This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo’s *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 1, “Calm – Peace – Equality”.

“It is good for the physical to be more and more conscious, but it should not be overpowered by these ordinary human reactions of which it becomes aware or badly affected or upset by them. A strong equality and mastery and detachment must come, in the nerves and body as in the mind, which will enable the physical to know and contact these things without feeling any disturbance; it should know and be conscious and reject and throw away the pressure of the movements in the atmosphere, not merely feel them and suffer.”

*Sweet Mother, how can the physical “throw away the pressure of the movements in the atmosphere”?*

You must first of all be conscious and become aware that they are coming, that these movements... that there is a pressure; and then, you must have a will, the will not to accept them; and then again you learn, it is... how to put it?... it is a little trick one must learn, a movement of the consciousness, of the will, and at the same time as though you were using a force that emanates from the body; and finally do this (*gesture of pushing away*), to push back the movement and not accept it.

But first of all you must be conscious. If you are not conscious you can do nothing. You must first see the pressure, the influence, the suggestion, whatever it may be, the thing coming from outside; you must feel it coming, see it, observe it and then take a decision, refuse, not want it. These are three consecutive things.
What is “the right spirit”?¹

It depends on the case, my child. The right spirit is the will to perfect oneself, or the will to be calm, or... it depends, you see, depends on the circumstances. That is why he has not stated it precisely, in this way or that; it means that in each circumstance there is a spirit which is the suitable spirit, the one you ought to have, the attitude you must inwardly take. It depends on the case.

For example, you see, as soon as one feels a wave of physical disequilibrium, of ill health coming, well, to concentrate in the right spirit is to concentrate in an inner calm, a trust in the divine Grace, and a will to remain in physical equilibrium and good health. This is the right spirit. In another case, one may feel a wave of anger or a fit of temper coming from outside; then one should withdraw into an inner calm, a detachment from superficial things, with a will to express only what comes from above and always be submissive to the divine Will. This is the right spirit. And in each case it is something like that. Naturally it always comes back to the same thing, that one must remember the Divine and put oneself at His service and will what He wills.

But in one case you may want the calm, in the other you may want the force, in another still you may want health, in yet another something which resists the pressure from outside.

When one is perplexed, when one has to make a choice, when one doesn’t know what the right thing to do is — you see, one has to choose among two or three or four possible decisions and doesn’t know which is the right one, then one must put oneself as far as possible in contact with one’s psychic being and the divine Presence in one, present the problem to this psychic consciousness and ask for the true light, the true decision, the

¹ “Aspire, concentrate in the right spirit and, whatever the difficulties, you are sure to attain the aim you have put before you.”
one most in accordance with the divine Will, and try to listen
and receive the inspiration.

In each case, you see, it is the right attitude.

“The Divine must always come first.” I don’t understand. What does “come first” mean?

You do not understand the French expression “passer”. However, in English it is the same thing; I don’t know what the text is in English, but “comes first”, do you understand what “comes first” means? It means that before every other consideration it is the Divine who is the first consideration—that all other considerations which are not the Divine are secondary, without importance. That is, as we have just explained for instance: when you have to make a choice, you must choose according to the divine inspiration or what will bring you closer to the Divine or put you in the best situation to attain to the Divine, because it is the Divine who comes first, all personal interest or personal satisfaction must come afterwards. First the Divine. And consecration to the Divine must come first, everything else comes afterwards. If it comes, it comes; if it doesn’t, it does not matter. What matters is the seeking for the Divine, this is the first thing, the thing that comes before everything, the most important thing. This is what it means.

There is “something truer in you”. It is the psychic, isn’t it?

Something...? Ah, it must be... You see, these are answers to letters. People used to write something and Sri Aurobindo copied

2 “For those who wish to lead the spiritual life, the Divine must always come first, everything else must be secondary.”
3 The French translation of the phrase, “passer d’abord”, was not clear to the child.
4 “It is in the peace behind and that ‘something truer’ in you that you must learn to live and feel it to be yourself.”
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what they said, you understand; and probably this person said that he felt within him “something truer”. And so he says: this “something truer” in you is certainly the psychic.

_Sweet Mother, how can we find the Divine who is hidden in us?_

This we have explained many, many times. But the first thing is to want it, and know precisely that this comes first, before all other things, that this is the important thing. That is the first condition; all the rest may come later, this is the _essential_ condition. You see, if once in a while, from time to time, when you have nothing to do and all goes well and you are unoccupied, suddenly you tell yourself, “Ah, I would like so much to find the Divine!” — well, this — it may take a hundred thousand years, in this way.

