

2 June 1954

This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's *Elements of Yoga*, Chapter 9, "Experiences and Visions" and Chapter 10, "Work".

No questions?... I was going to propose a meditation.

*What are the causes for not being able to meditate?*

Because one has not learnt to do it.

Why, suddenly you take a fancy: today I am going to meditate. You have never done so before. You sit down and imagine you are going to begin meditating. But it is something to learn as one learns mathematics or the piano. It is not learnt just like that! It is not enough to sit with crossed arms and crossed legs in order to meditate. You must learn how to meditate. Everywhere all kinds of rules have been given about what should be done in order to be able to meditate.

If at a tender age, when you are taught, for instance, how to squat, if one was taught at the same time not to think or to remain very quiet or to concentrate or gather one's thoughts, or... all sorts of things one must learn to do, like meditating; if, when quite young and at the same time that you were taught to stand straight, for instance, and walk or sit or even eat — you are taught many things but you are not aware of this, for they are taught when you are very small — if you were taught to meditate also, then spontaneously, later, you could, the day you decide to do so, sit down and meditate. But you are not taught this. You are taught absolutely nothing of the kind. Besides, usually you are taught very few things — you are not taught even to sleep. People think that they have only to lie down in their bed and then they sleep. But this is not true! One must learn how to sleep

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as one must learn to eat, learn to do anything at all. And if one does not learn, well, one does it badly! Or one takes years and years to learn how to do it, and during all those years when it is badly done, all sorts of unpleasant things occur. And it is only after suffering much, making many mistakes, committing many stupidities, that, gradually, when one is old and has white hair, one begins to know how to do something. But if, when you were quite small, your parents or those who look after you, took the trouble to teach you how to do what you do, do it properly as it should be done, in the right way, then that would help you to avoid all — all these mistakes you make through the years. And not only do you make mistakes, but nobody tells you they are mistakes! And so you are surprised that you fall ill, are tired, don't know how to do the things that you wish to do, and that you have never been taught. Some children are not taught anything, and so they need years and years and years to learn the simplest things, even the most elementary thing: to be clean.

It is true that most of the time parents do not teach this because they do not know it themselves! For they themselves did not have anyone to teach them. So they do not know... they have groped in the dark all their life to learn how to live. And so naturally they are not in a position to teach you how to live, for they do not know it themselves. If you are left to yourself, you understand, it needs years, years of experience to learn the simplest thing, and even then you must think about it. If you don't think about it, you will never learn.

To live in the right way is a very difficult art, and unless one begins to learn it when quite young and to make an effort, one never knows it very well. Simply the art of keeping one's body in good health, one's mind quiet and goodwill in one's heart — things which are indispensable in order to live decently — I don't say in comfort, I don't say remarkably, I only say decently. Well, I don't think there are many who take care to teach this to their children.

Is that all?

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*Sweet Mother, ought we to do some other work besides studies?*

Some other work? That depends upon you. It depends upon each one and on what one wants. If you want to do sadhana, it is obvious that you must have at least partially an occupation which is not selfish, that is, which is not done for oneself alone. Studies are all very well — very necessary, even quite indispensable, it's precisely one of the things I was talking about just a while ago, that you must learn when you are young, for when you are grown-up it becomes much more difficult — but there is an age when you can acquire the indispensable foundation for your studies, and if you want to begin to do sadhana, you must do something which does not have an exclusively personal motive. One must do something a little unselfish, for if one is exclusively occupied with oneself, one gets shut up in a sort of carapace and is not open to the universal forces. A small unselfish movement, a small action done with no egoistic aim opens a door upon something other than one's own small, very tiny person.

One is usually shut up in a shell and becomes aware of other shells only when there is a shock or friction. But the consciousness of the circulating Force, of the interdependence of beings — this is a very rare thing. It is one of the indispensable stages of sadhana.

*Mother, can't one study for the Divine?*

That means?

