27 May 1953

“There is a state of consciousness in union with the Divine in which you can enjoy all you read, as you can all you observe, even the most indifferent books or the most uninteresting things. You can hear poor music, even music from which one would like to run away, and yet you can, not for its outward self but because of what is behind, enjoy it. You do not lose the distinction between good music and bad music, but you pass through either into that which it expresses. For there is nothing in the world which has not its ultimate truth and support in the Divine.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 April 1929)

What is there “behind” the external form of music?

Music is a means of expressing certain thoughts, feelings, emotions, aspirations. There is even a region where all these movements exist and from there, as they are brought down, they take a musical form. One who is a very good composer, with some inspiration, will produce very beautiful music, for he is a good musician. A bad musician may also have a very high inspiration; he may receive something which is good, but as he possesses no musical capacity, what he produces is terribly commonplace, ordinary, uninteresting. But if you go beyond, if you reach just the place where there is this origin of music — of the idea and emotion and inspiration — if you reach there, you can taste these things without being in the least troubled by the forms; the commonplace musical form can be linked up again with that, because that was the inspiration of the writer of the music. Naturally, there are cases where there is no inspiration, where the origin is merely a kind of mechanical music. It is not
always interesting in every case. But what I mean is that there is an inner condition in which the external form is not the most important thing; it is the origin of the music, the inspiration from beyond, which is important; it is not purely the sounds, it is what the sounds express.

So the expression cannot be better than the inspiration?

There are musical pieces which have no inspiration, they are like mechanical works. There are musicians who possess a great virtuosity, that is, who have thoroughly mastered the technique and who, for example, can execute without making a mistake the fastest and most difficult things. They can play music but it expresses nothing; it is like a machine. It means nothing, except that they have great skill. For what is most important is the inspiration, in everything that one does; in all human creations the most important thing is inspiration. Naturally, the execution must be on the same level as the inspiration; to be able to express truly well the highest things one must have a very good technique. I do not say that technique is not necessary; it is even indispensable, but it is not the only indispensable thing, it is less important than inspiration.

The essential quality of music depends upon where the music comes from, upon its origin.

What does “its origin” mean?

Its starting point. Just as the spring is the source of the river.

Are there many sources for everything?

All physical life has the vital and mental life as its origin. The mental and the vital reality have themselves another origin, and so on. Nothing can be manifested physically upon earth that has not a higher truth at its origin, otherwise the world would not
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exist. If it were a flat thing having its origin in itself, it would very soon cease to exist. It is because there is a force which pushes, an energy which pushes towards manifestation, that life continues to exist. Otherwise it would exhaust itself very soon.

If everything that is manifested in the physical world has its origin in the higher Truth, what is it that makes it ugly when it expresses itself? Why are there ugly things at all?

Because there are forces that intervene between the origin and the manifestation.

If I ask you, “Do you know the truth of your being?” What will you say?... Do you know it? Well, the same holds for everything. And yet you are already a sufficiently evolved thinking being who has passed through all kinds of refinements. You are no longer quite like, let us say, a lizard that runs on the wall; and yet you would not be able to say what the truth of your being is. That is just the secret of all deformations in the world. It is because there is all the inconscience created by the fact of separation from the Origin. It is due to this inconscience that the Origin, though always there, is not able to manifest itself. It is there, that is why the world exists. But in its expression it is deformed because it manifests itself through the inconscience, ignorance and obscurity.

It is something I shall try to explain in the next issue of the Bulletin. But still, very briefly summed up, it is this:

In creating the universe as it was, the Will was an individual projection — individual, you understand, a scattering: instead of being a unity containing all, it was a unity made of innumerable small unities which are individualisations, that is, things that feel themselves separated. And the very fact of being separated from all others is what gives you the feeling that you are an

individual. Otherwise you would have the feeling that you were a fluid mass. For example, instead of being conscious of your external form and of everything in your being which makes of you a separate individuality, if you were conscious of the vital forces which move everywhere or of the inconscient that is at the base of all, you would have the feeling of a mass moving with all kinds of contradictory movements but which could not be separated from each other; you would not have the feeling of being an individual at all: you would have the feeling of something like a vibration in the midst of a whole. Well, the original Will was to form individual beings capable of becoming conscious once again of their divine origin. Because of the process of individualisation one must feel separate if one is to be an individual. The moment you are separated, you are cut off from the original consciousness, at least apparently, and you fall into the inconscient. For the only thing which is the Life of life is the Origin, if you cut yourself off from that, consciousness naturally is changed into unconsciousness. And then it is due to this very unconsciousness that you are no longer aware of the truth of your being.... It is a process. You cannot argue whether it is inevitable or evitable; the fact is it is like that. This process of formation and creation is the reason why purity no longer manifests in its essence and in its purity but through the deformation of unconsciousness and ignorance.... If you had answered immediately: “Yes, of course, I know the truth of my being!” it would have finished there, there wouldn't have been any problem.

