26 September 1956

“All or most of the works of life are at present or seem to be actuated or vitiated by the soul of desire; even those that are ethical or religious, even those that wear the guise of altruism, philanthropy, self-sacrifice, self-denial are shot through and through with the threads of its making. This soul of desire is a separative soul of ego and all its instincts are for a separative self-affirmation; it pushes always, openly or under more or less shining masks, for its own growth, for possession, for enjoyment, for conquest and empire.”


Sweet Mother what is the “soul of desire”?

It is what makes you live, act, move.

Soul, the word for soul in French, “âme” comes from a word which means “to animate”. It is what gives life to the body. If you didn’t have it you would be inert matter, something like stones or plants, not altogether inert, but vegetative.

Some people say that without desires, that is, without this soul of desire, there would never have been any progress.... In ordinary life it is something very useful but when one decides to do yoga, to find the Divine, it becomes a little cumbersome.

(Silence)

Is that all?

When we come to you for the distribution,1 at times we

---

1 Until 1958 Mother used to distribute groundnuts and sweets every evening at the Playground (except on class days), making it possible for all disciples to go to her one by one in order to receive her spiritual help directly.
Questions and Answers

(feel free and joyful, but at times we feel nothing, we are empty. What does this indicate?)

When one is joyful, it means that one is open and receives the Force; when one feels nothing, it means that one is shut up.

But what makes you open or shuts you up? For each one it is different. It depends on a number of things. Haven't you noticed the difference in yourself, whether it depends on outside circumstances or on something within you? No?

Yes.

Yes. Ah, good!

There are many different reasons which make one feel at times more alive, more full of force and joy.... Usually, in ordinary life, there are people who, due to their very constitution, the way they are made, are in a certain harmony with Nature, as though they breathed with the same rhythm, and these people are usually always joyful, happy; they succeed in all they do, they avoid many troubles and catastrophes, indeed they are in harmony with the rhythm of life and Nature. And, moreover, there are days when one is in contact with the divine Consciousness which is at work, with the Grace, and then everything is tinged, coloured with this Presence, and things which usually seem to you dull and uninteresting become charming, pleasant, attractive, instructive — everything lives and vibrates, and is full of promise and force. So, when one opens to that, one feels stronger, freer, happier, full of energy, and everything has a meaning. One understands why things are as they are and one participates in the general movement.

There are other times when, for some reason or other, one is clouded or closed or down in a hole, and so one no longer feels anything and all things lose their taste, their interest, their value; one goes about like a walking block of wood.
Now, if one is able to consciously unite with one’s psychic being, one can always be in this state of receptivity, inner joy, energy, progress, communion with the divine Presence. And when one is in communion with That, one sees it everywhere, in everything, and all things take on their true meaning.

On what does that depend?... On an inner rhythm. Perhaps a grace. In any case on a receptivity to something that is beyond you.

_Mother a well-developed soul, when it incarnates, does it have less difficulty in transforming this soul of desire?_

That means?...

_The great masters have less difficulties?_

One can’t say.

In principle it is like that, but in fact, the more the individuality is formed, the stronger is this false soul of desire. Those who have a well-formed, well-coordinated individuality, which has an existence of its own, with a minimum of dependence on the environment, have much more difficulty in coming into contact with the divine Presence than others, because they have a very coordinated, very organised separate existence, which is usually self-sufficient. One always finds it much more difficult to convert, we might say, a very living, fully realised personality than someone, for instance, who is full of goodwill but still open to all sorts of influences. When an individual is very strongly made and has the sense of his own personality, his own existence, it is much more difficult for him to think that he is nothing but an instrument of the divine Force, than for somebody who feels a little nebulous, like this (_gesture_) not very precise, who has no exact limits, no well-built individuality; he understands more easily that in himself he is nothing and that it is a force other than his own which makes him act. So you cannot say that a
Questions and Answers

well-developed soul has less difficulties. It depends on the case.

What you mean, I think, is that if you are in contact with your soul — the true one — it is relatively easy to get rid of the soul of desire. But that is a different situation. You must first have found your psychic being and identified yourself with it; and then, later, you may turn to the soul of desire and convince it of its stupidity.

