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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Planes and Parts of the Being”.

Sweet Mother, has the vital nature of man come out from his true vital being?

Come out? What do you call coming out? You mean that first there was the true vital being and that this expresses itself in the physical nature, the earth nature, by the vital which we see? Yes!

Mother, why is it so contradictory?

Why is the external world so total a contradiction of the divine world? It is exactly the same thing. It is like that.

The vital being, the true vital being which Sri Aurobindo describes, is the vital being which is in contact with the Divine, which is entirely surrendered to the Divine and is His instrument; whereas in the ordinary earth consciousness the vital being and also the physical being do not at all belong to the Divine, they think they belong to themselves, and the only thing that counts is their own little person; and that is why everything is like this. All the disorder in the universe is due to that.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “there is... a true physical being.” What does this mean?

There is a physical Nature which is perfectly harmonious, which has an absolutely... how to put it... yes, harmonious working, without any disorder, without disequilibrium, without any rupture of harmony, which would be expressed, if it existed upon earth, by a perfect health, a growing force, a continuous

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progress; and then all that one would like to obtain from one's body one would obtain; and this can go as far as an almost unimaginable progress of perfection.

The physical state as we see it with all its disharmonies, its weaknesses, its uglinesses, is the same deformation as that which has changed the higher vital, the true vital, into the kind of vital we see. And this comes from the same cause: it is cut off from its Origin, with an acute sense of separation which makes one live in an absolutely obscure consciousness which has become totally ignorant, instead of living constantly in the consciousness of one's Origin. Now, to ask why it is like that is to ask too much.

That's all?

I didn't understand very well, Sweet Mother.

You haven't understood what the true physical is, because it is not a question of understanding. One is not conscious of it because one is not inside it, one doesn't live in it. But can't you conceive of a body which would be perfectly beautiful, perfectly harmonious, which would function perfectly well and would never be ill, never tired, and would be in a state of constant progress? First it would become taller and taller until it reaches its maximum height, and then it would become stronger and stronger, more and more skilful, more and more conscious, and always in a perfect harmony: never any illness and never any fatigue, never any error, making no mistakes, knowing exactly at each moment what ought to be done and why.

Mother, it is said that there is a true being... but usually when one speaks of the physical it means material, concerning the body, doesn't it?

For the moment there is no true being in the most material domain. It is only a kind of subtle prototype which is not materially realised.

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(*To another child*) You have something to ask?

Mother, are Time and Space particular only to the physical world or to other worlds also?

As there are forms, there is necessarily a Time, a Space, but it is not at all the same as the physical. It is neither the same Time nor the same Space.

For example, as soon as you come to the vital there is a Time and Space which are similar to the physical but without that fixity and hardness and irremediability which are here. That is, for instance, in the vital a strong intelligent will has an immediate action; here, in the physical, it takes sometimes extremely long to be realised, an entire process has to be followed. In the vital it is direct, the will acts directly on the circumstances, and if it is truly of a very strong kind, it is instantaneous. But there is still a Space, that is, one has the impression of moving to go from one place to another, and that necessarily, as one moves, a certain time intervenes; but it is an extremely short time compared with physical time.

On the mental plane the notion of Time disappears almost totally. For example, you are in your mental consciousness, you think of someone or something or of a place, and immediately you are there. There is no need of any time between the thought and the realisation. It is only when the mind is mingled with the vital that the notion of time is introduced; and if they go down into the physical, before a mental conception can be realised a whole process is necessary. You do not have a direct mental action on matter. For instance, if you think of someone who lives in Calcutta, well, physically you have to take a plane and some hours must pass before you can be there; while mentally if you are here and think of someone in Calcutta, instantaneously you are there with him. Instantaneously, you see. But if you go out in the vital from your body and want to go somewhere, well, you have the feeling of moving, and of the time it takes you to reach

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the place you are going to. But it is incomparably fast in relation to the physical, to the time necessary to do things physically.

Only right at the top of the ladder, when one reaches what could be called the centre of the universe, the centre and origin of the universe, everything is instantaneous. The past, present and future are all contained in a total and simultaneous consciousness, that is, what has always been and what will be are as though united in a single instant, a single beat of the universe, and it is only there that one goes out of Time and Space.

