22 August 1956

_Sweet Mother, what does Sri Aurobindo call “the heaven of the liberated mind”?_

The heaven of the liberated mind? It is a metaphorical phrase. When the mind is liberated, it rises to celestial heights. These higher regions of the mind Sri Aurobindo compares with the sky above the earth; they are celestial compared with the ordinary mind.

Is that all?

_(Silence)_

Somebody has asked me a question about trance — what in India is called Samadhi, that is to say, when one passes or enters into a state of which no conscious memory remains when one wakes up:

_“Is the state of trance or Samadhi a sign of progress?”_

In ancient times it was considered a very high condition. It was even thought to be the sign of a great realisation, and people who wanted to do yoga or sadhana always tried to enter into a state of this kind. All sorts of marvellous things have been said about this state — you may say all you like about it, since, precisely, you don’t remember anything! And those who have entered it are unable to say what happened to them. So, one can say anything one likes.

I could incidentally tell you that in all kinds of so-called spiritual literature I had always read marvellous things about this state of trance or Samadhi, and it so happened that I had never experienced it. So I did not know whether this was a sign
of inferiority. And when I came here, one of my first questions to Sri Aurobindo was: “What do you think of Samadhi, that state of trance one does not remember? One enters into a condition which seems blissful, but when one comes out of it, one does not know at all what has happened.” Then he looked at me, saw what I meant and told me, “It is unconsciousness.” I asked him for an explanation, I said, “What?” He told me, “Yes, you enter into what is called Samadhi when you go out of your conscious being and enter a part of your being which is completely unconscious, or rather a domain where you have no corresponding consciousness — you go beyond the field of your consciousness and enter a region where you are no longer conscious. You are in the impersonal state, that is to say, a state in which you are unconscious; and that is why, naturally, you remember nothing, because you were not conscious of anything.”¹ So this reassured me and I said, “Well, this has never happened to me.” He replied, “Nor to me!” (Laughter)

And since then, when people speak to me about Samadhi, I tell them, “Well, try to develop your inner individuality and you will be able to enter these very regions in full consciousness and have the joy of communion with the highest regions, but without losing all consciousness and returning with a zero instead of an experience.”

So that is my reply to the person who has asked if Samadhi or trance is a sign of progress. The sign of progress is when there is no longer any unconsciousness, when one can go up into the same regions without entering into trance.

But there is a confusion in the words.

¹ When this talk was first published in 1962, Mother added the following commentary: “There are also some people who enter domains where they are conscious, but between this conscious state and their normal waking consciousness there is a gap: their personality does not exist between the waking state and this deeper state; so, during the passage they forget. They cannot bring the consciousness they had there back into the consciousness here, for there is a gap between the two. There is even an occult discipline for constructing intermediary fields in order to be able to recall things.”
When you leave a part of your being — for example, when you enter quite consciously the vital world — your body can enter into a trance, but this is not samadhi. It is rather what might be called a lethargic or cataleptic state. When extreme, it is a cataleptic state because the part of the being which animates the body has gone out of it, so the body is half dead; that is, its life is so far diminished and its functions almost suspended: the heart slows down and can hardly be felt and the breathing is hardly perceptible. This is the real trance. But you, during all this time, you are fully conscious in the vital world. And even, with a certain discipline which, moreover, is neither easy nor without danger, you may so contrive that the minimum of force you leave in your body allows it to be independently conscious. With training — as I said, it is not easy — quite a methodical training, one can manage to make the body keep its autonomy of movement, even when one is almost totally exteriorised. And this is how in an almost complete state of trance, one can speak and relate what the exteriorised part of the being is seeing and doing.... For that, one must be fairly advanced on the path.

There are spontaneous and involuntary instances of a state which is not quite the same as this, but very similar: they are states of somnambulism, that is to say, when you are fast asleep and the vital has gone out of your body, the body automatically obeys the will and action of the part which has gone out, the vital part. Only, as this is not the effect of a willed action and a regulated, progressive education, this state is not desirable, for it may produce disorders in the being. But it is an illustration of what I have just said, of a body which while three-quarters asleep can obey the part of the being which has gone out and is itself fully awake and quite conscious. This is the real trance.

