7 April 1951

Mother reads a question put to her in 1929 by an English disciple:

“If the Divine that is all love is the source of the creation, whence have come all the evils that abound upon earth?”

Questions and Answers 1929 (30 June)

Whence come the evils?... Who is going to answer me? A philosophic answer, a scientific answer, a psychological answer and a poetic answer!

*They come from the same source as ignorance and obscurity.*

A mystic answer, a religious answer. Oh! You have no imagination!

*In order that the work on earth may be done perfectly, the evil forces are sent.*

Evil is sent so that one may perfect oneself? What you say is quite defensible, but this would have terribly shocked the lady who asked me the question, she would have said, “How could God have done that, He who is all love?... The creation was not well done!”

Someone told me after having read *Genesis*, “God took seven days to do all that, then He said that it was good! He has a strange opinion!”

*At a certain time, the great Teresa had to face many calamities. She complained to God, saying, “Why do*
these things happen to me, who am full of goodwill?"

Then, it seems, God replied, “It is thus that I treat my friends. It is for this reason that we have so little!”

Now we touch the source of the difficulty. I don’t know if you have understood it, but there is a central fault in the question of that lady; she makes God or the Divine a personality quite independent of his creation. She should have said, “Someone who, having the power of creation, has created a world like this, truly, he must be sadistic”, and she would have been right, wouldn’t she?... The question is badly put, because the Divine spoken about here is not the true Divine, it is the Divine of religion — and of a certain kind of religion — but it is not the Divine as He is at all.

“All is from the Divine; but the One Consciousness, the Supreme has not created the world directly out of itself; a Power has gone out from it and has descended through many gradations of its workings and passed through many agents. There are many creators or rather ‘formateurs’, form-makers, who have presided over the creation of the world. They are intermediary agents and I prefer to call them ‘formateurs’ and not ‘creators’; for what they have done is to give the form and turn and nature to matter. There have been many, and some have formed things harmonious and benignant and some have shaped things mischievous and evil. And some too have been distorters rather than builders, for they have interfered and spoiled what was begun well by others.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (30 June)

I would not reply in this manner now, it is an altogether “administrative” answer! It is thus that governments always reply; they say, “It is not I who am responsible, it is my agents.” That’s not nice, it is better to take the responsibility upon oneself.
Questions and Answers

Mother continues her reading which begins with a question from the same listener:

“Is not this material world of ours very low down in the scale in the system of worlds that form the creation?”

“Our is the most material world, but it is not necessarily ‘low down’, at least, not for that reason; if it is low down, it is because it is obscure and ignorant, not because it is material. It is a mistake to make ‘matter’ a synonym for obscurity and ignorance. And the material world too is not the only world in which we live: it is rather one of many in which we exist simultaneously, and in one way the most important of them all. For this world of matter is the point of concentration of all the worlds; it is the field of concretisation of all the worlds; it is the place where all the worlds will have to manifest. At present it is disharmonious and obscure; but that is only an accident, a false start. One day it will become beautiful, rhythmic, full of light; for that is the consummation for which it was made.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (30 June)

This lady had definitely an altogether Chaldean idea of God, who from nothing made a world (which is badly made, I admit it; if it has been made like that, it was truly badly made) and yet a God who looks at it and says, “I made it on purpose,” which crowns the horror of this lady!

Why is there so much misery in the world? Come on, I ask you for a scientific, a philosophic, a mystical, a religious, a poetic answer....

In order to put in a little novelty, otherwise it would be too monotonous.

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This is not a poetic answer — you must use many images and symbols for that! You are like the person who said that if one were not unhappy, one could not be happy, because one would not know what it is to be happy! As others say, “If there were no shadow, there would be no light. One would not know what light is if all were light”... and so on. So you say that without unhappiness there would be no novelty in the world? It is a rather lugubrious novelty, isn’t it?

If everyone were happy the world would be happy.

If everybody entered a beatific state the world would be beatific; as a reason, it is very good. But it is a cure, it is not a cause. You are asked here what the cause is. Whence comes the unhappiness if it is not from God — who is, of course, all beneficent and who would never do such a horrible thing!

The world does not exist, it is an illusion of our false consciousness.

Ah! Try telling this to someone who is suffering from liver colic, for instance!

The world has been made, somebody said, to teach the poor to suffer and the rich to give.

That is what I was saying, isn’t it (laughing), that if there were no misery upon earth what would become of philanthropy?... If we explore all the fields like this, we shall end up perhaps by understanding that all was necessary, otherwise the world would not have been. This is perhaps one conclusion. No, it is not a conclusion, for it would justify the indefinite perpetuation of what is.

Why is there imperfection, if the world is as it ought to be?
Questions and Answers

No one has said that, if so there would be nothing else to do but sit down and not move any more!

We have already granted that the world is not what it ought to be and that we are here to work so that it may become what it ought to be. But to know this one must first know what it ought to be, isn’t that so? That is the problem. What should the world be?

X: It ought to be aware of the divine consciousness.

Y: No suffering in the world.

When one makes a construction, one doesn’t begin by saying, “I don’t want this, I don’t want that”, else you will never make your construction. You must say what it ought to be, not what it ought not to be. To begin with, what it ought not to be we know already: that is what it is! We don’t need to go very far — such as it is, we don’t want it. So, what should it be?

A garden where one plays an eternal game with the Divine.

This sounds very fine, it is very good — “God is a child playing,” Sri Aurobindo has said.¹ It seems this has shocked many people. When we translated this into French and sent it to Europe, there were people who were shocked and said, “Well, He plays at our expense!”

The world ought to be full of love and light.