But if it is the important thing, the only thing that matters, and if everything else comes afterwards, and you want nothing _but this_, then — this is the first condition. You must first establish this, later we may speak of what follows. First this, that all the rest does not count, that only _this_ counts, that one is ready to give up everything to have this, that it is the only thing of importance in life. Then one puts oneself in the condition of being able to take a step forward.

_Sweet Mother, one day you said that if one makes mistakes knowing that one is making a mistake, one pushes the divine Grace away and builds a wall, a veritable wall between the Divine and oneself._

I don’t remember exactly what I said, but there is one thing: if you make a mistake _knowing_ that it is a mistake and committing it all the same, then you do that. If through ignorance you make a mistake because you don’t know that it is a mistake, you may have very unpleasant consequences but you won’t push away
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the Divine, because you have done the thing through ignorance. That's not to say that the fault is not a fault! It is a fault all the same, but as I said, you are not in the state in which you push away the divine Grace. But if you know that it is a fault and commit it all the same, each time you do so you are pushing away the divine Grace, and you push it away a little farther.

_Mother, there are mistakes... one knows they are mistakes, but still it is as though one were pushed into making them. Then?_

Pushed by what? Ah, this is exactly what happens! It is the lower nature, the instincts of the subconscious which govern you and make you do things you should not do. And so it is a choice between your will and accepting submission. There is always a moment when one can decide. It goes to the point where as I said there is even a moment when one can decide to be ill or not to be ill. It even goes so far that a moment comes when one can decide to die or not to die. But for that one must have an _extremely_ awakened consciousness because this speck is infinitesimal in time and like the hundredth part of a second, and because before it one can do nothing and after it one can do nothing; but at that moment one can. And if one is absolutely awake, one can, at that moment, take the decision.

But for ordinary things, as for example, giving way before an impulse or refusing it, it is not a space, not even the space of a second; one has plenty of time before one, one certainly has several minutes. And it is a choice between weak submission and a controlling will. And if the will is clear, if it is based on truth, if truly it obeys the truth and is clear, it always has the power to refuse the wrong movement. It is an excuse you give yourself when you say, “I could not.” It is not true. It is that truly you have not wanted it in the right way. For there is always the choice between saying “yes” and saying “no”. But one chooses to be weak and later gives oneself this excuse, saying, “It is not
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my fault; it was stronger than I.” It is your fault if the thing was
stronger than you. Because you are not these impulses, you are
a conscious soul and an intelligent will, and your duty is to see
that this is what governs you and not the impulses from below.

_Sweet Mother, is “truth in thought” the same thing as
purity in thought?_

These of course are just definitions. It depends on the sentences,
the context, the way the words are used, etc.

_Then what does truth of thought mean?_

It simply means thought expressing the truth.

_Then what does purity of thought mean?_

Inevitably a thought which expresses the truth is necessarily a
thought which is pure, for otherwise it could not express the
truth.

_Sweet Mother, how can we make our consciousness vast?_

Vast? Ah, there are many ways of doing this.

The easiest way is to identify yourself with something vast.
For instance, when you feel that you are shut up in a completely
narrow and limited thought, will, consciousness, when you feel
as though you were in a shell, then if you begin thinking about
something very vast, as for example, the immensity of the waters
of an ocean, and if really you can think of this ocean and how it
stretches out far, far, far, far, in all directions, like this (Mother
stretches out her arms), how, compared with you, it is so far,
so far that you cannot see the other shore, you cannot reach its
end anywhere, neither behind nor in front nor to the right or
left... it is wide, wide, wide... you think of this and then
you feel that you are floating on this sea, like that, and that there are no limits.... This is very easy. Then you can widen your consciousness a little.

Other people, for example, begin looking at the sky; and then they imagine all those spaces between all those stars, and all... that kind of infinity of spaces in which the earth is a tiny point, and you too are just a very tiny point, smaller than an ant, on the earth. And so you look at the sky and feel that you are floating in these infinite spaces between the planets, and that you are growing vaster and vaster to go farther and farther. Some people succeed with this.

There is a way also by trying to identify yourself with all things upon earth. For example, when you have a small narrow vision of something and are hurt by others’ vision and point of view, you must begin by shifting your consciousness, try to put it in others, and try gradually to identify yourself with all the different ways of thinking of all others. This is a little more... how shall I put it?... dangerous. Because to identify oneself with the thought and will of others means to identify oneself with a heap of stupidities (Mother laughs) and bad wills, and this may bring consequences which are not very good. But still, some people do this more easily. For instance, when they are in disagreement with someone, in order to widen their consciousness they try to put themselves in the place of the other and see the thing not from their own point of view but from the point of view of the other. This widens the consciousness, though not as much as by the first ways I spoke about, which are quite innocent. They don’t do you any harm, they do you much good. They make you very peaceful.