That is why there is all this ugliness, there is death; that is why there is illness; that is why there is wickedness; that is why there is suffering. There is no remedy, there is only one way for all these things. All this is there in different domains and with different vibrations, but the cause of all is the same. It is inconscience produced because of the necessity of individual formation. Once again I do not say that it was indispensable. That is another problem which perhaps later on we shall be
ready to solve; but for the moment we are obliged to state that that's how it is.

And so, the remedy? Since such is the cause, the only way of putting everything right is to become conscious once again. And this is very simple, very simple.

Suppose that there are in the universe two opposing and contradictory forces, as some religions have preached: there was good and evil, and there always will be good and evil, there will be a conflict, a battle, a struggle. The one that is stronger, whether it be the good or the evil, will win; if there is more of the good, the good will win and if there is more of the evil, the evil will win; but the two will always exist. If it were like that, it would be hopeless; one wouldn’t have to say then that it is either difficult or easy, it would be impossible. One would not be able to get out of it. But actually that is not so.

Actually there is but one Origin and this origin is the perfection of Truth, for that is the only thing which truly exists; and by exteriorising, projecting, scattering itself, it brings forth what we see, and a crowd of tiny brains, very gentle, very brilliant, in search of something they have not yet seized but which they can seize, because what they are in search of is within them. That is a certainty. It may take more or less time, but it is sure to come. The remedy is at the very core of the evil. Voilà.

It has been called by various names, each one has presented it in his own way. According to the angle of seeing, one’s experience differs. All those who have found the Divine within themselves have found Him in a certain way, following a certain experience and from a certain angle, and this angle was self-evident to them. But then, if they are not well on their guard, they begin to say: “To find the Divine, one must do this and do that. And it is like that and it is that path one should follow”, because for them that was the path of success. When one goes a little further, has a little more experience, one becomes aware that it is not necessarily like that, it can be done through millions of ways.... There is only one thing that is certain, it is that what is
found is always the same. And that’s remarkable, that whatever
the path followed, whatever the form given to it, the result is
always the same. Their experience and everyone’s is the same.
When they have touched the Thing, it is for all the same thing.
And this is just the proof that they have touched That, because
it is the same thing for all. If it is not the same thing, it means
that they have not yet touched That. When they have touched
That, it is the same thing. And to That, you may give all the
names you like, it makes no difference.

Words are words. After all, they mean nothing, unless there
is something behind. Have you never noticed that when you
speak to certain people, you may express yourself quite clearly
and yet they understand nothing; and to others you say just
two words and they understand immediately? You have not had
this experience? No? I have had it often. Therefore, it does not
depend upon the external form, the words one speaks, but on
the force of the thought one puts into them; and the greater,
stronger, more precise and clear the thought-force, the more the
chance of what you say being understood by people who are
able to receive that force. But if one speaks without thinking,
usually it is impossible to understand what he says. It makes a
kind of noise, that is all. For example, when you have the habit
of speaking with someone, exchanging ideas with him, when
between the two of you there is a certain mental adjustment,
that is, when you have taken the precaution of saying, “When
I use this word, I mean this”, and the other person has said,
“When I use that word, I mean that”, and so on; when you are
used to an interchange, when you have established a kind of
contact between brain and brain — even if it be only that — you
understand each other quite easily. But with people who come
altogether from elsewhere, with whom you have never spoken,
you need a little time to adjust and adapt yourself to understand
what they mean by the words they use.... What is it that makes
you understand? It is just the kind of mental sense that is behind
the words. When the thought is strongly thought out, there is
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a powerful vibration and it is that which is sensed; the word
is only an intermediary means. You can develop this sense to
the point of having a direct mental contact with a minimum of
words or even without any words at all; but then you must have
a very great force of thought-concentration. And for everything
one does, it is like that. When there is a developed consciousness
behind, when one has the power to concentrate it, one can do
anything at all — this consciousness will act. Certainly it is not
the bodily mechanism that makes you act; the mechanism is
simply an instrument, nothing more. The day you catch that (it
is invisible, but you can catch it), and when you catch it and put
it into your movement, this movement becomes conscious and
you do well whatever you do. The day you do not catch it, it
slips from you like water through your fingers; and then you are
clumsy, you do not understand, you do not know what to do.
Hence, it is not the physical mechanism that counts, it is what
is behind.

