16 September 1953

“The force that comes down into one who is doing Yoga and helps him in his transformation, acts along many different lines and its results vary according to the nature that receives it and the work to be done. First of all, it hastens the transformation of all in the being that is ready to be transformed. If he is open and receptive in his mind, the mind, touched by the power of Yoga, begins to change and progress swiftly. There may be the same rapidity of change in the vital consciousness if that is ready, or even in the body. But in the body the transforming power of Yoga is operative only to a certain degree; for the receptivity of the body is limited. The most material plane of the universe is still in a condition in which receptivity is mixed with a large amount of resistance. But rapid progress in one part of the being which is not followed by an equivalent progress in other parts produces a disharmony in the nature, a dislocation somewhere; and wherever or whenever this dislocation occurs, it can translate itself into an illness. The nature of the illness depends upon the nature of the dislocation.”

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Why is the receptivity of the body limited?

Because in the physical world, in order that things do not get mixed up, it was necessary that it should be somewhat fixed. If, for example, your body were so subtle and plastic that suddenly it began to melt just like that, in the presence of another person, it would be quite annoying! Or when you come nearer, if both were to get mixed up, it would be rather unpleasant! So, because of this, there was a greater concentration, a kind of fixity in the
force to separate (it is indeed for the sake of separating) one individuality from another. And this fixity is just what prevents the body from progressing as rapidly as it could and should. And as one grows up and reaches one’s normal height and constitution, one becomes still more rigid. For children have this plasticity of growth, they are changing all the time, they are visibly changing. Therefore so long as they are young and are growing and developing, they have a certain plasticity in them, but when you are over forty and as generally in life you then sit down and think that you have reached your goal and are about to gather the fruit of your labour, you become dry and hard like wood and even like stone in the end. And as the body is no longer able to adapt itself to the movement of inner transformation, it drags, it ages and cannot keep pace any more, it dries up.

After death, does the inner being continue to progress?

That depends altogether upon the person. For everyone it is different. There are people — for example, writers, musicians, artists — people who have lived on intellectual heights, who feel that they still have something further to do, that they have not finished what they had undertaken to do, have not reached the goal they had fixed for themselves, so they are ready to remain in the earth atmosphere as long as they can, with as much cohesiveness as possible and they try to manifest themselves and continue their progress in other human bodies. I have seen many such cases, I have seen the very interesting case of a musician who was a pianist (a pianist of great worth), who had hands which were a marvel of skill, accuracy, precision, force, rapidity of movement, indeed, it was absolutely remarkable. This man died relatively young with the feeling that if he had continued to live he would have continued to progress in his musical expression. And such was the intensity of his aspiration that his subtle hands maintained their form without being dissolved, and each time he met anyone a little receptive and passive and a good
musician, his hands would enter the hands of those who were playing — the person who was playing at the time could play well but in an ordinary way; but at that moment he became not merely a virtuoso but a wonderful artist during the time he played. It was the hands of the other that were making use of his. This is a phenomenon I know. I have seen the same thing in the case of a painter: it was also a matter of hands. The same thing with regard to some writers, and here it was the brain that kept quite a precise form and entered the brain of someone who was sufficiently receptive and suddenly made him write extraordinary things, infinitely more beautiful than anything he had written before. I saw that taking hold of someone. It was in the case of a composer of music — not one of those who execute, but who compose, like Beethoven, like Bach, like César Franck (but César Franck executed also). The composition of music is an extremely cerebral activity. Well, here also the brain of a great musician came in contact with one who was engaged in writing an opera and made him compose wonderful things and arranged on paper all the parts. He was busy writing an opera and it is extremely complex for the performers who have to bring out in the music the thought of the person who has composed; and that man (I knew him) when he received this formation had a blank paper before him and then he started writing; I saw him writing, putting lines, then some figures, on a big, very big page and when he reached the bottom, the orchestration of the Overture (for example, of a certain act) was completed (orchestration means the distribution of certain lines of music to each one of the instruments). And he was doing it simply on a paper, merely by this wonderful mental power. And it was not only his own: it was coming to him from a musical mind that incarnated in him.... Whilst I was there I saw him writing in front of me a page like that: it took him about half an hour or three-quarters of an hour. And he got such a reputation that even big well-known musicians brought him their works for orchestration. He did it better than anyone, and just in that way on his paper.
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He had no need to hear the music or anything. Afterwards, it was tried out and it was always very good. There were so many violins, so many cellos, so many altos, all the instruments: some were playing this, others playing that, yet others playing other things, sometimes all together, at other times one after another (it is very complicated, not a simple thing), well, there, while playing, hearing or even reading (sometimes he took the score and read it) he knew which notes had to be distributed to which instrument, which notes had to be played by another, and so on. And he had very clearly the feeling of something entering into him and helping him.

