2 February 1955

This talk is based upon Bases of Yoga, Chapter 3, “In Difficulty”.

What is the meaning of “you must take the right attitude”?

He has explained this before. The right attitude is the attitude of trust, the attitude of obedience, the attitude of consecration.

“Let nothing and nobody come between you and the Mother’s force…” Who is this person?

This person? Anybody at all. Anybody at all who... There are all kinds of ways of letting someone come between you and the divine force. First of all it is to attach a very great importance to your relation with someone. It is to listen to the advice given to you by someone who is not qualified. It is to want to please anybody at all, for any reason whatever. People do that constantly, don’t they?

Probably what is written here was to someone who had heard certain things and was attaching much importance to these things — advices or remarks or opinions — who was attaching importance to these things. So Sri Aurobindo told him: Let nobody come between you and the Divine.

Whoever it might be, parents, friends, no matter who, it is not any special person... It may even be for each one a special person...

Sweet Mother, I did not understand “Sadhana has to be done in the body.”

The body? This is the continuation of something. It is said that
some people are disgusted with life and want to leave it in the hope that another time it will be better. So it is said: It is useless to run away from your body, it won’t be easier without the body. On the contrary it will be much more difficult. And the body is made for doing yoga. We are upon earth; the period one passes on earth is that in which one can make progress. One does not progress outside terrestrial life. The earthly, material life is essentially the life of progress, it is here that one makes progress. Outside the earthly life one takes rest or is unconscious or one may have periods of assimilation, periods of rest, periods of unconsciousness. But as for the periods of progress, they are on the earth and in the body. So, when you take a body it is to make progress, and when you leave it the period of progress is over.

And true progress is sadhana; that is, it is the most conscious and swiftest progress. Otherwise one makes progress with the rhythm of Nature, which means that it can take centuries and centuries and centuries and millenniums to make the slightest bit of progress. But true progress is that made by sadhana. In yoga one can do in a very short time what takes otherwise an interminable time. But it is always in the body and always upon earth that it is done, not elsewhere. That is why when one is in a body one must take advantage of it and not waste one’s time, not say, “A little later, a little later.” It is much better to do it immediately. All the years you pass without making any progress are wasted years which you are sure to regret afterwards.

“The difficulty must have come from distrust and disobedience...”

Yes, all these things — they are replies to letters. You see, someone was complaining of a difficulty. And so, having read the letter Sri Aurobindo saw that in this person the difficulty must have come from a lack of trust and obedience. He tells him so. And as it is something that happens very frequently, as it is common enough, you see, it is useful for everybody.
Questions and Answers

Mother, why is it that the same contemplation does not always produce the same sensation in oneself? That is, for example, when one looks at the sea or the stars and thinks of one’s insignificance, then there is a particular sensation which is produced within, and then at another time, when one wants to have the same experience, even if one thinks about it, why doesn’t it recur?

One can never have the same experience twice because one is never the same person twice. Between the first experience and the second, even if one hour has passed, you are no longer the same man and you can never reproduce identically the same thing. If you take care to become more conscious, more sincere, more concentrated, the experience you have will be different, but it may be deeper and more clear. But if you cling to something you have had and want to reproduce the same thing, you will have nothing at all, because you can’t have the same thing and you are in a state in which you refuse to have a new experience, for you are attached to the past one. And usually when one has had an experience which was a revelation, something altogether important, one doesn’t want to leave it, one is afraid of not having it any longer, and so, in this movement of clinging to something, one prevents oneself from progressing and puts oneself in conditions in which one can’t have the next experience.

Well, this has to be understood, because it is an absolute fact: one can never have the same experience twice. There may be similar experiences, very close, and particularly some which appear similar, but these experiences... if one is absolutely sincere, impartial and like a blank page, he will perceive that there is a difference, sometimes an essential one, between the two, though in appearance they seem very close. But the more ready you are to leave behind all that you have experienced, in order to be able to go towards something better and higher, the faster you will go; the more you drag the heavy weight of all the past which you don’t want to get rid of, the slower is your advance.
All the past should always be simply like a stepping-stone or a ladder, something to lead you farther; it should not have any other use except to push you forward. And if you can feel this and always turn your back on what is past and look at what you want to do, then you go much faster, you don’t waste time on the way. What makes you lose time is always this clinging to what has been, to what is, what seemed to you beautiful and good in what is past. This must only help you, you must not reject it, but it must help you to go forward, it must simply be something on which you lean to take a step forward.

Now, at a particular time, a set of circumstances, inner and outer, has caused one to be receptive to a certain vibration; for example, as you say, while looking at the stars or contemplating a landscape or reading a page or hearing a lecture, one has suddenly an inner revelation, an experience, something that strikes him and gives him the impression of being open to something new. But if you want to hold on to this tightly like that, you will lose everything, because one can’t keep the past, one must always go forward, advance, advance. This illumination must prepare you so that you can organise your whole being on this new level, in order to be able suddenly, one day, to leap up again to a higher step.

There is a horizontal advance between abrupt ascents. It is the moment of the abrupt ascent which gives you an impression of something like a revelation, a great inner joy. But once you have climbed the step, if you want to climb it once more you would have to go down again. You must go on preparing yourself at this level in order to climb another higher step. These things which suddenly give you a great joy are always ascents. But these ascents are prepared by a slow work of horizontal progress, that is, one must become more and more conscious, establish more and more perfectly what one is, draw from it all the inner, psychological consequences, and in action also. It is a long utilisation of an abrupt leap and, as I say, there are two kinds of progress. But the horizontal progress is indispensable.
Questions and Answers

You must not stop, you must not cling in this way to your vertical progress and not want to move because it has brought you a revelation. You must know how to leave it in order to prepare for another.