16 January 1957

“Man seeks at first blindly and does not even know that he is seeking his divine self; for he starts from the obscurity of material Nature and even when he begins to see, he is long blinded by the light that is increasing in him. God too answers obscurely to his search; He seeks and enjoys man’s blindness like the hands of a little child that grope after its mother.”

_Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 382_

_Sweet Mother, how is it that one seeks something and yet does not know that one is seeking?_

There are so many things you think, feel, want, even do, without knowing it. Are you fully conscious of yourself and of all that goes on in you? — Not at all! If, for example, suddenly, without your expecting it, at a certain moment I ask you: “What are you thinking about?” your reply, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, will be: “I don’t know.” And if in the same way I ask another question like this: “What do you want?” you will also say: “I don’t know.” And “What do you feel?” — “I don’t know.” It is only to those who are used to observing themselves, watching how they live, who are concentrated upon this need to know what is going on in them, that one can ask a precise question like this, and only they can immediately reply. In some instances in life, yes, one is absorbed in what one feels, thinks, wants, and then one can say, “Yes, I want that, I am thinking of that, I experience that”, but these are only moments of existence, not the whole time.

Haven’t you noticed that? No?

Well, to find out what one truly is, to find out why one is on earth, what is the purpose of physical existence, of this presence
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on earth, of this formation, this existence... the vast majority of people live without asking themselves this even once! Only a small élite ask themselves this question with interest, and fewer still start working to get the answer. For, unless one is fortunate enough to come across someone who knows it, it is not such an easy thing to find. Suppose, for instance, that there had never come to your hands a book of Sri Aurobindo’s or of any of the writers or philosophers or sages who have dedicated their lives to this quest; if you were in the ordinary world, as millions of people are in the ordinary world, who have never heard of anything, except at times — and not always nowadays, even quite rarely — of some gods and a certain form of religion which is more a habit than a faith and, which, besides, rarely tells you why you are on earth.... Then, one doesn’t even think of thinking about it. One lives from day to day the events of each day. When one is very young, one thinks of playing, eating, and a little later of learning, and after that one thinks of all the circumstances of life. But to put this problem to oneself, to confront this problem and ask oneself: “But after all, why am I here?” How many do that? There are people to whom this idea comes only when they are facing a catastrophe. When they see someone whom they love die or when they find themselves in particularly painful and difficult circumstances, they turn back upon themselves, if they are sufficiently intelligent, and ask themselves: “But really, what is this tragedy we are living, and what’s the use of it and what is its purpose?”

And only at that moment does one begin the search to know.

And it is only when one has found, you see, found what he says, found that one has a divine Self and that consequently one must seek to know this divine Self.... This comes much later, and yet, in spite of everything, from the very moment of birth in a physical body, there is in the being, in its depths, this psychic presence which pushes the whole being towards this fulfilment. But who knows it and recognises it, this psychic being? That too comes only in special circumstances, and unfortunately, most of
the time these have to be painful circumstances, otherwise one goes on living unthinkingly. And in the depths of one's being is this psychic being which seeks, seeks, seeks to awaken the consciousness and re-establish the union. One knows nothing about it.

When you were ten years old, did you know this? No, you didn’t. Well, still in the depths of your being your psychic being already wanted it and was seeking for it. It was probably your psychic which brought you here.

There are so many things which happen and you don’t even ask yourself why. You take them... it is like that because it is like that. It would be very interesting to know how many of you, till I spoke to you about it, had asked yourselves how it happened that you were here?

Naturally, most of the time, the reply is perhaps very simple: “My parents are here, so I am here.” However, you were not born here. Nobody was born here. Not even you, were you? You were born in Bangalore. No one was born here.... And yet, you are all here. You have not asked yourselves why—it was like that because it was like that! And so, between even asking oneself and giving an external reply satisfactory enough to be accepted as final, and then telling oneself, “Perhaps it is an indication of a destiny, of the purpose of my life...” What a long way one must travel to come to that!

And for everybody there are more or less external reasons, which, besides, are not worth much and explain everything in the dullest possible way, but there is a deeper reason which as yet you do not know. And are there many of you who would be very much interested in knowing why they are here? How many of you have asked yourselves this question: “What is the true reason for my being here?”

Have you asked yourself the question?

*I asked you once, Sweet Mother.*
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Oh! that’s true. And you?... And you?

*I don’t remember.*

You don’t remember. And you?

*Not before, Mother.*

Not before. Now it begins to come! and you?

No.

No.... And I could ask many others still. I know very well. Only those who have come after having had some experience of life and came because they wanted to come, and had a conscious reason for coming, they can of course tell me, “I came because of that”, and that would be at least a partial explanation. The truest, deepest reason may still elude them, that is, what they specially have to realise in the Work. That already requires having passed through many stages on the path.

Essentially, it is only when one has become aware of one’s soul, has been identified with one’s psychic being that one can see in a single flash the picture of one’s individual development through the ages. Then indeed one begins to know... but not before. Then, indeed, I assure you it becomes very interesting. It changes one’s position in life.

There is such a great difference between feeling vaguely, having a hesitant impression of something, of a force, a movement, an impulse, an attraction, of something which drives you in life — but it is still so vague, so uncertain, it is hazy — there is such a difference between this and having a clear vision, an exact perception, a total understanding of the meaning of one’s life. And only then does one begin to see things as they are, not before. Only then can one follow the thread of one’s destiny and clearly see the goal and the way to reach it. But that happens
only through successive inner awakenings, like doors opening
suddenly on new horizons—truly, a new birth into a truer,
deeper, more lasting consciousness.

Until then you live in a cloud, gropingly, under the weight
of a destiny which at times crushes you, gives you the feeling
of having been made in a certain way and being unable to do
anything about it. You are under the burden of an existence
which weighs you down, makes you crawl on the ground instead
of rising above and seeing all the threads, the guiding threads,
the threads which bind different things into a single movement
of progression towards a realisation that grows clear.

One must spring up out of this half-consciousness which is
usually considered quite natural—this is your “normal” way of
being and you do not even draw back from it sufficiently to be
able to see and wonder at this incertitude, this lack of precision;
while, on the contrary, to know that one is seeking and to seek
consciously, deliberately, steadfastly and methodically, this in-
deed is the exceptional, almost “abnormal” condition. And yet
only in this way does one begin to truly live.