9 September 1953

“Each time that something of the Divine Truth and the Divine Force comes down to manifest upon earth, some change is effected in the earth’s atmosphere. In the descent, those who are receptive are awakened to some inspiration from it, some touch, some beginning of sight. If they were capable of holding and expressing rightly what they receive, they would say, ‘A great force has come down; I am in contact with it and what I understand of it, I will tell you.’ But most of them are not capable of that, because they have small minds. They get illumined, possessed, as it were, and cry, ‘I have the Divine Truth, I possess it whole and entire....’

“One Divine Consciousness is here working through all these beings, preparing its way through all these manifestations. At this day it is here at work upon earth more powerfully than it has ever been before. There are some who receive its touch in some way, or to some degree; but what they receive they distort, they make their own thing out of it. Others feel the touch but cannot bear the force and go mad under the pressure. But some have the capacity to receive and the strength to bear, and it is they who will become the vessels of the full knowledge, the chosen instruments and agents.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (9 June 1929)

How does the divine Force choose the instrument in which it wants to manifest itself?

Through affinity. For the quality, the nature of the consciousness is visible in the divine domain. It has a special vibration, a special light and this can be perceived. And so, when there is
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an affinity (sometimes merely an affinity, sometimes an identity, depending on the being’s degree of perfection), the Force goes there. Those who are still in the course of formation but whose psychic being is sufficiently developed are seen, their vibrations are seen, the being that is there is seen and accordingly the degree of manifestation is determined, the exact line of manifestation, the importance and conditions of the manifestation. All that is included in the inner vision.

But it may happen that the instrument does not understand, for the man in whom the Force is manifested sometimes loses his head and is unable to contain the Force?

That may happen, everything is possible. But generally... I told you this the other day, when I spoke of the rebirth of psychic beings, I told you that from their domain they see a certain vibration, a certain light and they know that it is there that they must go. But when they drop down, most of the time they drop into unconsciousness and lose their faculties, at least for the moment. In the end they will come to themselves. But it takes time to recover, it comes as one progresses, through successive illuminations.

Between the vital being and the mental, which progresses faster generally?

That depends on people. It is the vital in those who have a stronger vital and the mental in those who have a stronger mental being. You mean in the same person? That depends absolutely on which one is more active and more strong. In what way? In each person the combination is different, so one cannot make a general rule and say how it must be. One can say that in certain types of cases, it is like this, and in certain others it is like that.

But to tell the truth, I do not believe that much progress
can be made if the two do not agree, if one pulls one way and
the other another. It will always be difficult. And generally it is
better if the mind is converted first, for it is the mind that must
have the power to organise the other parts of the being.

(Mother stops and suddenly looks at the disciples.) Someone
here has just sent a mental formation that... has taken, if you
like, the shape of a blue paper on which something was written.
It dropped down whirling, and dropped upon one of you. So I
would like to know if anyone has all of a sudden received some
sensational answer?... Nobody?... I could not spot who it was
among you, for it fell twirling.... Too bad. But it dropped upon
one of you. It was some blue paper, it took the form of a blue
paper and there was a very interesting answer upon it. Nobody
received anything? Didn’t some idea all of a sudden enter your
head? No? (Nobody answers)

If the vital is not converted and if the mind is convinced?

Well, you pass your life in quarrelling with yourself! One draws
you to one side and the other tries to be your good mentor but
you don’t listen to it. So you feel as though pulled from all sides.
You know what you ought to do and you do not do it. You
know what ought not to be done and you do it. And because
you do stupid things, you feel sorry. So there are two things, you
are unhappy for two reasons: first of all, because of the stupid
things you have done, and then due to the regret they bring. It
is a somewhat painful situation....

Can’t the vital be converted?

Convert the vital? Surely one can. It is a difficult task, but it can
be done. If it could not be done, then there would be no hope. But
generally the mind is not sufficient. For, I have known very many
people who could see very clearly, understand very well, were
mentally thoroughly convinced, could even describe to you and
tell you extraordinary things, could easily give excellent lessons to others, but their vital was up to all sorts of tricks and would not listen at all to all that. It said, “It is all the same to me, say what you may; as for myself, I go my own way!”

It is only when contact with the psychic has been established that this can convert anything at all — even the worst criminal — in a moment. These are those “illuminations” which seize you and turn you inside out completely. After that, all goes well. There may be slight difficulties of adjustment, but still things go well.

But the mind is a big preacher, that is its nature: it gives speeches, sermons, as it is done in the churches. So the vital usually gets impatient and answers the mind, not very politely: “You are a nuisance! what you say is very good for you, but for me it won’t do.” Or, at the best, when the mind is gifted with especially remarkable capacities and the vital is of a little higher kind, it may say: “Oh! how beautiful it is, what you tell me (sometimes this happens), but you see, I, I am unable to do it; it is very beautiful, but it is beyond my capacity.”

But this vital is a strange creature. It is a being of passion, enthusiasm and naturally of desire; but, for example, it is quite capable of getting enthusiastic over something beautiful, of admiring, sensing anything greater and nobler than itself. And if really anything very beautiful occurs in the being, if there is a movement having an exceptional value, well, it may get enthusiastic and it is capable of giving itself with complete devotion — with a generosity that is not found, for example, in the mental domain nor in the physical. It has that fullness in action that comes precisely from its capacity to get enthused and throw itself wholly without reserve into what it does. Heroes are always people who have a strong vital, and when the vital becomes passionate about something, it is no longer a reasonable being but a warrior; it is wholly involved in its action and can perform exceptional things because it does not calculate, does not reason, does not say “One must take precautions, one must not do this,
must not do that.” It becomes reckless, it gets carried away, as people say, it gives itself totally. Therefore, it can do magnificent things if it is guided in the right way.