From what plane does music generally come?

There are different levels. There is a whole category of music that
comes from the higher vital, which is very catching, somewhat
(not to put it exactly) vulgar, it is something that twists your
nerves. This music is not necessarily unpleasant, but generally
it seizes you there in the nervous centres. So there is one type
of music which has a vital origin. There is music which has
a psychic origin — it is altogether different. And then there is
music which has a spiritual origin: it is very bright and it carries
you away, captures you entirely. But if you want to execute
this music correctly you must be able to make it come through
the vital passage. Your music coming from above may become

2 At the time of the first publication of this talk, in 1968, Mother added the following
commentary: “What is important is to keep the consciousness of the Presence, that is, the
Presence must be concrete, and then all that one does and all that one says — whatever
one may do and whatever one may say — it is this Presence that expresses itself.”
externally quite flat if you do not possess that intensity of vital vibration which gives it its splendour and strength. I knew people who had truly a very high inspiration and it became quite flat, because the vital did not stir. I must admit that by their spiritual practices they had put to sleep their vital completely — it was literally asleep, it did not act at all — and the music came straight into the physical, and if one were connected with the origin of that music, one could see that it was something wonderful, but externally it had no force, it was a little melody, very poor, very thin; there was none of the strength of harmony. When you can bring the vital into play, then all the strength of vibration is there. If you draw into it this higher origin, it becomes the music of a genius.

For music it is very special; it is difficult, it needs an intermediary. And it is like that for all other things, for literature also, for poetry, for painting, for everything one does. The true value of one’s creation depends on the origin of one’s inspiration, on the level, the height where one finds it. But the value of the execution depends on the vital strength which expresses it. To complete the genius both must be there. This is very rare. Generally it is the one or the other, more often the vital. And then there are those other kinds of music we have — the music of the café-concert, of the cinema — it has an extraordinary skill, and at the same time an exceptional platitude, an extraordinary vulgarity. But as it has an extraordinary skill, it seizes you in the solar plexus and it is this music that you remember; it grasps you at once and holds you and it is very difficult to free yourself from it, for it is well-made music, music very well made. It is made vitally with vital vibrations, but what is behind is frightful.

But imagine this same vital power of expression, with the inspiration coming from far above — the highest inspiration possible, when all the heavens open before us — then that becomes wonderful. There are certain passages of César Franck, certain passages of Beethoven, certain passages of Bach, there are pieces by others also which have this inspiration and power. But it is
only a moment, it comes as a moment, it does not last. You cannot take the entire work of an artist as being on that level. Inspiration comes like a flash; sometimes it lasts sufficiently long, when the work is sustained; and when that is there, the same effect is produced, that is, if you are attentive and concentrated, suddenly that lifts you up, lifts up all your energies, it is as though someone opened out your head and you were flung into the air to tremendous heights and magnificent lights. It produces in a few seconds results that are obtained with so much difficulty through so many years of yoga. Only, in general, one may fall down afterwards, because the consciousness is not there as the basis; one has the experience and afterwards does not even know what has happened. But if you are prepared, if you have indeed prepared your consciousness by yoga and then the thing happens, it is almost definitive.

_What is the cause of the great difference between European and Indian music? Is it the origin or the expression?_

It is both but in an inverse sense.

This very high inspiration comes only rarely in European music; rare also is a psychic origin, very rare. Either it comes from high above or it is vital. The expression is almost always, except in a few rare cases, a vital expression — interesting, powerful. Most often, the origin is purely vital. Sometimes it comes from the very heights, then it is wonderful. Sometimes it is psychic, particularly in what has been religious music, but this is not very frequent.

Indian music, when there are good musicians, has almost always a psychic origin; for example, the rāgas have a psychic origin, they come from the psychic. The inspiration does not often come from above. But Indian music is very rarely embodied in a strong vital. It has rather an inner and intimate origin. I have heard a great deal of Indian music, a great deal; I have rarely heard Indian music having vital strength, very rarely; perhaps
not more than four or five times. But very often I have heard Indian music having a psychic origin, it translates itself almost directly into the physical. And truly one must then concentrate, and as it is — how to put it? — very tenuous, very subtle, as there are none of those intense vital vibrations, one can easily glide within it and climb back to the psychic origin of the music. It has that effect upon you, it is a kind of ecstatic trance, as from an intoxication. It makes you enter a little into trance. Then if you listen well and let yourself go, you move on and glide, glide into a psychic consciousness. But if you remain only in the external consciousness, the music is so tenuous that there is no response from the vital, it leaves you altogether flat. Sometimes, there was a vital force, then it became quite good.... I myself like this music very much, this kind of theme developing into a play. The theme is essentially very musical: and then it is developed with variations, innumerable variations, and it is always the same theme which is developed in one way or another. In Europe there were musicians who were truly musicians and they too had the thing: Bach had it, he used to do the same sort of thing, Mozart had it, his music was purely musical, he had no intention of expressing any other thing, it was music for music’s sake. But this manner of taking a certain number of notes in a certain relation (they are like almost infinite variations), personally I find it wonderful to put you in repose, and you enter deep within yourself. And then, if you are ready, it gives you the psychic consciousness: something that makes you withdraw from the external consciousness, which makes you enter elsewhere, enter within.