Do these beings who want to manifest themselves keep the same desire when they are born once again?

No, it is not the same thing. It is not the whole being, it is the special faculty which remains in the earth atmosphere, does not leave it and go away, which remains in the earth atmosphere in order to continue manifesting itself. But the psychic being can very well return to the psychic world and it is the psychic being which takes a body again. I explained to you the other day that before leaving the physical body, the psychic being decides most often what its next rebirth will be, the environment in which it will take birth and what its occupation will be, because it needs a certain field for its experience. So it may happen that very big writers and very big musicians take birth another time in somebody quite imbecile. And you say: “What! it is not possible!” Naturally it does not always happen like that, but it may. There was a case in which the contrary happened: it was a violin player, the most wonderful of the century... (Mother tries to remember.) Just wait, I knew his name and it is gone — it came back and is gone again. What was his name?... Ysayé! he was a Belgian and a violinist, truly the most wonderful violinist of the epoch. Well, that man had most certainly in him a reincarnation of Beethoven. Not perhaps a reincarnation of
his entire psychic being, but in any case, that of his musical capacity. He had the appearance, the head of Beethoven, I saw him, I heard him (I did not know him, I knew nothing, I was at a concert in Paris and they were giving the concerto in D major), I saw him coming on the stage to play and I said: “Strange! How much this man looks like Beethoven, he is the very portrait of Beethoven!” Then it just started with a stroke of the bow, three, four notes.... Everything changed, the atmosphere was changed. All became absolutely wonderful. Three notes started off with such power, such grandeur, so wonderful it was, nothing stirred, all waited. And he played that from beginning to end in an absolutely unique manner with an understanding I have not met with in any other executant. And then I saw that the musical genius of Beethoven was in him.... But perhaps Beethoven’s psychic being had taken body in a shoemaker or anybody else, one does not know! It wanted to have another kind of experience.

For what I saw in this man was a formation belonging to an earthly plane, it was mental-vital; and as Beethoven had disciplined his whole mental, vital and physical being around his musical capacity, that had remained in form, it was a living thing, and had incarnated in that man, just as it was, but not necessarily Beethoven’s psychic being. In his former life it was the psychic being of Beethoven that had shaped all those other beings, the psychic being that had disciplined them around musical creation; but after his death, it cannot at all be said whether the psychic being remained there; it must have returned to the psychic world as is the usual rule. That however had been formed, had its own life, independent and existing in itself. It was formed for a certain manifestation and it remained to manifest itself. And as soon as it found a fit instrument, it entered there to manifest itself.

*Can a psychic being take birth in two bodies?*

It is not quite so simple as that.... The psychic being is the result of evolution, that is to say, evolution of the divine Consciousness
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which spread into Matter and slowly lifted up Matter, made it
develop to return to the Divine. The psychic being was formed
by this divine centre progressively through all the births. There
comes a time when it reaches a kind of perfection, perfection
in its growth and formation. Then, most often, as it has an
aspiration for realisation, for a greater perfection to manifest
yet better the Divine, it generally draws towards itself a being
from the involution, that is to say, one of those entities belonging
to what Sri Aurobindo calls Overmind, who comes then to in-
carnate in this psychic being. It can be one of those entities men
generally call gods, some kind of deities. And when this fusion
occurs the psychic being naturally is magnified and shares in the
nature of the being incarnated in it. And then it has the power to
produce emanations. These beings have the power to produce
emanations, that is to say, they project out of themselves a part
of themselves which becomes independent and goes into others
to incarnate itself. So there can be not only two, but three, four
or five emanations. That depends upon cases, it can happen
thus. That is to say, one can have the same origin, psycho-
divine, we might say. And generally when there are a number
of emanations, the different persons feel themselves to be that
being, and rightly so, for they carry in themselves something
of that godhead: it is as though a part of the godhead has cast
itself out of itself and become independent in another being. It is
not a self-duplication but a kind of self-projection. (To the child
who put the question:) Duplication gives the idea that what has
been duplicated has lost a part of its capability: if you cut your
body in two, only half of it will remain for you; but if you have
the power to emanate something out of you, you remain quite
whole, as you are, and at the same time, there is another Tara
who is there in another person.... You understand? It is like that.

