18 July 1956

I would like an explanation, Sweet Mother. In Prayers and Meditations there is a sentence: “And the hours pass, fading away like unlived dreams.”

19 January 1917

This is an experience. Do you know what an unlived dream is?... I did not take the word “dream” in the sense of dreams at night; I took the word dream to mean something one has built up in the best and most clear-sighted part of one’s being, something which is an ideal one would like to see realised, something higher, more beautiful, more noble, more wonderful than all that has been created, and one has a power of imagination or creation somewhere in one’s consciousness and one builds something so that it may be realised.

And then, for some reason or other, it is not realised. Either the world was not ready or perhaps the formation was not sufficient, but it is not realised. And so the hours pass, sterile, unproductive — useless, vain, empty — they seem to fade away because they have no result and no usefulness.

And so I said: “And the hours pass, fading away like unlived dreams.”

(Silence)

I have received two questions. One is about a passage from The Synthesis of Yoga where it is said:

“For there is concealed behind individual love, obscured by its ignorant human figure, a mystery which the mind cannot seize, the mystery of the body of the Divine, the secret of a mystic form of the Infinite which we
can approach only through the ecstasy of the heart and the passion of the pure and sublimated sense, and its attraction which is the call of the divine Flute-player, the mastering compulsion of the All-Beautiful, can only be seized and seize us through an occult love and yearning which in the end makes one the Form and the Formless, and identifies Spirit and Matter. It is that which the spirit in Love is seeking here in the darkness of the Ignorance and it is that which it finds when individual human love is changed into the love of the Immanent Divine incarnate in the material universe.”

Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 150

This brings us back to the symbol of Krishna and Radha.

Krishna is the One of whom Sri Aurobindo speaks here, the divine Flute-player, that is to say, the immanent and universal Divine who is the supreme power of attraction; and the soul, the psychic personality, called here Radha, who responds to the call of the Flute-player. So I have been asked to say something this evening on the Radha-consciousness, that is, in fact, on the way in which the individual soul answers the call of the Divine.

It so happens that this is exactly what Sri Aurobindo has described in the chapter we have just read: it is that capacity of finding Ananda in all things through identification with the one divine Presence and a complete self-giving to that Presence. So I don’t think I have much to add; what I could say would be a limitation or a diminution of the totality of this experience.

(After a silence) This consciousness has the capacity of changing everything into a perpetual ecstasy, for instead of seeing things in their discordant appearance, one now sees only the divine Presence, the divine Will and the Grace everywhere; and every event, every element, every circumstance, every form changes into a way, a detail through which one can draw more intimately and profoundly closer to the Divine. Discordances disappear, ugliness vanishes; there is now only the splendour of
the divine Presence in a Love shining in all things.

It is obvious that from a practical point of view one must be able to remain at a constant and unshakable height in order to be in that state without exposing oneself to fairly troublesome consequences. That is probably why those who wished to live in this state used to withdraw from the world and find the universal contact through Nature.... I must say, without meaning to be unpleasant to men, that it is infinitely easier to realise this state of consciousness when one is surrounded by trees, flowers, plants and even animals than by human beings. It is easier but not indispensable. And if one wants the state to be truly integral, one must be able to keep it at every moment, in the presence of anyone and anything.

There are countless legends or stories of this kind, like that of Prahlad,¹ for instance, which we saw recently in a film, stories which illustrate that state of consciousness. And I am not only convinced, but I myself have the quite tangible experience that if in the presence of some danger or an enemy or some ill-will, you are able to remain in this condition and see the Divine in all things, well, the danger will have no effect, the ill-will can do nothing to you, and the enemy will either be transformed or run away. That is quite certain.

But I must add a word which is quite important. You must not seek this state of consciousness with any motive or seek it because it is a protection or a help. You must have it sincerely, spontaneously, constantly; it must be a normal, natural,

¹ In Indian mythology Prahlad is the son of King Hiranyakashipu, an ardent enemy of the god Vishnu. The king had banned the worship of Vishnu in his kingdom, and when he learnt that his son Prahlad was worshipping this god in his own palace, he delivered him to serpents, but they did not bite him. Then he had him thrown down from the top of a hill into the sea, but the child was miraculously carried by the waters. When the enraged king asked his son, “Who has saved you?”, the child replied, “Vishnu is everywhere, in the serpents and in the sea.” It is interesting to note that the king himself had been a soul temporarily driven out from the heaven of Vishnu due to the curse of some rishis who had given him the choice between three lives on earth as the enemy of Vishnu and ten lives on earth as the worshipper of Vishnu—the king had chosen the shorter way back.
effortless way of being. Then it is effective. But if you try in the least to imitate the movement with the idea of obtaining a particular result, it won’t succeed. The result is not obtained at all. And then in your ignorance you will perhaps say, “Oh! but they told me that, but it is not true!” That is because there was some insincerity somewhere.

