Mother reads the first part of Chapter 6 of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

**What is a “hierarchy”**?

It is a grouping organised in order of merit. For instance, you have a chief at the centre and you may have four persons around him, and around these four, 8, then 12, 24, 36, 48, 124, and so on, each with his special mission, his special work, his particular authority, and all referring in an ascending order to the centre. That is a hierarchy. In governments they try to form hierarchies, but these are untrue, they are arbitrary and not worth anything. But in all ancient initiations there were hierarchies which were expressions of individual merit — individual powers and merits — having always at their centre the representative of the Supreme and the Shakti; sometimes having only the Supreme, depending on the religions. But the groups were always organised in that way, that is, with a growing number of individuals, each one having to refer to the officer immediately above him. For instance, the 124 had to refer to the 48, the 48 had to refer to the 24, the 24 refer to the 12, the 12 to the 8, and so on. That is a hierarchy. The word is used in a very imprecise and vague way. They speak of a hierarchy and think it is the men who govern and have subordinates. But the true hierarchy is an occult hierarchy, and this occult hierarchy had as its purpose the manifesting, the expressing of a more profound hierarchy which is a hierarchy of the invisible worlds.

**What is the “transcendent Mother”?**

Don’t you know that there are three principles: the transcendent, the universal and the individual or personal? No? — the
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transcendent which is above creation, at the origin of creation; the universal which is the creation, and the individual which is self-explanatory. There is a transcendent Divine, a universal Divine and an individual Divine. That is, one may put oneself in contact with the divine Consciousness within oneself, in the universe and, beyond all forms, in the transcendent. So these three aspects are also the three aspects of the divine Mother: transcendent, universal and individual.... Do you know the flower I have called “Transformation”? Yes. You know it has four petals. Well, these four petals are arranged like a cross: one at the top which represents the transcendent; two on each side, the universal; and one at the bottom, the individual.

The petal at the top is divided into two.

Exactly, the transcendent is one and two (or dual) at the same time. This flower is almost perfect in its form. This was the original meaning of the cross also, but that was not as perfect as the flower, for it was one, two, and three. It was not so good — the flower is perfect.

The divine Mother is the divine Shakti, that is, the creative Force. She is identified with the cosmos. How can she have a transcendent aspect?

But perhaps the divine Mother was there before the creation! She must certainly have existed before the creation, for she cannot be her own product. If it is she who has created, she must have existed before the creation, otherwise she could never have created.

She existed in the Supreme, then, before the creation?

“In” the Supreme.... It is a little difficult to speak of “within”

1 The flower of the cork-oak of India (millingtonia bortensis).
and “without” when one is outside all forms! If you like, say that she is a movement of the Supreme (if that makes you understand better) or an action of the Supreme or a state of the Supreme, a mode... You may say what you like, what most gives you an understanding of the thing. You see, the human mind likes to cut things into little bits.... I am going to tell you a little story meant for children. The Supreme, having decided to create a universe, took a certain inner attitude which corresponded with the inner manifestation (unexpressed) of the divine Mother, the supreme Shakti. At the same time, he did this with the intention that it may be the mode of creation of the universe he wanted to create, the creative power of the universe. Hence, first of all, he had to conceive the possibility of the divine Mother in order that this divine Mother could conceive the possibility of the universe. You are following? I tell you once again that it is not quite like that, but after all, it is meant for childish minds. So, we may very well say that there is a transcendent Divine Mother, that is, independent of her creation. She may have been conceived, formed (whatever you like) for the creation, with the purpose of creation, but she had to exist before the creation to be able to create, else how could she have created? That is the transcendent aspect, and note that this transcendent aspect is permanent. We speak as though things had unfolded in time at a date which could be fixed: the first of January 0000, for the beginning of the world, but it is not quite like that! There is constantly a transcendent, constantly a universal, constantly an individual, and the transcendent, universal and individual are co-existent. That is, if you enter into a certain state of consciousness, you can at any moment be in contact with the transcendent Shakti, and you can also, with another movement, be in contact with the universal Shakti, and be in contact with the individual Shakti, and all this simultaneously — that does not unfold itself in time, it is we who move in time as we speak, otherwise we cannot express ourselves. We may experience it but we can express it only by saying one word after another. (Unfortunately, one
cannot say all the words at the same time; if one could say them all at the same time, that would be a little more like the truth.)

Finally, all that is said, all that has been said, all that will be said, is always only an extremely clumsy and limited way of expressing something which may be lived but which cannot be described. And there is a moment, when one lives the thing, in which one sees that the same thing can be expressed almost with the same exactness or the same truth in religious language, mystical language, philosophic language and materialistic language and that from the point of view of the lived truth, it makes very little difference. It is only when one is in the mental consciousness that one thing seems true to you and another does not seem true; but all these are only ways of expression. The experience carries in itself its absolute, but words cannot describe it — one may choose one language or another to express oneself, and with just a very little precaution, one can always say something approaching the Truth in all instances.

I am telling you this not to throw you into confusion but simply to let you understand that there is a considerable difference between the truth of experience and the way of expressing it, whatever it may be, even the best.