When the hands of the pianist entered the hands of
another, would the one who lent his hands be able to
play?

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I do not understand! The “hands” were what remained in the earth atmosphere of the dead pianist. So these hands which had been absolutely formed, had become like conscious, living and independent entities, entered the material hands, for they wanted to play actually on a piano. But when they played, they played through the hands of the other person, who might have been a good pianist but became a genius whilst those hands were there.

*I thought that the other one was alive!*

The other was alive? Which other? The first one... Ah! No! *(Laughter)*

*You have said: “The whole world is in a process of progressive transformation.”*¹ Then why do men fight among themselves?

It is perhaps their way of progressing! *(Laughter)* You do not progress always in an apparently harmonious way. All who do Yoga know that it is not a thing that always goes on in peace and harmony, that sometimes there are inner battles, you have to give battle to enemies within you who want to prevent you from progressing. That means war. Well, when it is the whole earth that’s progressing and there are things that resist and do not want to move, sometimes you have to give battle and that means war. You must not believe that progress consists in sitting down and meditating!... There are difficulties to be conquered. To conquer, what does it mean? — To fight

¹ “The action of the forces of Yoga hastens the movement of transformation of the being in those parts that are ready to receive and respond to the power that is at work upon it. Yoga, in this way, saves time. The whole world is in a process of progressive transformation; if you take up the discipline of Yoga, you speed up in yourself this process. The work that would require years in the ordinary course, can be done by Yoga in a few days and even in a few hours.”

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against something. When you fight, it means war. There are small wars, there are big wars; but what is this war of men upon earth, if seen, for example, by Titans to whom men are no bigger than ants?... When you look at a war of ants, you find it quite natural! You can even look at it with interest and smile and say: “Look, the ants are having a fight.” Well, to the titanic forces of the universe, men fighting on earth are like ants fighting, it is nothing at all. You must not judge things according to the measure of human consciousness.... For man Nature is a monstrous thing. It is so formidable, all the forces at her disposal, all the movements she creates. And what we know is only what is happening on earth! You know, directly or indirectly, by a kind of speculative knowledge, what is happening in the rest of the universe; but these are conflicts and plays of forces that are formidable in proportion to human consciousness. These are things that in comparison with human duration last almost eternally. So, in time it is immensity, in space it is immensity, and for the human consciousness it is something almost incomprehensible. But to these forces, human dimensions and movements have truly almost the same proportions as (perhaps are even less than) the consciousness of the swarming ant-world for us; it is the same thing. There are Nordic legends — Swedish and Norwegian — about these mighty universal Titans who are like that. And so stories are told naturally so that children may understand. It is said that there were two Titans sitting on some summit in the universe, not on earth, and then one Titan breathed a sigh. Then a thousand years pass, and the other asks, “Why do you sigh?” Another thousand years pass and the first one replies: “I am bored!” Yet another thousand years pass.... They try to give an idea. Probably the Titans took some hundreds of years to say, “I am bored.” It is a question of proportions!

Is it not possible, by yogic force, to prevent the body from being rigid?

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It is possible. When you do gymnastics, is it not to make your body less rigid? And you go on progressing: what you cannot do the first year, you are able to do after a few years. There are people who obtain an almost total suppleness, those, for example, who do Asanas. Yes, one can obtain almost complete suppleness. But an ordinary man, if he tried to do these exercises, would break something in him. Well, it happens like that. With the mind, it is the same thing. It is through gymnastic exercises that you make yourself supple. It is a question of discipline, of development.