Otherwise, if you are really sincere, that is, if it is an integral and spontaneous experience, it is all-powerful. If, looking into somebody’s eyes, you can spontaneously see the divine Presence there, the worst movements vanish, the worst obstacles disappear; and the flame of an infinite joy awakes, sometimes in the other person as well as in oneself. If in the other person there is the least possibility or just a tiny rift in his ill-will, the flame shines forth.

_Sweet Mother, about Radha, in all the Vaishnavite stories and in the accounts of many mystics, there are always tears and anguish: “She wept and the Divine did not come.... The Divine tormented her....” What does this mean? She was integral purity, then why...

That is just on the way! That happens when one is still on the way, when one has not reached the goal. They have that, they insist a lot on this, for... for they like to prolong the human road, simply because they enjoy this human road and because, as I told you, if you want to remain in life, in contact with life, a certain relativity necessarily remains in the experience. They like it that way — they like to quarrel with the Divine, they like the feeling of separation, these things give them pleasure! For they remain in the human consciousness and want to remain there. The moment there is perfect identification, all this disappears. So, it is as though one were depriving oneself of the pleasure of a drama! There is something that has gone out of life, that is, its illusion. They still need a reasonable amount of illusion; they can’t enter directly into the Truth.
In fact, for the feeling of separation to disappear, you must have realised within yourself a perfect identity; and once this perfect identity is realised, well, the story comes to an end, there is nothing more to tell.

That is why it is said that if the world, if creation realised its perfect identity with the Divine, there would no longer be any creation. If you realise this perfect identity in which there is no longer any possibility of distinction and if the entire universe realised this perfect identity in which there is no longer any possibility of distinction, well, there would no longer be any universe. It would be a return to Pralaya.

So the solution is to find Ananda, even in the play, in this exchange in which one both gives and receives, in which one seems to be two; and that is why they keep the duality.

Otherwise, in identity, nothing remains but the identity. If the identity is complete and perfect, there is no more objectivisation.

But I said this somewhere when speaking about the story of love. I think nobody — oh! I don’t know — probably very few people noticed the distinction. I said that it begins with the Ananda of identity, and that after the full circuit of the creation, it ends in the Ananda of union.² Well, if there had been no circuit,

² Later, someone asked Mother: “What is this ‘it’? the universe?” To which Mother replied, “I said ‘it’ deliberately, so as not to make it precise. I don’t like the word ‘creation’; it immediately gives the impression of a special creation as though it were made out of nothing — but it is He Himself! And it is not the universe ‘which begins’: the universe ‘is begun’. How to put it? It is not the universe which takes the initiative of the movement? And if one says that the Lord began the universe, it becomes false. All these are such fixed ideas! If I say: ‘The Lord began the universe,’ one sees at once a personal God deciding to begin the universe — it is not that!

“I have said that about Love, the manifestation of Love which is the supreme Ananda, Sri Aurobindo also said it: beyond Being and Non-being there is something which is, which manifests as supreme Love, and which is at once Being and Non-being. And the first manifestation of That is the Ananda of identity — essentially it is the identity becoming aware of itself in Ananda, and then, it makes the full circuit through the whole manifestation and all the forms taken by Love, and returns to the Oneness through union. And this adds to that Ananda, the Ananda of union, which would never have existed if the circuit had not been made.”
there would never be the Ananda of union, there would only be
the Ananda of identity. Were there no circuit, there would be no
union.

This is perhaps a little subtle, but it is a fact: and perhaps
it is just in order that the Ananda of identity may find what
I might call its consummation and crowning in the Ananda of
union, that the whole circuit was made.

But if there is perfect identity, there can be no union, the
feeling of union does not exist, for it necessarily implies some-
thing other than perfect identity. There can be perfect union but
there is no perfect identity.

Don’t try to understand with words and with your head, for
these two words express altogether different experiences. And
yet the result is the same, but one is rich with all that was not
in the other, the richness of the whole experience — the whole
universal experience.

If union is experienced consciously, why do some mys-
tics continue to have all kinds of emotions like ordinary
people, and weep and lament?

This is perhaps because the union is not constant.

But Radha is sincere in her aspiration.

If you ask me, I believe this is just literature, my children! Any-
way, it is certainly in order to give you an artistic picture of
human life as it is!

Vaishnavism is based on that.

But these people live in the vital and like it. Ah! one can’t talk
about that, because...

