2 March 1955

This talk is based upon Bases of Yoga, Chapter 4, “Desire — Food — Sex”.

_Sweet Mother, what is the right spirit and the right consciousness in which one should take food?_

It is the spirit of consecration and...

What is the other one you said?

_The right consciousness._

Yes, it is the same thing. It is the consciousness that’s turned exclusively to the Divine, and wants the divine realisation and nothing else; and the right spirit is the spirit of consecration to the Divine which wants only the transformation and nothing else, that is, something which does not try to seek its own satisfaction in the fulfilment of the aspiration.

There is always, as soon as there’s an aspiration... it may be very sincere and spontaneous but immediately the mind and vital are there, watching like robbers behind the door; and if a force answers they rush upon it for their own satisfaction. So there one must take very, very, very great care, because though the aspiration might be sincere, the call absolutely spontaneous and sincere and very pure, as soon as the answer comes the two brigands are there, trying to take possession of what comes for their own satisfaction. And what comes is very good but they immediately pervert it, they use it for personal ends, for the satisfaction of their desires or ambitions, and they spoil everything. And naturally, not only do they spoil everything but they stop the experience. So unless one takes good care, one is stuck there, and cannot move forward. If some Grace is above you, when
the Grace sees this it automatically gives you a terrible blow to recall you to the reality, to your senses; it gives you a good knock on the head or in the stomach or the heart or anywhere else so that all of a sudden you say, “Oh, that won’t do any more.”

No questions?

Mother, what does this mean: “sleep has to be gradually transformed into the yogic repose”?

Ah, yogic repose. It means that instead of an unconscious sleep it is a sleep — if you want to call it sleep — a conscious sleep. The body is in a state of complete repose, with the nerves relaxed, the muscles relaxed; one is completely relaxed and at rest; but the spirit remains conscious, conscious enough to be able to put the vital also at rest, the mind also at rest, and let everything be in a state of peace, quietude, immobility, so that the consciousness may be completely free. Then the consciousness can either rest also, if it thinks it necessary, or work if it thinks that is needed; and in any case it is free to do as it wants, what it wants, and to go to the regions to which it wants to go. But the parts belonging to the present physical being, that is, the mind, vital and physical, are in a complete repose and a kind of immobility, due to which the hours of sleep do not need to be so long. One can cut short the number of hours of sleep very much if one leaves the body in this state of rest. But this asks for much work, and a very conscious work, you see, very conscious and very persistent. It cannot be had immediately, it may require years of discipline. Only, once it is acquired, well, one has mastered sleep and can prevent, well... For example, there are many people who, when they go to sleep, are in a very good state of consciousness, and when they wake up in the morning they are completely dazed and have lost all that they had gained the previous day; and that’s because their sleep is unconscious and they go out in the vital or the mind or the subtle physical; they go to undesirable places or else fall into the inconscience and lose in this inconscience all
Questions and Answers

they had gained before... It is something very necessary, but it
can’t be acquired very easily. It is one of the most difficult things
to do, but it is very useful; only, one can hardly do it without
a very close guidance, because unless one knows how to do it
even to the last detail, one risks doing stupid things.

In any case one thing you can do in all security is, before
going to sleep, to concentrate, relax all tension in the physical
being, try... that is, in the body try so that the body lies like a soft
rag on the bed, that it is no longer something with twitchings and
cramps; to relax it completely as though it were a kind of thing
like a rag. And then, the vital: to calm it, calm it as much as you
can, make it as quiet, as peaceful as possible. And then the mind
also — the mind, try to keep it like that, without any activity.
You must put upon the brain the force of great peace, great
quietude, of silence if possible, and not follow ideas actively, not
make any effort, nothing, nothing; you must relax all movement
there too, but relax it in a kind of silence and quietude as great
as possible.

Once you have done all this, you may add either a prayer
or an aspiration in accordance with your nature, to ask for
the consciousness and peace and to be protected against all the
adverse forces throughout the sleep, to be in a concentration of
quiet aspiration and in the protection; ask the Grace to watch
over your sleep; and then go to sleep. This is to sleep in the best
possible conditions. What happens afterwards depends on your
inner impulses, but if you do this persistently, night after night,
night after night, after some time it will have its effect.

Usually, you see, one lies down on the bed and tries to sleep
as quickly as possible, and then, that’s all, with a state of total
ignorance of how it ought to be done. But what I have just told
you, if you do that regularly it will have an effect. In any case,
it can very well avoid the attacks which occur at night: one
has gone to bed very nicely, one wakes up ill; this is something
absolutely disastrous, it means that during the night one has
been getting infected somewhere in a state of total inconscience.
Is it not also necessary to remember one’s dreams?