Mother, you said that if we think mentally of something we are immediately in the presence of that thing, but if, for example, we think mentally of something higher, of the Divine, for example...

Yes.

Are we immediately in His Presence?

Yes, but only that part of the thought, not your body. That's just what I said. In the mental domain it is like that; if one concentrates on the Divine and thinks of the Divine, the part... I don't say the whole thought, because thought is multiple and divided, but the part which is sincerely concentrated on the Divine is with Him. It does some good but not very much when this part is mixed with all the others which think of hundreds of different things at the same time, or when it goes down into the body, is all tied up precisely to that frightful slowness of material things, and when we have to take so many steps only to go from here to the door.

In the vital with a leap one can be there; mentally there is no need even of a leap.

On the psychic plane is there a past, present and future?

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In the psychic? Yes, you have even the consciousness of all the lives you have lived. When you enter into contact with the psychic you become conscious of all the lives you have lived, it keeps the absolutely living memory of all the events in which the psychic took part — not the whole life, not that one can tell little stories to oneself: that first one was a monkey and then later something a little higher, and so on, the cave-man... no, no stories like that. But all the events of former lives in which the psychic participated are preserved, and when one enters into conscious contact with his psychic being this can be called up like a sort of cinema. But it has no continuity except in lives in which the psychic is absolutely conscious, active, permanently active, that is, constantly associated with the consciousness; so naturally, being constantly associated with the consciousness, it consciously remembers everything that has happened in the real life of the person, and the memories — when one follows these things — the memories of his psychic being are more and more coordinated and closer and closer to what could be a physical memory if there were one, in any case of all the intellectual and emotional elements of life, and of some physical events when it was possible for this being to manifest in the outer consciousness; then, at these moments, the whole set of physical circumstances in which one was is kept absolutely intact in the consciousness.

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo speaks of “the psychic behind supporting all”. What does this mean?

Well, yes, the psychic is behind the whole organisation, this triple organisation of human life and consciousness, the psychic is behind and supports it by its consciousness which is an immortal one. It is because of the psychic that we have so clear a sense of continuity. Otherwise if you compare what you now are with what you were when you were three, obviously you couldn't recognise yourself in any way, either physically or vitally or mentally. There is no resemblance of any kind. But behind there

is the psychic which supports the development, the growth of the being and gives this continuity of consciousness, makes one feel that he is the same being even while being absolutely different, absolutely different. If later one observes himself sufficiently, he can see that the things he understood and could do at that time are things which seem to him absolutely inconceivable now, and that he could never do a similar thing because he is no longer that person at all. And yet, because within there was the psychic consciousness which is immortal, one has the feeling that it is always the same being which was there and continues to be there and will continue to be there with more or less progressive and more or less conscious changes.

Mother, is the orientation of an individual's life directed by the psychic?

Yes. Absolutely unconsciously for the individual, most of the time; but it is the psychic which organises his existence — only in what may be called the main lines, because for intervening in the details there would have to be a conscious union between the outer being, that is, the vital and physical being, and the psychic being, but usually this does not exist. So externally, in the details... for example, there was someone who in deep perplexity said to me, “Well, if it is the psychic being or rather the Divine in the psychic who directs our life, is it He who decides the number of pieces of sugar I put in my tea-cup?” That was the question, verbatim. So the answer had to be, “No, because it is not a detailed intervention of this kind.”

It is as when you push your fist into a heap of iron filings or saw-dust, all the infinitesimal little elements of the iron filings or saw-dust are organised to take on the form of your fist, but they do not do this either deliberately or consciously. It is through the work of the consciousness which pushes that this kind of thing happens. There is no decision that each element is going to be exactly in this place, like that; it is the effect of

