27 July 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Surrender and Opening”.

He has said everything, I have nothing to add.

_Sweet Mother, here it is written: “The heart in this Yoga should in fact be the main centre of concentration until the consciousness rises above.” But each one’s consciousness is on a different plane!_

Yes, very different. Only it is always said: “Concentrate here, on the solar plexus, the centre, here, because it’s here that one can most easily find the psychic, enter into contact with the psychic. That’s why. That’s what it means.

_Once the consciousness rises where does one find it?_

Above the head, above the mind. What Sri Aurobindo means is: Unless one has gone beyond the mind and into altogether higher regions, so long as one remains in the human consciousness, the mental, vital, physical consciousness, one must concentrate in order to find the psychic. It is only if you have soared up out of the human consciousness and entered consciously the higher regions above the mind, far above the mind, that you no longer need to concentrate in the psychic because you will naturally find it.

But to rise above the mental consciousness, not into a higher speculative mind, but far beyond all mental movements is not an easy thing. To begin with, the mind must be absolutely silent and quiet, otherwise one can’t do it. It is only when the mind enters into a complete silence, a perfect quietude, that it becomes just a mirror for reflecting what is above; then one can rise above. But so long as that goes on, there’s no hope.
Yet you must not mistake the feelings for the psychic, you understand! — these two are absolutely different things. People always think that when they have emotions, feelings, they are entering the psychic. These things have nothing to do with the psychic, they are purely vital. They are the most subtle part of the vital, if you like, but they are vital. It’s not through the feelings that one goes to the psychic, it is through a very intense aspiration and a self-detachment.

_Sweet Mother, what is the meaning of “to dry up the heart”?_

To dry up the heart! People say that your heart is dried up when you no longer have any vital sentimentality. That’s what they call having a dried up heart, when one no longer has any vital sentimentality. A really dried up heart is a being who... who would be incapable of any goodness, any generosity, any goodwill; but happily this is very rare.

There are some rare individuals, born without a psychic being who are wicked; but they are very rare. For everyone there is always hope; even those who imagine that they are very strong in being wicked, even for them, there is a hope; it can awaken suddenly. But that’s not what people think. What people think is what I tell you; it’s when you have no sentimental weakness and vital emotion that people tell you, “You have a dried up heart.” But that’s their opinion, it’s not a truth. A dried up heart would be someone incapable of having any compassion; it is very rare. Even in people who had the reputation of being the most wicked there was always a small corner of their being open to compassion. At times it was ridiculously small, but it was there.

_Sweet Mother, when you say, “Concentrate in the heart”, does it mean concentrate with the mind?_

The consciousness, not the mind, the consciousness!
Questions and Answers

I don’t say think in the heart, I say concentrate, concentrate the energy, concentrate the consciousness, concentrate the aspiration, concentrate the will. **Concentrate.** One can have an extremely intense concentration without a single thought, and in fact it is usually much more intense when one doesn’t think. *(Silence)* It’s one of the most indispensable things to do if one wants to succeed in having self-control and even a limited self-knowledge: to be able to localise one’s consciousness and move it about in the different parts of one’s being, in such a way as to distinguish between one’s consciousness and one’s thought, feelings, impulses, become aware of what the consciousness is in itself. And in this way one can learn how to shift it: one can put one’s consciousness in the body, put it in the vital, put it in the psychic (that’s the best place to put it in); one can put one’s consciousness in the mind, can raise it above the mind, and with one’s consciousness one can go into all the regions of the universe.

But first of all one must know what one’s consciousness is, that is, become conscious of one’s consciousness, localise it. And for this there are many exercises. But one of them is very well known, it is to observe oneself and watch oneself living, and then see whether it is really the body which is the consciousness of the being, what one calls “myself”; and then when one has realised that it is not at all the body, that the body expresses something else, then one searches in his impulses, emotions, to see whether it’s that, and again one finds out that it is not that; and then one seeks in his thoughts, whether the thought is truly himself, what he calls “myself”, and at the end of a very short time one becomes aware: “No, I am thinking, therefore ‘myself’ is different from my thoughts.” And so, by progressive eliminations one succeeds in entering into contact with something, something which gives you the impression of being — “Yes, that’s ‘myself’. And this something I can move around, I can move it from my body to my vital, to my mind, I can even, if I am very... how to put it?... very practised in moving it, I can move it into other people, and it’s in this way that I can identify myself with things and...
people. I can with the help of my aspiration make it come out of my human form, rise above towards regions which are no longer this little body at all and what it contains.” And so one begins to understand what one’s consciousness is; and it’s after that that one can say, “Good, I shall unite my consciousness with my psychic being and shall leave it there, so that it may be in harmony with the Divine and be able to surrender entirely to the Divine.” Or else, “If by this exercise of rising above my faculties of thinking and my intellect I can enter a region of pure light, pure knowledge...” then one can put his consciousness there and live like that, in a luminous splendour which is above the physical form.