*Can one study for the Divine and not for oneself, prepare oneself for the divine work?*

Yes, if you study with the feeling that you must develop yourselves to become instruments. But truly, it is done in a very different spirit, isn't it? — very different. To begin with, there

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are no longer subjects you like and those you don't, no longer any classes which bore you and those which don't, no longer any difficult things and things not difficult, no longer any teachers who are pleasant or any who are not — all that disappears immediately. One enters a state in which one takes whatever happens as an opportunity to learn to prepare oneself for the divine work, and everything becomes interesting. Naturally, if one is doing that, it is quite all right.

*What you have said in the Bulletin about “educating the mind” — this means that one educates oneself for that, lives and studies for the Divine. Then isn't this a work done for the Divine?*

Yes, yes, yes. It is very good if it is done with that aim. But it must be with that aim. For instance, when one wants to understand the deep laws of life, wants to be ready to receive whatever message is sent by the Divine, if one wants to be able to penetrate the secrets of the Manifestation, all this asks for a developed mind, so one studies with that will. But then one no longer needs to choose one's particular subject of study, for everything, no matter what, the least little circumstance in life, becomes a teacher who can teach you something, teach you how to think and act. Even — I think I said this precisely — even the reflections of an ignorant child can help you to understand something you didn't understand before. Your attitude is so different. It is always an attitude which is awaiting a discovery, an opportunity for progress, a rectification of a wrong movement, a step ahead, and so it is like a magnet that attracts from all around you opportunities to make this progress. The least things can teach you how to progress. As you have the consciousness and will to progress, everything becomes an opportunity, and you project this consciousness and will to progress upon all things.

And not only is this useful for you, but it is useful for all those around you with whom you have a contact.

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Let us take simply a question about your class, shall we? — the school class. Even as an undisciplined, disobedient and ill-willed child can disorganise the class — and this is why at times one is obliged to put him out, because simply by his presence he can completely disorganise the class — so too, if there is a student who has the absolutely right attitude, the will to learn in everything, so that not a word is pronounced, not a gesture made, but it becomes for him an opportunity to learn something — his presence can have the opposite effect and help the class to rise in education. If, consciously, he is in this state of intensity of aspiration to learn and correct himself, he communicates this to the others.... It is true that in the present state of things the bad example is much more contagious than the good one! It is much easier to follow the bad example than the good, but the good too is useful, and a class with a true student who is there only because he wants to learn and apply himself, who is deeply interested in every opportunity to learn — this creates a solid atmosphere.

You can help.

*Mother, why is it that here, in work, some people venture to satisfy their fancies and thus much money is wasted?*

It is not money alone that is wasted!

Energy, Consciousness is *infinitely*, a thousand times more wasted than money. Should there be no wastage... my word, I believe the Ashram couldn't be here! There is not a second when there isn't any wastage — sometimes it is worse than that. There is this habit — hardly conscious, I hope — of absorbing as much Energy, as much Consciousness as one can and using it for one's personal satisfactions. That indeed is something which is happening every minute. If all the Energy, all the Consciousness which is constantly poured out upon you all, were used for the true purpose, that is, for the divine work and the preparation for the divine work, we should be already very far on the road, much

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farther than we are. But everybody, more or less consciously, and in any case instinctively, absorbs as much Consciousness and Energy as he can and as soon as he feels this Energy in himself, he uses it for his personal ends, his own satisfaction.

Who thinks that all this Force that is here, that is infinitely greater, infinitely more precious than all money-forces, this Force which is here and is given consciously, constantly, with an endless perseverance and patience, only for *one sole purpose*, that of realising the divine work — who thinks of not wasting it? Who realises that it is a sacred duty to make progress, to prepare oneself to understand better and live better? For people live *by* the divine Energy, they live *by* the divine Consciousness, and use them for their personal, selfish ends.

You are shocked when a few thousand rupees are wasted but not shocked when there are... when streams of Consciousness and Energy are diverted from their true purpose!

If one wants to do a divine work upon earth, one must come with tons of patience and endurance. One must know how to live in eternity and wait for the consciousness to awaken in everyone — the consciousness of what *true* integrity is.