I have already told you several times, I think, that when one undergoes this occult discipline, one is able to leave one's physical body, go out in the vital and move about quite consciously,
acting quite consciously in this vital world; then to leave one’s vital being asleep and go out mentally, acting and living in the mental world quite consciously and with similar relations — for the mental world is in relation with the mental being, as the physical world is in relation with the physical being — and so on, progressively and by a regular discipline. I knew a woman who had been trained in this way, who had quite remarkable personal faculties, who was conscious in all her states of being, and she used to be able to go out twelve times from her body, that is to say, from twelve consecutive bodies, until she reached the summit of the individual consciousness, which could be called the threshold of the Formless. She remembered everything and recounted everything in detail. She was an Englishwoman; I even translated from English a book in which there was a description of all she saw and did in these domains.

It is obviously the sign of a great mastery of one’s being, and the sign of having reached a high degree of conscious development. But it is almost the opposite of the other experience of going out of one’s consciousness to enter a state in which one is no longer conscious; it is, so to say, the opposite.

(Silence)

That brings me to something which is both a recommendation and an advice.

We have read in The Synthesis of Yoga, and also recently translated from The Life Divine, some passages in which Sri Aurobindo gives details, explanations and advice to those who do sadhana and try to have experiences that at times are too strong for their state of consciousness — which brings rather unfortunate results. On this subject I made a remark, and I have been asked to explain my remark. I said:

“One must always be greater than one’s experience.”
What I meant is this:
Whatever may be the nature, the strength and wonder of an experience, you must not be dominated by it to such an extent that it governs your entire being and you lose your balance and your contact with a reasonable and calm attitude. That is to say, when you enter in some way into contact with a force or consciousness which surpasses yours, instead of being entirely dominated by this consciousness or force, you must always be able to remind yourself that it is only one experience among thousands and thousands of others, and that, consequently, its nature is not absolute, it is relative. No matter how beautiful it may be, you can and ought to have better ones: however exceptional it may be, there are others still more marvellous; and however high it may be, you can always rise still higher in future. So, instead of losing one’s head one places the experience in the chain of development and keeps a healthy physical balance so as not to lose the sense of relativity with ordinary life. In this way, there is no risk.

The means?... One who knows how to do this will always find it very easy, but for one who doesn’t know it is perhaps a little... a little troublesome.

There is a means.
It is never to lose the idea of the total self-giving to the Grace which is the expression of the Supreme. When one gives oneself, when one surrenders, entrusts oneself entirely to That which is above, beyond all creation, and when, instead of seeking any personal advantage from the experience, one makes an offering of it to the divine Grace and knows that it is from This that the experience comes and that it is to This that the result of the experience must be given back, then one is quite safe.

In other words: no ambition, no vanity, no pride. A sincere self-giving, a sincere humility, and one is sheltered from all danger. There you are, this is what I call being greater than one’s experience.

Now, does anyone have a question?
(Silence)

(A swarm of insects appears.) That brings us down from the heights! (Laughing) I think it would be very wise to put out the light and get rid of the insects.... You won’t go to sleep, will you?

There is something I was asked some time ago to which I have not yet replied. It is this. I have written somewhere:

“The absolute of every being is its unique relation with the Divine and its unique manner of expressing the Divine in the manifestation.”

This is what is called here in India the truth of the being or the law of the being, the dharma of the being: the centre and the cause of the individuality.

Everyone carries his truth within himself, a truth which is unique, which is altogether his own and which he must express in his life. Now what is this truth? This is the question I have been asked:

“What is this truth of the being, and how is it expressed externally in physical life?”

It is expressed in this way: each individual being has a direct and unique relation with the Supreme, the Origin, That which is beyond all creation. It is this unique relation which must be expressed in one’s life, through a unique mode of being in relation with the Divine. Therefore, each one is directly and exclusively in relation with the Divine — the relation one has with the Divine is unique and exclusive; so that you receive from the Divine, when you are in a receptive state, the totality of the relation it is possible for you to have, and this is neither a sharing nor a part nor a repetition, but exclusively and uniquely the relation which each one can have with the Divine. So, from
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the psychological point of view, one is *all alone* in having this direct relation with the Divine.

One is all alone with the Supreme.*2

The relation one has with Him will never have an equal, will never be exactly the same as another's. No two are the same and therefore *nothing* can be taken away from you to be given to another, *nothing* can be withdrawn from you to be given to another. And if this relation disappeared from the creation, it would really disappear — which is impossible.

And this means that if one lives in the truth of one's being, one is an indispensable part of the creation. Naturally, I don't mean if one lives what one *believes* one should be, I am saying if one lives the truth of one's being; if, by a development, one is able to enter into contact with the truth of one's being, one is immediately in a unique and exclusive relation with the Divine, which hasn't its equal.

There, now.

And naturally, because it is the truth of your being, that is what you should express in your life.

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*2 This sentence was added by Mother on 13 May 1962.*