5 May 1954

This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo’s *Elements of Yoga*, Chapter 4, “Sincerity” and Chapter 5, “Faith”.

“Q: What is the right attitude to stick on to this path till the Supramental Truth is realised?
“A: There is the psychic condition and sincerity and devotion to the Mother.”

What is “the psychic condition”?

The psychic condition? That means being in relation with one’s psychic, I suppose, being governed by one’s psychic being.

*Sweet Mother, I don’t understand very clearly the difference between faith, belief and confidence.*

But Sri Aurobindo has given the full explanation here. If you don’t understand, then...

*He has written “Faith is a feeling in the whole being.”*

The whole being, yes. Faith, that’s the whole being at once. He says that belief is something that occurs in the head, that is purely mental; and confidence is quite different. Confidence — one can have confidence in life, trust in the Divine, trust in others, trust in one’s own destiny, that is, one has the feeling that everything is going to help him, to do what he wants to do.

Faith is a certitude without any proof.

*Mother, on what does faith depend?*
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Probably on Divine Grace. Some people have it spontaneously. There are others who need to make a great effort to have it.

*How can faith be increased?*

Through aspiration, I suppose. Some have it spontaneously... You see, it is difficult to pray if one doesn’t have faith, but if one can make prayer a means of increasing one’s faith, or aspiring, having an aspiration, having an aspiration to have faith... Most of these qualities require an effort. If one does not have a thing and wants to have it, well, it needs great, great, great sustained efforts, a constant aspiration, an unflagging will, a sincerity at each moment; then one is sure, it will come one day — it can come in a second. There are people who have it, and then they have contrary movements which come and attack. These people, if their will is sincere, can shield their faith, repel the attacks. There are others who cultivate doubt because it is a kind of dilettantism — that, there’s nothing more dangerous than that. It is as though one were letting the worm into the fruit: it eventually eats it up completely. This means that when a movement of this sort comes — it usually comes first into the mind — the first thing to do is to be very determined and refuse it. Surely one must not enjoy looking on just to see what is going to happen; that kind of curiosity is terribly dangerous.

It is perhaps more difficult for intellectuals to have faith than for those who are simple, sincere, who are straightforward, without intellectual complications. But I think that if an intellectual person has faith, then that becomes very powerful, a very powerful thing which can truly work miracles.

*Mother, where does determination come from?*

Usually it is in those who have a will and bring their will to bear upon their actions.
Questions and Answers

If one has faith in the Divine and also trust, what is the difference between faith and trust?

Faith is something much more integral — that is what Sri Aurobindo has written — much more integral than trust. You see, you have trust in the Divine, in the sense that you are convinced that all that comes from Him will always be the best for you: whatever His decision and whatever the experience He sends you or the circumstances in which He puts you, it will always be what is best for you. This is trust. But faith — that kind of unshakable certitude in the very existence of God — faith is something that seizes the whole being. It is not only mental, psychic or vital: it is the whole being, entirely, which has faith. Faith leads straight to experience.

Can’t trust be total and entire?

Not necessarily. Well, there is a shade of difference — however, I don’t know, it is not the same thing.

One has given oneself totally to the divine work, one has faith in it, not only in its possibility, but faith that it is the thing which is true and which must be, and one gives oneself entirely to it, without asking what will happen. And so, therein or thereon may be grafted a certitude, a confidence that one is capable of accomplishing it, that is, of participating in it and doing it because one has given oneself to it — a confidence that what one is going to do, what one wants to do, one will be able to do; that this realisation one wants to attain, one will attain. The first does not put any questions, does not think of the results: it gives itself entirely — it gives itself and then that’s all. It is something that absorbs one completely. The other may be grafted upon it. Confidence says: “Yes, I shall participate, realise what I want to realise, I shall surely take part in this work.” The other one has faith in the Divine, that it is the Divine who is all, and can do all, and does all... and who is the only real existence — and one
gives oneself entirely to this faith, to the Divine, that’s all. One has faith in the existence of the Divine and gives oneself; and there can also be grafted upon this a trust that this relation one has with the Divine, this faith one has in the Divine, will work in such a way that all that happens to him — whatever it may be, all that happens to him — will not only be an expression of the divine will (that of course is understood) but also the best that could happen, that nothing better could have happened to him, since it is the Divine who is doing it for him. This attitude is not necessarily a part of faith, for faith does not question anything, it does not ask what the consequence of its self-giving will be — it gives itself, and — that’s all; while confidence can come and say, “That’s what the result will be.” And this is an absolute fact, that is, the moment one gives oneself entirely to the Divine, without calculating, in a total faith, without bargaining of any kind — one gives oneself, and then, come what may! “That does not concern me, I just give myself” — automatically it will always be for you, in all circumstances, at every moment, the best that will happen... not the way you conceive of it (naturally, thought knows nothing), but in reality. Well, there is a part of the being which can become aware of this and have this confidence. This is something added on to faith which gives it more strength, a strength — how shall I put it? — of total acceptance and the best utilisation of what happens.

