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“Mind is one movement, but there are many varieties of the movement, many strata, that touch and even press into each other. At the same time the movement we call mind penetrates into other planes.... Now, there are mental planes that stand high above the vital world and escape its influence; there are no hostile forces or beings there. But there are others — and they are many — that can be touched or penetrated by the vital forces.”

Questions and Answers 1929 (26 May)

Which mental plane are you speaking of?

Of the physical mind. Certainly not of the higher mind, for there are no adverse forces there. The reference is to the mind that deals with material things.

Are there beings in the mental worlds?

Yes, many. They are completely independent; they have their own life, their own relations among themselves, as in other worlds. But for a physical consciousness, time and space are not the same in the vital or the mental worlds as in the physical world. For example, those who are in the physical consciousness have the impression that movements in the mind are instantaneous — compared with the higher consciousness they are not instantaneous, but compared with the physical consciousness, they are instantaneous, of an extreme rapidity.

The beings of the mental world also have an individuality of their own, even a form that can be permanent if they choose to keep one. Their form is the expression of their thought and is sufficiently plastic to be able to change with their thought, yet
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has a sufficient continuity to enable one to recognise them. If you go out of your body and enter the mental world, you can meet these beings, speak to them, even make an appointment with them for the next time!

*Can they exercise their influence on a human being, as the beings of the vital worlds do?*

Many mental formations try to realise themselves upon earth, but these are generally created by human beings; they then continue to work in the mental world with the intention of influencing the mind of human beings. But the beings of the mental plane proper are generally creators, and because they are creators of form, they are not much concerned with influencing other forms — they are satisfied with expressing themselves through the forms they have made.

*Is there any difference between the “spiritual” and the “psychic”? Are they two different planes?*

This subject has given rise to great confusion in human thought. I believe philosophical, yogic and other systems use the word “spiritual” in a very vague and loose way. Whatever is not physical is spiritual! In comparison with the physical world all other worlds are spiritual! All thought, all effort which does not tend towards the material life is a spiritual effort. Every tendency which is not strictly human and egoistic is a spiritual tendency. This is a word used to fit every case.

*I just read this in Illustration: “The spiritual activity par excellence is reading and writing. The centre of spiritual life is the National Library.”*

It is a cheap spirituality!
19 March 1951

Mother first read the passage on the difference between the “psychic” and the “spiritual”, then continued:

“So long as you have to draw your understanding from forms of words, you are likely to fall into much confusion about the true sense; but if in a silence of your mind you can rise into the world from which ideas descend to take form, at once the real understanding comes....

But here in this higher region of the unexpressed mind and its purer altitudes you are free; when you enter there, you go out of yourself and penetrate into a universal mental plane in which each individual mental world is dipping as if into a huge sea. There you can understand entirely what is going on in another and read his mind as if it were your own, because there no separation divides mind from mind. It is only when you unite in that region with others that you can understand them; otherwise you are not attuned, you do not touch....”

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It is only in the silence that one can understand. It often happens that two persons speak about a certain subject and all of a sudden, for some reason, both fall silent for a time; then, abruptly, one says a word which corresponds exactly to what the other was thinking. These are people who understand each other in silence. They have followed the same curve, they have come to the same result and one completes the thought of the other. This happens often to those who have lived together a long time and have developed a sort of mental affinity which enables them to truly understand each other behind the words. I have known people who belong to different countries — and you know the mode of thinking is very different according to the country, the manner of relating the sequence of ideas is different, even contrary to that of another country — but I have had experiences with persons of very far-removed races who succeeded so well
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in harmonising mentally with each other that there was this understanding without words.

*If one is silent and the other is not, can they understand each other?*

It is possible. Perhaps the one who is silent will understand the other who is not!... But when there is this full accord, even if it is not permanent, when you are with someone and follow a thought far enough to come out of the external agitation, if the other too has followed the same thought, you may find yourselves suddenly agreeing without having spoken or made any effort towards that. Generally the silence comes to both at the same time or almost the same time — it is as though you slid into the silence. Of course, it may happen also that one continues to make a noise in his head, while the other has stopped, but the one who has stopped has a much greater chance of understanding what is happening to the other!