There are lots of intellectual ways of widening the consciousness. These I have explained fully in my book. But in any case, when you are bored by something, when something is painful to you or very unpleasant, if you begin to think of the eternity of time and the immensity of space, if you think of all that has gone before and all that will come afterwards, and that this second
in eternity is truly just a passing breath, and that it seems so utterly ridiculous to be upset by something which in the eternity of time is... one doesn’t even have the time to become aware of it, it has no place, no importance, because, what indeed is a second in eternity? If one can manage to realise that, to... how to put it?... visualise, picture the little person one is, in the little earth where one is, and the tiny second of consciousness which for the moment is hurting you or is unpleasant for you, just this — which in itself is only a second in your existence, and that you yourself have been many things before and will be many more things afterwards, that what affects you now you will have probably completely forgotten in ten years, or if you remember it you will say, “How did I happen to attach any importance to that?”... if you can realise that first and then realise your little person which is a second in eternity, not even a second, you know, imperceptible, a fragment of a second in eternity, that the whole world has unfolded before this and will unfold yet, indefinitely — before, behind — and that... well, then suddenly you sense the utter ridiculousness of the importance you attach to what happened to you.... Truly you feel... to what an extent it is absurd to attach any importance to one’s life, to oneself, and to what happens to you. And in the space of three minutes, if you do this properly, all unpleasantness is swept away. Even a very deep pain can be swept away. Simply a concentration like this, and to place oneself in infinity and eternity. Everything goes away. One comes out of it cleansed. One can get rid of all attachments and even, I say, of the deepest sorrows — of everything, in this way — if one knows how to do it in the right way. It immediately takes you out of your little ego. There we are.

_Sweet Mother, how can we make our resolution very firm?_

By wanting it to be very firm! (_Laughter_)  
No, this seems like a joke... but it is absolutely true. One
does not want it truly. There is always, if you... It is a lack of
certainty. If you look sincerely, you will see that you have decided
that it will be like this, and then, beneath there is something
which has not decided at all and is waiting for the second of
hesitation in order to rush forward. If you are sincere, if you
are sincere and get hold of the part which is hiding, waiting, not
showing itself, which knows that there will come a second of
indecision when it can rush out and make you do the thing you
have decided not to do...

But if you really want it, nothing in the world can prevent
you from doing what you want. It is because one doesn't know
how to will it. It is because one is divided in one's will. If you
are not divided in your will, I say that nothing, nobody in the
world can make you change your will.

But one doesn’t know how to will it. In fact one doesn’t even
want to. These are velleities: “Well, it is like this.... It would be
good if it were like that... yes, it would be better if it were like
that... yes, it would be preferable if it were like that.” But this is
not to will. And always there at the back, hidden somewhere in a
corner of the brain, is something which is looking on and saying,
“Oh, why should I want that? After all one can as well want the
opposite.” And to try, you see... Not like that, just wait... But
one can always find a thousand excuses to do the opposite.
And ah, just a tiny little wavering is enough... pft... the thing
swoops down and there it is. But if one wills, if one really knows
that this is the thing, and truly wants this, and if one is oneself
entirely concentrated in the will, I say that there is nothing in
the world that can prevent one from doing it, from doing it or
being obliged to do it. It depends on what it is.

One wants. Yes, one wants, like this (gestures). One wants:
“Yes, yes, it would be better if it were like that. Yes, it would be
finer also, more elegant.”... But, eh, eh, after all one is a weak
creature, isn't that so? And then one can always put the blame
upon something else: “It is the influence coming from outside,
it is all kinds of circumstances.”
A breath has passed, you see. You don’t know... something... a moment of unconsciousness... “Oh, I was not conscious.” You are not conscious because you do not accept... And all this because you don’t know how to will.

To learn how to will is a very important thing. And to will truly, you must unify your being. In fact, to be a being, one must first unify oneself. If one is pulled by absolutely opposite tendencies, if one spends three-fourths of one’s life without being conscious of oneself and the reasons why one does things, is one a real being? One does not exist. One is a mass of influences, movements, forces, actions, reactions, but one is not a being. One begins to become a being when one begins to have a will. And one can’t have a will unless one is unified.

And when you have a will, you will be able to say, say to the Divine: “I want what You want.” But not before that. Because in order to want what the Divine wants, you must have a will, otherwise you can will nothing at all. You would like to. You would like it very much. You would very much like to want what the Divine wants to do. You don’t possess a will to give to Him and to put at His service. Something like that, gelatinous, like jelly-fish... there... a mass of good wills — and I am considering the better side of things and forgetting the bad wills — a mass of good wills, half-conscious and fluctuating....

Ah, that’s all, my children. That’s enough for today. There we are.

Only, put this into practice; just a little of what I have said, not all, eh, just a very little. There.