Well, I have another question here, a very small question,
but not without interest.
It is from someone who is trying to prepare himself to receive the Supermind, and in this preparation, among other things come prayer and meditation. And then there is this reflection which is very frank and which very few would have the courage to make. Here it is:

“I begin to meditate and pray ardently and fervently, my aspiration is intense and my prayer full of devotion; and then, after a certain length of time — sometimes short, sometimes long — the aspiration becomes mechanical and the prayer purely verbal. What should I do?”

This is not an individual case, it is extremely common. I have already said this a number of times, but still it was in passing — that people who claim to meditate for hours every day and spend their whole day praying, to me it seems that three-fourths of the time it must be absolutely mechanical; that is to say, it loses all its sincerity. For human nature is not made for that and the human mind is not built that way.

In order to concentrate and meditate one must do an exercise which I could call the “mental muscle-building” of concentration. One must really make an effort — as one makes a muscular effort, for instance, to lift a weight — if you want the concentration to be sincere and not artificial.

The same thing for the urge of prayer: suddenly a flame is lit, you feel an enthusiastic élan, a great fervour, and express it in words which, to be true, must be spontaneous. This must come from the heart, directly, with ardour, without passing through the head. That is a prayer. If there are just words jostling in your head, it is no longer a prayer. Well, if you don’t throw more fuel into the flame, after a time it dies out. If you do not give your muscles time to relax, if you don’t slacken the movement, your muscles lose the capacity of taking strains. So it is quite natural, and even indispensable, for the intensity of the movement to cease after a certain time. Naturally, someone who
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is accustomed to lifting weights can do it much longer than one who has never done it before. It is the same thing; someone who is accustomed to concentration can concentrate much longer than one who is not in the habit. But for everybody there comes a time when one must let go, relax, in order to begin again. Therefore, whether immediately or after a few minutes or a few hours, if the movement becomes mechanical, it means that you have relaxed and that you need no longer pretend that you are meditating. It is better to do something useful.

If you cannot manage to do a little exercise, for instance, in order to neutralise the effect of the mental tension, you may read or try to note down what happened to you, you may express things. Then that produces a relaxation, the necessary relaxation. But the duration of the meditation is only relatively important; its length simply shows how far you are accustomed to this activity.

Of course, this may increase a great deal, but there is always a limit; and when the limit is reached one must stop, that's all. It is not an insincerity, it is an incapacity. What becomes insincere is if you pretend to meditate when you are no longer meditating or you say prayers like many people who go to the temple or to church, perform ceremonies and repeat their prayers as one repeats a more or less well-learnt lesson. Then it is no longer either prayer or meditation, it is simply a profession. It is not interesting.

*Just a while ago you said that if one can spontaneously see the Divine in one's enemy, the enemy is converted. Is that true?*

Not necessarily! I said: either he will be converted or he will run away. I did not say he is always converted! I said: if there is the least little rift in his bad will, the thing will enter; and then he can suddenly be changed, or at any rate become incapable of acting. But if that is not there, well, he will go away. But he
won’t be able to do anything. What I assert is that he won’t be able to do anything; and if he can do something it is a sign that the state of consciousness you were in was not sufficiently pure and complete.

*Why then are there so many enemies of the Divine, since the Divine can see Himself in His enemies?*

I don’t quite understand your question.

*Why are there so many enemies of the Divine?*

So many enemies of the Divine?

*These hostile forces.*

But why are there so many completely unconscious human beings? I find that still more astonishing! For it is quite simply an act of unconsciousness: to be an enemy of the Divine is nothing but being unconscious.

(A teacher) *He means that they should have been converted since the Divine can see the Divine...*

But, excuse me, the Divine where? I don’t understand your reasoning.

*When a man is the Divine’s enemy...*

But after all, suppose there is one man in a million who has realised this consciousness in himself. It is possible he may have had an effect on those around him — and yet I took care to tell you that for this state to be perfectly realised, generally it is necessary to live in solitude, otherwise there are too many contradictory things, there are too many brutally material necessities which contradict it, for you to be able to attain that state.
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absolutely perfectly. But if you do attain it absolutely perfectly, everything around you will necessarily become divine.
And so? I don’t even understand the argument.

(The teacher) *He was objectifying the Divine and was thinking: when somebody is the Divine’s enemy, he is an enemy of a divine form, and this divine form sees the Divine in his enemy, therefore the enemy must be converted.*

No, I still haven’t caught it!

(Another disciple) *Sweet Mother, it is perfect but it doesn’t exist!* (Laughter) *What he says doesn’t exist.*

No, I admit I don’t follow you at all, neither him, nor you, nor you! (Laughter) Good Lord, what do you all mean!

