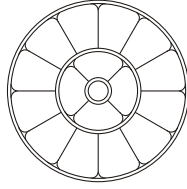


Some Answers from the Mother



The Mother

Some Answers from the Mother

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

VOLUME 16
COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER

Second Edition

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Publisher's Note

This volume contains the Mother's correspondence with fourteen persons; all but one of them were members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The material covers a forty-five year period, from 1927 to 1972. The earliest items are letters of the Mother to her son; the latest are brief thoughts and prayers written in a young disciple's notebook. Each of the correspondences is presented in chronological order, with the exception of Series Six, which is arranged by theme. Two correspondences were written in English; twelve were written wholly or partly in French and appear here in translation. Further information is provided in the Note on the Texts.

Contents

Series One (1927–1938)	3
Letters from the Mother to her son	
Series Two (1931–1940)	13
To the sadhak in charge of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Building Department during the 1930s and early 1940s.	
Series Three (1931–1949)	59
To “My little smile” who worked for many years embroidering clothes for the Mother and later became one of her personal attendants.	
Series Four (1932–1934)	105
To the sadhak in charge of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram’s cows, bullocks and carts during the 1930s.	
Series Five (1932–1937)	113
To a young sadhak who in his youth learned music, painting and poetry, and later became a teacher in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.	
Series Six (1933–1949)	153
To a young sadhak who became a teacher in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.	
Series Seven (1935–1940)	201
To the sadhak who was the dentist at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram during the 1930s and then served as one of Sri Aurobindo’s personal attendants.	

Contents

Series Eight (1959–1960)	221
To a young captain in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Department of Physical Education.	
Series Nine (1960–1963)	241
To a young teacher in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.	
Series Ten (1961–1970)	259
To a young captain in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Department of Physical Education.	
Series Eleven (1966–1969)	357
To a sadhak of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.	
Series Twelve (1969–1970)	397
To a student in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.	
Series Thirteen (1969–1970)	409
To a student in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.	
Series Fourteen (1971–1972)	423
To a sadhak of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.	
Note on the Texts	439

Some Answers from the Mother

Series One

Series One

Letters from the Mother to Her Son

Our community is growing more and more; we are nearly thirty (not counting those who are scattered all over India); and I have become responsible for all this; I am at the centre of the organisation, on the material as well as the spiritual side, and you can easily imagine what it means. We already occupy five houses, one of which is our property; others will follow. New recruits are coming from all parts of the world. With this expansion, new activities are being created, new needs are arising which require new skills.

16 January 1927

*

I think I told you about our five houses; four of them are joined in a single square block which is surrounded on all sides by streets and contains several buildings with courtyards and gardens. We have just bought, repaired and comfortably furnished one of these houses and then, just recently, we have settled there, Sri Aurobindo and myself, as well as five of the closest disciples.

We have joined the houses together with openings in some of the outer walls and outbuildings, so that I may walk freely in our little realm without having to go out into the street — this is rather nice. But I am busier than ever now, and I can say that at the moment I am writing to you in a hurry.

16 February 1927

*

It is true that for a long time I have not slept in the usual sense of the word.¹ That is to say, at no time do I fall into

¹ Written in connection with a newspaper article in which it was stated that the Mother had not slept for several months.

Some Answers from the Mother

the inconscience which is the sign of ordinary sleep. But I do give my body the rest it needs, that is, two or three hours of lying down in a condition of absolute immobility in which the whole being, mental, psychic, vital and physical, enters into a complete state of rest made of perfect peace, absolute silence and total immobility, while the consciousness remains perfectly awake; or else I enter into an internal activity of one or more states of being, an activity which constitutes the occult work and which, needless to say, is also perfectly conscious. So I can say, in all truth, that I never lose consciousness throughout the twenty-four hours, which thus form an unbroken sequence, and that I no longer experience ordinary sleep, while still giving my body the rest that it needs.

3 July 1927

*

In this letter I am sending you a few photographs of the Ashram which will no doubt interest you since they will give you an idea, however incomplete and imprecise, of the surroundings in which I live; in any case they will give a very limited impression, for the Ashram at present consists of seventeen houses inhabited by eighty-five or ninety people (the number varies as people come and go).

I am also sending you conversations 14 and 15. I hope that you have received, in several instalments, the complete series of the first thirteen; I had them mailed to you as they were published.²

25 August 1929

*

I shall not endeavour to reply to your opinion on the “conversations” although there are certain points which you do not seem to have fully grasped; but I suppose that a second reading later

² These fifteen “conversations” are published in *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, pp. 1–120.

Series One – To Her Son

on, at your leisure, will enable you to understand those parts which eluded you at first glance. Moreover, these “conversations” make no claim to exhaust their subjects or even to deal with them thoroughly. Rather they are hints whose purpose is more pragmatic than didactic; they are a kind of moral stimulus meant to goad and spur on those who are on the way. It is true that in my answers many aspects of the question have been neglected which could have been examined with interest — that will be for another time.

21 October 1929

*

The Ashram is becoming a more and more interesting institution. We have now acquired our twenty-first house; the number of paid workers of the Ashram (labourers and servants) has reached sixty or sixty-five, and the number of Ashram members (Sri Aurobindo’s disciples living in Pondicherry) varies between eighty-five and a hundred. Five cars, twelve bicycles, four sewing machines, a dozen typewriters, many garages, an automobile repair workshop, an electrical service, a building service, sewing departments (European and Indian tailors, embroideresses, etc.), a library and reading-room containing several thousand volumes, a photographic service, general stores containing a wide variety of goods, nearly all imported from France, large gardens for flowers, vegetables and fruits, a dairy, a bakery, etc., etc.! — you can see that it is no small affair. And as I am taking care of all this, I can truly say that I am busy.

23 August 1930

*

I have also received the *Grande Revue*³ and I read the article you mention. I found it rather dull, but apart from that not too bad. But the Mukerjee quoted there must have lived for many years

³ A literary monthly published in France until 1939.

Some Answers from the Mother

outside India (in America, I believe) and has become completely westernised; otherwise he would not give Gandhi and Tagore as the two most popular figures *in India*. On the contrary it is outside India that they are most popular; and for foreigners these two men seem to be the only ones who represent Indian genius. This is very far from the truth, and if they are so well known in Western countries, it is probably because their stature does not go beyond the understanding of the Western mind.

India has far greater geniuses than these and in the most varied fields, scientific, literary, philosophic, spiritual. It is true that the young people from Shantiniketan come out refined, but without any force or energy for realisation. As for Gandhi's young people, they may have more energy and power of action, but they are imprisoned within the four walls of a few narrow ideas and a limited mind.

I repeat, there is better, far better in India, but this India does not care for international glory.

4 August 1931

*

Just a word about your remark that having children is the only way to perpetuate the human race. I have never denied this, but I wish to add that there is nothing to fear in this respect; if it is Nature's plan to perpetuate the human race, she will always find as many people as she needs to carry out her plan. The earth will surely never suffer from a dearth of men.

28 September 1931

*

The things that are awaited... they alone can remedy the sorry state of affairs you mention in your letter of October 9th; and it is certainly not confined to the small states of central Europe. What you have described is pretty much the state of the whole world: disorder, confusion, wastage and misery.

Series One – To Her Son

It is no use lamenting, however, saying: Where are you headed! The final collapse, the general bankruptcy seems obvious enough... unless... There is always an “unless” in the history of the earth; and always, when confusion and destruction seem to have reached their climax, something happens and a new balance is established which extends, for a few centuries more, the life of declining civilisations and human societies in delirium.

Do not start thinking I am a pessimist. I certainly do not like things as they are. I do not believe, however, that they are worse than they have been many times before. But I want them to be different, I want them to be more harmonious and more *true*. Oh, the horror of falsehood spread everywhere on earth, ruling the world with its law of darkness! I believe that its reign has lasted long enough; this is the master we must now refuse to serve. This is the great, the only remedy.

3 November 1931

*

After a very long time I was happy to receive your letter of January 5th, especially since you think of Pondicherry as an ideal resting place. True, I think that it could provide a perfect place of cure for the restless — even if one seeks diversions there are none; on the other hand the sea is beautiful, the countryside is vast and the town is very small: a five minute drive and you are out of it; and, at the centre of it all, the Ashram is a condensation of dynamic and active peace, so much so that all those who come from outside feel as if they were in another world. It is indeed something of another world, a world in which the inner life governs the outer, a world where things get done, where work is carried out not for a personal end but in a selfless way for the realisation of an ideal. The life we lead here is as far from ascetic abstinence as from an enervating comfort; simplicity is the rule here, but a simplicity full of variety — a variety of occupations, of activities, of tastes, tendencies, natures; each one is free to organise his life as he pleases, the discipline is reduced

Some Answers from the Mother

to the minimum that is indispensable to organise the existence of 110 to 120 people and to avoid movements that would be detrimental to the achievement of our yogic aim.

What do you say to this? Isn't it tempting? Will you ever have the time or the possibility to come here? Once you did let me hope for a visit.

I would like to show you our "establishment". It has just acquired four houses which I bought in my name to simplify the legal technicalities; but it goes without saying that *I do not own them*. I think I have already explained the situation to you and I want to take advantage of this opportunity to remind you of it. The Ashram with all its real estate and moveable property belongs to Sri Aurobindo, it is his money that enables me to meet the almost formidable expenses that it entails (our annual budget averages one "lakh" of rupees, which at the present rate of exchange corresponds approximately to 650,000 francs); and if my name sometimes appears (on bank accounts, purchase of houses, of automobiles, etc.), it is, as I already told you, a matter of convenience for the papers and signatures, since it is I who "manage" everything, but not because I really own them. You will readily understand why I am telling you all this; it is so you can bear it in mind just in case.

10 February 1933

*

Your last letter refers to current events and betrays some anxiety which is certainly not unfounded. In their ignorant unconsciousness men set moving forces they are not even aware of and soon these forces get more and more out of their control and bring about disastrous results. The earth seems to be shaken almost entirely by a terrible fit of political and social epilepsy through which the most dangerous forces of destruction do their work. Even here, in this poor little nook, we have not escaped the general malady. For three or four days the forces at work were ugly and could justifiably cause anxiety, and a great confusion

Series One – To Her Son

was beginning to set in. I must say that under the circumstances the Governor (Solmiac) showed great kindness and resolve at the same time. His goodwill is beyond all praise. Finally, it all ended quite well, considering the difficult circumstances. But now more than 14,000 workers are out of work. The largest factory is closed, no one knows for how long, and the other one was burned down.

The sign of the times seems to be a complete lack of common sense. But perhaps we see it this way simply because nearness makes us see all the details. From a distance the details fade and only the principal lines appear, giving a slightly more logical aspect to circumstances.

It may be that life on earth has always been a chaos — whatever the Bible may say, the Light has not yet made its appearance. Let us hope that it will not be long in coming.

23 August 1936

*

A small booklet is being published in Geneva, containing a talk I gave in 1912, I think. It is a bit out-of-date, but I did not want to dampen their enthusiasm. I had entitled it “The Central Thought”, but they found this a little too philosophical, so it has been changed to “The Supreme Discovery”.⁴ Rather pompous for my taste, but...

24 April 1937

*

Speaking of recent events, you ask me “whether it was a dangerous bluff” or whether we “narrowly escaped disaster”. To assume both at the same time would be nearer to the truth. Hitler was certainly bluffing, if that is what you call shouting and making threats with the intention of intimidating those to whom one is talking and obtaining as much as one can. Tactics

⁴ Published in *Words of Long Ago*, CWM, Vol. 2, pp. 40–46.

Some Answers from the Mother

and diplomacy were used, but on the other hand, behind every human will there are forces at work whose origin is not human and which move consciously towards certain ends. The play of these forces is very complex and generally eludes the human consciousness; but for ease of explanation and understanding, they may be divided into two main opposing tendencies: those that work for the fulfilment of the Divine work upon earth, and those that are opposed to this fulfilment. The former have few conscious instruments at their disposal. It is true that in this matter quality compensates by far for quantity. As for the anti-divine forces they have only too many to choose from, and always they find wills which they enslave and individuals whom they turn into docile but nearly always unconscious puppets. Hitler is a choice instrument for these anti-divine forces which want violence, upheaval and war, for they know that these things retard and hamper the action of the divine forces. That is why disaster was very close even though no human government consciously wanted it. But at any cost there was to be no war and that is why war has been avoided — for the time being.

22 October 1938

Series Two

Series Two

Letters to a Sadhak

To the sadhak in charge of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Building Department during the 1930s and early 1940s.

Sin belongs to the world and not to yoga.

*

By his way of thinking, feeling, acting, each one emanates vibrations which constitute his own atmosphere and quite naturally attract vibrations of similar nature and quality.

*

So long as you are capable of beating somebody, you open the door to the possibility of being beaten yourself.

*

You are expecting those who are working with you to be *geniuses*. It is not quite fair.

*

I have seen your chit for washing soap. You got the last one on the *22nd* of March. This makes only *16 days*, while a soap must last *30 days*. It is quite evident that your coolie is stealing the soap, and I have no intention of providing him with washing soap. Some device must be found to check him; words are of no use.

(This time I have sanctioned the soap.)

*

Some Answers from the Mother

X has started a new notebook; but it seems to me that he had not finished the previous one.

I do not see at all the need of changing the notebook every month. Will you see if indeed the previous book is finished or not, and act accordingly.

In future I will be obliged to ask for the finished notebook before I can sanction a new one. That is to say, each time that a notebook is to be renewed the *finished notebook* must be sent up to me at the same time as the chit for the new one.

I do not see the need of leaving a blank page at the beginning.

*

Y is complaining that cement dust falls in the cattle-feed when it is prepared on the verandah.

Perhaps this is what makes the bullocks ill. One of these poor creatures has grown terribly thin. I saw it this morning.

Please see whether some better arrangement can be made.

*

(About increasing the size of a bathroom)

It seems to me quite sufficiently big. They have no intention of using their bathroom as a ballroom, I suppose.

*

How is it that you have not spoken to me about the bakery kneading table for two days? If it is not repaired at once, we shall have no bread to eat. The work must be done immediately.

*

I am not feeling comfortable about the dining room. It is not by merely saying: "nothing will happen" that an accident can be avoided. Your mental formation may be strong, but the contrary formation is at least as strong as yours — and we must never tempt the adverse forces.

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

I ask you to discard all obstinacy and to be *perfectly sincere*.
Go and see with no preconceived idea.

Go and see honestly, carefully, all round the place; consider that thirty people or so are taking their meals there and if anything happened what a horrible thing it would be — and, with the sense of your full responsibility, come tomorrow morning, with a final and definite answer — I shall trust your word.

P.S. Naturally I am not expecting you to go tonight but tomorrow morning.