(Long silence)

(To a child) Do you have anything to ask?

Not I, Mother. Somebody has asked a question: “In the present state of the sadhana, what is the utility of a personal contact with you? To what extent does a personal contact with you help us?”

What is meant by a personal contact? To see me, speak to me, what? Individually, collectively, how?

Individually.

Oh! (laughing) to have interviews?

You may answer that it depends on the use one makes of them.

It is very difficult to answer, for it is a purely personal question. It depends on the moment, depends on the state one is in, and above all, as I say, it depends on whether one knows how to use this contact properly.

Don’t you see, if one is inwardly open, if one is receptive, one receives right down into the subtle physical all that is necessary for one’s integral progress. And in the order of things, the outer contact should come only as a crowning and an aid so that the body — the material physical consciousness and the body — may be able to follow the movement of the inner being.
But if you believe that this contact is going to replace the inner receptivity, you are mistaken, it is not much use. For example, people who are quite closed up, who receive nothing within, who have no opening to the forces and who imagine that because they are going to spend half an hour or an hour sitting in front of me and chatting, this is going to help them to transform themselves, they make a gross mistake. But if they are inwardly open, if they are in contact with the Force and make an effort to transform themselves, then, at a particular moment, perhaps a conversation or a material contact, a presence, may help them to make a more integral progress.

One may very easily live in close proximity, in one’s daily life be apparently very near, and get nothing at all out of it, at least in the active consciousness. Perhaps there is a very slow and deep action which goes on... but it seems to me that it would go on in any case. And if, while by my side for some reason or other the thought is elsewhere, the desires elsewhere, the preoccupations elsewhere, it is absolutely useless, it leads to nothing.

The important point is to establish the inner contact; this is really the important point. Then in certain cases — perhaps not very often, it depends on each one — but in certain cases, the presence adds something, gives a more concrete, more precise realisation. But if there is nothing within, it is altogether useless. So one cannot make a general rule, it depends on each one, on the state he is in.

(Silence)

You see, the general mistake is to believe that one must begin from outside and reach within. It is not like that. One must begin within and reach outside afterwards, when one is ready within.

*Mother, when we come to you, we try to be at our best possible, that is, to have very good thoughts; but often,*
Questions and Answers

*on the contrary, all the bad impulses, bad thoughts we had during the day come forward.*

That is perhaps so that you can get rid of them.

If they come, one can offer them and ask to be rid of them.

That perhaps is the reason, it is because the Consciousness acts for purification. It is no use at all hiding things and pushing them behind, like this, and imagining they are not there because one has put a veil in front. It is much better to see oneself as one is — provided one is ready to give up this way of being. If you come allowing all the bad movements to rise to the surface, to show themselves; if you offer them, if you say, “Well, this is how I am”, and if at the same time you have the aspiration to be different, then this second of presence is extremely useful; you can, yes, in a few seconds receive the help you need to get rid of them; while if you come like a little saint and go away content, without having received anything, it is not very useful.

Automatically the Consciousness acts like that, it is like the ray that brings light where there wasn’t any. Only, what is needed is to be in a state where one wants to give up the thing, to get rid of it — not to cling to it and keep it. If one sincerely wants to pull it out of oneself, make it disappear, then it is very useful.

(Silence)

Indeed, I could ask a question myself: Why — I don’t know if it is common, but still — why, when you come to me, do you want to have good thoughts and be at your best? For what reason?

*To have bad movements before you is very ugly!* (Laughter)

If you want to keep them, yes, it is very ugly, but if you want to get rid of them!... It is perhaps a chance to get rid of them. It is surely even an opportunity to get rid of them, because before
me they appear exactly as they are; while far from me they are
coloured with all sorts of brilliant and false lights, so that you
take them for what they are not. If the movement is nasty and
you see it in my atmosphere, it appears exactly as it is. Then that
is the time to get rid of it.

(Silence)

To give the best one has is very fine and is much appreciated;
but to give the worst one has is much more useful; and perhaps
this offering is even more appreciated — on condition that it is
given in order to get rid of it, not to take it back afterwards!