5 April 1951

“Everything here is followed by the supermind; the mind movements and not less the vital, the material movements, all the play of the universe have for it a very deep interest, but of another kind. It is about the same difference as that between the interest taken in a puppet-play by one who holds the strings and knows what the puppets are to do and the will that moves them and knows that they can do only what it moves them to do, and the interest taken by another who observes the play but sees only what is happening from moment to moment and knows nothing else. The one who follows the play and is outside its secret has a stronger, an eager and passionate interest in what will happen and he gives an excited attention to its unforeseen or dramatic events; the other, who holds the strings and moves the show, is unmoved and tranquil. There is a certain intensity of interest which comes from ignorance and is bound up with illusion, and that must disappear when you are out of the ignorance. The interest that human beings take in things founds itself on the illusion; if that were removed, they would have no interest at all in the play; they would find it dry and dull. That is why all this ignorance, all this illusion has lasted so long; it is because men like it, because they cling to it and its peculiar kind of appeal that it endures.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

How can interest be founded on illusion?

So you think you are not in the illusion? You imagine you are outside the illusion? In the world as it is now, all is illusion. It is
Questions and Answers

perhaps an advantage, but you see only the surface of things, at most a very small part — you do not see the depth of things, you do not see the core of things, you do not see the cause of things. Do you know what is going to happen tomorrow?... You may guess it more or less, telling yourself that it will be like today but you don’t know it at all. You do not know what is going to happen tomorrow, still less in a month’s time, yet less in a year. And do you know where you were before your birth? And do you know what will happen to you after your death?... You take interest in what you do just because you do not know what is going to happen. If you were fully in the know of what is going to happen, I am sure that 999 persons in a 1000 would sit down quietly waiting for it to happen. If you know exactly what is going to take place, all your enthusiasm would evaporate and in most cases you would say, “Have I to do all this to get there? Ah, no!”

Then illusion is necessary?

I do not say it is necessary, I say that it is evident, which is not quite the same thing. What is necessary is to change.

One of the great things, you see, is just to be able to do something with as much interest, as much intensity, as much energy, while knowing perfectly what the result will be and even if the result is the opposite of what you seem to expect. This is not easy, but still it is indispensable.

I don’t see why it is indispensable.

I am saying that it is indispensable to reach the state in which one can do things, continue to act, while knowing perfectly what the result will be and even if this result is the opposite of what one hopes for. It is this condition of detachment which is indispensable — not being in illusion!
During the 1929 talk someone asked what should be done to effect the cure of an illness, whether one should exercise one's willpower or only live in the confidence that it will be done or rely entirely on the divine Power. Mother replied:

“All these are so many ways of doing the same thing.... But whatever you ask for or whatever your effort, you must feel, even while trying your best, using knowledge or putting forth power that the result depends upon the Divine Grace.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

But first you must will it, I believe that is quite important! There is no one method to follow.... I read this and at the same time ask myself how many people would be satisfied to hear this. All the materialism and positivism in the world have been constructed just because people do not want the divine Grace to come in at all. If they are cured they want to say, “It is I who cured myself”; if they make a progress, they want to think, “It is I who have progressed”; if they organise something, they want to proclaim, “It is I who am organising.” And many, many of those who try to do otherwise, if they look within themselves, would see how seldom spontaneously, sincerely (not as when one says something because one knows it should be said, or as one thinks something because it is the fashion to think like that but spontaneously, sincerely, with all their heart) they know that it is not they who have done the thing, but the divine force. When they have made a progress, when they have changed something in themselves, when they have learnt something, then when is it that spontaneously, without an effort of will, without thinking, without needing to tell oneself, “One ought to think like this”, spontaneously one knows that without the divine force nothing would have been done? Look into yourself, it is a very interesting thing, very interesting, how many times a day you think (without even telling yourself), “I have done this”, “I have been able to
Questions and Answers