This is not so necessary. It is useful if one wants to have a great control over his sleep. But this also one must know how to do. To remember one’s dreams — that’s in the morning; what I am telling you is for the evening. In the morning when you get up, you must not be in a hurry. That is, you must not wake up just at the moment when you must get out of bed; you must have some time in hand and must take good care, must make a formation before going to sleep, and take good care when waking up not to make any abrupt movement, because if you make an abrupt movement, automatically the memory of your dreams vanishes. You must remain with the head absolutely motionless on the pillow, without stirring, until you can quietly recall to yourself the consciousness which went out, and recall it as one pulls at something, very gently, without any knocking and without haste, in a state of attention and concentration. And then, as the consciousness comes back to you, the consciousness that went out, if you remain quite motionless, very quiet, and do not begin once again to think of all kinds of things, it will bring back first an impression and then the memory, sometimes a fragmentary memory. But if you remain in that same state of receptive immobility, then it can become more and more a conscious memory. But for this you must have time. If there is the least feeling that you have to hurry, it is finished, you can do nothing at all. You must not even ask yourself, when waking up, “What is the time?” It is absolutely finished. If you do that, everything vanishes.

But, Mother, one goes off to sleep again if one doesn’t move! (Laughter)

This means one thing or other: either that one has not slept enough, and so should sleep again or else that one is a little tamasic by nature and likes to be in the inconscience.
Questions and Answers

So, that's all, my children? No questions?

Mother, an inner effort is often spoilt by dispersions in outer activities.

When one is outwardly active, how to keep the concentration?... Oh, this should not be very difficult. Truly it should not be very difficult. For me what seems difficult is not to keep a kind of intensity of inner consciousness, to be separated from it; this seems something impossible. Once one catches that within oneself, how can one separate oneself from it, if you have had it once, if it has become a reality for you, this consciousness and this inner union with the psychic, and this consciousness and intensity of aspiration, and this flame which is always lit? Why, whatever one may be doing, this cannot be extinguished, it is always there.

It seems to me that to separate oneself from it, once it is there, you must close a door, you must deliberately close the door, like this, upon it, and say, “I am no longer interested in it.” But if one truly has the will to keep the contact, it doesn’t seem very difficult to me. It seems to me that one must really have the will to turn one’s back upon it for it to go away; otherwise it is there, behind everything, all things, constantly. And if on the contrary one has made it a habit, when saying something, when making a movement, simply a movement or doing anything at all, to refer always to that, in there, not to feel capable of doing something without having that at the back, there, to tell you, “Yes, this way, not that way. That, no, not that, this”, then it is difficult to live without it.

Some people, because it troubles them, because it puts a control on their impulses and they want to feel absolutely free and independent (what they call independent), seem deliberately to bang the door, like that, they slam the door violently to stop it. Then naturally, once it is done, it is done; then one becomes something so superficial, so weak, so petty, so ignorant,
so stupid! How can one bear to be like that? It seems to me that immediately the instinct would be to take a step backwards, open the door hurriedly and put oneself again into contact, saying, “No, no, no, not this state, not this frightful state of ignorance” — in which you don’t even know what you ought to say or ought not to say, what you ought to do or ought not to do, where you should go or should not go, nothing, nothing, you are in an obscure and incoherent immensity. It is a dreadful state. But when the door is open and this thing is behind, it is absolutely comfortable at every minute, as though one were leaning one’s back against a great light, a great consciousness, like this... “Ah, now, here we are, this is what ought to be done, that’s what ought to be said, this is the movement to be made”, etc. So, then one is comfortable, quiet, without anguish, without any problem, without any anxiety. One does what one wants to do; whether people take it more or less well is their affair, but for oneself it is like that.

And note that I am telling you this because I take the greatest care to open your door, inside all of you, and if you have only a little... a small movement of concentration within you, you don’t have to spend those long periods in front of a closed door which does not move, of which you do not have the key, and which you do not know how to open. Sometimes one has to wait stuck to the door for hours or for days or months or sometimes for years, and you do not know what to do.

It is not like that for you, my children.

The door is open, only one must look towards it. One must not turn one’s back to it.

Ah, that’s all?

_Sweet Mother, what does the error of the lower vital mean?_

You are asking what it is?

All desires, all impulses, all egoistical, obscure, ignorant,
Questions and Answers

passionate, violent movements — in fact most of the movements one makes every day. This is the error of the lower vital. It wants to have everything for itself. It wants to be the master of the whole life, to govern everything. And when the mind is an accomplice — which happens ninety-nine and a half times out of a hundred — the mind says, “This indeed is called living one’s life, a right to live one’s life.” It means the right to be an ignorant and stupid animal.

Mother, what is sleep? Is it only the need of the body to rest or is it something else?

Sleep can be a very active means of concentration and inner knowledge. Sleep is the school one has to go through, if one knows how to learn his lesson there, so that the inner being may be independent of the physical form, conscious in itself and master of its own life. There are entire parts of the being which need this immobility and semi-consciousness of the outer being, of the body, in order to be able to live their own life, independently.