14 December 1931

*

At Cycle House a teakwood bench broke, bringing down a mason who was standing on a plank resting on that bench. The mason was not injured. The incident reminded Z that 1:30 to 3:30 P.M. on Thursdays is Rāhukāl.¹

It is always better NOT to remember such superstitions. It is the *suggestion* that acts in these cases — most often a suggestion in the subconscious mind; but it is made stronger by becoming conscious.

9 June 1932

*

Four bats were found in the north end of the west roofbeam. Two of them got drenched with solignum.²

What a pity! The bats eat the white ants!

14 June 1932

*

During the spraying of solignum the mason got a jet of it in his eyes.

¹ Rāhukāl: an inauspicious period each day, according to local superstition.

² Solignum: a wood preservative that deters white ants (termites).

Some Answers from the Mother

Precaution, *much precaution* should be taken so that such a thing may *not happen*. Do you realise our responsibility and WHAT IT MEANS if something serious happens?

The lack of precaution is a part of the movement of hurry and impatience.

*

I have noticed that even in cases where Mother knows our needs, She waits to be asked before granting them.

Not exact in all cases and especially not with everybody.

*

My explanation, based on my own experience, is this: I feel a reserve while asking something from Mother. But in fact, there should be no reserve in our dealings with Mother; all movements should be movements of joy, including the movement of asking. As this is lacking, Mother is training us by making us ask with joy.

It is not quite that. In each case there is, probably, a special reason. What is constant is a difference of appreciation in the urgency of the needs and the importance attached to their fulfilment. I attach also some value to the power of imagination, adaptability, utilisation or invention developed by the necessity of overcoming some material difficulty.

*

The cause of reserve in asking is that a person is full of desires. If he expresses all his demands — which he believes to be needs — he will be disillusioned. He prefers not to mention them rather than to be disillusioned.

Yes, so long as there are desires, no true intimacy can be established.

15 June 1932

*

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

(Regarding the misuse of “gris entretien”, maintenance grey paint) A stool used by the Mother has been painted with “gris entretien”. I had informed the stores not to issue gris entretien except for Sri Aurobindo’s room.

But who is responsible for *having given the paint*? Was not the fact that the “gris entretien” must be kept for the doors and windows in Sri Aurobindo’s room only, told to those in charge?(!)

Why was my stool at all painted with gris entretien? I did not ask for the grey paint as far as I remember.

*

In this case the paint slipped out because it was asked for Mother’s stool.

A rule is a rule and I do not see why *my* stool escaped the rule, unless a chit *signed by me* could be produced.

*

“To turn towards Thee, unite with Thee, live in Thee and for Thee, is supreme happiness, unmixed joy, immutable peace.... Why do men flee from these boons as though they fear them?”³

I still wonder why and I can find no answer except that stupidity rules the world.

25 June 1932

*

For the last few days, my mind has dwelt upon the scenes and incidents of days long past. It takes pleasure in comparing how different I am now from what I was then.

³ Extract from the Mother’s *Prayers and Meditations*, 18 June 1913.

Some Answers from the Mother

It is good sometimes to look backwards for a confirmation of the progress made, but only if it is used as a lever to encourage one in the efforts towards the progress still to be made.

27 June 1932

*

On the outside cover of a notebook used by X, there was a table of Rāhukāl, giving the inauspicious hours for each day of the month. I have pasted a blank piece of paper over it.

I pray for a gracious word from You to strike at the root of this superstition.

Do you believe it is so easy to strike at the root of a stupidity? Stupidities are always rooted deep down in the subconscious.

1 July 1932

*

“Every moment all the unforeseen, the unexpected, the unknown is before us.”⁴ What is the remedy?

Be plastic and vigilant, attentive and alert — receptive.

18 July 1932

*

By the way, I have seen the painter sand-papering the salon table and was horrified! He was rubbing violently and in any direction with one or the other hand, while he was looking at anything and everything *except at what he was doing*; poor table, what a treatment!! I prefer not to think of what will come out of so much unconsciousness and carelessness.

20 July 1932

*

⁴ *Prayers and Meditations*, 11 January 1914.

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

“One single drop of Thy divine love can transform this suffering into an ocean of delight!

Oh! Let all tears be wiped away, all suffering relieved, all anguish dispelled, and let a calm serenity dwell in every heart.

I am sad, have pity on me.

O Thou who relievest all suffering and dispersest all ignorance, O Thou the supreme healer, have pity on me.

Break this resistance which fills me with anguish. Why, why this night?”⁵

I could give many explanations; the how and the why can easily be described — but is it really necessary? This is not what heals. Healing comes not from the head but from the heart.

To *understand* is good, but to *will* is better.

Self-love is the great obstacle.

Divine love is the great remedy.

20 July 1932

*

I am weeping without knowing why.

Weep if you like, but do not worry. After the rain the sun shines more bright.

*

I am rolling in my bed in the hope of getting sleep.

Peace, peace, my child; do not torment yourself.

*

⁵ The sadhak's prayer is composed of extracts from several prayers of the Mother in *Prayers and Meditations*; paragraph one, 29 November 1913; two, 7 January 1914; four, 8 March 1914; five, 7 April 1914 and 18 April 1914.

Some Answers from the Mother

But what was this darkness? I could not recognise myself during the last four hours. I was stiff, I was burning with heat, all was gloom.

The exact symptoms of an attack from adverse forces.

*

I was imagining that Mother will throw away this book in disgust, or that Sri Aurobindo will write two pages asking me to quit the Ashram or at least to stop work from tomorrow. Mother will say: this is the effect of indulging himself so much in the morning! He deserves to be kicked out. And so on.

The usual nonsense.

By the way, I don't find that the Hostile Forces have much imagination; they are always repeating the same old tricks! They ought to be worn out by this time.

*

O Sweet, Sweet Mother, Thy Peace is in me, Thy Peace is in me, Thy Peace is in me.

Sleep, child, sleep, with sweet Mother in your heart!

Awake, child, awake, with sweet Mother in your heart!

21 July 1932

*

"O Love, Divine Love, in a fecund silence I bow to Thee"⁶...

I open myself to Thee and I would obey Thee with an absolute faithfulness.

28 July 1932

*

⁶ *Prayers and Meditations*; first phrases, 16 August 1913; last phrase, 17 August 1913.

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

True *greatness*, true *superiority* lies in *kindness and goodwill*.

I trust that X is not truly provoking. *I would not like it at all. Each one has his faults and must never forget it when he deals with others.*

29 July 1932

*

It is always better not to show too much what I have written, as I am not dealing with everybody in the same way, and what I can say to one I would not say to another.

Guard against all individual decision (which can be arbitrary).

30 July 1932

*

“To Thee all the fervour of my adoration.”⁷

It is adoration expressing itself in work — all the more precious.

31 July 1932

*

I thirst for Thy consciousness, O Sweet Mother, I become one with Thee.

This thirst shall be quenched when this (“O Sweet Mother, I become one with Thee”) is psychologically realised.

2 August 1932

*

This evening when Y informed me that Z was ill, I exclaimed that she must have revolted against Mother. He asked me whether it was my belief that the cause for sickness is always a revolt or wrong attitude. I said Yes. He asked me to give a concrete example. I described an incident in which Mother found defects in my work,

⁷ *Prayers and Meditations*, 29 January 1914.

Some Answers from the Mother

which led to a subdued revolt in me and consequent illness. He pointed to his fingers and said that he was not conscious that any revolt or wrong attitude was the cause of the pain in his fingers.

The wrong attitude can be in the *body consciousness* itself (lack of faith or of receptivity) and then it is very difficult to detect as it does not correspond to any wrong *thought* or *feeling*, the *body consciousness* being most often and in almost everybody *subconscious*.

*

Is it good to talk about one's experiences, as in the above conversation?

No general rule can be made for this, each case is different. The important point is the attitude behind the talk. It is only what is said as a pure and sincere offering on the altar of Divine Truth that can have a real value.

6 August 1932

*

There was lightness, mirth and joy in Your expressions this morning, as if to counteract the graveness I was feeling.

This was to remove all possibility of a feeling of scolding or reproach in what I was saying, because there was nothing of the kind in my intention. I was giving expression to an amused observation about the ways of the world and how it cannot but misunderstand our own ways, *we who are too sincerely seeking for the Truth expression to be easily understood by ordinary people*. It is this seeking which gives the impression of hesitation, uncertainty, unsuccessful attempts, etc.

10 August 1932

*

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

“Grant that we may effectuate Thy Victory”⁸ if the time has come... but it is for You to answer, O Sweet Mother.

It is by the concentration of our will and the intensity of our aspiration that we can hasten the day of victory.

13 August 1932

*

Beloved Mother,

As to my belief in the efficacy of prayer, I believe in its efficacy only when it is addressed to the Mother. I mean that Mother in that room who is there in flesh and blood. If you refer your prayer to some unknown or unknowable or invisible god, I do deride it as mere philosophy.

I find your answer quite good. But X is quite free to expect more help from an invisible and silent Mother (who never contradicts you openly) if he likes.

15 August 1932

*

Why do I do something in dream which I would not do in the waking consciousness?

The movement comes from a subconscious layer which is not allowed to express itself in the daytime.

*

Is it because there is no mental control in the dream state and hence the vital being is free to act as it likes?

⁸ *Prayers and Meditations*, 19 June 1914.

Some Answers from the Mother

No true and constant control is established in that part as yet.

*

An experiment: This morning while supervising work, I prayed with concentration that each workman might become conscious that he was working for Mother and feel the joy of it. After concentrating like this for about an hour, I felt fatigued and imperceptibly the concentration frittered away. What is the cause of this feeling of fatigue? What is the difficulty in keeping such a concentration for all the 24 hours?

The physical being is always fatigued when it is asked to keep a lasting concentration.

The concentration can be kept constantly but not by mental decision.

It must be a divine decision.

16 August 1932

*

Which activity will most fully utilise all the energies?

The one that is done in the most perfect spirit of consecration.

20 August 1932

*

A reservation: Mother said this morning that it would take one and a half months to finish the bathroom. I said Yes. In fact, I expected it to be finished within a month. Two conflicting thoughts passed rapidly through my mind when I said Yes: (1) When Mother says that it will take one and a half months, naturally that should be correct; there may be some delays I cannot foresee. (2) But why should I not say that according to my estimate, it is 30 days' work?

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

It is good, it is indispensable that you should *think* that the work will take only 30 days; otherwise it would extend over more than two months!

But I want it to be good rather than quick.

*

I pray to Mother that there may be no unforeseen delays.

I hope so also — but I have seen that the work takes *always* longer than your estimate and we are pushed on and on week after week. I like better to count largely and not to be disappointed.

*

Mother, what is the proper attitude? If I hear suggestion (1), I feel I am keeping a reserve. If I hear suggestion (2), I feel I am contradicting Mother. What should I do?

There is no contradiction in stating what you *think*. I am not expecting you to be a *prophet* and that your thought should be always right.

25 August 1932

*

Mother,

Yesterday I told You, "All have gone." In fact I saw that the carpenter was going, not gone, and I calculated that by the time I came out and closed the door, he should be gone. So I replied, "Yes, Mother, the last man has gone." And lo, there he is, arranging the polishing stones! If I had drawn back for only a second before hastening to reply, I would have given a more precise reply. I feel a little uneasy about it.

Nothing to be uneasy about. The spontaneous answers of the external consciousness are always vague and somewhat incorrect.

Some Answers from the Mother

It needs a great vigilance to correct that — and a very firm resolution too. This incident may be meant to raise in you the resolution.

5 September 1932

*

Mother divine,

I am feeling tired today. I have not exerted myself, nor have I economised on sleep or rest. I was also getting mild suggestions of vomiting, but they have stopped by now.

I am not astonished. You have reached a point of inner progress when you can no more get into fits of anger without feeling the results of it. You must, once for all, take the resolution — and keep it: NEVER LOSE YOUR TEMPER.

I told you already that far from diminishing, your hold upon the workmen can but increase by it.

26 September 1932

*

It is better simply to be sincere than to be clever.

31 October 1932

*

To love the Divine is to be loved by Him.

2 November 1932

*

Because of the sudden rain we wanted to close the windows and found, with some discomfort, that *not a single one is closing properly*. Unless you are a Hercules and a wrestler you have no hope of closing them at all. They keep closed through goodwill, I suppose, but this goodwill would certainly not stand any strong gust of wind!

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

Repairs are urgently needed. Tomorrow morning I shall show you the state of affairs.

9 November 1932

*

Sweet Mother,

X told me this morning, “Do you see the plaster work done by Y? How nice it is! The work we have done is not so nice.” I replied: “I know at least one reason. It is because you are not with the workmen all the time. This morning you were missing from your post from 9:30 to 10:30.” X said, “But Y also takes off sometimes.”

I told you already that if someone refuses to be conscientious in his work, what can I do? It is true that the work suffers, but he suffers still more, for no amount of meditation can replace sincerity in the service of the Divine.

3 December 1932

*

Sweet Mother,

“One must know how to soar in an immutable confidence; in the sure flight is perfect knowledge.”⁹ I don’t understand this sentence. How can one soar? What is the figurative sense of this word?

It simply means to rise (soar into the air) above the ordinary consciousness, into a higher consciousness from which one can see things from above, and thus see them more profoundly.

9 December 1932

*

If you try to hide something from the Divine, you are sure to fall flat on your nose, plop! like that...

10 December 1932

*

⁹ *Prayers and Meditations*, 15 June 1914.

Some Answers from the Mother

Joy lies in having *absolute trust* in the Divine.

2 January 1933

*

Why, when you get into trouble, do you no longer ask for the help of the Divine Grace? Yet you know from experience that the result is unfailing and marvellous!

16 January 1933

*

Sweet Mother,

I still cannot make a clear distinction between a desire and a need for the work. So this is the method I have adopted: When I think I need something (anything), I wait. If the inconvenience caused by not having this thing comes up again or increases, I ask for it.

Then the desire gets exacerbated and the request is made with a kind of sour rage.

*

I sometimes think of adopting a diametrically opposite method: asking for a thing as soon as I think I need it, without thinking or putting it off — but I don't dare adopt this method.

There is still another method, far more interesting than these two: ask for nothing at all and see what happens.

*

Give me an infallible method.

I don't have one.

26 March 1933

*

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

Sweet Mother said, “There is still another method.” I was a bit perplexed as to how to apply Sweet Mother’s words to the letter. I started following Her advice. I didn’t ask for anything, even on April 1st,¹⁰ and that is another reason for my perplexity.

I am afraid that in trying too hard to stick to the “letter”, you have lost the “spirit”. I was not referring to the things given at the “stores”, and I was most surprised to see that you did not ask for anything on the first. You would do well to ask strictly for *the things you need*.

5 April 1933

*

Because others are mean is no reason to be mean yourself.

24 April 1933

*

Sweet Mother,

The old servant X wants a job for her young son (who is less than eight years old, I think). Can he be employed to clear the rubble at Ganapati House?

It is impossible to put a child of under eight to work. It would be criminal.

9 June 1933

*

We want to be faithful workers for the Great Victory.