do that”, “I succeeded in this”, “I failed in that”, and when you have made a good effort, when you have obtained a result, you need a little moment for thought, or more, to tell yourself, “If the divine force had not helped me, probably I would not have been able to do it.” The spontaneous thing is, “Oh! I have succeeded”, isn’t that true? There is indeed a part of the mind which has been educated, which has learnt, has reflected, understood, which is well-disposed and truly feels that in reality it is like that, but this is only one part of the mind, and it is not always active, sometimes it must be called up, asked its advice, “What is then the best attitude to have?”, “What should I think?” I believe all who have taken up yoga, if they are sincere, if they reflect for a moment, tell themselves, “I was not aware of it, but if I have succeeded, it was probably because the divine forces were there to help me, otherwise I would not have been able to succeed.” This is well understood. But there comes a moment when one knows that one would not have been able to lift a finger if these forces had not been there. That comes later.... But to begin with, how many times, if one thinks, if one quite simply observes oneself, does one catch oneself saying, “It is I!” And, then, one congratulates oneself sometimes, one says, “After all I can do something, I am capable!” I am going further: how many people would be capable of doing anything at all if simply deprived of the pleasure of being able to tell themselves, “I have done this, I have realised that, I have made a progress, how well I played this game”? How many people would be able to sincerely do something if this pleasure were taken away? I have known individuals whose mind was much more developed than the rest of the being, they had understood very well (almost too well); they sat down to meditate and all their energy was gone, all vitality evaporated into a kind of peace, not unpleasant, but very still. There is no more need to do anything, no longer any need to move, one dreams.... Under a tree, arms crossed, one leaves the Divine to do everything for oneself, even feeding you if you need it. This is perhaps very well, but this shows
that the instrument is not ready; it is not really at the service of the Divine, it is at the service of the ego, and when the ego is taken away, it does nothing any longer. Therefore, so long as one lives in the ego this illusion is necessary to make you act; it is necessary to keep up action until one is completely transformed or, in any case, till the true consciousness is established.

I have said this and I repeat it (Mother takes up her book):

“Whatever you do, whatever the process you use, and even if you happen to have acquired in it a great skill and power, you must leave the result in the hands of the Divine. Always you may try, but it is for the Divine to give you the fruit of your effort or not to give it. There your personal power stops; if the result comes, it is the Divine Power and not yours that brings it.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

Well, it is this idea, which has been taught in almost all religions, that has made men atheistic, so much does it anger them — an anger of revolt: “What! It is not I!”

And this “I”, if you only knew how big it is! how it occupies the whole place.... It is this which is the base of all materialism.

In silent meditation, should not one make oneself completely empty? But, then, how can it depend on the one who meditates?

I think there is a confusion between silence in the mind and the complete emptiness in the being, they are two very different things. Besides, I don’t see very well how one can make oneself completely empty — one would not exist any longer!

“To make yourself blank in meditation creates an inner silence; it does not mean that you have become nothing or have become a dead and inert mass. Making yourself
Questions and Answers

an empty vessel, you invite that which shall fill it. It means that you release the stress of your inner consciousness towards realisation. The nature of the consciousness and the degree of its stress determine the forces that you bring into play and whether they shall help and fulfil or fail or even harm and hinder.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (23 June)

What does “the degree of its stress” mean?

Aspiration and will produce a stress in the being. But I say “degree”, for there is also the point upon which the stress works.

I say “to make yourself blank” is to release the stress of your consciousness towards realisation, towards the goal you want to realise. The “stress” is the pressure upon a point, what is concentrated upon a point and insists that it be done. Consciousness — the consciousness of the being, individual consciousness — puts a pressure upon a point, you see. We may take the example we were just speaking of: you have a chronic illness, a malformation of the body, a physical defect. Then your consciousness, in its aspiration and will puts a more or less constant stress on the thing it wants to realise, what you want to cure.

Well, when you make yourself empty within in meditation (this is one form of meditation if you like), this means that you stop this concentration of will: your consciousness becomes neutral for the moment. Its stress is upon this point (it may be on other points, on things more or less concrete or abstract, but the stress is on one point) and when you make yourself empty you withdraw this pressure, this stress, and you remain like a blank page upon which nothing is written. This is what I call “making yourself empty”, not to have any active will concentrated upon one point or another. And so I say the moment you make yourself empty, the stress indeed stops, and yet in your silent aspiration you put yourself in contact with the forces attracted by this stress you usually have, the special point of stress you
have normally. That is why I have emphasised the fact that all depends upon the person, because everything depends upon his habitual aspiration, the thing he usually wants to realise, for he is naturally in touch with the forces which will answer his aspiration. So, if for a certain time one stops the activity of this aspiration and remains silently receptive, passive, well, the effect of the habitual aspiration remains and will draw just those forces which ought to answer it.

