November 4, 1958

(Concerning the Agenda of August 9, 1958, on the gods of the Puranas)

The gods of the Puranas are merciless gods who respect only power and have nothing of the true love, charity or profound goodness that the Divine has put into the human consciousness — and which compensate psychically for all the outer defects. They themselves have nothing of this, they have no psychic. The Puranic gods have no psychic, so they act according to their power. They are restrained only when their power is not all-powerful, that's all.

But what does Anusuya represent?

She is a portrait of the ideal woman according to the Hindu conception, the woman who worships her husband as a god, which means that she sees the Supreme in her husband. And so this woman was much more powerful than all the gods of the Puranas precisely because she had this psychic capacity for total self-giving; and her faith in the Supreme's presence in her husband gave her a much greater power than that of all the gods.

The story narrated in the film went like this: Narada, as usual, was having fun. (Narada is a demigod with a divine position — that is, he can communicate with man and with the gods as he pleases, and he serves as an intermediary, but then he likes to have fun!) So he was quarrelling with one of the goddesses, I no longer recall which one, and he told her ... (Ah, yes! The quarrel was with Saraswati.) Saraswati was telling him that knowledge is much greater than love (much greater in that it is much more powerful than love), and he replied to her, “You don't know what you're talking about! (Mother laughs) Love is much more powerful than knowledge.” So she challenged him, saying, “Well then, prove it to me,” — “I shall prove it to you,” he replied. And the whole story starts there. He began creating a whole imbroglio on earth just to prove his point.

It was only a film story, but anyway, the goddesses, the three wives of the Trimurti — that is, the consort of Brahma, the consort of Vishnu and the consort of Shiva — joined forces! and tried all kinds of things to foil Narada. I no longer recall the details of the story ... Oh yes, the story begins like this: one of the three — I believe it was Shiva's consort, Parvati (she was the worst one, by the way!) — was doing her puja. Shiva was in meditation, and she began doing her puja in front of him; she was using an oil lamp for the puja, and the lamp fell down and burned her foot. She cried out because she had burned her foot. So Shiva at once came out of his meditation and said to her, “What is it, Devi?” (laughter) She answered, “I burned my foot!” Then Narada said, “Aren't you ashamed of what you have done? — to make Shiva come out of his meditation simply because you have a little burn on your foot, which cannot even hurt you since you are immortal!” She became furious and snapped at him, “Show me that it can be otherwise!” Narada replied, “I am going to show you what it is to really love one's husband — you don't know anything about it!”

Then comes the story of Anusuya and her husband (who is truly a husband ... a very good man, but well, not a god, after all!), who was sleeping with his head resting upon Anusuya's knees. They had finished their puja (both of them were worshippers of Shiva), and after their

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1 In Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's terminology, 'psychic' or 'psychic being' means the soul or the portion of the Supreme in man which evolves from life to life until it becomes a fully self-conscious being. The soul is a special capacity or grace of human beings on earth.

2 The film on August 5.
puja he was resting, sleeping, with his head on Anusuya's knees. Meanwhile, the gods had descended upon earth, particularly this Parvati, and they saw Anusuya like that. Then Parvati exclaimed, “This is a good occasion!” Not very far away a cooking fire was burning. With her power, she sent the fire rolling down onto Anusuya's feet — which startled her because it hurt. It began to burn; not one cry, not one movement, nothing ... because she didn't want to awaken her husband. But she began invoking Shiva (Shiva was there). And because she invoked Shiva (it is lovely in the story), because she invoked Shiva, Shiva's foot began burning! *(Mother laughs)* Then Narada showed Shiva to Parvati: “Look what you are doing; you are burning your husband's foot!” So Parvati made the opposite gesture and the fire was put out.

That's how it went.

*Lovely.*

Oh, the story was very lovely all along. There was one thing after another, one thing after another, and always the power of Anusuya was greater than the power of the gods. I liked that story very much.

It ended in a ... (Oh, the story was very long; it lasted three hours!) But really, it was lovely throughout. Lovely in the way it showed that the sincerity of love is much more powerful than anything else.

If I were to narrate the whole thing to you, there would be no end to it, but anyway, you get the idea.

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*(Shortly afterwards, the disciple again brings up the topic of August 9, where Mother had said that the gods are “a good deal worse than human beings”)*

It should be said that we are speaking of the Puranic gods, because the Christians, for example, do not understand what this can mean. They have an entirely different conception of the gods. It could apply to the old Greek mythology, though.

*No, not uniquely. It could apply in many other cases. Even if the Christians don't understand, there are many others who will!*  

Those who have read a little and who know something other than their little rut will understand.