There is a state in which one realises that the effect of things, circumstances, all the movements and actions of life on the consciousness depends almost exclusively upon one’s attitude to these things. There is a moment when one becomes sufficiently conscious to realise that things in themselves are truly neither good nor bad: they are such only in relation to us; their effect on us depends absolutely upon the attitude we have towards them. The same thing, identically the same, if we take it as a gift of God, as a divine grace, as the result of the full Harmony, helps us to become more conscious, stronger, more true, while if we take it — exactly the very same circumstance
— as a blow from fate, as a bad force wanting to affect us, this constricts us, weighs us down and takes away from us all consciousness and strength and harmony. And the circumstance in itself is exactly the same — of this, I wish all of you had this experience, for when you have it, you become master of yourself. Not only master of yourself but, in what concerns you, master of the circumstances of your life. And this depends exclusively upon the attitude you take; it is not an experience that occurs in the head, though it begins there, but an experience which can occur in the body itself. So much so, that — well, it is a realisation which naturally asks for a lot of work, concentration, self-mastery, consciousness pushed into Matter, but as a result, in accordance with the way the body receives shocks from outside, the effect may be different. And if you attain perfection in that field, you become master of accidents. I hope this will happen. It is possible. It is not only possible, it is certain. Only it is just one step forward. That is, this power you have — already fully and formidably realised in the mind — to act upon circumstances to the extent of changing them totally in their action upon you, that power can descend into Matter, into the physical substance itself, the cells of the body, and give the same power to the body in relation to the things around it.

This is not a faith, it is a certitude that comes from experience.

The experience is not total, but it is there.

This opens new horizons to you; it is the path, it is one step on the path leading to transformation.

And the logical conclusion is that there is nothing impossible. It is we who put limitations. All the time we say, “That thing is possible, that other, impossible; this, yes, this can be done, that can’t be done; oh yes, this is true, it is feasible, it is even done, but that, that is impossible.” It is we who all the time put ourselves like slaves into the prison of our limits, of our stupid, narrow, ignorant sense which knows nothing of the
laws of life. The laws of life are not at all what you think they are nor what the most intelligent people think. They are quite different. Taking a step, especially the first step on the path—one begins to find out.

Mother, here it is written:

“Q: Is it a sign of sincerity to confess one’s weakness and faults to the Divine and to others?
“A: Why to others? One has to confess them to the Divine.

“Q: But if one does some wrong to a person, is it not necessary to confess it to him? Is it enough to confess it to the Divine?
“A: If it concerns the other persons, then it can be done.”

It is harmless. You can do it if it gives you pleasure! Fundamentally, if it sets you at rest and allows you to progress, if you feel you must do it in order to progress, it is very good.

Sweet Mother, can it happen that a person is very insincere but unconscious of his insincerity?

I think in a case like this, he is no longer insincere, he is wicked; for if one knows that one is insincere and persists in one’s insincerity, it is wickedness, isn’t it? It means that one has bad intentions, otherwise why would one persist in one’s insincerity?

I said: if one is unconscious.

Then how can one be conscious and unconscious at once? It is just this that is impossible. If one is conscious of one’s insincerity, one can’t be unconscious of it. It is impossible. The two can’t exist simultaneously.
Questions and Answers

But if one is insincere and doesn’t know where this insincerity lies?

Oh! One doesn’t know?... That is because one is not sufficiently sincere and doesn’t look at oneself. For, I guarantee this, if you are conscious that you are insincere, you know where it lies. Otherwise you could not be aware of your insincerity. For instance, in a certain circumstance one knows, knows that one should do this: “I should do this”; and at the same time one does not wish to do it, eh! And so, within oneself one finds a means, a sort of way of deceiving oneself and not doing it, because one does not want to do it — ah, that happens very often! (Laughter) And then, if at that moment, the moment when you are doing this little inner work to find an excuse for not doing what you don’t want to do, if at that moment you become aware that you are insincere and still continue to do it, this means that you are perverse. If you ask me, this is what I call being wicked, bad. But if you realise that you are insincere, this means that you are conscious that you are insincere, and how can you say “I am not conscious of my insincerity”?... Ninety times out of a hundred one does it without knowing. That indeed is the misery. It is that one deceives oneself with such facility, finds good tricks for not doing what one doesn’t want to do, or the contrary: for doing what one wishes to do when one knows very well one shouldn’t do it — it is the same thing. So you give yourself good reasons, and, unhappily, as I said, most men are so unconscious that they do it without even realising it. They think they are very sincere: “No, sincerely, I thought I had to do it” — like that, quite innocently. But that’s because they are not sincere, not at all because they are quite unconscious. But if one is just a little conscious of what is happening within, one perceives very well the little trick one has played and how one has found — has somewhere been so cleverly unearthing, an excellent excuse for doing what one wanted to do. Even when one knows very well one ought not to do it. It is these two, you see: a play between unconsciousness
and insincerity, insincerity and unconsciousness, in this way. But if you tell me, “I am conscious of my insincerity”, then naturally at that moment this fact faces you: Have you decided to remain in the darkness or do you want to progress? There, the problem comes up. If you are conscious of your insincerity, you have only one thing to do: that is to put a red-hot iron on it and make yourself sincere. That is the feeling. You must take a red-hot iron: it burns well, and then... ouch!... that’s the way.

For a moment it hurts a little, afterwards one is left in peace.

_Sweet Mother, you have written: “Sincerity is the key to the divine gates.” What does that mean?_

It is a literary image, my child, an imaged, figurative, literary way of expressing the fact that with sincerity one can attain everything, even the Divine. If one wants to open a door, a key is necessary, isn’t it? Well, for the door separating you from the Divine, sincerity works as a key and opens the door and lets you in, that’s all.

Good night.