26 June 1933

*

¹⁰ On the first of the month, the sadhaks received from the Ashram stores the material items which they previously requested.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

The carpenter Y has taken ten days' leave in order to get married again. He wants Rs. 40 advance, to be paid back at the rate of Rs. 8 per month. I have already told him that Mother approves neither of marriage — far less of remarriage — nor of loans to encourage marriages.

He insists on asking Sweet Mother.

Your orders please, Mother wonderful!

What can we do? He is a good and regular worker, isn't he? I hope this new marriage will not make him irregular.

Should we give him the money? If you think it is necessary, I shall not say No.

6 July 1933

*

Sweet Mother,

The measuring tape: mere common sense shows that the tape is not indispensable. But there is a dissatisfaction somewhere in my being. I can't pinpoint this recalcitrant spot. Is it my mind? Isn't it the mind that shows the absurdity of this request?

It is a *mental formation* prompted by a desire of the vital, which protests and rebels because it cannot be fulfilled. These formations are *autonomous entities*. That is why, once they are made, the conscious will loses nearly all control over them unless *a counter-formation is made to destroy them*. Something like this, for example: "I do not want to receive a measuring-tape. I earnestly hope that Mother will not disgrace me by giving me one, for it would cover me with shame and embarrassment. Such ignorant and obstinate desires are unworthy of a child of the Mother."

12 September 1933

*

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

Sweet Mother,

The blacksmith: an iron shaving got into his eye. Is there any connection between the fact that I gave him the job of making rods for X's embroidery frame without first having spoken to You about it and the accident that occurred later? When the blacksmith came to see me after the accident I wondered whether there was any connection, and when You said that You had doubts about this type of long frame my uneasiness doubled. Enlighten me, Sweet Mother.

These movements spring from desire and ignorance (X's desire for a frame without any exact knowledge of *how* the frame has to be made) and they develop without harmony, in disorder and confusion, sometimes producing the most unfortunate results as in this case. I will explain: the *idea* of a big frame is excellent but difficult to execute. If the *desire* had not been there *insisting on immediate realisation*, the project could have been examined carefully before being carried out and its execution would have been more harmonious.

13 September 1933

*

(About constructing a braced frame to support a swinging sieve)

Do you know what a swing is?

It is a plaything I enjoyed very much when I was small. It is made of wood, and the plank you swing on is suspended by strong ropes from rings fixed to a bar above. The supporting posts are securely set in the ground. I was thinking that something similar could be made for the sieve.

19 September 1933

*

O Mother divine,

I have started examining the details of the work with

Some Answers from the Mother

a critical eye and everything goes to prove that in reality I know nothing, I can do nothing, I am good for nothing. Having recognised this, I have lost all joy in action.

Simply welcome the fact that you have become aware of a lack of thoroughness, since this awareness allows you *to make further progress. Indeed, making progress, overcoming a difficulty, learning something, seeing clearly into an element of unconsciousness* — these are the things that make one *truly happy*.

22 September 1933

*

Sweet Mother,

How can people insult me so easily, I wonder. Is it that my features are lacking in vigour? Is it that I am scornful of others and therefore others treat me scornfully? I try again and again, but I can't find any satisfactory explanation.

It may be that physical appearance has something to do with it, but truly speaking it does not count for much. I believe rather in the influence of atmospheres. Each one has around him an atmosphere made of the vibrations that come from his character, his mood, his way of thinking, feeling, acting. These atmospheres act and react on each other by contagion; the vibrations are contagious; that is to say, we readily pick up the vibration of someone we meet, especially if that vibration is at all strong. So it is easy to understand that someone who carries in and around himself peace and goodwill, will in a way impose on others at least something of his peace and goodwill, whereas scorn, irritability and anger will arouse similar movements in others. The explanation of many events may be found along this line — although, of course, it is not the only explanation!

30 October 1933

*

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

Sweet Mother,

This morning at pranam a prayer leapt up from my heart towards You: “May this day bring me an opportunity to remain calm even in the face of provocation.” It was a very spontaneous prayer.

Now that is indeed an imprudent prayer! It is as if you were deliberately attracting an unpleasant experience to yourself.

*

(The sadhak then related his heated conversation with someone.) I regret having lost my temper while pronouncing these last sentences. I have noticed that even when I am conscious, if I open my mouth I lose my self-control. I get angrier and angrier from one sentence to the next.

The conclusion is therefore obvious: it would be better not to open your mouth. In certain cases, as in this one, it is wiser to *turn your back* than to *open your mouth*.

3 November 1933

*

Sweet Mother,

Regarding the partition-cupboard in Y's room: I made the shelves of this cupboard out of small pieces of wood. A large quantity of old planks were thus used up. But Y expressed his dissatisfaction when he saw the shelves.

Yes, here everyone thinks only of spending, spending, spending as much as he can; no one thinks of saving and avoiding waste. It is the triumph of egoism. You may show this to them and add that it is I who gave the order to make all possible use of the old pieces of wood.

13 November 1933

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Important — Aroumé (the Kitchen)

I forgot to enquire about an important point. Since the vessels used for cooking are very *large*, the top of the fire-places should not be much higher than ground level. This must be checked while the kitchen is being repaired. The top of the fire-places should not be more than fifty centimetres above ground, so that the vessels can be raised and lowered without danger.

5 December 1933

*

(The sadhak outlined his work-schedule.) All this leaves me little time — not enough for a tour of all the centres. What should I do, Sweet Mother? I call for Your help.

You must be calm and concentrated, *never utter an unnecessary sentence* and have faith in the divine help.

12 December 1933

*

Sweet Mother,

An exercise: If you notice that your voice is rising, stop speaking immediately; call upon Sweet Mother to make you aware of the hidden deformation. Is it all right, Sweet Mother?

It is quite all right.

All my compliments for this appreciable progress.

9 February 1934

*

“Attila, King of the Huns in 434, devastated the cities of Gaul but spared Lutetia after being diverted by Saint Genevieve.” I don’t understand the phrase “diverted

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

by Saint Genevieve". Did Saint Genevieve divert Attila from Lutetia, which he spared?

Attila was compelled to spare Lutetia because of the occult action of Saint Genevieve who, by the ardour of her prayers, obtained the intervention of the Divine Grace. This prompted Attila to alter the route of his troops, and so he gave the city a wide berth.

11 February 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

I have had a pain in the right side of my chest and in the left side of my back for the past three or four days. I decided to be brave and not tell You about it, but the pain has grown sharper since yesterday.

It was not at all clever to have said nothing about it. If you had told me immediately, you would already have been cured.

13 February 1934

*

(The sadhak recounted his conversation with Mr. Z, a local French official. The conversation ends:)

Mr. Z: I have heard that Sri Aurobindo can communicate at a distance. Is it true?

Sadhak: That is nothing. He isn't interested in occult powers; it isn't His aim.

Mr. Z: But even so, can He communicate with someone in Calcutta?

Sadhak: Yes, if the other person is receptive. Suppose I have difficulties in my work. There is no way of communicating with Mother. I can't find the solution. I concentrate on Mother, ask Her to guide me and find the solution. This is not unusual. It has happened several times.

Some Answers from the Mother

Mr. Z: Does Sri Aurobindo give talks?

Sadhak: No, we meditate with Mother.

Mr. Z: On what do you meditate?

Sadhak: Each one on his own aspiration, and Mother guides us. She gives us experiences and revelations.

Mr. Z: You don't say!

Sadhak: Yes, we are not all under a hallucination!

Mr. Z: Are you sure it isn't a hallucination?

(The Mother underlined most of the remarks above in red pencil.)

It would have been better not to say the things I have marked in red pencil. This falls under the "powers" that it would be better not to mention. Either the person you are speaking to does not understand at all and takes you for a fool suffering from hallucinations, or else he understands and then *gets frightened*, which is always dangerous.

If someone asks you about Sri Aurobindo's *powers*, it is always better to say: "I don't know. He doesn't tell us about these things."

And don't speak about me unless it is *unavoidable*. I am putting a copy of the *Conversations* in the tray for Mr. Z.

27 March 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

When I read a novel or anything in print I clearly understand, say, eighty per cent. But when someone speaks, I have great difficulty in following him. I miss more than half.

Does this imply that the report of your conversation with Mr. Z is inaccurate? This is very serious — you should not put words into his mouth which he didn't say. You must report things

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

exactly as you heard them, and when you are not sure you must say so.

2 April 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

A prayer: Teach me the unfailing way to receive from Sweet Mother a healing and comforting kiss.

Why do you want an outward sign of my love? Are you not satisfied with knowing it is there?

16 April 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

I admit that I have much to learn from X. I bow to Sweet Mother in X. Make our relationship one through which I may benefit and come to know you.

I appreciate this attitude and this effort. It proves the sincerity of your aspiration. But I did not have that particular point in mind — I was speaking in a much more general way. *All* of you, in your relationships with one another, have much to change and much to learn.

20 April 1934

*

It seems that the notice about the holidays has been circulated only in French. I don't think you should do this, for it would amount to imposing the study of French on all those who work in the Building Department, which is impossible.

For instance, Y once asked me whether it was indispensable to learn French and I told him No. Others too are in the same position. In my opinion you should add an English version to the French and circulate both together.

4 May 1934

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Z has asked whether we could give double pay for the extra working hour from six to seven in the evening. I have said Yes. For surely you must know that in France all the extra hours in the evening are paid double, and this seems reasonable.

4 May 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

I have a confession to make. My mind is flooded with contradictions and doubts. I have struggled against this onslaught desperately, but still I haven't found peace.

Last night I made an effort. I made an estimate of the expenditures and workers needed for our project, as well as I could with my short and limited foresight. I was completely dejected. What should I do?

These things need to be considered carefully, not lightly as one discusses a play or the pronunciation of French.

As soon as the project is completely ready, when you have worked everything out and can answer my questions, I shall call you one morning alone with X into my little room, and we shall discuss the matter quietly. *When will you learn not to lose courage and confidence* at the slightest setback, when things are not, *by my own doing*, exactly as you had planned? I think it is high time you learned this and I find that you give me very little credit, less perhaps than you would give an ordinary building contractor who, in your eyes, seems to know his job and have some common sense.

*

(The sadhak then gave several examples of difficulties with his workers and work projects.)

All that you say is quite true and there are still many other things you have not said, but which I know. The trouble might be summed up thus:

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

- 1) Too many workers.
- 2) Too many different projects undertaken at the same time.
- 3) Lack of consciousness in some of the supervisors.

Naturally, No. 2 could be set right by increasing the number of supervisors, provided, of course, that they are sincere and honest, which would also be the remedy for No. 3. But perhaps of all the remedies, this one (I mean being honest, sincere and conscientious) is the most difficult to achieve.

Several times we have spoken in a general way about reducing the number of workers. I have always said Yes, and I would be very happy to cut down expenses as much as possible.

But when we came to the details of carrying this out, we always found ourselves confronted with the same difficulty: whom to dismiss? And according to your answers the difficulty seemed insurmountable.

Now I propose this — to put up a notice which X could draft along the following lines:

“The ill-will of the local residents has obliged me to stop buying houses; consequently there is no longer enough work to keep all the workers busy. I am very sorry about this, but I am obliged to part with a certain number of them (you give the number), and since they have all been hardworking and faithful, I am at even more of a loss to make a selection. Therefore I am giving them three weeks’ advance notice: as of July 1st the number of workmen will be reduced by... (give the exact figure). That will give them time to look for work elsewhere. Those who have found work should let us know.”

Before displaying the notice you will speak to the workers (masons, carpenters, painters, coolies, etc.) whom you *positively want to keep* and tell them that the notice which is going to be put up is not meant for them and that *in any event we want to retain their services*, so they do not have to look for work elsewhere. To avoid any possible misunderstanding, it would be best if X or Y speaks to them in your presence.

And from July 1st we shall also have to think about reducing

Some Answers from the Mother

the number of projects undertaken at one time, in order to meet the difficulty of supervision.

This is what I see most clearly at the moment.

5 June 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

All the pain I have felt till tonight comes from my reservations with regard to Sweet Mother. Is my diagnosis correct? If so, how can I do away with these reservations without seeming to contradict or embarrass Sweet Mother?

I am going to begin by telling you a very little story. Then I shall answer you.

You must have seen the new clock which is supposed to run for six months. When it was first set going, it ran very fast. Z tried to figure out how to adjust it and found a sort of screw which is used to lengthen or shorten the pendulum. I looked at the clock with my *inner sight* and told Z, "To make it go slower, you have to shorten the pendulum." He looked at me in bewilderment and explained that in mechanics the longer the pendulum is, the slower the movement. (I knew that very well — but this is not an ordinary pendulum since it works by rotary movement.) I answered, as I always do, "Do as you think best." He lengthened the pendulum and the clock started going even faster. After observing it for a day, he agreed to shorten the pendulum and now the clock is working perfectly all right.

I believe in the superiority of the inner vision over the outer vision and this belief is based not merely on theoretical knowledge but on the thousands of examples I have come across in the course of a life which is already long. Unfortunately I am surrounded by people who, though they are here to practise yoga, are still convinced that "a cat is a cat", as we commonly say in French, and that one can rely only on one's physical eyes

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

for seeing and observing, on one's physical-mental knowledge for judging and deciding, and that the laws of Nature are *laws* — in other words, any exception to them is a miracle. This is false.

This is what is at the root of all the misunderstandings and reservations. You already know, and I mention it only to remind you, that an experiment made in a spirit of reserve and doubt is not an experiment, and that outer circumstances will always conspire to justify these doubts, and this for a reason which is very easy to understand: doubt veils the consciousness and the subconscious sincerity, and into the action some small factors creep in which may seem unimportant, but which are just sufficient to alter all the factors of the problem and to bring about the result that one had anticipated by doubting.

I have nothing else to add except this. When the question of distempering X's rooms arose, I looked very carefully several times with the inner eye and I saw this: brush the walls with a metal brush so that whatever is loose falls off and cover the rest with a thick layer of distemper which by its very thickness will be enough to conceal any irregularities. The process was supposed to be simple, rapid and fully satisfactory. I put forth all the necessary force for it to become an effective formation charged with the power of realisation, and I said that the work could proceed, adding in a few words how it was to be done. (This was long ago — the first time it was decided to distemper the walls of X's apartment, perhaps more than a year ago.) My formation was so living, so real, so active, that I made the mistake of not reminding you about it before the work began. I have an unfortunate tendency to believe that the consciousness of those around me is, at least partially and in its limited working, similar to mine. I shall explain. I know that each of you has a very small and limited consciousness compared with mine, but within its limits, I have the illusion that its *nature* is similar to mine, and that is why there are many things I do not say, because to me they are *so obvious* that it would be utterly pointless to mention them. It is here that on your side a freedom of movement and speech

Some Answers from the Mother

arising from an affectionate confidence must come in: if there is something you are unsure of, you must ask me about it; if you do not *very clearly see my intention*, you must enquire about it; if you do not grasp my formation in a very precise way, you must ask me to explain it to you. When I do not do so, it is because I think you are receptive enough for the formation to act and fulfil itself without my needing to speak about it, and in fact this often happens — it is only when the mind and vital get in the way, for one reason or another, that the working becomes defective.