There is something similar between the Puranic gods and the gods of Greek or Egyptian mythology. The gods of Egyptian mythology are terrible beings ... They cut off people's heads, tear their enemies to pieces! …

*The Greeks were not always tender either!*
In Europe and in the modern Western world, it is thought that all these gods — the Greek gods and the ‘pagan’ gods, as they are called — are human fancies, that they are not real beings. To understand, one must know that they are real beings. That is the difference. For Westerners, they are only a figment of the human imagination and don’t correspond to anything real in the universe. But that is a gross mistake.

To understand the workings of universal life, and even those of terrestrial life, one must know that in their own realms these are all living beings, each with his own independent reality. They would exist even if men did not exist! Most of these gods existed before man.

They are beings who belong to the progressive creation of the universe and who have themselves presided over its formation from the most etheric or subtle regions to the most material regions. They are a descent of the divine creative Spirit that came to repair the mischief ... in short, to repair what the Asuras had done. The first makers created disorder and darkness, an unconscionableness, and then it is said that there was a second ‘lineage’ of makers to repair that evil, and the gods gradually descended through realities that were ever more — one can’t say dense because it isn’t really dense, nor can one even say material, since matter as we know it does not exist on these planes — through more and more concrete substances.

All these zones, these planes of reality, received different names and were classified in different ways according to the occult schools, according to the different traditions, but there is an essential similarity, and if we go back far enough into the various traditions, hardly anything but words differ, depending upon the country and the language. The descriptions are quite similar. Moreover, those who climb back up the ladder — or in other words, a human being who, through his occult knowledge, goes out of one of his ‘bodies’ (they are called sheaths in English) and enters into a more subtle body — in order to ACT in a more subtle body — and so forth, twelve times (you make each body come out from a more material body, leaving the more material body in its corresponding zone, and then go off through successive exteriorizations), what they have seen, what they have discovered and seen through their ascension — whether they are occultists from the Occident or occultists from the Orient — is for the most part analogous in description. They have put different words on it, but the experience is very analogous.

There is the whole Chaldean tradition, and there is also the Vedic tradition, and there was very certainly a tradition anterior to both that split into two branches. Well, all these occult experiences have been the same. Only the description differs depending upon the country and the language. The story of creation is not told from a metaphysical or psychological point of view, but from an objective point of view, and this story is as real as our stories of historical periods. Of course, it's not the only way of seeing, but it is just as legitimate a way as the others, and in any event, it recognizes the concrete reality of all these divine beings. Even now, the experiences of Western occultists and those of Eastern occultists exhibit great similarities. The only difference is in the way they are expressed, but the manipulation of the forces is the same.

I learned all this through Théon. Probably, he was .. I don't know if he was Russian or Polish (a Russian or Polish Jew), he never said who he really was or where he was born, nor his age nor anything.

He had assumed two names: one was an Arab name he had adopted when he took refuge in Algeria (I don't know for what reason). After having worked with Blavatsky and having founded an occult society in Egypt, he went to Algeria, and there he first called himself ‘Aïa Aziz’ (a word of Arabic origin meaning ‘the beloved’). Then, when he began setting up his Cosmic Review and his ‘cosmic group’, he called himself Max Théon, meaning the
supreme God (!), the greatest God! And no one knew him by any other name than these two — Aia Aziz or Max Théon.

He had an English wife.

He said he had received initiation in India (he knew a little Sanskrit and the Rig-Veda thoroughly), and then he formulated a tradition which he called the ‘cosmic tradition’ and which he claimed to have received — I don't know how — from a tradition anterior to that of the Cabala and the Vedas. But there were many things (Madame Théon was the clairvoyant one, and she received visions; oh, she was wonderful!), many things that I myself had seen and known before knowing them which were then substantiated.

So personally, I am convinced that there was indeed a tradition anterior to both these traditions containing a knowledge very close to an integral knowledge. Certainly, there is a similarity in the experiences. When I came here and told Sri Aurobindo certain things I knew from the occult standpoint, he always said that it conformed to the Vedic tradition. And as for certain occult practices, he told me that they were entirely tantric — and I knew nothing at that time, absolutely nothing, neither the Vedas nor the Tantras.

So very probably there was a tradition anterior to both. I have recollections (for me, these are always things I have LIVED), very clear, very distinct recollections of a time that was certainly VERY anterior to the Vedic times and to the Cabala, to the Chaldean tradition.

But now, there is only a very small number of people in the West who know that it isn't merely subjective or imaginative (the result of a more or less unbridled imagination), and that it corresponds to a universal truth.

All these regions, all these realms are filled with beings who exist separately in their own realms, and if you are awake and conscious on a given plane — for example, if while going out of a more material body you awaken on some higher plane — you can have the same relationship with the things and people of that plane as with the things and people of the material world. In other words, there exists an entirely objective relationship that has nothing to do with your own idea of things. Naturally, the resemblance becomes greater and greater as you draw nearer the physical world, the material world, and there is even a moment when one region can act directly upon the other. In any case, in what Sri Aurobindo calls the “kingdoms of the overmind”, you find a concrete reality entirely independent of your personal experience; whenever you come back to it, you again find the same things, with some differences that may have occurred DURING YOUR ABSENCE. And your relationships with the beings there are identical to those you have with physical beings, except that they are more flexible, more supple and more direct (for example, there is a capacity to change the outer form, the visible form, according to your inner state), but you can make an appointment with someone, come to the meeting and again find the same being, with only certain differences that may have occurred during your absence — but it is absolutely concrete, with absolutely concrete results.