Only, people don’t know, they sleep because they sleep, as they eat, as they live — by a kind of instinct, a semi-conscious impulse. They don’t even ask themselves the question. You are asking the question now: Why does one sleep? But there are millions and millions of beings who sleep without ever having asked themselves the question why one sleeps. They sleep because they feel sleepy, they eat because they are hungry, and they do foolish things because their instincts push them, without thinking, without reasoning; but for those who know, sleep is a school, an excellent school for something other than the school of waking hours.

It is another school for another purpose, but it is a school. If one wants to make the maximum progress possible, one must know how to use one’s nights as one uses one’s days; only, usually, people don’t at all know what to do, and they try to remain awake and all that they create is a physical and vital
imbalance — and sometimes a mental one also — as a result.

The physical and all material physical parts should be absolutely at rest, but a repose which is not a fall into the inconscient — this is one of the conditions. And the vital must be in a repose of silence. Then if you have these three things at rest, the inner being which is rarely in relation with the outer life, because the outer life is too noisy and too unconscious for it to be able to manifest itself, can become aware of itself and awaken, become active and act upon the lower parts, establish a conscious contact. This is the real reason for sleep, apart from the necessity that, in the present conditions of life, activity and rest, rest and activity must alternate.

The body needs rest but there are very few people, as I said, who know how to sleep. They sleep in such conditions that they don’t wake up refreshed or are hardly rested at all. But this is an entire science to learn.

_On what do our physical reserves depend, Mother?_

Physical reserves? You mean the reserve of energy?

Yes.

It depends on the capacity to receive the universal vital force; because in fact, through food also it is these vital forces one receives but one receives them from below. But in order to have reserves you must know how to receive the universal vital forces constantly and to have a kind of balance in the being which prevents you from spending more than you have.

A proportion has to be kept between the receptivity and the expenditure. It is a kind of harmony in the being which must be established. Only, some people have an almost instinctive power of attracting towards them the vital forces or absorbing them — the universal vital forces, I mean — and so they make up their expense as they go along spending. These people can produce
much more than others. Some of them, in certain conditions like sleep or a kind of repose or relaxation, can accumulate forces and later they exhaust them, so to say, in their activities and they must yet once again charge the battery afterwards — this is already a much less favourable condition.

Some people don’t know how to receive the forces at all. These live on the energies concentrated in the body — for there is some concentrated energy in all the cells of the body. They live upon that, but after some time, they are drained out completely if they don’t know how to recuperate; when they have spent all the energies which were concentrated inside them either they fall ill or they never recuperate them. So this cannot last very long; it lasts the average lifetime of human beings, and yet, at the end of a certain number of years they are no longer able to make the same effort or to produce as much, or above all to make any progress.

But those who know instinctively or who have learnt to receive and accumulate the universal vital forces, these can last almost indefinitely. The wear and tear is very little, especially if they know how to do it and do it with knowledge and method; then here it can reach a certain degree of perfection.

When one knows, sometimes just two or three minutes are sufficient to recuperate the energies spent over a long period. Only, one must know how to do it.

But those who draw back upon themselves, who turn and double up on themselves, cannot do this. One must live all the time in a very vast and very expansive consciousness (I don’t know if you understand the word, it means something which extends very homogeneously and quietly, as when the tide is at its height and the water spreads like that, quietly — that’s the impression). The vital must be like that — then one is open to the universal forces. But if, for example, one has the very bad habit of exchanging vital forces with one’s fellowmen, then one loses the capacity altogether. So unless one is in relation with someone, one receives nothing at all. But naturally if you receive forces through others, you receive at the same time all the
difficulties of the other person, perhaps sometimes his qualities also, but these are less contagious. This indeed is something that shuts you up most.

Some people... unless they have more or less social relations with others, relations of friendship, conversing... and then it goes still farther... they don’t receive any forces; and this is how they receive them. But this always makes a soup. The forces one receives are already half digested, in any case they don’t have their primal purity, and this affects your own capacity.

But when one has this capacity in his own consciousness — for example, you go for a walk and come to a place which is somewhat vast, like the seashore or like a great plain or the summit of a mountain, a place where the horizon is fairly vast, then if you have this kind of physical instinct which suddenly makes you as vast as the horizon, you have a sense of infinity, immensity; and the vaster you become, the quieter and more peaceful you become.

It is enough for you to have a contact with Nature like that.

There are many other means, but this one is very spontaneous. There is also... when you see something very beautiful you can have the same thing: a kind of inner joy and an opening to the forces, and so this widens you and fills you at the same time. There are many means but usually one does not use them. Naturally, if you enter into contemplation and aspire for a higher life and call down the forces from above, this recuperates your energies more than anything else. But there are numerous methods.

There we are. That’s all? Good.

So, au revoir, my children.

Good night.