May 11, 1963

(The beginning of this conversation was noted from memory.)

... If I could only have the 'Word', as the Rishis said, the true mantra, I would keep at it, I'd do hours of japa if necessary, but I would go right to the end. It's as if I were told, "See this plot of land, there are ten million cubic feet of earth to dig, and at the end of it is freedom." Well, I'd set to it, whatever the time needed, because I'd know there is an end. But for that you need a pickax.

Nobody can give you the true mantra. It's not something that is given: it's something that wells up from within. It must spring from within all of a sudden, spontaneously, like a profound, intense need of your being — then it has power, because it's not something that comes from outside, it's your very own cry.

I saw, in my case, that my mantra has the power of immortality; whatever happens, if it is uttered, it's the Supreme that has the upper hand, it's no longer the lower law. And the words are irrelevant, they may not have any meaning — to someone else, my mantra is meaningless, but to me it's full, packed with meaning. And effective, because it's my cry, the intense aspiration of my whole being.

A mantra given by a guru is only the power to realize the experience of the discoverer of the mantra. The power is automatically there, because the sound contains the experience. I saw that once in Paris, at a time when I knew nothing of India, absolutely nothing, only the usual nonsense. I didn't even know what a mantra was. I had gone to a lecture given by some fellow who was supposed to have practiced 'yoga' for a year in the Himalayas and recounted his experience (none too interesting, either). All at once, in the course of his lecture, he uttered the sound OM. And I saw the entire room suddenly fill with light, a golden, vibrating light.... I was probably the only one to notice it. I said to myself, "Well!" Then I didn't give it any more thought, I forgot about the story. But as it happened, the experience recurred in two or three different countries, with different people, and every time there was the sound OM, I would suddenly see the place fill with that same light. So I understood. That sound contains the vibration of thousands and thousands of years of spiritual aspiration — there is in it the entire aspiration of men towards the Supreme. And the power is automatically there, because the experience is there.

It's the same with my mantra. When I wanted to translate the end of my mantra, "Glory to You, O Lord," into Sanskrit, I asked for Nolini's help. He brought his Sanskrit translation, and when he read it to me, I immediately saw that the power was there — not because Nolini put his power into it (!), God knows he had no intention of 'giving' me a mantra! But the power was there because my experience was there. We made a few adjustments and modifications, and that's the japa I do now — I do it all the time, while sleeping, while walking, while eating, while working, all the time.¹

¹ Mother later clarified: "'Glory to You, O Lord' isn't MY mantra, it's something I ADDED to it — my mantra is something else altogether, that's not it. When I say that my mantra has the power of immortality, I mean the other, the one I don't speak of! I have never given the words.... You see, at the end of my walk, a kind of enthusiasm rises, and with that enthusiasm, the 'Glory to You' came to me, but it's part of the prayer I had written in Prayers and Meditations: 'Glory to You, O Lord, all-triumphant Supreme' etc. (it's a long prayer). It came back suddenly, and as it came back spontaneously, I kept it. Moreover, when Sri Aurobindo read this prayer in Prayers and Meditations, he told me it was very strong. So I added this phrase as a kind of tail to my japa. But 'Glory to You, O Lord' isn't my spontaneous mantra — it came spontaneously, but it was something written very long ago. The two things are different."
And that's how a mantra has life: when it wells up all the time, spontaneously, like the cry of your being — there is no need of effort or concentration: it's your natural cry. Then it has full power, it is alive. It must well up from within.... No guru can give you that.

‘Well up’.... Well, it's a long way to go! I will need a great deal of paper for all those ‘diagrams’ [Tantric diagrams given by X]: seventy-two every day.

Do you want some paper?

Yes, quite a lot of it!

But how big?

About this big [approximately four inches]. And the paper should be very smooth. You understand, it should be written with ‘chandanam’ [sandal paste] and a stick! And assuming each diagram takes me three or four minutes ... for seventy-two that means ... it'll be a good four hours! So the paper should be smooth enough — and a good amount: seventy-two sheets every day.

Seventy-two sheets.... Where can we find that?

I'll have to go to the Press.

They've no paper left, mon petit, with that state of war. But I have some paper.

But you need it.

Not all of it. One ream of paper.... Will you look down there and see if there's a box or something? Let's see.

(Satprem pulls out a box)

It's turned completely yellow.... Does it matter?

The water would soak into it! Because I have to write with chandanam mixed in water, you understand, and with a twig of ‘Divine Love’! [pomegranate]

Without a piece of cotton or anything?

No, nothing. A twig which I cut into a nib.