Read this carefully, study it, and when you come today I will ask you to read it from the place I have marked with a red cross, for I think it may be useful to everyone there. I shall probably ask you to translate it into English, to make sure that you have fully understood.

May Peace be with you — I bless you.

7 June 1934

*

O Sweet Mother,
I am thirsting, thirsting for Your love!

You have only to open your heart and your thirst will be quenched, for the waters of love never run dry.

3 July 1934

*

Sleep well and rest yourself beneath the protective shade of my blessing.

11 July 1934

*

Sweet Mother,
This morning You said that when one has a feeling of danger, it is because there is a hidden reason somewhere.

That is not exactly what I said. I said that a feeling of danger should always be taken seriously when one is *responsible* for

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

the state of things, and that one should not say, “*It is nothing*” unless one is *ten times sure* it is nothing.

22 August 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

While inspecting the stores I found that the principle of keeping all materials without throwing anything away is not above reproach. The good materials get spoiled under a pile of useless things, because one cannot take care of them.

If only the good materials had been kept, it would have been easier to take care of them. Am I right, Sweet Mother?

I think so. But more than anything, it is the lack of organisation and order which causes all this waste. Certainly, if there is not enough room to keep things in order and *separate*, the good things on one side and the bad on the other, it is better to get rid of the bad things. But this should be done with great care so as not to go to the other extreme and throw away things that may be useful.

20 September 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

X sent me a mason with a dismissal note this morning. Later, I learnt from X that the mason had laughed when X told him he was not satisfied with the work he had done. How should one determine a worker's fate in this and similar cases?

One really cannot dismiss a man because he laughed. He should be given some other work and advised to be polite in the future.

24 October 1934

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

I heard that one can know all the qualities of any material by identification of consciousness. Is this true? Is it possible? For example, if there are cracks in a roof, I want to know the exact cause. How can I identify myself with the roof? Is there a definite method? Is this method easier and more certain than the mental process of reasoning which is based on acquired experience?

In theory, it is true that *everything can be known by identification*, but in practice it is rather difficult to apply. The whole process is based on the power of concentration. One has to concentrate on the object to be known (in this case the roof) until all the rest of the world disappears and the object alone exists; then, by a slight movement of will, one can succeed at identification. But it is not very easy to do and there are other means of knowing besides reasoning — intuition, for example — which are also effective.

November 1934

*

O Sweet Mother,

I sing Your praises. I will never forget how You respond when one calls You with intensity, nor the marvel of Your presence which changes the attitude of others too.

This statement is quite true.

*

I bow to You, Sweet Mother. Be present in me always and for ever.

Yes, I am always with you, but you must never forget to call me, for it is by calling me that the presence becomes effective.

15 December 1934

*

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

Sweet Mother,

I know that I was not obliged to give Y an explanation for my decision. In his expression, the question was there, but I could easily have ignored it. Why did I show this weakness? O Sweet Mother, how should one act in such cases?

Y's will is strong and he knows how to impose it on others. The only solution is to have a will stronger than his and to use it with great calm, but also with great determination.

25 December 1934

*

Sweet Mother,

Listen to these two accounts of inner suggestions. (Two instances are given.) From these two accounts You will see that there were good grounds for the first suggestion, whereas the second one was importunate. How can one distinguish between these two types of suggestions?

It is only by long experience, tested many times very carefully, that one can discriminate between various types of suggestions *by the vibration that accompanies them.*

12 January 1935

*

Sweet Mother,

Please forgive me for my ambiguous reply to Z. I bow to You, full of remorse.

Remorse is of no use; you have to feel the joy of the possibility of making further progress.

26 February 1935

*

Some Answers from the Mother

(The sadhak suffered a headache after contact with a fellow-worker.) I don't understand these two completely different movements in me: (1) one which decides to avoid all contact with X, direct or indirect, and (2) the other which sees any harmonious dealings between us as a sure sign of victory—but how can this be done without getting a headache, Sweet Mother?

It may be the contradiction between these two movements which is the cause of the headache. No. 1 wants peace with a *minimum of effort*. No. 2 wants to conquer the difficulty, not run away from it. I suggest that for the time being you avoid contact with X as far as possible. But if contact is established, beware of subconscious reactions and be very vigilant.

3 May 1935

*

(A fellow-worker violated the established work-procedure.) When I saw Y coming out of the workshop I was struck by two suggestions: (1) If he has done something without my knowledge, why should I interfere? and (2) Since I know all about it, I cannot remain indifferent; I must tell him that it is not right. I followed the second suggestion.

What you did was good, in principle at least, for really so much depends on one's choice of words and tone of voice.

15 May 1935

*

Sweet Mother,

What does "listening to the voice" mean? Is it like listening to words that are pronounced? A ready-made sentence, "Write down what is there in the estimate", wanted to disturb my mind. I don't know where it came

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

from. Was it my own thought expressed in words, or was it what is known as a “voice”? How can these things be distinguished, Sweet Mother?

It was obviously an inner voice. One rarely hears the *sound* of the words, but rather the message is expressed as words in the mind or sometimes merely as a feeling in the heart.

23 May 1935

*

Sweet Mother,

I have decided to adopt the following attitude towards Z. If I have any suggestion or remark to make about the work, I shall do it very simply. If he accepts, very good. If he doesn't, I shall keep silent, without arguing, and let him do as he likes. Is this attitude correct?

No, it is not correct — and I see that you have not understood the implications of my remark the other day. If you see something that should be done in a certain way, you should simply say: “This is how I think it should be done.” If he contradicts you and gives a different opinion, you should simply answer: “All right. We shall both submit our views to Mother and *she will decide.*”

In this way there can be no clash of personalities between him and you. It is only a matter of obedience to me.

6 June 1935

*

Sweet Mother,

You have made me aware of the subconscious movements governing my action. Whenever a similar opportunity arises, will You please make me more and more aware. Do not withdraw from me when You see me sad. O Sweet Mother, I assure You, I promise You, that with Your Grace I will be myself again within a short time.

Some Answers from the Mother

*I aspire for the blessed day when the conflict, the momentary lack of faith, will cease forever and You will use me even as You use Your feet, O Sweet Mother.
I bow to You in joyful gratitude.*

I am very happy about the way you have taken this matter. When I speak to you so frankly, I am giving you a great proof of confidence.

My blessings are with you.

16 July 1935

*

(The sadhak refused to remove some nails in the wall of someone's room, and wrote to the Mother explaining his decision.)

Yes, it is correct as an analysis, but a thing ought not to be done for any of these personal considerations. The thing to be done should be considered in itself, independent of all personal questions. If the thing is right and good, one should do it. If not, one should refrain from doing it.

It is precisely because your refusal had *no real cause* that it did not have the power to dominate the other man's will.

So you should have the nails removed.

17 July 1935

*

Sweet Mother,

Yesterday X asked me whether the nails in his wall would be removed. In the absence of any definite orders on this point I said, "Ask Mother." Later it was Sweet Mother who decided not to have them removed.

Yes, I hoped that his will could be made to yield on this point, because I thought it was *absolutely true* that removing the nails would damage the wall. But it was only *very relatively true*,

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

and so the formation did not have a power of truth sufficient to dissolve X's counter-formation. (This is true "occultism".)

*

I don't think I can be the judge to decide whether the thing is good or not, because my vision is limited.

I never said that *you should be the judge*. I agree to be the judge in all cases, because I recognise that it is very difficult to know whether a thing is right and good, unless one can see the law of Truth behind things.

*

If You had said to me, "Removing the nails is nothing, is it?", I would have replied, "Nothing much." And if You had said, "What! Removing the nails for nothing and damaging the wall?", I would have replied, "Senseless."

This is not right. When I ask a question, I ask it in order to get *exact* and *objective* information. I have said this many times. I have no preconceived idea, no preference, no opinion about things. If I could move about and see everything physically for myself, I would not need to get information from anyone. But this is not the case, and this is why I consult the people around me, because they are able to move about. I do not want them to answer me by echoing what they imagine — *wrongly* — to be what I think. I want them to use their powers of observation and their technical knowledge to give me as precise and exact information as they can. And on that information I base my decision.

18 July 1935

*

Sweet Mother,

You wrote to me, "It is precisely because your refusal had no real cause that it did not have the power to dominate the other man's will. So you should get the

Some Answers from the Mother

nails removed.” This is the sentence that upset me. Why was there no real cause? Won’t the holes spoil the wall?

It all depends on what you mean by *spoil*. I had understood from what you told me that it would cause *extensive damage*. From what X wrote, I understood that the nails were loose and that a little scraping and pulling would be enough to ease them out. After averaging these two interpretations I saw that the argument I gave X to make him accept the nails was not true enough to have the power to overcome the hostility of his attitude.

*

Did I invent this for some other motive?

Look into your heart, in all sincerity, and you will see that if someone you liked had asked you to remove the nails, you would not have found it so difficult and you would not have put it in the same way.

*

I thought that my refusal was ineffective because it was not supported by Sweet Mother, and I firmly believe that nothing whatever can hold true or be effective unless it is supported by Sweet Mother.

When we are in the presence of hostile forces, only the purity of an absolute truth can conquer them.

*

This is the argument, almost word for word, that upset me, and I still haven’t found the answer to this problem. Enlighten me, Sweet Mother.

Your argument seems right, but since its starting-point is wrong it no longer holds. Reread what I have written, carefully and

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

several times if necessary; ponder every word so that you *understand exactly* what I am saying and nothing else.

20 July 1935

*

When someone makes a remark, why does Sweet Mother blame me without even asking me for an explanation?

Always the same mistake — you think that I judge by what people tell me! Whenever I am confronted with a fact, either directly or indirectly, I look and judge for myself without the intervention of anyone's opinion.

1 September 1936

*

In the case of the Arogya House cupboard, when Y told me that he didn't want it painted I was surprised, and I revealed that Z had asserted that it was he, Y, who wanted it done.

As a general rule, it is better not to repeat to someone what someone else has said, for there is always a risk of creating confusion and increasing the difficulties.

11 December 1936

*

O Sweet Mother,
“Penetrate all my being, transfigure it till Thou alone
livest in us and through us.”¹¹

The main door of your being is open, but certain other doors are still not open. You must open them all, for I am there and I am waiting.

With my blessings.

1 April 1936

*

¹¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, 7 March 1914. The sadhak has substituted “my” for “our”.

Some Answers from the Mother

X has just written that he has recognised his mistake in having given up the work and that he will return to work this morning. So you should behave as if nothing had happened and welcome him back. I hope that Y too will not make any unnecessary remarks.

23 September 1936

*

Perhaps Sweet Mother is displeased with me about something? I have no peace.

I am not at all displeased. But what a strange idea to let yourself be upset by such little things! What about the Yoga?

You must shake all that off and return to a better state of consciousness.

Blessings.

8 July 1937

*

Sweet Mother,

I don't know why I have lost my self-control and peace.

It is a pity! Perhaps you are a bit tired. I hope you are sleeping well. I would like you to go to bed earlier. Is all this work after meditation (discussions, accounts, etc.) really indispensable? To keep one's self-control, one needs to have time enough to rest, enter into oneself and find calm and quiet.

19 October 1938

*

Sweet Mother,

I would like to take part in all the shuttering and building work without offending anyone. How should I go about it? How can I wash away the past?

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

Once and for all, wash away the feeling that you are “superior” to others — for no one is superior or inferior before the Divine.

6 December 1938

*

Sweet Mother,

For the past few days, every time I meet X, he wards me off. I looked inside myself to see if I have recently done something to displease him, but I can't find anything. Please tell me if I have done something wrong.

I know nothing about the matter. X has not written to me.

But one thing is certain: you give *far too much importance* to the way people treat you. This hypersensitivity is the cause of most of the misunderstandings.

March 1939

*

O Sweet Mother,

In spite of all my efforts at friendly collaboration with X, I have failed. I pray that you tell me in detail the defects which prevent this achievement. I promise You that I will make a sincere effort to get rid of them, and with Your help I am sure to succeed.

I had dreamed that X and I would discuss both the work in hand and the work to be done and exchange opinions — I mean, just as Y and I speak together. But I am sorry to say that X keeps me at a distance and remains aloof, and when he does speak I find him rather difficult.

This state of things stirs up reactions of revolt in me, and the efforts I make to remain peaceful and calm seem beyond my capacity.

I am afraid it is a lack of affinity in the vital and even in the

Some Answers from the Mother

mind. These things are very difficult to overcome, for it requires that both of you open yourselves to a higher consciousness. This needs time and a continuous effort of sadhana from both of you.

In the present conditions I think it would be better not to persist in your attempt at friendly relations with him, for it only increases his sense of importance.

As for the need to exchange your views and opinions about the work, I am still not convinced of it. My impression is that one always says far more than is necessary and that it is not with words that good work gets done.

In any event, calm and patience are absolutely necessary — and you ought to have them since my blessings are with you.

10 October 1939

*

A year of silence and expectation... let us find, O Lord, our entire support in Thy Grace alone.

1940

*

(The sadhak recounted several instances in which he got upset and depressed because a fellow-worker did not follow his advice.)

The disease: a narrow and egoistic ambition in the mind expressing itself as a strong *vanity* in the vital, thus distorting your ideas of things and your reactions.

The remedy: surrender all that to “Sweet Mother” completely and definitively.

With my loving solicitude and my blessings.

5 March 1940

*

I am happy that you have seen the light, but it doesn't surprise me; I was sure that one day you would understand.

Series Two – To a Sadhak in the Building Department

Let the light of a luminous consciousness enter into you;
widen yourself into that vast consciousness so that every shadow
may disappear for ever.

With my blessings.

5 June 1940

*

It is very good, my child; I was quite sure that it would end this
way, for I know the goodness of your heart.

My blessings are with you.

15 October 1940

Series Three

Series Three

Letters to “My little smile”

To “My little smile”, one of the first children admitted to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram; she came at the age of fourteen. Little smile worked for many years embroidering clothes for the Mother and later became one of her personal attendants. She began writing to the Mother at the age of seventeen.

My dear little smile,

You must not lose patience or courage; everything will turn out all right.

The condition you were in while embroidering the “Silence” flower¹ cannot return as it was before, for in this world things never repeat themselves in exactly the same way — everything changes and progresses. But the state of mental peace you have known is nothing compared to the one — much deeper and completer — which you will come to know.

You must keep your aspiration intact and your will to conquer all obstacles; you must have an unshakable faith in the divine grace and the sure victory.

Sri Aurobindo is working for your transformation — how can there be doubt that he will triumph!

With all my love.

1931

*

I simply meant to say that you were happy and confident as a child or an animal is confident and happy *without knowing why*. Now you must learn to be happy and confident while knowing

¹ Silence: the name given by the Mother to the Wild Passion-flower (*passiflora incarnata*).