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the energy which has pushed the fist that organises the elements. But that's how it is. There is the psychic consciousness at work in life, organising all the circumstances of your life but not with a deliberate choice of the details; and in fact very few things are deliberate and conscious in the organisation of the physical life of human beings. Most of the time that's what happens. If you ask someone, "Why have you done this?" — "That's how it happened." It is always like that: "That's how it happened." At least seventy-five times out of a hundred. Only, one is so used to going, moving, and doing things like that that one doesn't even notice it. But if one begins to observe himself, he sees that it is true. There are very few things which were the result of a clear and willed decision, very few, only what one considers important things, and even here there is a wide margin. The amount of inconstancy that's mixed with the physical consciousness is tremendous, but because we are used to it we do not notice it. But as soon as you begin to analyse, look, study, you are terrified. How many times you are just faced with a question. You see, you do things automatically, by habit, perhaps sometimes by choice — sometimes, but suddenly you find yourself facing an absolutely insignificant detail: "Should I do this or should I do that?" Simply this. You can take very small things like... you are in the course of eating, and you ask yourself, "Should I continue eating or should I stop?" How many times can you take a motivated and conscious decision? And you suddenly realise, "Why, I know nothing about it", and "I don't know; I can do this, I can do that; I can do that and that and that. But what will choose in me?" Unless you have mental constructions. But then if you have mental constructions ruling your life, you don't even ask yourself these questions, you live like an automaton, in a habitual routine you have made for yourself. But it's not just once, it happens a thousand times daily.

For example, you are in contact with someone, you have very good feelings for this person; you find yourself in a slightly difficult circumstance and want to do the best possible. If you act

spontaneously, there is no problem before you because you act like that, one thing trailing another, and without reflecting. And you consciously want to do the best... On what will you base your judgment? What knowledge will allow you to decide: “I must do this or I must do that, I must say this or I must say that or I must not say anything” — all the countless possibilities which come before you? And on what will you base your judgment? If you look at it sincerely, you will find out that at each step you do not know.

It is only if you have been in the habit of going within yourself, of referring to the inner psychic consciousness and letting it decide in yourself what you want to do, that you do it with certitude, without hesitation, without a question, nothing. You know that this is what must be done and there is no question about it; but that’s the only case. Therefore it is only when you let your psychic guide you consciously, constantly, that you are able to do consciously and constantly the right thing; but that’s the only case.

In the other case, if you have made it a habit to study and observe, you have before you all the little things of life which recur constantly. You don’t want to live mechanically by a kind of habit, you want to live consciously, making use of your will. Well, at every minute you are facing a problem which you can’t solve, I mean purely physically. Take a certain difficulty you have in your body — what we call a disorder — which is expressed by an uneasiness or an indisposition; it is not an illness, it is an indisposition, it is an uneasiness, there is something that’s not working very well. Then if you don’t have the psychic knowledge which makes you directly do the thing which ought to be done and without any argument, if you want to refer the thing to your mind and to what you consider to be the knowledge you have, then... Take a case which lies in the field of medicine, that is, “Should I do this or that, take this medicine or that, change the diet, take this food or that?”... Then you look. If you have never known more than a certain number

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of very primary principles, your choice is very easy, but if by chance you have studied a little and know if it be only the different medical systems of treatment... there are the systems of different countries, the different systems of medicines, there are, you know, allopathy, homeopathy, this one and that; so one tells you one thing, another tells you another. You know people who have told you, "Don't do this, do that", others who say, "Above all don't do this, do that", and so on, and so you find yourself facing the problem and ask yourself, "Well, with all that, what do I know myself, what am I going to decide? I know nothing."

There is only one thing which knows in you, that's your psychic; *it* makes no mistake, it will immediately, instantaneously tell you, if you obey it without a word and without your ideas and arguments, it will make you do the right thing. But all the rest... you are lost. And for everything: what are you going to study, what are you not going to study, what work are you going to do, what path are you going to take? But then there are all the possibilities which come in, all that you have either studied or met in life, all the suggestions you have received from all sides, which are there, like that, dancing around you. And with what will you decide? I am speaking of people who are absolutely sincere and have no preconceived ideas, prejudices, established rules which they follow in a mechanical routine, without endeavouring to know the truth at all, and for whom their mental construction is the truth. Then it is so simple, one goes straight on his path, bumps his nose against the wall but doesn't notice it until the nose is smashed. But otherwise it is terribly difficult.

This was what Sri Aurobindo meant when he said that one lived constantly in ignorance and that unless the mind of ignorance is replaced by the mind of light one could not follow the true path, and that this was the indispensable preparation before any integral transformation could take place.

That's all? (*To a child*) You have something to say? No?

Well then, it is very late.