22 November 1967

There is a progress.

At the end of the physical demonstration on the 2nd of December,¹ all the children in a chorus are going to pray, and I have written the prayer for them. I am going to read it to you. But I had not thought of it; I was asked and I did it.

Probably they read the Bulletin and so they asked for a prayer—a prayer that is truly of the body. And I answered:

The prayer of the cells of the body

Now that, by the effect of the Grace, we are slowly emerging out of inconscience and waking to a conscious life, an ardent prayer rises in us for more light, more consciousness,

"O Supreme Lord of the universe, we implore Thee, give us the strength and the beauty, the harmonious perfection needed to be Thy divine instruments upon earth."

It is almost a proclamation.

After the demonstration they are going to say it. It appears they are going to show the whole historical growth of physical culture and then at the end they will say: we have not come to the end, we are at the beginning of something and here is our prayer.

I was very glad.

You say there is a progress?

¹ Every year on this date, the children of the School and the Ashram sadhaks who take part in sports give a general demonstration of physical culture.
Notes on the Way

A progress! A tremendous progress! They had never thought, never; there in the totality they had never thought of achieving the transformation: they were thinking of becoming the best athletes in the world and all the usual nonsense.

The body, you see, they asked for a prayer of the body. They have come to understand that the body must begin to transform itself into something else. Before this, they were quite full of the whole history of physical culture in all the countries, and the country where it is most advanced and how to use the body as it is, etc. Well, it was the ideal of the Olympics. Now they have jumped beyond; that was the past, now they want transformation.

Yes, people in their mind and their vital asked to become divine; well, it is all the old story of spirituality, reiterated for centuries. No, now it is the body. It is the body that wants to participate. It is altogether a progress.

Yes, but one can see very well how in the mind the aspiration maintains itself, how it lives by itself. In the heart also, one sees very well how the aspiration lives. But in the body? How to awaken this aspiration in the body?

But it is already fully awake for months in me! So it must be they have just now felt it and they feel it.

How is it done? — it is in the process of being done.

But how in oneself...

No, no, no. If it has been done in one single body, it can be done in all bodies.

Yes, but I ask how... yes, how?

Well, that is what I have been trying to explain for months.
First of all, to awaken the consciousness in the cells...

*Well, yes!*

Yes, of course, but once it is done, it is done: the consciousness wakes up more and more, the cells live consciously, aspire consciously. I have been trying to explain it for months; for months and months I have been trying to explain it. And so it is just that which has pleased me, that they have understood at least the possibility.

The same consciousness which was the monopoly of the vital and the mind has become that of the body: the consciousness is working in the cells of the body.

The cells of the body are becoming something conscious, wholly conscious.

A consciousness that is independent, not depending at all upon the vital or the mental consciousness: it is a bodily consciousness.

*(Silence)*

And this physical mind of which Sri Aurobindo said that it was an impossibility, that it was something that turns round and round and will always turn round and round, precisely without consciousness, like a kind of machine, that mind has been converted, has become silent, and in the silence it has received the inspiration of the Consciousness. And it has begun again to pray: the same prayers that were there before in the mind.

*I quite understand what can happen in you, but...*

But since it is happening in one body, it can happen in all bodies! I am not made of something different from the others. The difference is in consciousness, that is all. It is made exactly of
the same thing, with the same things, I eat the same things, and it was made in the same way, absolutely.

And it was as stupid, as obscure, as unconscious, as obstinate as all the bodies of the world.

And this began when the doctors declared that I was very ill,2 that was the beginning. Because the entire body was emptied of its habits and its forces, and then slowly, slowly, slowly the cells woke up to a new receptivity and opened themselves to the Divine Influence directly.

Otherwise there would be no hope. If this matter that started by being... Even a pebble is already an organisation — certainly it was worse than a pebble: unconscious, inert, absolute; and then, little by little, little by little that woke up. It sees, yes, it sees, it has only to open its eyes to see. Well, it is the same thing which happens: for the animal to become a man it did not require anything other than the infusion of a consciousness, a mental consciousness; and now it is the awakening of this consciousness which was altogether at the bottom, the very bottom. The mind is withdrawn, the vital is withdrawn, all is withdrawn. At the time when I was said to be ill, the mind was gone, the vital was gone, the body was left to itself — purposely. Yes, it is just because the vital and the mental were gone that it gave the impression of a very serious illness. And then, in the body left to itself, little by little the cells began to wake up to the consciousness (gesture of aspiration rising up); this consciousness that was infused into the body by the vital (from the mental into the vital, from the vital into the body), when both had disappeared, the consciousness emerged slowly, slowly. That started with a burst of the Love from the highest summit, the last supreme altitude, and then little by little, little by little, it came down into the body. And then this physical mind, that is to say, something altogether, altogether stupid, which used to turn round and round, repeating always the same thing, a hundred

2 During the spring of 1962.
times the same thing, little by little it was illumined, became conscious, was organised, and then it entered into the silence; then in the silence the aspiration expressed itself in prayers.