You have said that the world and the darkness were concomitant. What is the cause of this concomitance?

The cause... is the light which has become the darkness and the consciousness which has become the inconscience! How to speak about these things? You may call this an accident if you like, if that satisfies your mind. It was perhaps, after all, the best thing that could have happened, one can’t tell. All depends upon the point of view one takes. There must certainly be a consciousness in which this was foreseen, and if it has not been avoided, it means that it forms part of the programme!... It is a human way of looking at the problem, for things do not happen quite like that in those regions. One may also relate a story which could make a subject, a magnificent drama, but it would be only a story, a way of saying things.

A story is of value only to the extent it can help you to understand things. Ah! Here is an interesting subject.... A story, that is, a way of saying things, is of value only if it can make you understand the thing. A language (which is a kind of story) is of value only to the extent it is capable of putting you in contact with the Reality. Science is a language, Art is a language — all activity is a sort of language, that is, a way of expression. And the way of expression is of value only if it puts you in contact with what it wants to express. It is a very interesting generalisation, for you can bring into it all the categories you want and you will see that it is true.
Questions and Answers

It is the same for everything. The way of approaching the universe and the universal truth is also a language and all depends upon the person who uses it, the person to whom the understanding is to be communicated. Whatever may be the way of telling, if you understand, that is all that is necessary. If you do not understand, even if it be the wonder of wonders, the truth of truths, it will have no value for you. This is an essentially pragmatic point of view of the universe; things have value only if they realise that for which they have been made, and the most beautiful philosophies of the world are of no use to those who do not understand them. The most beautiful works of art in the world are quite useless to those whom they do not put on the path of the Truth. And the most perfect yoga in the world is useless to those whom it does not lead to the Realisation. And if you have this sense of relativity, you have finished with all dogmatism, all sectarianism, all that kind of absolutism which leads one always to think that all that has done us good is “the truth”—it is the truth for us, it is not necessarily the truth for our neighbour. And what our neighbour thinks is the truth for him, and when you say, “It is idiotic, it is quite useless”, if it helps him to realise the truth, it is excellent, it is the best thing possible for him. And everything, everything on earth is like that. And if you do not want to be altogether narrow, to put on visors and not see farther than the tip of your nose, you must first of all understand this. You must understand that all things in the universe tend towards a goal and that it is to the extent they help to realise this goal that they have a value, and that this value is quite relative; and what is good for one may not be so for another, what is good at one moment may not be so at another and, consequently, every kind of dogmatism is an absurdity.

It is very easy to say, “That, that’s true, now I know that it is true and I shall not think otherwise”; this is very easy, and in fact something has suddenly put you in touch with a light, you have had an experience, you have become conscious of yourself,
conscious of something which transcends you and is the reality of your being, so for you it is perfect. But do not imagine that you must go from door to door, from city to city, country to country, telling people, “I proclaim the Truth”, because what is true for you may not be at all good for another. What you have seen has its truth in itself — everything has its truth in itself — but the true raison d’être of this truth is that it has helped you to find yourself, to find the truth of your being, and it may quite possibly not help your neighbour, unless you have a considerable power of persuasion and oblige him to see things as you have seen them yourself, but this has not much value.

When you have understood this, you will no longer say, “Why is there such a diversity in the world, why all this multiplicity, why all this confusion, why...?” It is a confusion simply because you don’t understand and things are not in their place. If things were in their place, there would be no confusion. And we come to this, that you cannot take away one atom from this world without dislocating the universe. All that is, was necessary — if it had not been necessary, it would not have been. The whole totality of things is indispensable for realising the Divine. If you took away one of these things, there would be a hole in the realisation. And I am not speaking only of material things, material points, I am speaking of all the depths. So when you say as many do, “Ah! If that were not there in the world, how fine the world would be”, you are displaying your ignorance.

I met in Japan one of the sons of Tolstoy; he was going round the world preaching human unity. He had caught this from his father and was going everywhere in the world preaching human unity. I met him at some friends’ place and asked him, “How are you going to realise this human unity?” Do you know what reply he gave me? “Oh! It is very simple — if everybody spoke the same language, if everybody dressed in the same manner, if everybody lived in the same manner, the whole world would be united!” Then I told him, “That would be a poor world not worth living in.” He did not understand me!