What light? What love?

¹ “What is God, after all? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden.”

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_The divine light._

When you say “divine light”, what do you understand by it?

_The world ought to be receptive._

Receptive to what?

_It ought to be a constant expression of the divine Will from which it has separated._

So, it is the world which has separated from the Divine. We come to that: the world is miserable because it has separated from the Divine. Here is an answer which is neither philosophic nor poetic nor... We shall call it a practical expression. And how has it managed to separate itself from the Divine, since it is the Divine?... Now it becomes very complicated. We say, don’t we, that the world is divine and that it is unhappy because it has separated from the Divine. How has it separated?

_By its ignorance._

Good heavens! From where then does the ignorance come? Ignorance of what? Ignorance of itself?

_Ignorance of its origin._

Yes, that means ignorance of itself! This is why everyone is told: “Know thyself” — it ought to be that!

_Is it the world which is ignorant or is it we?_

Ah! Then I must ask you, “What do you call the world?” Is it the earth or the universe?
Questions and Answers

*The universe.*

Then, the whole universe is not ignorant — there are parts of the universe which are not ignorant. When you say “we” you identify yourself with the universe or with mankind? Because this is a very important question. We say the world is unhappy because it has forgotten its origin, that is, its divine origin. You say, child, that we are unhappy because “we” are ignorant — the “we” is men. Consequently, unhappiness has come into the world with men — here is something serious! That is, with man mind has come upon earth, you see, for man is a mental animal, and with the mind has come misery. The mind is capable of objectifying, and so it finds that such and such a thing is miserable — without the mind there would be no such discovery and no unhappiness. So, there is no unhappiness for animals nor for plants, and yet less for stones. Are we agreed on this: there is no unhappiness for animals, plants and stones? We say unhappiness has come with the mind which has become conscious of it. Mark that I am trying to lead you to something which is not so stupid, for in the ancient Teaching it was said, “Change your consciousness and what appears to you unfortunate will not so appear to you any longer.” The Buddha taught that if you are free from desire, things that seemed to you unfortunate would no longer seem to you unfortunate at all. Therefore, we come to this: it is the thought you have about it which makes you consider this or that thing unfortunate. If you thought an event happy, it would become happy for you; and that is what it is, in fact. In most cases when the thought has accepted that a thing *ought to be*, for whatever reason, it is no longer unhappy; when the thought has not accepted this, it finds this unhappy. So, as long as you are in the field of emotions, of sentiments and thoughts, all this is true. That is, the notion of “unhappiness” has entered the world with the capacity to consider that things were unfortunate. You follow the logic? Thus, plants do not suffer because they do not know that they suffer and animals do not suffer.
because they do not know that they suffer. You are sure of it? Aren’t you?

One sees an expression of pain in their eyes.

It is said you see in others what you have in yourself!

Descartes relates that a lady was beating her dog and saying, “It does not suffer, it has no soul, this is a reflex.” Descartes maintains that men alone can feel!

I have always been told that he was an intelligent man!

If unhappiness entered the world with thought, happiness also entered, didn’t it?

Ah! Here is logic! When there is unhappiness there is happiness... without unhappiness, no happiness. How difficult philosophy is!... Has your Mr. Descartes told us from where the soul of man has come?

He says it is a creation of God.

The rest of the world is not a creation of God?

Yes, that also.

Then, suddenly, he bethought himself that it was necessary to put in his creation something that he calls “a soul” and he chose this animal, man, to put it in. Then it becomes very difficult to get out of it.... But we were trying to find out what the world ought to be. It is this we must find, for the minute we know what it ought to be, we must start working on this.
Questions and Answers

*It must be open to the Force which wants to manifest.*

The misfortune is that it is precisely open to certain forces and manifests them. It is the quality of the Force which matters. The world as it is manifests forces, it does not exist without a manifestation of forces; but what forces does it manifest? For the moment it seems to manifest the forces of obscurity, ignorance, disharmony, suffering and all the rest.

*It must have discernment.*

You mean it should choose the force which is necessary? Yes, but this is not the transformation of the world, this is for us. It is we who must have discernment to know which force we want to manifest, that's understood. But to come back to our subject, you all agree that in the world we are going to build, there should not be any suffering? You agree?... You are not quite sure of it?... Then you are satisfied with suffering? I don’t know, perhaps it has its purpose. But, you see, as long as one is satisfied with a thing, there are many chances that it stays. We have been told in the more or less sacred scriptures that suffering comes from ignorance; hence if you do not think of getting rid of suffering, it means that you want to keep the ignorance also? That becomes very difficult. It is like the artist to whom someone spoke of the future world which would be made all of light, and he said, “Then I won’t be able to paint any longer” and he was miserable! Perhaps, indeed, there are many people who cling to their ignorance?...

*It is suffering which makes us conscious of a higher force.*

That is true, in many cases it is like that and that is the apparent justification of suffering. If human beings did not suffer, perhaps they would never make any progress. Aspiration is quite lukewarm when one is perfectly satisfied.

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Now then, here we are quite muddled up! Well, this is an exact example of the way the human mind functions; and after that there are people who have caught the tail of something and are so satisfied with this tail, they say, “I have the truth, and you ought to believe what I tell you, otherwise you will never get out of it.” The fact is that in the state of your thought at that moment, anyone at all could come to tell you “I have the truth”, and you would be happy to catch on to it to come out of your confusion.... Let’s see, we have two minutes, and during those two minutes we won’t speak, and all our confusion will disappear. Then we shall disperse. So, do not talk, try to be as silent as possible for two minutes.

\( A \) meditation follows\( ) \)