But first this consciousness must be mobile, and one must know how to distinguish it from the other parts of the being which in fact are its instruments, its modes of expression. The consciousness must make use of these things, and not you mistake these things for the consciousness. You put the consciousness in these things, so you become conscious of your body, conscious of your vital, conscious of your mind, conscious of all your activities through your will for identification; but for this, first your consciousness must not be completely entangled, mingled, joined, so to say, with all these things; it must not take them for itself, must not be deceived.

When one thinks of himself (obviously out of millions of men perhaps there are not ten who do otherwise) he thinks “Myself... that’s my body, that’s what I call ‘myself’, what’s like this. And so, I am like that; and then my neighbour, he also is the body. When I speak of another person, I speak of his body.” And so, as long as one is in this state he is the plaything of all possible movements and has no self-control.

The body is the last instrument and yet it’s this which one calls “myself” most of the time, unless one has begun to reflect.

Questions? No questions?

Why is one often dispersed during periods of assimilation?
Questions and Answers

Yes, that's a very frequent state: dispersed in all one's thoughts, in all one's desires, all one's activities; that makes lots and lots of dispersion. And so one is pulled from all sides and has no coordination in his life.

_But why during periods of assimilation?_  

Periods of assimilation? Dispersed?  

Not necessarily! Not necessarily. There are people who, on the contrary, are extremely concentrated during periods of assimilation, shut up in themselves... Not necessarily! Usually one is more dispersed in periods of activity — not in periods of aspiration — I am speaking of ordinary activity.

One is always identified more or less with all that one does and all the things with which one is in contact. The ordinary state of people is to be in everything that they do, all that they see, all whom they frequently meet. They are like that. There is something in them which in fact is very vague and very inconsistent, and which moves around everywhere. And if they simply want to know a little what they are, they are obliged to pull back towards them a heap of things which are scattered everywhere. There is a kind of unconscious fluidity between people, I have told you this I don't know how many times; it produces a mixture, all that, as soon as it is no longer altogether material... It's because you have a skin that you don't enter into one another like that; otherwise even the subtle physical, you see... like a kind of almost perceptible vapour which goes out from bodies, which is the subtle physical, it intermingles terribly, and it produces all kinds of reactions, constantly, of one person upon another.

One may without knowing why, without having the least idea of the cause, pass precisely from a harmony of good health to a disequilibrium and a great uneasiness! One doesn't know why, there is no outer cause, suddenly it happens; one may have been peaceful, content, in at least a pleasant, tolerable condition,
then all of a sudden to become furious, discontented, uneasy! One doesn’t know why, there is no reason. One may have been full of joy, gaiety, enthusiasm, and then, without any apparent reason, one is sad, morose, depressed, discouraged! It happens sometimes that one is in a state of depression, and then one passes on somewhere and everything is lit up: a light, a joy — why, one becomes suddenly optimistic! This of course is rare — it can also happen, it is the same thing, it is also contagious; but still one risks much more catching destructive rather than constructive things.

There are very few people who carry with them an atmosphere which irradiates joy, peace, confidence; it is very rare. But these are truly benefactors of humanity. They don’t need to open their mouth.

(Silence)

That’s all?

Sweet Mother, every day we go for the Balcony Darshan, and here at the Playground we come for the March Past and the Concentration.¹ What should be our approach to each one of these things?

The most indispensable thing in every case is receptivity.

At the Balcony, for example. When I come on the Balcony I make a special concentration, you notice that I look at everybody, don’t you; I look, see, pass my eyes over every one, I know all who are there, and where they are, and I give each one exactly what he needs; I see his condition and give him what is necessary. It can go fast, because otherwise I would keep you

¹ In this period Mother used to give Darshan every morning from her balcony. This was known as “Balcony Darshan”. In the evening She was present in the Playground to receive the salute at the March Past and conduct the Concentration at the end of the “Marching”.

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there for half an hour, but I do it, that’s what I do. That’s the only reason why I come out, because otherwise I carry you in my consciousness. I carry you in my consciousness always, without seeing you, I do what is necessary. But here it is a moment when I can do it by touching the physical directly, you see; otherwise it is through the mind that it acts, the mind or the vital. But here I touch the physical directly through the sight, the contact of sight; and that’s what I do — each time.

So if each one who comes, comes with a kind of trust, of inner opening, and is ready to receive what is given, and naturally is not dispersed... there are people there who pass their time looking at what is happening, what the others are doing; and in this way they don’t have much chance to receive anything very much... but if one comes concentrated on what he can receive and is as quiet as possible, and as though he were open to receive something, as though he were opening his consciousness, like this (gesture) to receive something — if one has a particular difficulty or problem, one can put it in an aspiration, but it is not very necessary, because usually between what people think about themselves and the condition in which they are, there is always a little difference, in the sense that it’s not quite the thing; their way of feeling or seeing the thing creates a little deformation, so I am obliged to cross over their deformation; whereas if they don’t think about anything, if they are simply like this (gesture), open and awaiting the Force — I go straight in and what has to be done I do. And that’s the moment when I know exactly, you see, I do this (gesture), quite slowly — from above I see very well, very well — exactly the condition in which each one is. That’s the morning’s work.