(Silence)

It is the contradiction of all the spiritual assertions of the past: “If you want to live fully conscious of the divine life, give up your body — the body cannot follow”; well, Sri Aurobindo came and said: the body, not only can it follow, it can even be the base for manifesting the Divine.

The work remains to be done.

But now a certitude is there. The result remains still far off, very far; much has to be done before the crust, the experience of the most external surface as it is, manifests what is happening within (not “within” in the spiritual depths: within the body). To enable that to manifest what is within... This will come last, and it is good it is so, for if it came before time, one would neglect the work, one would be so satisfied as to forget to finish his work; everything should be done within, should be well and good, should be thoroughly changed, then the outside will speak it out.

But it is all one single substance, all similar everywhere, and everywhere it was unconscious; and then what is remarkable is that automatically things are happening (gesture showing points scattered everywhere in the world) altogether unexpected, here and there, in people who do not even know anything.

(Silence)

The material cells have to obtain the capacity to receive and to manifest consciousness. And then what makes for a radical transformation is that in place of, so to say, an eternal and indefinite ascent, there is the appearance of a new type — it is a descent from above. The previous descent was a mental descent,
Notes on the Way

and this one, Sri Aurobindo calls it a supramental descent; the impression is that of a descent of the supreme Consciousness which infuses itself into something that is capable of receiving it and manifesting it. And then, out of this, when it has been thoroughly churned (how long it will take, one does not know), a new form will take birth, which will be what Sri Aurobindo called the supramental form — which will be... it does not matter what, I do not know what these beings will be called.

How will they express themselves, how will they make themselves understood, and all that?... In man, it has developed very slowly. Only the mind has laboured much and basically has made things move quicker.

How is one going to reach there?... There will surely be stages in the manifestation, with perhaps a specimen that will come and say: this is how it is. (Mother looks in front) One sees that.

Only, when man came out of the animal, there was no means of recording — of noting down and keeping an account of the process — now it is quite different, so it will be more interesting.

(Silence)

But still at the present moment, the vast majority — the vast majority — of the intellectual humanity is perfectly satisfied with being busy with itself and its bits of progress like this (Mother draws a microscopic circle). It has not even — not even the desire to be anything else.

This means that the coming of the superhuman being... it may very well pass unperceived or not be understood. One cannot say, for there is no analogy; evidently if a monkey, one of the big monkeys, had met the first man, he would simply have felt that it was a being a little... queer, that’s all. But now it is different, because man thinks, reasons.

But with regard to all that is superior to man, man has been accustomed to think that these were beings... divine beings, that
is to say, they had no body, they appeared in the light — in short, all the gods as they have been conceived — but it is not at all like that.

(Long silence)

Then?

You are not convinced?

Why don’t you try?

Of course! That is why I put the question to you. I am not doubting anything whatsoever. I put the question to you, I asked you: “How is one to do it, I do not know how it is done.”... For example, in the morning I shave myself; well, in the morning one is stupid, one is tired, the mind refuses to work, the vital refuses to work...

Yes, it is an excellent occasion.

Certainly, it is just what I do, and I say: well, no, I do not see. I do not know how to make it move — it does not move. It does not move unless I put my mind or vital or heart to it.

Bah!

It is not that I am doubting. I say that my body is an ass, quite possibly, but I do not doubt.

It is not an ass, poor fellow! (Mother laughs.)

Doubts I do not have, but the question about the “how”, that, yes, I do not know.

For me that problem never arose, because... When one plays
Notes on the Way

music or does painting, one sees very well that the consciousness enters into the cells and these cells become conscious. This experience, for example: there are things in a box and one says to the hand: “Take twelve”; (without counting, like that) the hand picks up the twelve and gives them to you. That is an experience that I had long, long ago. At the age of twenty I started having experiences like that, therefore I know. I knew how the consciousness works. Well, it is impossible to learn piano or to do painting unless the consciousness enters into the hands and the hands become conscious independently of the head. The head can be busy elsewhere, that has no importance. Besides, this is exactly what happens in the case of people called somnambulists: they have a consciousness belonging to the body that makes them move and do things [that are] quite independent of the mind and the vital.

I mean to say that when I am before the mirror for shaving, if I do not put within me the mantra or an aspiration coming from the heart, well, it is an inert block that is shaving, and add to that the physical mind whirling. But if I put a mantra or a mental will...