Some Answers from the Mother

why and understanding the deeper cause of your happiness and confidence.

1931

*

My little smile,

For your smile to become truly “eternal”, you must learn to speak to me as freely when you are near me as when you are in your room.

Also it would be better not to get angry, and if it happens, it is better to forget your anger quickly; and if that isn’t possible, then you must tell me very simply what has happened so that I may remove the anger from the consciousness of my “little smile” and give her back the joy and peace I want her always to have.

With my most affectionate blessings.

1931

*

I have seen the sari embroidered by my little smile and I find it *very pretty*, completely successful.

You should not listen to the criticism of people without taste or sufficient education.

Lovingly.

1931

*

Dear Mother,

I am sending You this rupee. Now I no longer need any pocket money.

I accept the rupee and send to my dear little child, along with my blessings, my congratulations for the manner in which she has passed her French test.

Affectionately.

10 May 1932

*

Series Three – To “My little smile”

My little smile,

I am very glad that you have written; I am sure that you are feeling much better now.

Do not attach too much importance to all these things; they are the imaginations of a child who knows nothing of life, of its misery and ugliness. For life is not as it is portrayed in novels; day-to-day existence is full of sufferings great and small, and it is only by identification with the Divine Consciousness that one can attain and preserve the true unchanging happiness.

Keep your confidence and your faith, my little smile, and everything will be all right.

With all my love.

1 August 1932

*

Dear Mother,

This subject was given for composition in our French class —

Develop this thought:

*Consecration to the Divine is the secret of existence;
a perpetual renewal of force comes from communion
with the Infinite.*

My dear little smile,

It is very simple, as you will see.

1) The Infinite is the inexhaustible storehouse of forces. The individual is a battery, a storage cell which runs down after use. Consecration is the wire that connects the individual battery to the infinite reserve of forces.

Or

2) The Infinite is the river that flows without cease; the individual is the little pond that dries up slowly in the sun. Consecration is the canal that connects the river to the pond and prevents the pond from drying up.

Some Answers from the Mother

With these two images, I think you will understand.
Tender love.

28 August 1932

*

Mother,

Many times I have found that if I don't imagine stories, as they are called, I feel a sort of dullness; then I can't work, and even if I do I can't work fast. Today I spent the whole day in this state of dullness because I no longer imagine things as before.

Mother, I would like to know if everything I say about my dullness is true — if it is due to an absence of imagination.

The dullness comes from “tamas”; imaginative activity was shaking off the tamas and thus ridding you of the dullness. But this is not the only way to get rid of it. Opening to the Light and Consciousness from above and allowing them to replace the tamas in the external consciousness, is a much better and surer way.

22 November 1932

*

Dear Mother,

I don't want tamas. Today I worked all day.

But my mind does not have tamas; it is always active and runs here and there like a madman.

The mind always runs about like a madman. The first step is to detach *one's consciousness* from it and let it run by itself *without running with it*. Then it finds this less enjoyable and after some time it becomes quieter.

23 November 1932

*

Series Three—To “My little smile”

Dear Mother,

I have noticed that in X's presence I dare not do certain things, such as talk in a loud voice or other impolite things of this kind.

It is good to observe yourself in order to see your weaknesses and be able to correct them.

26 November 1932

*

Dear Mother,

You know that the doctor asked me to look after Y. At the Ashram, I heard Z asking him something about Y and I also heard the doctor talking to him. Afterwards I asked the doctor, “Why do you speak to Z about Y?” He said, “Z was asking me what happened to Y. He no longer sees her at Pranam.” Then I replied, “But he has nothing to do with her and it is not good to talk about these things to people because they cannot do anything for her.” “Yes,” the doctor said, “I understand that he asked me about that just out of curiosity and I will say nothing to him.”

My little smile,

Your reply to the doctor was very good and you are perfectly right. One should never talk about others — it is always useless — and least of all about their difficulties; it is uncharitable because it does not help them to overcome the difficulties. As for doctors, the rule is that they should not talk about their patients, and the doctor ought to know better. I hope you are not frightened by what happened to Y. Remain very calm, very quiet, and everything will be all right.

28 November 1932

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Mother,

While You were playing the organ, I had the feeling that the others were listening to the Mother playing the organ for me, and it made me feel proud. I understood, even at that moment, that it was a wrong feeling and I didn't want it; but I don't know how to get rid of it.

Mother, I believe that if I stay all by myself, apart from everyone else, I will be very happy. I am very bad; I don't know when all these bad things will leave me.

Take pity on me.

You must not exaggerate. Certainly there are movements of vanity — rather childish besides — but they are not the only ones. I am quite sure that while you were listening to the music, you could also feel the pure and simple joy of the music for its own sake, and that when you are near me, you also feel the simple and sincere joy of a child near to its mother.

The nature is complex, and always the true and the false, the good and the bad are mixed together. It is very useful to see one's faults and weaknesses clearly, but one should not see only them, for that too would be one-sided. One should also be aware of what is good and true in the nature and give it all one's attention, so that this good and true side can grow and ultimately absorb the rest and transform the nature.

5 December 1932

*

Mother,

When I saw You this morning at Pranam, it seemed to me that You were very serious.

I write to You whatever I think I ought to tell You, because I have promised to write about my thoughts and feelings and I don't want to deceive You. I have nothing good to tell You. I have a hoard of bad, ugly, foolish and naughty things to tell You. If there is something good, it

Series Three–To “My little smile”

is only that I work for You (Your sari): this is the only thing I can call good.

Today I was sad all day, I could not smile. You will receive many such things to read. But if You become serious, as You were this morning, I would rather put an end to the matter.

Today I worked for seven hours.

No, my child, I was not “serious” and I smiled at you as usual; it was you who had such a sad little face and it is probably your own sadness that you saw reflected in my eyes. I know life too well for your confessions to make me “serious”. Besides, your confessions are not so terrible as all that, no matter what you may think of them. And as soon as you tell me all the things that are troubling you, you will see that they have disappeared and you will feel free and happy.

Keep your smile, little child; it is this that gives you your strength.

7 December 1932

*

Mother,

I don't know why, but for two or three days I have been feeling a bit sad.

Mother, sometimes when I am depressed, when I feel that maybe I won't be able to do yoga, my mind imagines: “Mother tells me that I cannot do yoga and asks me to go away from here, I have no one to go to and nowhere to stay; I will remain here even as a servant, but it is impossible for me to live elsewhere.”

Thinking of all this makes me feel even sadder than before.

My Mother, today it seems to me that my mind is not calm enough to write anything to You. Today I worked for nine hours on the sari.

Some Answers from the Mother

My dear little child,

You must not accept depression, never, and still less these suggestions, so stupid and false, that I could ask you to go away! How can you dream of such a thing? You are at home here — are you not my little daughter? — and you will always have a place by my side, in my love and protection.

9 December 1932

*

Mother,

I had an imaginary conversation in my head with X. I was not paying attention, but at one moment it came to me that I would have to write all this to Mother and suddenly the conversation stopped.

That is how I talk to people in my head; my mind puts the thoughts it likes, as it likes, into someone's mouth and this makes a noise in my head.

I am very tired of writing such bad and stupid things. I don't know when this distracted mind will become quiet.

It is not so terrible — the mind likes to be busy with something always, and making up stories (even when one knows that these stories are not true) is one of the most innocent pursuits of this restless mind. Of course, it must become calm and quiet some day in order to receive the light from above; but in the meantime, you may surely tell me all these stories. I find them more amusing than silly and they interest me. So don't say: I won't tell Mother this or that, but rather say: I shall tell her everything quite frankly.

11 December 1932

*

Dear Mother,

I am never satisfied, even though You have given me

Series Three—To “My little smile”

*a very rare chance. My vital being always wants more
and more; it is never satisfied with what You give it.*

My child, I am going to reveal something that you will try to understand: you are dissatisfied not because I fail to give you all that you need, but because *I give you more, far more than you are able to receive. Open yourself, increase your receptivity* by giving yourself more, and you will see that all discontentment will disappear.

12 December 1932

*

*Dear Mother,
Nowhere do I find any progress. Even in my work I
am still not regular, so how can I hope for Your help?*

I don't understand what you mean. My help is always with you, as complete as it can be; it is up to you to open yourself and receive it. And it is certainly not by being rebellious and discontented that you will be able to do so.

*

*So many times I have resolved to work regularly and so
many times I have failed! So I thought that if I told You,
I would have Your help and become regular in my work,
but in vain.*

*How then can I continue my practice of writing to
You in this state of depression and discontent?*

*But I don't blame You for this; it is me—I don't
have a strong will, so how can I get rid of it?*

You don't need to have a strong will—you have only to use mine.

Be careful, child, do not open the door to depression, discouragement and revolt—this leads far, far away from consciousness and makes you sink into the depths of obscurity

Some Answers from the Mother

where happiness can no longer enter. Your great strength was your smile; because you knew how to smile at life, you also knew how to work with courage and steadiness, and in this you were exceptional. But you have followed the example of other people, you have learned from them to be discontented, rebellious, depressed, and now you have let your smile slip away, and with it your faith and confidence in me; in this condition, if all the divine forces were to concentrate on you, it would be in vain — you would refuse to receive them.

There is only one remedy, and you must lose no time in accepting it: recover your smile, regain your faith, become once more the confident child you were, do not brood over your faults and difficulties — it is your smile that will chase them away.

16 December 1932

*

Dear Mother,

I have often noticed that when I wake up from sleep, there is a kind of noise in my head, as if many people were talking at once and I can understand nothing of what they say. And I feel as if this noise has been going on all night. It is like a bazaar, there is a lot of noise because people are all talking at once and one can understand nothing of it.

In your sleep you are becoming conscious of the noises that the mechanical thoughts of the most material mind make in their own domain.

18 December 1932

*

Dear Mother,

... And as for X, now I think, "Why didn't I refuse him?" But what is the advantage of thinking afterwards!

Series Three–To “My little smile”

There is an advantage in looking back after some time at what one has done; for at a distance, removed from the action, one sees more clearly and better understands what ought or ought not to have been done.

20 December 1932

*

Dear Mother,

If You want these imaginations to remain in me, let them remain, but if You don't want that, root them out.

Once again, do not worry; what should disappear will disappear; only what is good will remain.

25 December 1932

*

Dear Mother,

I think this is the last thing I shall write to You. I should like to stop writing now, as I am feeling very tired.

I know that You will not like it, but I have to say that it is better to put me aside. I am quite hopeless. Again for the last few days I have become irregular in my work. You once said that to open myself to You is my work, because Your help is always with me. But I do not know when I will open myself to You. I am as hard as a stone. If I had known before that these things are so difficult, I should never have wished to come here. Mother, I wish You would not tell me that I am rebelling, I do not like to hear that.

I do not know, Mother, why I have written all these things. Mother, please do not be angry with me, I have nobody except You.

Why this discouragement? Each one has his difficulties, yours

Some Answers from the Mother

are no more insurmountable than those of others. You have only to remain confident and cheerful.

27 December 1932

*

Dear Mother,

“What should disappear will disappear; only what is good will remain.”

You wrote this one day in my notebook. But all the things I have written about to You up to now have not disappeared. Perhaps they are all good! And perhaps this revolt, discontent, discouragement and bad temper are good too. Because they have remained in me, they have not disappeared. And the smile and working regularly and having confidence — all of these are bad perhaps. Because I see that they have disappeared, at least for the present.

And if there is nothing bad in me, why are we taking so much trouble? It would be better to remain quiet because “what should disappear will disappear; only what is good will remain.”

Mother, I know that You will not like all these things I have written, but what can I do? I have to write all this to You.

I am not angry because what you write here means nothing — I pity you, that’s all. Did I tell you that it would disappear immediately, *instantaneously*, especially if you yourself are more inclined to keep it than to reject it?

28 December 1932

*

Dear Mother,

This morning after nine o’clock X came to my room. He advised me to reject hostile suggestions and so on.

Series Three—To “My little smile”

He gave me a lecture. He did not say so but I think You asked him to come to my room.

But I must tell You that I don't like people to come and lecture me. Can't You tell me directly what is necessary? Am I not here with You? Am I so far away? Then why should I have to listen to the advice of others?

It is your self-esteem and vanity that are in an exasperated state and prevent you from seeing affection where it is present.

*

I don't know whether You tell Y about what I write to You, but I would rather You didn't.

Only Sri Aurobindo knows what you write to me.

*

You wrote to me once in this notebook (December 16th), with regard to Your help: “It is up to you to open yourself and receive it. And it is certainly not by being rebellious and discontented that you will be able to do so.”

And again You wrote to me (December 7th) in this notebook: “And as soon as you tell me all the things that are troubling you, you will see that they have disappeared and you will feel free and happy.”

So I tell You that even this revolt and this bad temper are troubling me.

*

Of all things these are the worst.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

I think I have told You all the things that are troubling me.

It is not enough to *tell* them, you must *want* them to disappear.

*

Mother, today I am sad. I don't know why but I even wept.

And yet it is quite natural; how can you not be sad when you turn your back on your soul, and that simply out of pride!

*

Mother, rid me of this discouragement and this revolt, please. Will You not save me from them?

With all my will I want to save you, but you must allow me to do so. *To revolt is to reject the Divine Love and only the Divine Love has the power to save.*

28 December 1932

*

Dear Mother,

Am I not Your child? Yes, I know that I am a naughty child, but what can I do? Naughty or not, in any case I am Yours.

I don't think you are naughty and I know you are my child.

29 December 1932

*

Series Three—To “My little smile”

Dear Mother,

It seems to me that my mind (or rather myself) doesn't want to become quiet. Because if I wanted to become quiet, I would naturally have tried to make myself quiet, wouldn't I?

In the psychological domain, only the patients who do not want to recover, do not recover. Perhaps it is the same for physical diseases?

5 January 1933

*

Dear Mother,

What is all this about psychological and physical diseases? I understand nothing of it.

Psychological diseases are diseases of the thoughts and feelings, such as depression, revolt, sadness, etc. Physical diseases are those of the body.

6 January 1933

*

Dear Mother,

Yes, I know that You know that now I can hide nothing from You and that it is impossible for me to live without You, and this is why, Mother, You like to see me suffer as much as possible — isn't it so?

I understand absolutely nothing of what you mean to say. You *seem to be saying* that I like to see you suffer; but this is so absurd that I cannot believe it is what you *mean*.

When with all my will I am working for the disappearance of suffering from the world, how could I want, much less like, one of my children to suffer! It would be monstrous.

7 January 1933

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Dear Mother,

For the past two days I have felt a great despair and sadness — so much that I think if it goes on for a few days more, it may be very difficult for me to get rid of these things.

I don't know what is going to happen, but I can't help thinking that if I remain in this condition all the time and if I can't ever be happy, it will soon be impossible for me to live. During these two days, in this sadness and despair, I had the idea of committing suicide. (Don't be afraid, I won't commit suicide; I am only telling You about my condition in order to let You know about it.)