The “Concentration” is something absolutely different. I try, first, to make the atmosphere as calm, quiet, unified as possible, as though I were spreading the consciousness out wide, like this (gesture); and then from far above I bring down the Force as much as I can and put it upon you as strongly as I can. So this depends exclusively on whether one is quite tranquil and
well concentrated; here one must be concentrated, one must not be dispersed, one must be concentrated, but very... how to put it?... plain, very horizontal. Like this (gesture). Then the Force puts a pressure. And it’s above all for unifying, penetrating the whole and endeavouring to make of it something cohesive which can express collectively the Force from above.

In the morning it is an individual work, in the evening it is a collective work. But naturally, within that, each one can feel individually, but you see, it is a work of unification which I do in the evening. Each one receives according to his receptivity and the state in which he is.

And during the March Past, Sweet Mother?

That, the March Past, it is... it is more a physical action — preparing oneself for the physical action. It is more a way of opening oneself to the energy, the universal energy, to prepare for the action. It is a contact with the energy, the universal energy which is there, it is to help the body to participate in the work. At that moment it is something very physical. This is truly the basis of physical culture: to prepare the body for the action and the receptivity of energies to accomplish the work. And also the Marching, even when I am not there. But the March Past is for stimulating the receptivity of the body to the energies for realisation. It is based upon something which is expressed in all kinds of ways; but it is a kind of admiration... how to put it?... a spontaneous and also charming admiration for heroism, which is in the most material physical consciousness.

And this is a tremendous power for overcoming tamas and physical inertia. Besides it is upon this that all the fighting capacities of armies in the wars are founded. If human beings did not have this, well, one could never make them go to fight one another, stupidly, for things which they don’t even know. And it is because this is there in the being that these great masses of men can be utilised, employed and put in motion.
Questions and Answers

There were examples of this, absolutely marvellous ones, in the First World War, which was much harder for the individual than the Second. It was a terrible war because men had dug trenches and were obliged to lie sunk in the earth like worms, under the perpetual danger of a bombardment against which they could do nothing but protect themselves as well as possible; and they remained at times shut in there for days. Sometimes it happened that they were shut in for more than fifteen days in one trench, for there was no means of changing them; that is, it was a mole’s life under a perpetual danger, and with nothing to do about it. Of all things it was the most horrible. It was a horrible war. Well, there were troops which had been left like that, for nothing more could be done because of the bombardments and all that, they could not be relieved any more. It was called “relieving”, relieving the troops, bringing new troops and taking away the others to give them rest. There were some who remained in this way for days. There were some who remained ten days, twelve days. There was cause enough to go mad, for anyone at all. Well, among these people there were some who related their life, related what happened.

I have read books about this, not novels, reports noted from day to day of what was happening. There is one — by the way it is a great writer who wrote his memories of the War, and he related that they had held on like that under the bombardment for ten days. (Naturally there were many who were finished off there.) And then they were made to come back behind and were replaced by others, new ones arrived, the old ones returned. And naturally when they returned — you see, they had eaten poorly, had slept badly, had lived in dark holes, indeed it was a dreadful life — when they had come back, some of them could not even take off their shoes any more because the feet were so swollen inside that they couldn’t pull them off. These are unthinkable physical horrors. Well, these people (you see, at that time mechanical transports were not as common as in this last war), so they came back on foot, like that, broken, half-dead.
They had stuck.

That was one of the most beautiful things in the war from the point of view of courage: because they had held on, the enemy could not take the trenches and was not able to advance. Naturally the news spread and then they came to a village and all the people of the village came out to receive them and lined the road with flowers and shouts of enthusiasm. All those men who could no longer even drag themselves along, you see, who were like this (gesture of collapse), suddenly all of them were seen drawing themselves up erect, holding up their heads, filled with energy, and all together they began to sing and went through the whole village singing. It seemed like a resurrection.

Well, it is about this kind of thing I am speaking. It is something so beautiful, which is in the most material physical consciousness! You see, all of a sudden, they had the feeling that they were heroes, that they had done something heroic, and so they didn’t want to look like people completely flattened out, no longer good for anything. “We are ready to go back to the fight if necessary!” Like that. And they went by in this way. It seems it was marvellous; I am sure of it, that it was marvellous.²

Well, that’s what you are developing with the March Past now.

There we are.

² In continuation of this talk, while leaving the Playground Mother remarked to Pavitra: “It is the cellular response to the enthusiasm of the vital.”