*Suppose a man endeavours in this life to become very intelligent, but if in the next life he is born an idiot, what is the use of all these efforts?*

No, I spoke a little briefly, but it is not that. His psychic being is not stupid! Granting, for example, that the psychic being has had the experience of a man who was a writer and could translate his experience through books and speeches; thus he covered a particular field of experience due to the associations and circumstances in which this being lived. But there is a field of experience he misses. For example, he says: “I have lived with my brain, with the reactions of an intellectual to life, now I want to live with my feeling.” For usually this over-activity of the intellect in ordinary life diminishes very much the capacity of feeling. Therefore in order to have another field of experience, of development, he renounces his intellectual height; he is no longer a genius, a writer of genius, he becomes an ordinary man, but with a remarkable heart, very kind, very generous. I said “idiot”, but it is a question of comparison. It is not rare, for example, that a psychic being which has reached its maximum growth, after having enjoyed the experiences of a ruling authority (of all that the life of an emperor or king may bring) may want to be able to work in an obscure life, without being fettered all the time by governmental pomps, and may very well choose to be
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born in quite an ordinary environment, an ordinary bourgeois family, in the most mediocre conditions, so as to have that kind of incognito which will allow it to work without being hampered by all the necessities of governmental display that are binding on one who is at the head of a country. So if you look at the thing from one point of view, you say: “How is it? what is this downfall?” It is not a downfall. It is meeting the problem from another angle, from another point of view. For the consciousness (I mean the true consciousness, the divine consciousness) success or failure are the same, glory or mediocrity are the same. What is important is the growth of the consciousness. And certain conditions that appear very favourable to human beings can be very unfavourable for the growth of the consciousness.... You may look at yourself. Naturally, if you are careful to be always at the height of your being, you do not fall into this error. But with ordinary thought, with ordinary reaction, you judge everything by success or failure, but that is the last way of judging, for it is the most artificial, the most external, that which is the very contrary of truth. In human life as it is at present organised, not once in a million can one find the true value in the forefront, recognised. Usually a little cabotinage is always necessary. When a man gets success, great success, whatever it is, in whatever domain it may be, you can be sure that somewhere there is some “cabotinage”.

What does cabotinage mean?

This is said of actors who show off in a comedy, but the word is used also in speaking of someone who over-estimates his value, who shows more than he has, displays more than he really has and who thinks above all of getting appreciated. That is the most important thing for him, to be appreciated.

How can memory be increased?

Widen your consciousness and your memory will increase.
Consciousness is a much higher memory than the mechanical brain memory. I explained this to you one day, not so very long ago. I told you that the mechanical brain memory can forget — can mix up and deform things — but if you are able to establish in you once again the state of consciousness in which you were at a given moment, you have exactly the same experience. And that is the only true memory. And this depends entirely on the development of your consciousness.

You have said that on the material plane “receptivity is mixed with a large amount of resistance.” What is this resistance?

You have resistances in your body, haven’t you? When you want to do an exercise, can you do with your body whatever you want? And when you try to be in good health, does your body always obey? And when you want to learn your lesson, does your brain follow it without difficulty?... That is the resistance, it is all that refuses to progress. And I believe that unfortunately the amount of resistance is much greater than the amount of receptivity. One must work very hard to become receptive.

One does not know — it is perhaps something you will know one day, perhaps you will be told one day, perhaps one will be able to make you understand it — you cannot imagine the immense flood of force that is at your disposal! And generally you do not feel it even. When you feel it, something in you shrinks because it is too much and produces a kind of instinctive fear in your cells; and when you receive it, more than three-quarters of it is thrown away like an overfilled vessel! It gushes out, spills over, because you are not able to hold it. I have met a very large number of people who complained that they were receiving nothing, that is to say, they said they did not have the forces they needed. It was because they were absolutely incapable of

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receiving them, and there was a hundred thousand times more force than what they could receive. It is like that. You are all in a sea of tremendous vibrations, and you are not at all aware of it because you are not receptive. And there is such a resistance in you that if something succeeds in entering, three quarters of what enters is thrown out violently because you are not able to contain it.... I do not speak of this usually, but since we are talking about the subject, I am telling you. And perhaps one day I shall give you examples of it. It is something unbelievable. For example, just take the consciousness of the Forces, like the force of love, the force of understanding or the force of creation (for everything, it is the same: the force of protection, the force of growth, all that, and the power for progress, for everything); take Consciousness, simply this Consciousness which surrounds everything, enters into everything, which is everywhere, which is in everything.... Well, it is almost felt as a violence which seeks to impose itself upon the being that is unable to receive or bear it. And I am speaking of the very best; but in everyone there is a part more or less big, more or less important which does not yet have the goodwill, which is just on the border-line of bad will and does not want at any cost and rejects what is there. But if one were open and simply breathed in — nothing more, if one did that only — one would breathe in the Consciousness, the Light, the Understanding, the Force, the Love and all the rest. And all that is wasted upon Earth because the Earth is not ready to take it. Voilà.