*When one is an enemy of the Divine, one is an enemy of what?*

Oh!... That depends exclusively upon each one. Usually one is an enemy of one’s own idea of the Divine, and that is why it is said that one who denies the Divine is very often the greatest devotee. For if he did not have within himself the certitude that the Divine exists, he would not take the trouble of denying Him. And this is still stronger in one who hates Him, for if he did not have somewhere far within himself the certitude of the Divine’s existence, how could he hate Him?

This has been symbolised here in India in the stories of those who wanted to identify themselves with the divine Reality and chose to become His enemies, for the path of the enemy was more direct than the path of the worshipper. These are well-known stories here, all the old legends and Indian mythology speak about it. Well, this simply illustrates the fact that one who
has never put the problem to himself and never given the faintest thought to the existence of the Divine is certainly farther away from the Divine than one who hates Him or denies Him. For one can’t deny something one has never thought about.

He who says or writes: “I declare, I certify, all my experience goes to prove that there is no Divine, no such thing exists, it is just man’s imagination, man’s creation...”, that means he has already thought over the problem any number of times and that something within him is prodigiously interested in this problem.

As for the one who detests Him — there it is even more obvious: one can’t be the enemy of an illusion.

So (speaking to the disciple), your question no longer holds. For perhaps, after all, this is one more form of meeting which may have its interest. One sometimes says in a lighter vein: “My intimate enemy”, and it is perhaps not altogether wrong. Perhaps there is more intimacy in hatred than in ignorance. One is nearer to what one hates than to what one is ignorant of.

This doesn’t mean I recommend hatred! That is not what I am saying, but I have very often happened to see more love in a look or an expression of fury and hatred than in an absolutely dull and inert state. It is deformed, spoilt, disfigured, whatever you like, but there is something living, a flame is there.

Of course, even in unconsciousness and immobility, in the complete inertia — apparently — of the stone, one may find a dazzling Light, that of the divine Presence. But then that is the state we were just speaking about: one sees Him everywhere, meets Him everywhere, and in so manifold and marvellously harmonised a way that all these difficulties disappear.

(Silence)

Truly speaking, to be practical, the problem could be expressed like this. If the Divine had not conceived His creation as progressive, there could have been from the beginning a beatific, immobile and unchangeable condition. But the minute... How
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shall I explain it, I don’t know. Just because the universe had
to be progressive, perfect identity, the bliss of this identity, the
full consciousness of this identity had necessarily to be veiled,
otherwise nothing would have ever stirred.

A static universe may be conceived. One could conceive of
something which is “all at one and the same time”: that there is
no time, only a kind of objectivisation — but not an unfolding in
which things manifest progressively one after another, according
to a special rhythm; that they are all manifested at the same time,
all at once. Then all would be in a blissful state and there would
be no universe as we see it, the element of unfolding would be
missing, which constitutes... well, what we live in at present.

But once we admit this principle that the universe is progres-
sive, the unfolding progressive, that instead of seeing everything
together and all at once, our perception is progressive, then
everything takes its right place within it. And inevitably, the
future perfection must be felt as something higher than what was
there before. The realisation towards which we are moving must
necessarily seem superior to the one which was accomplished
before.

And this opens the door to everything — to all possibilities.

Sri Aurobindo often said this: what appeared beautiful,
good, even perfect, and marvellous and divine at a given moment
in the universe, can no longer appear so now. And what now
seems to us beautiful, marvellous, divine and perfect, will be an
obscurity after some time. And in the same way, the gods who
were all-powerful at a certain period belong to a lower reality
than the gods who will manifest tomorrow.

And that is a sign that the universe is progressive.

This has been said, this has been repeated, but people don’t
understand, you know, when it concerns all those great ages,
that they are like a reduction of the universal progress to the
human measure.

That is why if one enters the state in which everything,
as it is, appears perfectly divine, one necessarily goes out of
the universal movement at the same time. This is what people like Buddha or Shankara had understood. They expressed in their own way that if you could realise the state in which everything appears to you perfectly divine or perfectly perfect, you necessarily go out of the universal movement and enter the Unmanifest.

This is correct. It is like that.

They were sufficiently dissatisfied with life as it was and had very little hope that it could become better; so for them this was the ideal solution. I call it escaping, but still.... It is not so easy! But for them it was the ideal solution — up to a certain point, for... there is perhaps one more step to take.

But it is a fact. If one wants to remain in the universe, one must admit the principle of progress, for this is a progressive universe. If you want to realise a static perfection, well, you will inevitably be thrown out of the universe, for you will no longer belong to its principle.

It is a choice.

Only, Sri Aurobindo often used to say: people who choose the exit forget that at the same time they will lose the consciousness with which they could congratulate themselves on their choice! They forget that.