However, you must have at least a little experience of these things to understand them. Otherwise, if you are convinced that all this is just human fancy or mental formations, if you believe that these gods have such and such a form because men have imagined them to be like that, or that they have such and such defects or qualities because men have envisioned it that way — as with all those who say God is created in the image of man and exists only in human thought — all such people won't understand, it will seem absolutely ridiculous to them, a kind of madness. You must live a little, touch the subject a little to know how concrete it is.

Naturally, children know a great deal — if they have not been spoiled. There are many children who return to the same place night after night and continue living a life they have
begun there. When these faculties are not spoiled with age, they can be preserved within one. There was a time when I was especially interested in dreams, and I could return exactly to the same place and continue some work I had begun there, visit something, for example, or see to something, some work of organization or some discovery or exploration; you go to a certain place, just as you go somewhere in life, then you rest a while, then you go back and begin again — you take up your work just where you left it, and you continue. You also notice that there are things entirely independent of you, certain variations which were not at all created by you and which occurred automatically during your absence.

But then, you must LIVE these experiences yourself; you yourself must see, you must live them with enough sincerity to see (by being sincere and spontaneous) that they are independent of any mental formations. Because one can take the opposite line and make an intensive study of the way mental formations act upon events — which is very interesting. But that's another field. And this study makes you very careful, very prudent, because you start noticing to what extent you can delude yourself. Therefore, both one and the other, the mental formation and the occult reality, must be studied to see what the ESSENTIAL difference is between them. The one exists in itself, entirely independent of what we think about it, and the other...

That was a grace. I was given every experience without knowing ANYTHING of what it was all about — my mind was absolutely ... blank. There was no active correspondence in the formative mind. I only knew about what had happened or the laws governing these happenings AFTERWARDS, when I was curious and inquired to find out what it related to. Then I found out. But otherwise, I didn't know. So that was the clear proof that these things existed entirely outside of my imagination or thought.

It doesn't happen very frequently in this world. And that's why these experiences, which otherwise seem quite natural, quite obvious, appear to be ... extravagant fancies to people who know nothing.

But if you transposed this to France, to the West, unless you frequent occult circles, people would look at you with ... And behind your back, they would say, “That person is cracked!”

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(Later, the disciple asks Mother for some clarification on the “essential difference” between the occult reality and mental formations)

Once you have worked in this field, you realize that when you have studied a subject, when you have mentally understood something, it gives a special tonality to the experience. The experience may be quite spontaneous and sincere, but the simple fact of having known this subject and of having studied it gives a particular tonality; on the other hand, if you have learned nothing of the subject, if you know nothing at all, well, when the experience comes, the notation of it is entirely spontaneous and sincere. It can be more or less adequate, but it is not the result of a former mental formation.

What happened in my life is that I never studied or knew things until AFTER having the experience — only BECAUSE OF the experience and because I wanted to understand it would I study things related to it.
It was the same thing for visions of past lives. I knew NOTHING when I would have the
experience, not even the possibility of past lives, and only after having had the experience
would I study the question and, for example, even verify certain historical facts that had
occurred in my vision but about which I had no prior knowledge.

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*Then the disciple asks for details on going out of each successive body into the next, more
subtle one*

There are subtle bodies and subtle worlds that correspond to these bodies; it is what the
psychological method calls ‘states of consciousness’, but these states of consciousness really
correspond to worlds. The occult process consists in becoming aware of these various inner
states of being, or subtle bodies, and of mastering them sufficiently to be able to make one
come out of the other, successively. For there is a whole hierarchy of increasing subtleties —
or decreasing, depending upon the direction — and the occult process consists in making a
more subtle body come out from a denser body, and so forth, right to the most ethereal
regions. You go out through successive exteriorizations into more and more subtle bodies or
worlds. Each time it is rather like passing into another dimension. In fact, the fourth
dimension of the physicists is only the scientific transcription of an occult knowledge.

To give another comparison, it could be said that the physical body is at the center — it is
the most material and the most condensed, as well as the smallest — and the more subtle
inner bodies increasingly overlap the limits of this central physical body; they pass through it
and extend further and further out, like water evaporating from a porous vase which creates a
kind of steam all around it. And the more subtle it is, the more its extension tends to fuse with
that of the universe: you finally become universal. It is an entirely concrete process that
makes the invisible worlds an objective experience and even allows you to act in those
worlds.