There are thieves in the subtle world just as in the outer world. But you must close to them the doors of your thoughts and feelings as carefully as a prudent man bolts the doors of his house.

These suggestions of sadness, despair and suicide come from them (the thieves of the vital world), because it is when you are depressed that they are best able to rob you. You must not listen to them — you must reject the wicked suggestions and become yourself once again, that is to say, my “little smile”.

9 January 1933

*

Dear Mother,

You no longer call me “my child”? Am I so bad and unworthy?

Mother, I believe that I am doing all I can and if I still cannot be good, what is to be done? Yes, I know I am not what I was before.

I did not mean anything by not writing “my child” on the little note I sent you this afternoon. I was in a big hurry and I wrote as few words as possible. Of course I miss the time

Series Three—To “My little smile”

when you were truly the *eternal little smile*, spontaneously and effortlessly, when you felt satisfied with your work, happy to be near me, and trusting and simple enough not to put a false interpretation on all I do. Who has poured this poison of doubt and dissatisfaction into your heart? Who has taken away at once your happiness, your simple joy of life and your beautiful smile which was a pleasure to see? I don't ask the question in order to get an answer from you, for I think that I know it; it is only so you may understand that I don't hold you responsible for this change *which has come over you from outside*. Now there is only one way open, the way of progress — since it is impossible to go backward, you must go forward and what was merely *instinctive* must now become *conscious* and *willed*.

And never doubt my affection, which is always with you to help you make this indispensable progress.

11 January 1933

*

Dear Mother,

You told me to write something to You every day. But now I find nothing to say and I don't know what to write. As for what I have written: since You told me that in order to become happy and good, I must want it with all my will and to work as before, I have started to do that.

But when I have nothing to write to You, what can I write (in order, as You said, to keep the contact with You)?

Mother, You will tell me.

My little smile,

When you have nothing else to tell me, tell me at what time you got up — (like this, for example: this morning I woke up at such and such a time after having slept for so many hours; I

Some Answers from the Mother

got up, washed and dressed, then I ate my breakfast and started working at such and such a time, etc. etc.). You can tell me all the people you met and whom you spoke to, what you told them, etc. It will be a very good exercise in French and at the same time will create a further intimacy between us.

13 January 1933

*

Dear Mother,

This morning I woke up at 5:45. I washed and dressed, then went to collect my notebook from X's window (I always go there). Then at about 6:30 I drank my phoscao, then started work at 6:45. At 7:30 I went for Pranam, then at 7:45 I started work again. At 9:30 I went to Y's house to get some work for Z, then sat down again to work until 11:30. Then I ate my lunch and rested for ten minutes. At 12:00 I went back to work; at 12:30 Z came to work and at about 2:00 she made some lime juice for us. I worked from 12:00 to 8:00. I have finished embroidering the crown.

Well, it is a success! It is a good account with hardly any mistakes, and I am glad to know exactly how you spent your day. It will be good to continue like this.

14 January 1933

*

Mother, I always write to You about the same things: sleep, work and talk. Mother, do You like reading the same thing every day?

Why not, my little smile? You can learn to say the same things in different ways; this is an excellent exercise to learn how to write and mould your style. It seems that at the moment

Series Three – To “My little smile”

you are practising calligraphy! Who has taught you to write so beautifully?

Your affectionate Mother.

25 January 1933

*

My dear Mother,

*I have noticed that X has not stopped his bad habit.
I hate him...*

That is quite a big word! It is said that hate is the reverse of love; at any rate it is a dangerous sentiment which leaves you always at the mercy of the one you hate: to hate means that you are still attached; the true attitude is one of complete indifference.

27 January 1933

*

My dear Mother,

*Today I prayed to You with my body² for ten hours.
Next time I see You, I shall explain how embroider-
ers fix the sari on the frame. The frame has to be as big
as the sari.*

*Mother, couldn't I have a big frame like that, to
embroider the saris really nicely?*

If I give you such a big frame, we shall have to build a room to fit the frame in!

13 February 1933

*

² To pray with the body: to do one's work as an offering to the Divine. The Mother has written: "To work for the Divine is to pray with the body." *Words of the Mother—II*, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 299.

Some Answers from the Mother

My dear Mother,

I worked on the sari for ten hours. I think I shall finish this sari before 24th April.

Mother, I have nothing new to tell You.

You are a beautiful and skilful worker, my little smile, and I am proud of you and your work, which is so lovely. I see that you have written without making a single mistake!

14 February 1933

*

Dear Mother,

Today I prayed to You with my body for nine hours. Now I have become regular again in all my work as before.

Mother, what else?

This is good, my little smile; balance of the being is based upon regular work.

27 February 1933

*

Did you notice the date today — 3.3.33?

Do you know that this happens only once in eleven years? Eleven years ago, in 1922, in the month of February, it was possible to write 2.2.22 and eleven years from now, in the month of April, it will be possible to write 4.4.44, and so on. It is interesting, isn't it?

3 March 1933

*

My dear Mother,

“Supramental beauty in the physical”³ — what does it mean? All these things — all the arts, the beautiful

³ The Mother's name for a light golden-orange Hibiscus.

Series Three—To “My little smile”

*work we do for the Divine—are they expressions of
supramental beauty in the physical?*

No, all that is only the manifestation of a universal harmony which lies, as it were, at the very heart of creation. But the supramental beauty is something much higher and more perfect; it is a beauty untainted by any ugliness and it does not need the proximity of ugliness in order to look beautiful.

When the supramental forces descend into Matter in order to manifest, this perfect beauty will express itself quite naturally and spontaneously in all forms.

6 March 1933

*

I am very happy when I wear your saris, but I also wish to keep them as carefully as one keeps works of art, and that is why I do not wear them very often.

9 March 1933

*

My dear Mother,

This morning You gave me a flower which signifies “Consciousness turned towards the supramental Light”.⁴ What does this mean? I don’t understand.

If you put “Divine” instead of “supramental”, does that make it clearer to you?

It means the consciousness that is not filled with the activities and influences of ordinary life, but is concentrated in an aspiration towards the divine light, force, knowledge, joy.

Now do you understand?

23 March 1933

*

⁴ The Mother’s name for a yellow-orange Sunflower (*Helianthus*).

Some Answers from the Mother

*My dear Mother,
Have You seen my little roses on Your gown? Are
they nice?*

They are absolutely charming! It is impossible to say which is the original and which the copy, and it may very well be that the copy is even more beautiful than the original. You saw that I was wearing the gown this evening when I went for a walk on the terrace.

6 April 1933

*

*My dear Mother,
Today I prayed to You with my body for nine hours.
Mother, for the past two days I have been feeling a
little tired, my hands have become a bit slow.*

Don't you think it would be a good idea for you to take a little rest? That is, either take a full day's rest or else work two hours less each day.

13 April 1933

*

*My dear Mother,
No, I don't want to take a rest. Today I prayed to
You with my body for ten hours.*

Then use Coué's method⁵ and repeat, "I am not tired, I cannot be tired because I am protected!"

14 April 1933

*

⁵ Emile Coué (1857–1926), French doctor of Nancy who developed a system of cure by auto-suggestion (Couéism).

Series Three – To “My little smile”

My dear Mother,

Yes, X told me today that the frame would be completely ready this evening.

Today I worked nine hours on the blouse.

Little smile, you must not go on working to the point of fatigue.

10 June 1933

*

My dear Mother,

Not only do I work all day, but I want to work as much as I can, hoping that I won't get tired. If I don't work all day every day, how can I make so many big and beautiful things such as I want to make for my dear, dear Mother? How will my dreams be fulfilled if I waste my time?

Mother, do You know, I am going to embroider large curtains for Your room? You told me once that the Japanese cover the walls of their rooms with embroidered curtains.

You are right; nothing is better than to realise our most beautiful dreams and nothing makes us stronger and happier!

11 June 1933

*

My dear Mother,

Mother, do You know, it is I who ironed these two blouses without spoiling them? This is the first time I have ironed a blouse. Mother, give me a “bravo” for this. Tomorrow I am going to start on the other grey blouse.

This is worth far more than a “bravo”! This morning I was literally filled with admiration. It is magnificent — the birds are so beautiful and so very alive; I found their little heads with the

Some Answers from the Mother

lovely little silver crests very beautiful, far more beautiful than in the original drawing. The little diamonds are also very fine, and in silver on the sari they will be magnificent. Where did you do the ironing? It is good that you are learning.

21 June 1933

*

My dear Mother,

This morning I cut a chemise for You — it is the first time I ever cut a chemise. X is going to stitch it and when it is ready, You will wear it and then tell me if it is well cut or not. Because if it is well cut, I can cut other things without any hesitation.

Today also I worked all day.

I am very pleased that you have learned to do this too. What do you mean by “all day”? I hope it is not more than nine hours, because that was already a long stretch and ought not to be increased.

26 June 1933

*

Mother,

Since this morning I have some pain in the pupil of my left eye.

You must wash your eye with *very warm boric water* thrice a day and do less embroidery for two or three days. Do just as I tell you and remember that your work depends almost entirely on your eyes. If your eyes were to get spoiled in any way, it would be the end of your beautiful embroideries! When you have pain, close your eyes for a few minutes and cover them with the palms of your hands (without pressing). You will find this very restful.

27 June 1933

*

Series Three—To “My little smile”

My dear Mother,

I think all the trouble I took for X was in vain. I spent nearly two hours this evening making her understand how to write things very clearly. But in vain.

The trouble one takes like this for someone is *never in vain*. The result may not appear immediately, but one day or another a disinterested action bears its fruit.

26 July 1933

*

My dear Mother,

I shall tell You how I usually spend my evenings.

After seeing You go up to the terrace, I go and have my meal. Then I return home and write my letter to You, and then sometimes I wash our clothes (X's and mine; sometimes X washes them). Then I walk for an hour, then I usually prepare my lesson and go to bed.

But last night after my walk at 9:30, I helped X to sew with the sewing machine until 10:15. Then I worked with the sewing machine until 11:45; then I did a bit of lesson and at 12:30 I went to bed.

Today I worked on the blouse for three hours.

You must not get into the habit of going to bed late like that. It is not good — you will quickly spoil your eyesight, and that would be the end of your beautiful embroideries. The nerves also get tired and then one no longer has the sure hand or the precise movement, one loses one's patience and calm and the work one does is no longer neat and trim; everything becomes an approximation and one has to give up all hope of achieving any kind of perfection. I don't think this is the result you want to obtain!

31 July 1933

*

Some Answers from the Mother

My dear Mother,

Today, August 15th, I didn't work; I will start from tomorrow.

I think you must have been proud today to see your *superb* sari — it is truly regal; and as for me, I was proud of my little smile and her beautiful work!

15 August 1933

*

My dear Mother,

I have started fixing the sari on the embroidery frame and tomorrow this work will be finished. Afterwards I shall start the embroidery.

I have nothing else to write to You. The only news I have to give You is about my work.

You are very hardworking and painstaking, and if you have nothing to tell me except news of your work, I have to tell you of all my affection for my dear little smile.

22 August 1933

*

My dear Mother,

Today also I was busy fixing the sari on the frame, but I saw that the sari was not quite straight. So now I have only to undo this work — which took me three days — so as to do it better.

It is rather tiresome for you, my dear little smile! But it is an exact image of life, where one must constantly undo what has been done in order to redo it better.

24 August 1933

*

Series Three – To “My little smile”

My dear Mother,

I do not feel that I am working; I just play like a child all day with the marvellous playthings my Mother has given me to play with all day. I don't know how to write in any other way and that is why I write to You “I worked” instead of “I played”.

Mother, I think the sari You wore today is my finest embroidery, don't You think so?

It is a work of art. It is simply *splendid*. I feel as if I were *dressed in light*.

1 September 1933

*

My dear Mother,

I am working on the grey sari. What else? What can I write to You?

Just a word is enough to keep the contact, and when you have something interesting to tell me, you must do so.

16 October 1933

*

My dear Mother,

You have a lot of work; I don't want to take up Your time...

As you like, my little smile; I am very busy, it is true, but I could have managed to give you a few minutes. It is nice of you to think of not increasing my work unnecessarily; there are not many like you.

13 November 1933

*

Some Answers from the Mother

*Mother,
Today I worked very little...*

You did quite the right thing!

A great promise came from above for you yesterday⁶, the promise that you will be delivered from all your difficulties and that your mind will become luminously peaceful and your heart quietly content. Did you feel anything?

25 November 1933

*

*My dear Mother,
After the Darshan I was quiet and happy. At the Ashram I saw X and Y and we talked together happily. "How are you?" Y asked me. I had nothing to say, so I asked, "And how are you?" She told me, "This time I spent a lot of time; Sri Aurobindo put his hand on me for a long time" and so on. Then X also said, "This time I also spent a little more time, two or three minutes."*

Then it was lunchtime, so we went to take our plates. I was first and I took my seat with a place on either side of me. I thought X would sit on one side and Y on the other. But then Z came and sat down beside me. I told her to sit somewhere else and she got angry with me. At that moment X and Y came and, seeing that Z was angry with me, they did not sit with me. I was very hurt because they did not sit with me.

Do not torment yourself, my little smile; all this has come to teach you that on these occasions, after having had the joy of receiving Sri Aurobindo's blessing, it is better to remain concentrated and to keep one's joy locked inside oneself rather than to throw it out by mixing and talking with others. The experiences

⁶ November 24th, a Darshan day. On the three (later four) Darshan days each year, the sadhaks went before Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to receive their blessings.

Series Three – To “My little smile”

we talk about evaporate and we lose the benefit they could have brought us.

26 November 1933

*

Poor little X has become very sad... Are you so serious with her?

27 November 1933

*

Mother,

I am not angry with X. I always try to keep silent; so I speak only about important things, with her as well as with others; that is to say, if she asks me something I answer her and I show her the work to be done.

Mother, I want Your presence and I try to keep it at all times. I aspire towards You. I want You always, all day and all night. I want to live always in Your heart, where I can live constantly with X and with all who love You.

I have noticed that when I am concentrated, or rather when I try to concentrate, I cannot smile at anyone and if I try to smile I feel as if I were smiling superficially.

Mother, this morning I wanted to tell all this to X, but my lips refused; they didn't want to smile.

Mother, is it good or bad not to be able to speak like that? I want to know, because if it is not good I don't want it; I will go on speaking as before.

It is very good to remain silent and concentrated in your aspiration; and I am sure that if you keep a deep affection for X in your heart, she will feel it and will no longer be sad. But, of course, if you feel you can explain to her kindly what is happening in you, it will be very good.

28 November 1933

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Mother,

You keep promising me beautiful things and I keep resisting them. How then can I ever be happy?

You must not worry — it does not help towards the realisation of the promises; and also you must be patient. In this physical world, things take time to get realised.