Are the drawings small?
It's a rectangle divided into three compartments, with figures and letters — a Sanskrit letter. Quite a job, I can tell you!

Seventy-two every day! ... Mon petit! (Mother laughs)
I've got to find something....

When I come out of it, I feel stunned.

But that's just what they want!
I tell you, I know it, they want to stupefy you. And of course, when you're stupefied enough, they'll put a good dose of force and then it seems like a miracle!

You understand, I am supposed to keep squatting for two hours over those blessed scribblings.

But tell me, couldn't you be allowed to do that sitting on a chair, at a table?

I don't know.

Why not? It doesn't occur to him [X] because he's used to sitting and writing on the ground. It's the same as if I thought it impossible to meditate unless I sat cross-legged and bolt upright! ... Fortunately, I lived with Sri Aurobindo, who never used to sit cross-legged. He told me right away that it was all a question of habits — subconscious habits. It has no importance whatsoever. And how well he explained: if a posture is necessary for you, it will come by itself. And it's perfectly true, for instance, that when necessary, the body will suddenly sit up straight — it comes spontaneously. As he said, the important thing is not the external frame but the inner experience, and if there is a physical necessity and your inner experience is entirely sincere, that physical necessity will come ALL BY ITSELF. This is something I am absolutely sure of. And he gave me his own example (I had mine, too) of certain things considered dangerous or bad, which we both did independently and spontaneously, and which were a great help to us! Consequently, all those stories of posture and so on are the petty mechanical bounds of the human mind.

It came to me while I was walking [for the japa]. I had a kind of vision of you squatting askew and writing. And I thought, “But that's awful! He'll ruin his health!”

What is needed is to have the inner attitude.

Well, precisely, the inner attitude ... I find this new work empty and mechanical.

Don't you feel the words you write?

They're figures. Figures and one Sanskrit letter. But you can't say there's much soul in figures, can you?

Will you show it to me? I'd like to see.
I'll write it for you.

(Satprem draws the Tantric diagram he has been instructed to do 72 times a day for three times 72 days. It is a square divided into 9 smaller squares which contain figures and one Sanskrit letter. The first thing Mother does is to add up all the figures.)

Did you add them up? No? Whatever way you do it, it adds up to 72.... 9 is the figure of birth.

It should be done 72 times for 72 days, and three times over.

And 72, that means 7 + 2, or 9.

And this [the Sanskrit letter] is HRIM.

It's one of the three essential sounds. I don't remember now, but each of them represents one aspect of the Mother.

Sujata told me it's Mahalakshmi.

I was hesitating between Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati.

(Mother remains concentrated)

It is clearly taken as a symbol of the gestation of the new birth, the second birth, the divine birth. That's certain.

He said 72 days?

Three times 72 days.... A little more than eight months, that is.

That's it.

It's ... (laughing) I've just asked him!) it's the work of gestation for the birth of the divine consciousness.

And 7 (7 and 2) is interesting. 7 is the realization; 2 is dual: a dual realization. If you put both together, you get the figure of gestation.

You see, Mahalakshmi is the Divine Mother's aspect of love, the perfection of manifested love, which must come before this supreme Love (which is beyond the Manifestation and the Nonmanifestation) can be expressed — the supreme Love referred to in Savitri when the Supreme sends Savitri to the earth:

“For ever love, O beautiful slave of God!”

(Book XI, p.702)
It's to prepare the earth to receive the Supreme's manifestation, the manifestation of His Victory.

Seen in that way, it becomes clear — comprehensible, and comprehensive, too: it has a content.

(Mother suddenly points to a piece of paper on the table beside her, on which the figure 8 is written)

Did you notice this figure?... There's a line in Savitri (I can't quote exactly): “Wherever Nature is, He (the Supreme) too is there, for, in truth, He and She are one.” I was asked to find an illustration for this line, and I found the 8.

The drawing starts here (Mother draws the first half of the 8): it's the Supreme leaning forward. Then, Nature in its base, Nature in sleep (the base of the 8). And here (the top of the 8), I put two little drawings (as if to symbolize an eye, a nose and a mouth) to evoke the summit of consciousness. So the Supreme is leaning forward like this and Nature rises like this (Mother draws the second half of the 8). All this (the top of the 8) is golden, then it becomes prismatic (the middle of the 8), and deep blue here (the base of the 8), in the most material part of the creation, and the blue becomes lighter and lighter (going upward again), and finally golden. Perpetually.

*Eight is the symbol of infinity for mathematicians (∞).*

Exactly. It's very interesting.

