aspire for the other to open. It will open after a certain time; one must continue, persist. That is the only thing to do. There is something that does not want it, an acute resistance there, which does not want it. It is like a stubborn child: “I don’t want it, I shall remain what I am, I won’t move.”... It does not say, “I am pleased with myself”, because it does not dare. But
the truth is it is quite self-satisfied, it does not budge.

*But when one wants to aspire, shouldn't one know which part it is?*

Ah! Yes, but if one is sincere, one will know it. If one looks at oneself sincerely, one is sure to know. It is only when one plays the ostrich that one does not know: one shuts one's eyes, turns one's head to the other side, and says, “It does not exist.” But if one looks at oneself straight in the face, one knows *very* well where it is — hidden somewhere in a corner quite nicely, turned upon itself, shut in, close-set. But then, when you go and flash a light like that, straight upon it, oh, it suddenly hurts, doesn't it?

*Mother, on what does receptivity depend?*

It depends first of all upon sincerity — on whether one really wants to receive — and then... yes, I believe the principal factors are sincerity and humility. There is nothing that closes you up more than vanity. When you are self-satisfied, you have that kind of vanity of not wanting to admit that you lack something, that you make mistakes, that you are incomplete, that you are imperfect, that you are... There is something in the nature, you know, which grows stiff in this way, which does not want to admit — it is this which prevents you from receiving. You have, however, only to try it out and get the experience. If, by an effort of will you manage to make even a very tiny part of the being admit that “Ah, well, yes, I am mistaken, I should not be like that, and I should not do that and should not feel that, yes, it is a mistake”, if you manage to make it admit this, at first, as I said just now, it begins by hurting you very much, but when you hold on firmly, until this is admitted, immediately it is open — it is open and strangely a flood of light enters, and then you feel so glad afterwards, so happy that you ask yourself, “Why, was I foolish enough to resist so long?”
Questions and Answers

But when one is so self-satisfied, can one still aspire?

One is not made all of a piece, don’t you know? There is something in the being which can aspire. There is always something in the being which is conscious exactly of what is not all right, at times vaguely, imprecisely, but yet sufficiently conscious that still, after all, one is not perfect, you see, that things could be better than they are. That’s enough! That part can aspire.

What is the work of Purusha and Prakriti?

Ah! Once again I have to give the impression that I don’t know. (Mother turns to Nolini.) Nolini, explain this. (Laughter) As for me, I understand nothing at all of this, it does not correspond to any inner experience for me, I have never had this experience; consequently, I cannot speak about it.

If Mother says that Mother does not know, then I must say I am ignorant! (Laughter)

The Indian concept I know theoretically, and it is enough to read books to know it—that is not what I call knowing. I can speak to you only about things I have experienced. Well, this does not correspond to anything in me. I have not had that experience. I have had very clearly the experience of a witness looking at things, completely detached from everything, who knows all and does not move, who allows everything to be done and who... I have also had the experience of a will which decides. Naturally, everybody has the experience of a moving force—the force in Nature, in its obscurity, and all that—everybody has that experience. But as for making a clear-cut division in this way and calling one Purusha, masculine, and the other Prakriti, feminine, no, I refuse to do that—I have always objected to it and shall always object. And that is why I prefer not to speak about it.
This seems to me an Asiatic version, or perhaps more particularly Indian, I don’t know, of the Chaldean conception of a single, masculine God: you know, the Christian God. This is for me something that comes (pardon me) from a masculine mentality that’s a bit warped. That is how I feel about the subject. Now, if you had not asked me, I would never have spoken to you about it!

*Mother, you said precisely that you had the experience of this witness who does not move, then that is the Purusha!*

Ah! I don’t know. *(Laughter)* Purusha, if you like. But I did not find it particularly masculine! You understand, what... what I object to is the male element and female element. Well, I find that it is not true, and I shall always say: IT IS NOT TRUE. There is an element like this and another like that *(Mother turns her hand from one side to the other)*. There is an activity like this and an activity like that. But why on earth do you want one to be masculine and the other feminine? It is not like that. This, this masculine-feminine business is a trick of Nature, it has arranged things here like that. Now, let me tell you: when one descends from above, well, right up there one has no idea of masculine and feminine and all that nonsense; as you come down and arrive here, it starts to become something real. So you tell yourself, “Well, well! That’s how Nature has arranged things.” Good! But what I say is that these conceptions — these very conceptions which make one element masculine and the other feminine — this is a conception which has come from below, that is, has come out of man’s brain which cannot think otherwise than of MAN and WOMAN — because he is still an animal. There you are! And that’s how I feel — I have always felt this, I have said it from the beginning and will repeat it till the very end, and if you don’t want to hear me say so, don’t speak to me about it! *(Laughter)* That’s all.

Good night.