In what form does music come to the great composers? That is, is it only the melody that comes or is it what we hear?

But that depends upon the musician. This is just what I was saying. For example, here in India, the science of harmony does
not exist much, so the thing is translated by melody. As soon as the vital intervenes, there comes a kind of harmonic complexity in the music. That gives it a richness, a plenitude which it did not have.

*But is it the melody that comes?*

No, it is the music, and music is not necessarily melody. It is a relation of sounds which is not necessarily melodic. Melody is a part of this relation of sounds.

“When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to the Divine, you have still at every moment to remember it and carry it out in all the details of your existence. You must feel at every step that you belong to the Divine; you must have the constant experience that, in whatever you think or do, it is always the Divine Consciousness that is acting through you.”

*Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (28 April 1929)*

*When one is conscious does one perceive the Divine in His form in everything?*

Oh! that is, you expect to see a divine form in everything!... I do not know, that may happen. But I have the feeling that a great deal of imagination enters into it, for it is not like that. You change consciousness, you change the state of consciousness and change the states of perception.

If I understand well what you mean, you expect to see a form, like the form of Krishna for example, or the form of Christ, of Buddha, in every person? That seems to me childishness. But still I do not say that it cannot happen; I think it may happen. But there is in it much human consciousness added to the perception, for that would no longer be exactly
what I have just told you: for those who have the consciousness of the Divine, when they are in contact with the Divine, whoever they may be, whatever age, whatever country they may belong to, the experience is the same. Whereas if it were as you say, then Indians would see one of their divinities, Europeans one of theirs, the Japanese one of their own, and so on. Then it would no longer be a pure perception, there would already be an addition of their own mental formation. It is no longer the Thing in its essence and purity, which is beyond all form.

But one may have a perception, and a very concrete perception of the Divine Presence, yes. One may have a very personal contact with the Divine, yes. But not in this way. And it is inexpressible, except for those who have had the experience. If you do not have an experience, I could speak to you for hours about it, you would understand nothing; it escapes all explanation. It is only when one has the experience that one can understand. And what do you expect? When you speak or write about things, there is necessarily a mental addition, otherwise you would not be able to speak, you would not be able to write. Well, it is this mental addition that has made people try to give an explanation of their experience, and then they have said or written things like this: “I see images of God.” These are ways of speaking. It is possible that the thing you are speaking about may happen: to be suddenly in a particular state and see a Divine Presence and this Presence taking a form that’s familiar to you — one is accustomed to associate certain forms with the Divine, due to one’s education, tradition, and that takes an external form. But it is not the supreme essence of the experience, it is the form, and this gives a sort of limitation to the experience, it must take away from it its universality and a great deal of its power.

“Obviously, what has happened had to happen; it would not have happened, if it had not been intended. Even the mistakes that we have committed and the adversities
that fell upon us had to be, because there was some necessity in them, some utility for our lives. But in truth these things cannot be explained mentally and should not be. For all that happened was necessary, not for any mental reason, but to lead us to something beyond what the mind imagines. But is there any need to explain after all? The whole universe explains everything at every moment and a particular thing happens because the whole universe is what it is.”

Ibid.

How does the universe explain at every moment the universe?

That is not what I have said. If you want an explanation of something, it is the universe that explains this something. And each thing is explained by everything; and you can explain nothing except by the whole universe and the entire universe is explained by everything.... Just see: if you read all the explanations given in all the sciences, all the branches of human knowledge, always one thing is explained by another, and if you want to explain this other you explain it by yet another and if you want to explain this other one too, you explain it by yet another. So you continue in this way and go round the universe in order to explain one thing. Only, usually people get tired after a time, they accept the last explanation and stick to it. Otherwise, if they continued to find an explanation, they would have to make the full round of all things and would come back always to the same point. Things are so because they are so, because they had to be so, otherwise they would not be. Things are so, because they are as they are. There’s no doubt about it. And that indeed is supreme wisdom.

Is there not a physical law that is able to explain everything in the universe?
Find it out, I shall be very glad.