12 December 1933

*

Mother,

Once Sri Aurobindo wrote me something with some words that I couldn't read. I asked X to read them; then he said, "You are the Mother's child, not Sri Aurobindo's." (It was just a joke, because I can read Your handwriting but not Sri Aurobindo's.)

Don't you believe that when one is a child of the Mother, one is at the same time a child of Sri Aurobindo, and vice-versa?

16 December 1933

*

My dear Mother,

Yesterday and today I worked all day on the "iris" sari. I love to work for You. Mother, I don't know what to write. I have nothing to say.

That is enough; all I ask is that we exchange a little "*bonjour*"⁷ every day. When you have something special or important or interesting to write to me, you will write.

Tender love.

18 December 1933

*

⁷ "Good day", the customary French greeting.

Series Three – To “My little smile”

My dear Mother,

Today also I worked all day on the “iris” sari; I won’t tell You how many hours I work because if I write “I worked for ten hours”, You write to me, “It is amazing”!

You are a courageous and energetic child.

Tender love.

19 December 1933

*

My dear Mother,

The “iris” flowers are very beautiful. Mother, what do they signify?

“Aristocracy of beauty”. It is a noble flower which stands upright on its stalk. Its form has been stylised in the fleur-de-lis, emblem of the kings of France.

23 December 1933

*

Mother,

Today also I worked all day on the blouse.

All my affection for my hardworking little smile.

29 December 1933

*

Mother,

What can I write? Today I worked on the sari.

What can I say? — that I am always with you in your work and your rest, your sleep and your waking.

Affectionately.

3 January 1934

*

Some Answers from the Mother

*My dear Mother,
Yesterday while ironing the blouse I scorched it in a
few places.*

I didn't notice it, so it can't be anything much. That is probably why you looked so grave at Pranam this morning. You should not torment yourself over such little things.

Tender love.

11 January 1934

*

I shall always be with you, my dear little child, in the struggle and in the victory.

13 January 1934

*

*Mother,
Today I worked on the sari for nine hours.*

Then the work must be proceeding very fast. You have a marvellous capacity for work, my dear little child.

18 January 1934

*

My dear little child, why were you weeping so much this morning at Pranam? I was so sorry I could not comfort you. Won't you tell me about your sorrow so that I may remove it if possible? You know that all my love is always with you as well as my best will to help you out of your difficulties.

24 January 1934

*

Series Three—To “My little smile”

Mother,

*Today also I worked all day on the sari. Sometimes
I become a naughty child, don't I, Mother?*

Not *naughty*, poor little one, only a little sad, and that distresses
me, for I would like to see you always full of light and joy.

26 January 1934

*

Mother,

*I know that there are beautiful things in my little
heart. There are bad things too, as You know, Mother
—I have told You about them.*

*But this little heart is full of love. Mother, we are
going to burn all the bad things in this little heart. Then
in my heart there will only be a very, very sweet love for
You alone.*

What you have written here is very beautiful and it is also very
true. The beautiful things are far stronger than the ugly ones
and they will surely win the victory. I am with you always, in
the struggle and in the *victory*.

29 January 1934

*

Mother,

*This morning X showed me the pink blouse she has
embroidered with silver thread. This blouse is very, very
beautiful. The sari too will be the most beautiful one in
Your collection of saris embroidered by us.*

*Before seeing X's blouse I used to think that my
bird-of-paradise⁸ sari was very beautiful; but now that*

⁸ The Mother's name for the Tiger-claw plant, *Heliconia metallica*.

Some Answers from the Mother

I have seen this blouse, I find that the bird-of-paradise sari is nothing compared to the one X is preparing.

That is not true; each has its own particular beauty and style. The bird-of-paradise is a *very beautiful* sari.

Her blouse is truly the most beautiful one.

I cannot say whether it is *the most* beautiful or not. Each of the embroidered saris has its own beauty; but it is true that this blouse is very beautiful.

30 January 1934

*

Mother,

I once told You that if someone made something beautiful for You we ought to be happy, no matter who made it, myself or someone else; I mean that upon seeing a very beautiful thing someone has made for You, one ought to be very happy, and all those who love my sweet Mother will naturally be happy.

Do You know that when I saw X's blouse, I felt as if another person had made something more beautiful than I had.

Mother, I know why I felt like that. Up to now I have had in me a kind of pride in my work: "I make finer things than anyone else here", something like that. And that is why when I saw something very beautiful made by someone else, my pride received a good hard blow. Isn't that true? (Mother, here I recall a sentence I once heard Y telling someone: "Mother knows how to give blows.")

I assure you that I do not deliberately give blows.

*

Series Three – To “My little smile”

Mother, why are these silly things in me? I don't want them. They have been in me long enough. Now I don't want them. I shall not rest until You come into my heart and live there eternally.

My Mother, give me purity and constancy in my aspiration.

Certain conditions in us (and pride is one of them) automatically invite blows from the surrounding circumstances. And it is up to us to utilise these blows to make further progress.

You are right in wanting all this pettiness and stupidity to disappear. I am fully with you in this determination and I am sure that you will triumph.

31 January 1934

*

Mother,

Today I have nothing to write. As usual I worked all day.

I hope that this new month will bring you the realisation you desire: a happy calm, an invariable peace, a luminous silence.

Such is my wish and my blessing.

1 February 1934

*

Mother,

I shall capture You in my heart. I don't need to think of peace and happiness. When You dwell in our hearts, these things are sure to be there.

You will not have to go far to seize me, for I am already in your heart and as soon as your eyes are opened you will see me there; turn your faculty of feeling inward instead of letting it project

Some Answers from the Mother

outward, and you will feel my presence as concretely (even more so) as you feel the cold and the heat.

2 February 1934

*

My beloved Mother,

You are already in my heart, it is true. But I don't know how to open my eyes; they are always open except when I sleep.

I am speaking of your inner eyes, not the physical ones.

*

"Turn your faculty of feeling inward instead of letting it project outward." Mother, when I feel something I feel it in my heart (and I think everyone feels in his heart). I don't know how to feel outward. I don't understand what You mean by "outward".

I mean that instead of living in the perceptions of the sense-organs, which are exclusively occupied with outward things, you should concentrate in the inner being, which has a life independent of the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch).

3 February 1934

*

Mother,

Why didn't You return the letter to me (the one You wrote to me) after I sent it to You this morning with my letter?

I want to lie on Your lap, Mother.

Poor little one, I very gladly take you on my lap and cradle you to my heart to soothe this heavy sorrow which has no cause and to quell this great revolt which has no reason. Let me take you in my arms, bathe you in my love and wipe away even the

Series Three–To “My little smile”

memory of this unfortunate incident. I kept the letter to show it to Sri Aurobindo along with your letter of this morning. I am returning it to you in this notebook.

27 February 1934

*

No, my dear child, I am sure I didn't tell you that you wanted to hide something from me. When you started crying under the pressure I was putting on you in meditation to calm the restlessness of your mind and vital, I thought that it might relieve you to tell me the cause of your sorrow, and when you didn't reply, I simply asked whether you wanted to speak, so as not to insist unnecessarily. You were mistaken if you thought I was showing displeasure.

Unfortunately, for some time now you have closed up inside yourself, and that is why I cannot help you as much as I would like to.

Affectionately.

7 July 1934

*

My dear child, this is certainly a most unexpected way of interpreting this vision. I hadn't given it that meaning at all. The images in these visions are always symbolic and should be taken as such.

The rocks represent the material nature, hard and inflexible yet concealing in itself the stream of life. Because of the resistance of matter, this stream of life is freed only with difficulty and can hardly emerge into the light. But with a little concentration and insistence, the resistance of matter lessens and the life-forces are freed. This image applies to almost everyone, but in this case it concerned you because you were present, and I took it as a promise that your difficulties would give way and that you

Some Answers from the Mother

would soon be able to emerge into a luminous, free and happy consciousness.

With my love.

11 July 1934

*

Mother,

Ten yards of cloth cost 25 rupees, 15 annas — that is, 2 rupees, 9 1/2 annas per yard. This evening X and I dyed the big ten-yard piece. But it was not successful: the dyeing is irregular: some places are dark and some are pale. You will see it tomorrow morning.

My dear child, I didn't reply at once because I wanted to see the cloth first. There are irregularities, of course, but it seems to me that they can be put right.

I don't think it would be good to dye it again. It would become too dark. But we can take the irregularities as *movements of water* and underline them with a fine gold thread; then it will look as if it were done deliberately and it will be even lovelier. Next time I see you, I shall show you exactly what I mean. Don't worry, it will be quite all right. You may start your work right away.

6 September 1934

*

Mother,

Now I don't feel like doing the fishes. I shall do them in five years.

I would rather start on the green sari with gold and silver dragons, for 21 February 1935 — if You ask someone to do the drawing. Because the green cloth and the gold and silver thread are all ready.

I am disappointed, I cannot do the fishes now.

Series Three—To “My little smile”

You can ask X if he would like to draw the dragons for you.

7 September 1934

*

You are my little child and you will always be my little child — that is a sure fact.

But when little children prove to be unreasonable, it is very difficult to reason with them. Now if you want me to tell you what I think, it is this: Y has taken a lot of trouble and made a very beautiful drawing, a beautiful piece of cloth has been purchased at a cost of Rs. 30, you and Z have taken a great deal of trouble to dye it, and I tell you that I have found a way of utilising the irregularities of the dyeing to make a sari far more beautiful than we had thought, and yet without considering you write in a fit of bad temper: “I don’t want to do this sari any more, I will do another one.” Naturally I thought that now I would have to ask X to go to the trouble of making another drawing, and if by chance another difficulty crops up, this little child may once again say: “I am disappointed, I don’t want to do this sari,” and X will have worked for nothing. That is why I told you to ask him for the drawing yourself. He has just today sent me the design of the crown with fishes. It is very, very pretty. And if you want my opinion, I suggest that you first take up the crown — it will set you going on the sari itself; and you will see that everything will be all right, completely all right. I am sending you the design of the crown.

With my love.

8 September 1934

*

Mother,

Last night when I went to bed at about 9:30, I felt a sort of fear, as if someone were there or someone might come. I shut my eyes and after a moment, in my sleep, I felt a sort of fear. I opened my eyes, looked at the sky,

Some Answers from the Mother

and then closed my eyes again. I saw something like a cloud coming slowly and I opened my eyes...

My dear little smile,

You must not be afraid. If you see something that frightens you or you have an unpleasant feeling, you must call me and the thing will disappear. When you are awake, surely you are not afraid of an approaching thunder-cloud; why should it frighten you at night?

Put yourself in my arms without fear and be sure that nothing can harm you. My force and my protection are always with you.

With my tender love.

18 June 1935

*

My dear little smile,

You are absolutely right, and I don't see why, instead of reading interesting things, you should start doing boring exercises.

To learn a language one must read, read, read — and talk as much as one can.

With all my love.

10 July 1935

*

My dear little smile,

You have described your condition very well and since you are so conscious of it, I feel that soon you will be able to master it.

It goes without saying that our help is always with you to bring you peace and silence, and it is absolutely certain that peace and silence will be established in you some day never to leave you again.

Very affectionately.

8 August 1935

*

Series Three—To “My little smile”

My dear little smile,

You are quite right. I much prefer a beautiful embroidered sari to a lace gown. It is not a question of number or of need. For years I was perfectly satisfied with two saris a year — but I am proud of the beautiful things my dear children make for me and I wear them with affection and joy.

My blessings and my love are always with you.

10 December 1935

*

Mother,

You told me that there is something closed in me which isn't open to You and this is why, even when I want to feel Your love in my heart (which You say is already there) I do not feel it. What is it that is closed? My heart? Or something else? I don't understand all this.

I want my heart to open to You and to feel Your love there always. But if it is really closed, how can I open it? What must I do to open it? For I really do want it to open to You and I want to feel happy for ever.

My dear little smile,

I know of only one way: to give oneself — a complete consecration to the Divine. The more one gives oneself, the more one opens; the more one opens, the more one receives; and in the intimacy of this self-giving one can become conscious of the inner Presence and the joy it brings.

Tender love from your mother.

25 July 1936

*

Mother,

I shall tell You frankly when I don't feel happy: it is when someone joyfully tells me about his beautiful and happy experiences that I feel so poor; I feel then that I do not yet have in me what I should have.

Some Answers from the Mother

And I always ask You for silence and peace (as I told You the other day) because I know that if one can always keep that silence and peace one never feels poor for any reason.

I don't want to be, I don't want to feel so poor.

You have already had this experience of peace and silent joy; you know what it is and it is sure to come back stronger and steadier. Remain confident, do not torment yourself—in this way you will hasten its coming.

Tender love from your mother.

30 July 1936

*

Mother,

I find that I have lost everything. All that was good in me, all is lost. Previously I always felt that all I did was for You; in all the work I did, this feeling of “doing it for You” was always with me.

Now I find that I have lost this feeling.

My dear little child,

Are you aware of any cause for this change? Surely there is one. Besides, these days when the Ashram is full of visitors,⁹ there is a great confusion which often brings a clouding of the consciousness. You must not let this upset you too much, but simply aspire with calm and perseverance for the light to reappear. My love is always with you to help you go through this bad moment.

Affectionately.

30 August 1936

*

⁹ The period around August 15, Sri Aurobindo's birthday.

Series Three—To “My little smile”

Mother,

Yes, I think I know the cause of this change. Isn't it the desire to be admired by people—ego? Or is it something else? If You know, You will let me know. I must know what it is in order to get rid of it.

Yes, my dear little child, you have indeed found the cause; and weren't you a little annoyed that I didn't wear your embroidered saris all these days? It is certainly not because I dislike wearing them—quite the contrary. But they are rather heavy and warm and I prefer to keep them for wearing between November and January—at that time there are many visitors because of the vacations and I shall then wear the embroidered saris with the greatest pleasure since the season is a bit cooler.

It is true that you must get rid of these ignorant and petty movements; but at the same time, you may be sure that I appreciate and love your work immensely. I have great admiration for your embroidery, and for you, great love.

Your mother.

31 August 1936

*

My little “Eternal Smile”

Must go on smiling, smiling still more when the difficulties come. Smiles are like rays of the sun, they dissolve the clouds... And if you want the radical remedy it lies in this: *frankness*, be absolutely frank; tell me fully all that is going on in you, and soon the cure will come, a complete and happy cure.

To my little smile very affectionately.

6 September 1936

*

My child,

Don't pretend to be silly when you are not. Not only was I not angry, but I had not the slightest intention of looking angry.

Some Answers from the Mother

I only looked straight into your soul, trying to reestablish the connection between it and your exterior consciousness. And I took your laughter for a sign of conversion!

Beware of false pride—it leads only to ruin. And do not belittle the Divine's love, because without it nothing is worth living for.

I know that you are too sensible and sensitive to ignore this truth.

Always lovingly.

6 September 1936

*

Bonne Fête!

To [my little smile] whose precious help prevents my feet from being hurt by the stones on the way.