A converted vital is an all-powerful instrument. And sometimes it gets converted by something exceptionally beautiful, morally or materially. When it witnesses, for example, a scene of total self-abnegation, of uncalculating self-giving—one of those things so exceedingly rare but splendidly beautiful—it can be carried away by it, it can be seized by an ambition to do the same thing. It begins by an ambition, it ends with a consecration.

There is only one thing the vital abhors; it is a dull life, monotonous, grey, tasteless, worthless. Faced with that, it goes to sleep, falls into inertia. It likes extremely violent things, it is true; it can be extremely wicked, extremely cruel, extremely generous, extremely good and extremely heroic. It always goes to extremes and can be on one side or the other, yes, as the current flows.

And this vital, if you place it in a bad environment, it will imitate the bad environment and do bad things with violence and to an extreme degree. If you place it in the presence of something wonderfully beautiful, generous, great, noble, divine, it can be carried away with that also, forget everything else and give itself wholly. It will give itself more completely than any other part of the being, for it does not calculate. It follows its passion and enthusiasm. When it has desires, its desires are violent, arbitrary, and it does not at all take into account the good or bad of others; it doesn’t care the least bit. But when it gives itself to something beautiful, it does not calculate either, it will give itself entirely without knowing whether it will do good or harm to it. It is a very precious instrument.

It is like a horse of pure breed: if it lets itself be directed, then it will win all the races, everywhere it will come first. If it is untamed, it will trample people and cause havoc and break its own legs or back! It is like that. The one thing to know is
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to which side it will turn. It loves exceptional things — excep-
tionally bad or exceptionally good, it loves the exceptional. It
does not like ordinary life. It becomes dull, it becomes half inert.
And if it is shut up in a corner and told: “Keep quiet there”, it
will remain there and become more and more like something
crumbling away, and finally just like a mummy; there is no more
life in it, it is dried up. And one will no longer have the strength
to do what one wants to do. One will have fine ideas, excellent
intentions, but one won’t have the energy to execute them.

So do not wail if you have a powerful vital, but you must
have strong reins and hold them quite firmly. Then things go
well.

Does depression come from the vital?

Oh, yes. All your troubles, depression, discouragement, disgust,
fury, all, all come from the vital. It is that which turns love into
hate, it is that which induces the spirit of vengeance, rancour, bad
will, the urge to destroy and to harm. It is that which discourages
you when things are difficult and not to its liking. And it has
an extraordinary capacity for going on strike! When it is not
satisfied, it hides in a corner and does not budge. And then you
have no more energy, no more strength, you have no courage
left. Your will is like... like a withering plant. All resentment,
disgust, fury, all despair, grief, anger — all that comes from this
gentleman. For it is energy in action.

Therefore, it depends on which side it turns. And I tell you,
it has a very strong habit of going on strike. That is its most
powerful weapon: “Ah! you are not doing what I want, well, I
am not going to move, I shall sham dead.” And it does that for
the least reason. It has a very bad character; it is very touchy
and it is very spiteful — yes, it is very ill-natured. For I believe it
is very conscious of its power and it feels clearly that if it gives
itself wholly, there is nothing that will resist the momentum of
its force. And like all people who have a weight in the balance,
the vital also bargains: “I shall give you my energy, but you must do what I want. If you do not give me what I ask for, well, I withdraw my energy.” And you will be flat as a pancake. And it is true, it happens like that.

It is difficult to regulate it. Yet naturally, when you have succeeded in taming it, you have something powerful in hand for realisation. It is that which can carry by storm the biggest obstacles. It is that which is capable of turning an idiot into an intelligent person — it alone can do so; for if one yearns passionately for progress, if the vital takes it into its head that one must progress, even the greatest idiot can become intelligent! I have seen this, I am not speaking from hearsay; I have seen it, I have seen people who were dull, stupid, incapable of understanding, who understood nothing — you could go on explaining something to them for months, it would not enter, as though one were speaking to a block of wood — and then all of a sudden their vital was caught in a passion; they wanted simply to please someone or get something, and for that one had to understand, one had to know, it was necessary. Well, they set everything moving, they shook up the sleeping mind, they poured energy into all the corners where there was none; and they understood, they became intelligent. I knew someone who knew nothing practically, understood nothing, and who, when the mind started moving and the passion for progress took possession of him, began to write wonderful things. I have them with me. And when the movement withdrew, when the vital went on strike (for sometimes it went on strike, and withdrew), the person became once again absolutely dull.

Naturally it is very difficult to establish a constant contact between the most external physical consciousness and the psychic consciousness, and oh! the physical consciousness has plenty of goodwill; it is very regular, it tries a great deal, but it is slow and heavy, it takes long, it is difficult to move it. It does not get tired, but it makes no effort; it goes its way, quietly. It can take centuries to put the external consciousness in contact
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with the psychic. But for some reason or other the vital takes a hand in it. A passion seizes it. It wants this contact (for some reason or other, which is not always a spiritual reason), but it wants this contact. It wants it with all its energy, all its strength, all its passion, all its fervour: in three months the thing is done.

So then, take great care of it. Treat it with great consideration but never submit to it. For it will drag you into all kinds of troublesome and untoward experiments; and if you succeed in convincing it in some way or other, then you will advance with giant strides on the path.