*Can it be found by science?*

Yes, if it moves in a very definite direction, if it progresses sufficiently, if it does not stop on the way, scientists will find the same thing the mystics have found, and all religious people, everybody, because there is only one thing to find, there are not two. There is only one. So one can go a long way, one can turn round and round and round, and if one turns and turns long enough without stopping, one is bound to come to the same spot. Once there, one feels as though there is nothing at all to find. As I have just told you, there is nothing to find. It is That, the Power. It is That, that is all. It is so. Still another question?

*Can the Divine withdraw from us?*

That is an impossibility. Because if the Divine withdrew from a thing, immediately it would collapse, for it would not exist. To put it more clearly: The Divine is the only existence.3

3 Later on, a disciple asked Mother what she meant by, “It is That, the Power.” Mother answered, “Yes, they will find the same thing the mystics have found and — religious people have found, as everybody has found — it is That, the Power. What one finds is the Power. And to That, essentially, you can give neither a name nor a definition.... That is now the big quarrel about Auroville: in the ‘Charter’ I put the ‘Divine Consciousness’ (to live in Auroville one must be a ‘willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness’, so they say: it makes you think of God. I said (laughing), as for me, it does not make me think of God! So some translate it as ‘the highest consciousness’, others put other things. I agreed with the Russians to put ‘Perfect Consciousness’, but that is an approximation.... And it is That — which you can neither name nor define — which is the supreme Power. It is Power that one finds. And the supreme Power is only an aspect: the aspect concerning the creation.”

See *Notes on the Way* (13 and 16 March 1968).

4 At the time of the publication of this talk, Mother added: “Now I would have answered: it is as if you asked whether the Divine would withdraw from Himself! (Mother laughs.) Well, that is the trouble: when you say ‘Divine’, they understand ‘God’.... There is only That, That alone exists. That, what is it? That alone exists.”

See *Notes on the Way* (13 March 1968).
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If the Divine withdrew, it would mean that He would withdraw from the universe; there would no longer be any universe (this is an image to make you understand the thing, I speak of an impossibility). Human beings may withdraw from the Divine and they do it very often. But the Divine withdrawing from human beings, that’s an impossibility.

**By following the way of music or art or any other thing, why can’t one arrive at the divine realisation and the transformation?**

Who has told you that? Do you know all that is happening in you? Don’t you think that there are many people who have realised the Divine, who have never said anything about it, known nothing about it? There are people who have spoken about it — philosophers, whose very profession necessarily is to express what happened to them. But there are people who have had experiences but never said anything. And I know there are artists who purely by their art attained the divine realisation.

As for transformation, I would be glad if you could show me an instance; I would be glad to see it. One example. Whatever the way one follows, whether it be the religious way, the philosophical way, the yogic ways, the mystic way, no one has realised transformation.

**Since art does not arrive at transformation, it is not of much value!**

But who has ever reached there till now, will you tell me? Neither philosophy, nor religion, nor yoga. If you put the value in realisation and in the transformation of the world, for example one

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5 A disciple asked the Mother how one could realise the Divine and know nothing about it? The Mother answered: "It is once more the same thing. One might add: ‘and know nothing about it mentally.’ They did not say: ‘I have realised the Divine’, because that did not correspond to any mental conception.”
single individual transformation, admitting that it is possible, and I do not believe it, then nothing has any value, because nothing has ever reached there till today. Don’t you understand?

Yes, I understand that.

Then why do you suddenly say that art has no value? Nothing has any value, because nothing has led to that? But everything helps. The whole universe is helping the transformation.

But it may happen that the artist after having reached a certain height where he is master of his art, has to stop his work to proceed towards the transformation of his life.

Why? For the transformation of his life? Who has told you that? If you were doing manual work, there are any number of artisans who have had a wonderful conversion. There is the example of a shoe-maker who became one of the greatest Yogis of the world. It does not depend on what one does, happily! You have to sit in meditation, like that, with an orange robe on, under a tree, to be able to realise the Divine?

So I do not understand anything of what you say.

There may come a time when one must change one’s activity?

But by any path whatever, if you follow it sincerely enough and fairly constantly you arrive, by any path whatsoever — I tell you, you may make shoes and find the Divine. There are illuminating examples that are indisputable. It matters little what one does. There are numerous examples of people who were doing gardening, or cultivating, and who found the Divine even while they were working physically; they had no need to stop their
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work to do this. You do not understand? You believe one must have what? — a philosophical knowledge?

No, it is not that, but I do not know how to express myself....

No, I understand very well what you mean to say, but, excuse me, it is something foolish.