17 August 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Surrender and Opening”.

*Sweet Mother, what is the meaning of “a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness”?*

You see, one always has the feeling either of a vertical ascent to the heights of the Supreme Consciousness or a kind of... how to put it?... horizontal widening into a universal consciousness.

A universal consciousness means becoming aware of the forces which manifest in the universe and in all that is manifested. For example, just this: there are many people here; well, let us take these people as representing the universe. Now, if you want to unite with them, you have a movement of consciousness spreading above them all and uniting with all, like this (gesture). It is a movement which spreads horizontally.

But if you want to unite with the supramental Force which wants to come down, you have the feeling of gathering all your aspiration and making it rise up in a vertical ascent to the higher forces which have to descend. It is just a question of movement, you see, it is a movement of widening or a movement of concentration and ascent.

*What does the liberation of the psychic being mean?*

Because one has the feeling — this is a feeling one very often has in the beginning of the sadhana — that the psychic being is as though shut up in a kind of hard shell, a prison, and that this is what prevents it from manifesting outwardly and entering into a conscious and constant relation with the outer consciousness, the outer being. One has altogether the feeling that it is as though enclosed in a box or in a prison with walls
which must be broken or a door which must be forced in order to be able to enter. So naturally if one can break the walls, open the door, it liberates the psychic being which was shut in and which can now manifest externally. All these are images. But each person, naturally, has his own personal image, his personal method, with small modifications.

Some of these images are very common to all those who have had the experience. For example, when one goes down into the depths of one’s being to find the psychic right at the bottom of one’s consciousness, there is this image of descending into a deep well, going down deeper and deeper, descending, and it is as though one were truly sinking into a well.

Naturally all these are analogies; but they are associations with the experience of impressions which give a great deal of force and concrete reality to the experience.

As when one goes on the discovery of one’s inner being, of all the different parts of one’s being, one very often has the feeling that one is entering deep into a hall or room, and according to the colour, the atmosphere, the things it contains, one has a very clear perception of the part of the being one is visiting. And then, one can go from one room to another, open doors and go into deeper and deeper rooms each of which has its own character. And often, these inner visits can be made during the night. Then it takes a still more concrete form, like a dream, and one feels that he is entering a house, and that this house is very familiar to him. And according to the time, the periods, it is internally different, and sometimes it may be in a state of very great disorder, very great confusion, where everything is mixed up; sometimes there are even broken things; it is quite a chaos. At other times these things are organised, put in their place; it is as though one had arranged the household, one cleans up, puts it in order, and it is always the same house. This house is the image, a kind of objective image, of your inner being. And in accordance with what you see there or do there, you have a symbolic representation of your psychological work. It is very
useful for concretising. It depends on people.

Some people are just intellectuals; for them everything is expressed by ideas and not by images. But if they were to go down into a more material domain, well, they risk not touching things in their concrete reality and remaining only in the domain of ideas, remaining in the mind and remaining there indefinitely. Then one thinks one is making progress, and mentally one has done so, though it is something altogether indefinite.

The mind’s progress may take thousands of years, for it is a very vast and very indefinite field, which is constantly renewed. But if one wants to progress in the vital and physical, well, this imaged representation becomes very useful for fixing the action, making it more concrete. Naturally it doesn’t happen completely at will; it depends on each one’s nature. But those who have the power of concentrating with images, well, they have one more facility.

To sit in meditation before a closed door, as though it were a heavy door of bronze — and one sits in front of it with the will that it may open — and to pass to the other side; and so the whole concentration, the whole aspiration is gathered into a beam and pushes, pushes, pushes against this door, and pushes more and more with an increasing energy until all of a sudden it bursts open and one enters. It makes a very powerful impression. And so one is as though plunged into the light and then one has the full enjoyment of a sudden and radical change of consciousness, with an illumination that captures one entirely, and the feeling that one is becoming another person. And this is a very concrete and very powerful way of entering into contact with one’s psychic being.

*Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo says: “The nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi.” Ordinarily is there not a nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness?*
Ordinarily means in the ordinary life? A relation between the psychic being...

Yes.

It is almost, almost totally unconscious.

In the ordinary life there’s not one person in a million who has a conscious contact with his psychic being, even momentarily. The psychic being may work from within, but so invisibly and unconsciously for the outer being that it is as though it did not exist. And in most cases, the immense majority, almost the totality of cases, it’s as though it were asleep, not at all active, in a kind of torpor.

It is only with the sadhana and a very persistent effort that one succeeds in having a conscious contact with his psychic being. Naturally, it is possible that there are exceptional cases — but this is truly exceptional, and they are so few that they could be counted — where the psychic being is an entirely formed, liberated being, master of itself, which has chosen to return to earth in a human body in order to do its work. And in this case, even if the person doesn’t do the sadhana consciously, it is possible that the psychic being is powerful enough to establish a more or less conscious relation. But these cases are, so to say, unique and are exceptions which confirm the rule.

In almost, almost all cases, a very, very sustained effort is needed to become aware of one’s psychic being. Usually it is considered that if one can do it in thirty years one is very lucky — thirty years of sustained effort, I say. It may happen that it’s quicker. But this is so rare that immediately one says, “This is not an ordinary human being.” That’s the case of people who have been considered more or less divine beings and who were great yogis, great initiates.

(Silence)
Questions and Answers

Do you want a concentration, a meditation?
I suggest that the lights may be turned off... this light here above my head, because there are so many insects.

(Meditation)