This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo’s Elements of Yoga, Chapter 6, “Surrender”.

“Q: If the Purusha does not consent to the action of the Mother’s Grace, does it prevent the other beings from receiving or feeling the Mother’s Grace for transformation?
“A: No. The Purusha often holds back and lets the other beings consent or feel in his place.”

What does he exactly understand by Purusha?... The ego?

(Nolini) No, it is the conscious being. There is the being and the becoming. The conscious being is Purusha, the becoming is Prakriti.

But then each inner being has its Purusha? Or is there one Purusha in all the beings?

(Nolini) In each part of the being: that is, there is a vital Purusha, a mental Purusha, a physical Purusha...

It is what we call consciousness?

Yes, the conscious being.

The conscious being in its continuity?

Yes.

But how can one do the sadhana if the conscious being within does not consent, for it seems to me that it is this being which must take the resolution to begin.
Yes.

(To the children) It is I who am asking questions!

(A child) Sweet Mother, the following question has been put here: “What is the sign to indicate that a sadhak’s determination to surrender to the Divine is having practical effect in his life?” And Sri Aurobindo replies: “The sign is that he has full obedience without question or revolt or demand or condition and that he answers to all divine influences and rejects all that are not from the Divine.”

Isn’t this a resigned surrender?

Resigned? What does that mean, “resigned”?

Passive!

I don’t know what you mean. He is asking for the sign which shows that his surrender is perfect. There is no question of active or passive surrender there. He says that the determination to surrender brings certain results. The first result is simply to be obedient without questioning, and the second is to have the power of rejecting all influences except that of the Divine. These are great results. When one has attained these, one is already quite advanced.

Do you know how to distinguish between an influence coming from the Divine and one coming from elsewhere?... When you feel an impulse in you, can you tell whether it comes from the Divine or from elsewhere?

A little.

A little! Ah! That’s good, and tell us why, and how?... That indeed is interesting.
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_Sometimes, when I wake up in the morning or afternoon, I feel someone saying: “The time is passing, you must hurry up.”_

And then?... Someone?... That is to say, you feel there is a person telling you: “Get up and go quickly to do your work”? 

_Not a person._

An influence?

Yes.

But you know from where it comes?... Do you know from where it comes?

_It is not bad. I think it is not bad, so it must come from the Divine._

Ah! That is an interpretation. If, for instance, in your mind there is a formation, an idea, that you ought not to be lazy and should work — that you should be on time, should not waste your time sleeping — that is enough for this idea or formation to come up at the moment of awakening like an influence (for it is a part of your mind which has remained awake) like an influence telling you: “Hurry up, let’s go, go and work, don’t be lazy!” But it is perhaps just one part of yourself trying to act upon another. Or else, if you have to go to class or do some work with somebody, this may be the active thought of that person saying: “Isn’t she perchance still sleeping and going to be late?” — that suffices. So, this is something perhaps which has its good side and may be useful for you as a check on your activity, but it is not at all necessarily something from the Divine. To judge that a thing comes from the Divine because you find it good may lead you into terrible mistakes.
This is not how one should sense things. It is not by a perception of this kind of consciousness, not in this way. It comes when one has a sufficiently delicate and refined sensitivity to perceive clearly the value of a vibration; all vibrations that come from external activities, whether mental, vital or physical, or even psychic, have a particular quality, but what comes from the divine influence is of an absolutely different nature and quality. In order to be able to distinguish this, one must first of all have felt both; and even when one has felt both, one must be very calm, very attentive, indeed very still within, to be able to distinguish between them and not make a mistake. If your active thought comes in the way, it is finished, you cannot distinguish clearly any longer; you begin to question. And then you make use of your notions of good and evil to judge whether this comes from the Divine or doesn’t come from the Divine. That’s absurd. It is impossible.

Even when one has had this double experience and can make the distinction, there are still precautions to be taken and a check to be kept in order to be sure of not being mistaken. Only when one has opened wide the door of the psychic being, has entered consciously, and had the absolute, total, complete contact with the Divine, when one has the feeling of being born to a new life, when one is another being, does not see anything in the same way any longer, does not feel anything in the same way any more — then one knows intimately, profoundly, completely what the divine life is. And even afterwards, if the door closes again, one can keep a precise memory. And it is in this way that it is seen. It is impossible to make a mistake. It is something quite different, there is no comparison, none: one can compare nothing with this. It is unique and absolute. That is why I asked you, “Can you make the distinction?” For surely if one among you has had the experience, he knows in this way what comes from the Divine, and necessarily if he knows absolutely what comes from the Divine, he knows perforce all that does not. So there I asked you the question. For I should have been very happy
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that one among you could tell me with sincerity, “I have had
the experience and I know.” But it is only after this experience
that one knows, not before. That is why, if one sincerely wants
to progress, one must at each step inquire, be sure from where
the influence comes: “Who has given me this suggestion? Is it a
part of myself? Is it something external? Does this come from
the Divine?”

But before having had that experience, one is not capable of
judging by oneself. Naturally, if one’s surrender is truly sincere
and there is this constant attitude in the being, this total self-
giving to the Divine, “Thy Will be done”, in this way, one can,
without knowing, without understanding, instinctively, choose
the thing that should be done and reject the one that should not,
but this becomes an instinct, a sort of automatic thing, if your
surrender is perfect. And that is the very advantage of surrender,
for you can do the right thing in the right way automatically,
before having the knowledge.

But as Sri Aurobindo says there, you understand, one must
be in a state of perfect obedience which does not question,
does not discuss and obeys spontaneously, acts rightly as one
is guided. Nothing in the thought or the vital must revolt or
contradict or question or try to justify, to prove to oneself
(and sometimes even to the Divine) that one is right, that
what one has done is the right thing. All that must be done
with.

Fundamentally, whatever be the path one follows — whe-
ther the path of surrender, consecration, knowledge — if one
wants it to be perfect, it is always equally difficult, and there
is but one way, one only, I know of only one: that is perfect
sincerity, but perfect sincerity!

Do you know what perfect sincerity is?...

Never to try to deceive oneself, never let any part of the
being try to find out a way of convincing the others, never to
explain favourably what one does in order to have an excuse for
what one wants to do, never to close one’s eyes when something
is unpleasant, never to let anything pass, telling oneself, “That is not important, next time it will be better.”

Oh! It is very difficult. Just try for one hour and you will see how very difficult it is. Only one hour, to be totally, absolutely sincere. To let nothing pass. That is, all one does, all one feels, all one thinks, all one wants, is exclusively the Divine.

“I want nothing but the Divine, I think of nothing but the Divine, I do nothing but what will lead me to the Divine, I love nothing but the Divine.”

Try — try, just to see, try for half an hour, you will see how difficult it is! And during that time take great care that there isn’t a part of the vital or a part of the mind or a part of the physical being nicely hidden there, at the back, so that you don’t see it (Mother hides her hands behind her back) and don’t notice that it is not collaborating — sitting quietly there so that you don’t unearth it... it says nothing, but it does not change, it hides itself. How many such parts! How many parts hide themselves! You put them in your pocket because you don’t want to see them or else they get behind your back and sit there well-hidden, right in the middle of your back, so as not to be seen. When you go there with your torch — your torch of sincerity — you ferret out all the corners, everywhere, all the small corners which do not consent, the things which say “No” or those which do not move: “I am not going to budge. I am glued to this place of mine and nothing will make me move.”... You have a torch there with you, and you flash it upon the thing, upon everything. You will see there are many of them there, behind your back, well stuck.

Try, just for an hour, try!

No more questions?

Nobody has anything to say?

Then, au revoir, my children!