*When the class*¹ is over, we are asked what you said. *Should we tell?*

You may say, “Well, I tried my best, but I am not sure if I have understood, and if I report what she said, I am almost certain to distort her words.” In this way you are on the safe side, at ease.

*What characterises the substance of the psychic world?*

The substance of the psychic world is a substance proper to it, with its own psychic characteristics: a sense of immortality, a complete receptivity to the divine influence, an entire submission to this influence by which it is wholly impregnated. It is this exactly which distinguishes the psychic from the other parts of

¹ Children used to speak of “Mother’s class” when they referred to these talks.
the being. When, for instance, I speak of organising the mind and the vital around the psychic centre, I do not mean that they become psychic; they remain the mind and the vital, but they are organised around the psychic as an army is organised around its leader — it does not become the leader, it obeys him, doesn’t it? Well, it is the same thing here; the vital and the mind are organised around the psychic, they receive orders from the psychic and carry them out as well as they can. But their substance does not become psychic substance as a consequence. They can be under the influence of the psychic and assume its nature more or less but not its substance.

You said that our body can become receptive to forces which are concentrated in certain places or in certain countries. But can we have this physical sensation without a preliminary preparation of the consciousness? Or is it truly a spontaneous sensation like heat, cold or goose-flesh, for example?²

If it were the result of a thought or a will, it would not be an experience and it would have no value. You understand, I affirm absolutely that any experience that is the result of a thought or preconceived will has no value from the spiritual point of view.

But were you not in a state, so to say, “favourable” to this sensation?

There are people who live constantly in a higher consciousness, while others have to make an effort to enter there. But here it is an altogether different thing; in the experience I was speaking about, what gave it all its value was that I was not expecting it at all, not at all. I knew very well, I had been for a very long

² In the preceding talk Mother had described how on her return from Japan she had all of a sudden physically felt the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo at a distance of two nautical miles from Pondicherry.
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time and continuously in "spiritual" contact, if I may say so, with the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo, but I had never thought of the possibility of a modification in the physical air and I was not expecting it in the least, and it was this that gave the whole value to the experience, which came like that, quite suddenly, just as when one enters a place with another temperature or another altitude.... I do not know if you have noticed that the air you breathe is not always the same, that there are different vibrations in the air of one country and in the air of another, in the air of one place and in the air of another. If indeed you are accustomed to have this perception of the subtle physical, you can say immediately, “Ah! This air is as in France” or “This is the air of Japan.” It is something indefinable like taste or smell. But in this instance it is not that, it is a perception of another sense. It is a physical sense, it is not a vital or mental sense; it is a sense of the physical world, but there are other senses than the five that we usually have at our disposal — there are many others.

Actually, for the physical being — note that I say the physical being — to be fully developed, it must have twelve senses. It is one of these senses which gives you the kind of perception I was speaking of. You cannot say that it is taste, smell, hearing, etc., but it is something which gives you a very precise impression of the difference of quality. And it is very precise, as distinct as seeing black and white, it is truly a sense perception.

Generally, when you want to study occultism, the first thing that the Master does is never to speak to you about it, never to explain it to you, precisely because of this ridiculous phenomenon of the mind which begins to “think” about it and brings you “experiences” which have no value: they are mental formations which make a plaything of you, that is all. They have no reality.

You must distrust the mind altogether when you want to enter the world of experiences. It is enough for the mind to be just slightly roused for it to say, “Ah, what is going on?”... Then
it may be that things do happen but it is no longer the thing, it is a fabrication.

First condition, know how to keep silent. And not only keep your tongue quiet, but silence your mind, keep the head silent. If you wish to have a true, sincere experience upon which you can build, you must know how to be silent, otherwise you have nothing but what you fabricate yourself, which is equivalent to zero. All that one can say is, “Heavens, what a fashioner my mind is!”