But no! It is the body that ends by saying the mantra! Spontaneously, so spontaneously that even if you by chance think of other things, your body will be saying the mantra. You do not have this experience?

No.

And it is the body that aspires, the body that says the mantra, the body that wants the light, the body that wants the consciousness — you, you can think of other things, Tom, Dick or Harry, a book, etc., it has no importance.

But now I understand very well, very well; in the beginning I did not understand, I believed that I was made “ill” so that I
would stop the life that I was leading when I was downstairs\textsuperscript{3} — but I lead a life still more busy than the life downstairs, therefore... I asked myself why, whether it was a period of transition. But now I understand: cut off, I fainted in a swoon. That is why the doctor declared that I was ill: I could not move a step without fainting; I wanted to walk from here to there: on the way, pouf! I fainted. Someone had to hold me so that the body would not fall down. But as for me, I did not lose consciousness for a single minute. I fainted, but I was conscious, I saw my body, I knew that I had fainted, I did not lose consciousness, and the body also did not lose consciousness. So now I understand: it was cut off from the vital and the mental and left to its own resources; it was simply the body: all that it knew, all the experiences it had had, all the mastery that was there in all the states of being, the vital, the mental and above, all that gone! and this poor body left to itself. And then naturally, little by little, all that was rebuilt, rebuilt, a conscious, purely conscious being.

Yes, I understand, I understand. But truly it was cut off, that I have known — I have seen — cut off, the states of being sent away: “Go away, you are no longer wanted.” And then a new life needed to be built up. And instead of the necessity of passing through all the states of being as was done before, by successive awakenings (\textit{gesture of ascent step by step as done by the old yogis}) up to the highest, the very highest, beyond form — now it is not at all like that, it needed nothing at all of all that, it has simply to... (\textit{gesture of aspiration that rises and opens like a flower}). Something has opened and developed within, and that is why this stupid mind has been organised, has been capable of being silent in an aspiration; and then... then it was the direct contact, without any intermediary — direct contact. And that it has now, all the while. All the while, all the while, the direct contact. And it is \textit{the body}, it is not through all kinds of things and states of being, not at all, it is direct.

\textsuperscript{3} Since this “illness” in 1962, Mother retired to her apartments upstairs.
Notes on the Way

But once it is done (Sri Aurobindo has said this), once one body has done it, it has the capacity to pass it on to others: and I tell you, now — I do not say in the whole and in detail, probably not, but here and there (gesture of scattering, indicating various points upon earth) — all of a sudden one or another experience occurs in people. There are people (the majority) who are afraid; then naturally it goes away — it is because they were not sufficiently prepared within; if it is not the petty routine of every minute, of day to day, they have fear; and once they have fear, it is finished, it means that years of preparation will be needed for this to happen again. But there are some who are not afraid; an experience, all of a sudden! “Ah!...” Something altogether new, altogether unexpected, of which they never thought.

It is contagious, this I know. And it is the only hope, because if everyone had to go again through the same experience... Well, now I am ninety — at ninety people are tired, they have had enough of life. To do that one must feel young like a little child.

And it takes long, I see quite well that it has taken a long time.

And then, it is not done, it is being done, but it is not done — far from it — we are far from it.... What is the percentage of conscious cells? One does not know.

And from time to time there are some that scold the others. It is very amusing! They scold, they catch hold of them, tell them stupidities (in their way) — to those that want (Mother draws a small circle) to continue the old habits: digestion must be done in a certain way, absorption in a certain way, circulation in a certain way, respiration in a certain way... all the functions must be done according to the method of Nature; and when it is not like that, they become anxious. And then those that know, catch hold of them and put them under heavy bombardment in the name of the Lord. It is very amusing!

Something is translated in words (it is without words, but there something is translated in words) and then there are conversations among the cells (Mother laughs): “Imbecile that you
are! Why do you have fear? Don’t you see it is the Lord himself who is doing this to transform you?” And the other: “Ah!...” Then it remains quiet, and then opens itself and waits, and then... the pain goes away, the disorder goes away, and everything is put in order.

It is wonderful.

But if by mischance the mind comes in, starts to help or judge, then the whole thing stops, and all fall back into the old habit.

(Long silence)

In reality, it is the ego, vital, mental, etc., all that has been, pouf! taken away.

It was a radical operation.

And so now, there is a kind of suppleness, plasticity. And all this is learning — it is very much in relation with the whole (horizontal gesture), but it is learning to look for all its support, all its force, all its knowledge, all its light, all its will, all, all, like that (vertical gesture, turned to the Supreme), solely like that, in an extraordinary plasticity.

And then, the splendour of the Presence.