(Then Mother considers one by one the various figures of the Tantric diagram:)

4 is the figure of the Manifestation (the square is the figure of the Manifestation). So here you have the manifestation of the Infinite: \(4 + 8 = 12\).

6 is the figure of the creation.

12 is the perfection of the creation: perfect creation.

30 is ... The 3 is Sachchidananda and the 30 its external expression (because 10 means something expressed). So 30 is the manifestation of Sachchidananda.

Thus we have first 6, then 12 (a perfection of manifestation), then 30, the manifestation of Sachchidananda, and 48, the manifestation of the Infinite. You see, it's beginning to come alive!

Afterwards comes 42: it's the dual manifestation, that is to say, the Supreme and Nature.

Then 18 ... The 10 (unless it's 12 ... 12 is two times 6; also 10 plus 2, but that has another meaning), but the 10 in itself is something established (the 11 is something beginning, while the 10 is something established). So if you have 18, it means that the Infinite is established.

Then 36, which is 3 times 12: it's the union of 30 (Sachchidananda) and 6, the creation.

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2 “As long as Nature lasts, he too is there; For this is sure that he and she are one.” (I.IV.72)

3 Mother helps a disciple, a painter, to illustrate some passages from Savitri.
The 12 is the figure of the Mahashakti. It's the essential creation, the creation in its essence - the creative Power. And perfection, too: the perfection in the execution. The 12 is a very important figure (24 is two times 12, and 36, three times).

48 is four times 12. It's an extremely important figure. Extremely important.

And finally, we have 9 here: gestation. Gestation in Matter — not on the heights: here, physically.

(Mother begins drawing herself the diagram with the figures and the Sanskrit mantra.)

Let's see if I remember my Sanskrit....

My eyes are no good, I've lost all my power of expression because of that (Mother takes her magnifying glass to draw). Before, I used to do these letters so easily, and now I can't see any more....

Here.

Now, it has life, you understand. It has life. And it's the correct drawing, I mean it should be a square (not a rectangle as you did), a square divided into nine smaller squares. It is the image of the realization (not realization — gestation), the birth of Mahalakshmi's consciousness in Matter, that is to say, the form of divine love in Matter.

(Mother pores over the diagram for a long time. It should be noted that the figures of the diagram must be read and written in a particular order to have their full power.)

Oh, there's a music!

(Mother starts humming the music or the vibration which has come to her and corresponds to the diagram and the birth of Mahalakshmi's consciousness in Matter.)

Another point is unclear: after 30, do you go here or there?

After 30 it's 48, then 42....

(Mother starts humming again)

There, mon petit. Now I would advise you to take a comfortable chair, a table on which you can write comfortably, put it before you and get on with it!

It's a pity we can't note the music down.

(Mother hums again)

There.

But it's full of meaning, it vibrates with meaning!
I am not positive, but when he gave you this diagram, had he had in himself the conscious meaning, he would have passed it on to you.... I have a feeling he is more like a scholar. He has perhaps more of an impression than an understanding.

But where does the significance of figures come from?

The deeper significance of figures ... There are countless traditions, countless scriptures ... which I took great care not to follow. But the deeper significance of figures came to me in Tlemcen, when I was in the Overmind. I don't remember the names Théon used to give to those various worlds, but it was a world that corresponded to the highest and most luminous regions of Sri Aurobindo's Overmind. It was above, just above the gods' region. And it was something in accord with the Overmind creation — the earth under the gods' influence. That was where figures took on a living meaning for me — not a mental speculation: a living meaning. That was where Madame Théon recognized me, because of the formation of twelve pearls she saw above my head; and she told me, “You are that because you have this. Only that can have this!” (Mother laughs) It hadn't even remotely occurred to me, thank God!

But figures are alive for me. They have a concrete reality.

And this (the diagram) is meant to prepare for the ‘second birth’ mentioned in the Vedas, the spiritual birth. Through it one becomes a complete being, consciously complete.

Of course, it's the beginning of realization. But for many people it's the ultimate term. I hope it won't tire you out any more.

(as Satprem is about to leave)

Do you think your machine [the tape recorder at the other end of the room] has picked up the music?

I hope so!

I know someone who could note it down: Sunil could note it down, he knows how to write music. I no longer do ... I've forgotten all that. I have spent all my time forgetting everything.

I used to write my Sanskrit as I write French — all gone.

One must learn to lose everything in order to gain everything. Always, every minute. There we are.

I asked Sujata to prepare some orange juice for you — it should be prepared by someone who puts his heart into it.

Good-bye, petit.