With my love and blessings that her aspiration may be realised this year.

6 January 1963

Series Four

Series Four

Letters to a Sadhak

To the sadhak in charge of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram's cows, bullocks and carts during the 1930s.¹

Special new ropes for the bullocks have been prepared by the milkman. When the bullocks are working, it may be safer to use those ropes. As soon as the work is over, the ropes will be removed. Those ropes are not tight; they are loose, so it is no hardship to the bullocks. Pray sanction them.

I thought they have strongly refused to have the ropes put upon them. The ropes may not be tight, but most probably they will spoil the nose of the bullocks. There again it seems to me that it is a matter of training.

8 May 1932

*

I beg to submit some facts for your gracious consideration. The weakest and smallest of the bullocks used by X's cart-men are carrying more than 600 Dem of sand.

How can you speak of that! Do you know how the cart-men here *kill* their bullocks in a few months or in even less time?

11 May 1932

*

¹ This correspondence was written entirely in English.

Some Answers from the Mother

Tomorrow is a holiday. The day after, these repairs can be made to the cart.

As there will be a *big crowd* tomorrow in town, you will have to be *very careful* when taking to and bringing back the bullocks from the Agricultural Garden.

13 July 1932

*

The coolie did not come last night. He simply put the feeding tubs before the bullocks and went away. He is not working satisfactorily. He does not keep things clean. As there is no better man I am trying to get on with him.

The bullocks seem to like this man and this is the most important point.

For cleanliness it is a matter of supervision.

15 July 1932

*

No wonder that Ojas² gave some trouble. These bullocks are quite intelligent enough to feel the change of people. This new man is not an expert and moreover he has something of a brute around him. You will have to look carefully after him, for I do not like his way of dealing with the bullocks.

I object strongly to his way of twisting the tails of the beasts. If somebody twisted one of his limbs like that, what would he say? And I am pretty sure that our bullocks are more sensitive than he is.

3 September 1932

*

² A bullock.

Series Four—To a Sadhak

I have watched the thing from the roof, and saw with the inner sight also. There is absolutely no doubt about what is happening and once more I shall try to make you understand it.

The bullocks are not mischievous. On the contrary, they are very good and peaceful creatures, but very sensitive — unusually sensitive perhaps — (of this I am not sure as I have not followed other bullocks so closely). The truth is that they dislike and distrust the present driver, and *not without reason*. When they were working under the previous one they were happy and cheerful and worked well. Since this one is driving them they are sad and dejected and work reluctantly. I see no solution but to change the man and to find a better one.

The proposal to frighten them in order to master them is unacceptable. Some kind of submission can thus be obtained perhaps, but of the worst kind. The beasts lose more and more confidence and joy and peace and finally their strength and even their health goes.

What is the use of being a sadhak if, as soon as we act, we act like the ignorant ordinary man?

I can tell you this to finish with the subject, that from the roof I concentrated the power on the bullocks ordering them to yield and obey and I found them *quite receptive*. To use a *quiet, steady, unwavering conscious will*, that is the way, the only true way *really effective* and worthy of an aspirant for Divine Life.

I hope that this time I have made myself clear.

14 September 1932

*

It seems to me that, at least for a time, it would be better not to try to turn out much work every day, as Ojas may truly need rest. I do not find the new man better than the previous one. He is far too nervous and restless. If he could be a little more quiet and peaceful in dealing with the bullocks they would surely work much more willingly.

22 September 1932

*

Some Answers from the Mother

I think that Chakki work³ is very disgusting for the bullocks; it brings down their vitality because of that, and makes them become old very soon. That is why I do not wish them to be given that work.

11 January 1933

*

Saturday the 14th is cattle festival day. Generally in all the places, many things are observed on that day. Horns are painted in red and blue colour, no work is given and so on. I am not submitting all this to have permission to do like that for our cattle. But I am tempted to beg you for your kind gracious permission to use this kind of necklace which I am enclosing herewith for our darling Ra⁴ on that day.

Yes, the necklace is nice, you can put it on; but no painting of the horns; it is so ugly! And I think you must be careful not to take out Ra in the street that day as usually children run after the calves and frighten them very much; they even hurt them sometimes.

12 January 1933

*

Is not 19 trips too much for the bullocks? It seems to me that they are not getting much rest.

8 June 1933

*

What is this? If the cart-man made a mistake or misbehaved with the bullocks, I *must know* and will tolerate none of THESE MYSTERIES.

7 August 1933

*

³ Milling work.

⁴ A bullock calf.

Series Four – To a Sadhak

I will explain what happened. X was with the cart, but as he himself says, he was fully merged in solving a problem of chess play. So till the cart was turned over and touched the ground, he did not know.

I do not see what a chess problem has to do either with work or with sadhana. Is X here to solve chess problems? He could do it just as well elsewhere.

26 August 1933

*

I am sorry to submit to Thee the following about X. For no reason he has beaten Ra with the back of his sandal in her shed at 5.10 p.m. I saw it from Ba's shed. He removed one sandal from his foot, took it into his hand, turned it over and beat on Ra's mouth and face. He had put two baskets, one of plantain peels and another of vegetable cuttings, beside the feeding tub. Ra did not take the feed as he wanted her to. This was her mistake. When I ran and questioned him he did not care to answer. Servants tell me that he has beaten Ra like that with a sandal before too and it seems he wants to control her like that.

If truly he does it, it is brutal and stupid; apart from spoiling her head, which is bad enough, he will make her vindictive and violent which is worse.

18 November 1933

*

I find Tej⁵ *very much reduced*. He is certainly ill and needs some close attention. I would like to know from the doctor if it would not be good for Tej to let him move freely in a pasture for some time, so that he may have air, sun and movement without doing work. This question must be put clearly to the doctor asking for

⁵ A bullock.

Some Answers from the Mother

a precise answer. It is well known now, that there is no better cure for illnesses, whatever they are, than *air* and *sun*.

1 February 1934

*

I thought there would be no objection from the Municipality or others to fixing rings on foot-path walls to tie the cows. I wanted to have one ring fixed.

All this is absolutely forbidden by the Municipal rules, and if any of these things were done by us it was a *great mistake* and I intend that it *should never be renewed*.

10 March 1934

*

The boy X who was working in the Building Department was dismissed some two days back, not for the crime of theft but for some rash dragging of a cart and thus causing some slight hurt to a dog. So may I keep him as a substitute for his brother?

Certainly not.

*

If you are pleased to permit, as it is only for a day, I have no objection. He works very satisfactorily. Awaiting orders.

No, he is very rude and a boy who can almost willingly hurt a dog is likely to do the same with the cow and calf.

This boy has been dismissed by *my orders* and will not be given work in the Ashram.

A man who is cruel with beasts is worse than a beast.

2 April 1934

Series Five

Series Five

Letters to a Child

To one of the first children admitted to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram; he came at the age of ten. Interested as a youth in music, painting and poetry, he later became a teacher of music in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. He began writing to the Mother at the age of twelve.

Always do with pleasure the work you have to do.
Work done with joy is work done well.

14 March 1932

*

When you have a desire you are governed by the thing you desire; it takes possession of your mind and your life, and you become a slave. If you have greed for food you are no longer the master of food, it is the food that masters you.

22 August 1932

*

My dear Mother,

Today when I went to X for my music lesson I felt uneasy. I also felt that he is not very happy with me. I had a sort of bad feeling at that time. Why did I feel this uneasiness? After coming home I felt tired and had no interest in doing anything. Now I feel that after the music lesson, the good things that were developing in me have been broken to pieces. Is it true?

All these feelings — this uneasiness, this tiredness, these impressions of broken progress — come from the vital, which rebels

Some Answers from the Mother

because its desires and preferences are not satisfied. All that has no true reality.

2 April 1933

*

O Mother,

The disturbance still has not disappeared. I am in a worse state than before. There is something wrong in my mind. Also, I feel bad everywhere. Tell me what I should do.

Think of something else. Keep yourself busy; don't remain idle, doing nothing.

18 December 1933

*

Dearest Mother,

I want to feel your touch in each and every one of my movements. I want to feel your presence everywhere. Mother, accept my prayer.

I am always with you, my child, so it is not only possible but quite easy to feel my presence constantly.

With love and blessings.

6 March 1934

*

Mother, O Mother,

Have I done any wrong? Answer me please. If I have done any wrong, please excuse me. Are you displeased with me? Mother, make me yours.

Why this question? You have done nothing wrong and I am not in the least displeased with you. Did I look very serious tonight? If it is so, it was because I was thinking of the stupidity

Series Five—To a Child

and blindness of this poor world, but there was surely nothing concerning you.

With love and blessings.

9 March 1934

*

My little mother,

Yesterday I told you that “we” had painted an envelope. By “we” I mean that there is me and you. I feel that it is not I who am working, so I say “we”. I am your child.

That is *really nice* and I am *very pleased*. Yes, I am always with you and even more specially when you are working on your painting and music. Are you aware that you are making a great deal of progress? I like the envelopes that *both of us are painting together* very much, and that is one more proof that we are doing them together, because they are nearly always just as I thought they should be. The small one you sent this morning is very fine and the choice of colours is excellent.

Affectionately.

Your little mother.

15 March 1934

*

My mother,

I do not want the vulgar joy of the world. Take me into your heart. Take me into your arms.

Yes, I am taking you into my arms and cradling you to my heart so that you may have true happiness and unalloyed peace.

Love from your little mother who is always with you.

15 March 1934

*

Some Answers from the Mother

My little mother,

Peace, peace, give me your unalloyed peace and make me conscious of you.

Peace be with you, my child, the peace of Certitude and of confidence in my love which never leaves you.

Your mother.

16 March 1934

*

My little mother,

Why does this difficulty come? Do I open myself to it or is it something else? Mother, after having come so close to you, why does it come?

You should not speak to others about what I write or say to you, because they become jealous and their jealousy creates a bad atmosphere which falls back on you and brings back the difficulty to you; because you spoke, you opened yourself and received it, perhaps without even being aware of it.

Love from your mother.

17 March 1934

*

My dear mother,

My heart wants to run to your feet; it wants to lose itself in you. This is what I want, but have I done it? I want to be close to your heart, I want... but is it possible? I don't know.

Make me peaceful. Give me the taste of your divine presence.

Yes, my dear child, it is entirely possible and since you want it sincerely, it will come to be so. You will feel yourself always

Series Five—To a Child

close to my heart, cradled in my arms, and Peace will fill your being and make you strong and joyful.

Love from your mother.

29 March 1934

*

Sweet mother,

I feel devoid of strength, will and energy. I don't know what to do. This state must go, but I don't know how. I have no courage.

Do not distress yourself, it is the result of these last few days of sickness. It will pass — but you must eat well regularly and sleep well too, taking care not to go to bed too late.

Very lovingly.

30 March 1934

*

My dear little child,

I was so pleased to receive your nice letter. You must learn that it is your good and *your good alone* that I want. I want to make you a strong and conscious man who is master of himself — that is, in control of his lower nature and capable of becoming a true Yogi if that be his aspiration. And the more this man realises his true being, the more he will become my very dear child.

That is why, now, when the will that is expressing itself is the will of the lower nature, I cannot satisfy all its whims, for that would be the worst thing I could do for you.

True love is the love that wants, to the exclusion of all else, the highest good for the loved one. This is the love that I have and want to have for you.

Your mother.

6 April 1934

*

Some Answers from the Mother

*My sweet mother,
May peace be with me always.*

Peace, peace in your heart and your vital.

Yes, Peace, Light, Force and Bliss are always with you in the Consciousness that is constantly by your side, bringing you the solicitude of my love.

9 April 1934

*

My dear child,

Yes, you are and will be more and more a child of the Light. No obscurity must be allowed to manifest through you.

12 April 1934

*

Dear little child,

The paintings are fine, they are like Japanese ones. As for the “plane” from which they come, it is surely the subtle physical, where the memory of all the conceptions and works of art realised on earth is stored.

Very affectionately yours.

16 April 1934

*

*Mother,
I do not want a life without energy.*

Very good — then you must acquire energy, and after all, it is not so difficult, especially here where you are as if bathed in a sea of energy. You have only to open and receive.

Love from your mother.

17 April 1934

*

Series Five—To a Child

*Sweet mother,
Give me peace, energy and inspiration.*

Learn to drink from the eternal source; it contains everything.
With my love.

21 April 1934

*

My child, my child, why this great sadness? Is it because someone to whom you had given your friendship has withdrawn for reasons that he thinks are very profound?

But don't you still have your mother's friendship? And also all her love, and her solicitude for you?

No, all is not sad and gloomy, neither the trees nor the sky nor the sea; everything is full of the divine Presence and is only too glad to speak of it to you. Shake off this childish depression and contemplate the Sun that is rising in your heart!

28 April 1934

*

*Mother,
You don't love me at all. Is this the way that one
loves one's child?*

My child,

Certainly I do not love you in the way you conceive of as love; and I do see how it could be otherwise. You first have to realise the Divine Consciousness — only then will you be able to know what true love is.

30 April 1934

*

*My sweet mother,
Human contact has done me much harm, but I
cannot give up this habit. I have made many efforts to
stop all human contacts, but I cannot. I don't know
what to do.*

Some Answers from the Mother

*Mother, let me open to you and to no one else,
always, always. Give me patience.*

I don't think it would be good for you to live completely retired and turned in on yourself. The whole thing is to choose your relationships well. You must choose to enter into relation only with those whose contact *does not veil my presence*. This is the important point which should never be forgotten. All that leads you away from me in thought and feeling is bad. All that brings you closer to me and gives you the perception and joy of my presence is good. You should judge things in the light of this rule. You will see that it will help you to protect yourself from many mistakes.

I send you much patience and all my love.

2 May 1934

*

*My sweet mother,
You are everywhere. Remain with me always.*

My dear child,

You are always in my arms and always I hold you close to my heart to comfort and protect you, to strengthen and illumine you. Never for a moment do I leave you and I am sure that if you are a little attentive you will very clearly feel the warmth of my arms around your shoulders.

Your mother.

4 May 1934

*

My dear child,

It seems to me that you are so often sad and depressed because your nerves are not very strong. You should eat more, sleep longer, take some exercise in the open air, etc.

Affectionately.

9 May 1934

*

Series Five—To a Child

Peace, peace, my little child, the sweet peace of inner silence and outer calm. May it always be with you.

Affectionately.

14 May 1934

*

You see, my child, the unfortunate thing is that you are too pre-occupied with yourself. At your age I was exclusively occupied with my studies — finding things out, learning, understanding, knowing. That was my interest, even my passion. My mother, who loved us very much — my brother and myself — never allowed us to be ill tempered or discontented or lazy. If we went to complain to her about one thing or another, to tell her that we were discontented, she would make fun of us or scold us and say, “What is this nonsense? Don’t be ridiculous. Quick! Off you go and work, and never mind whether you are in a good or a bad mood! That is of no interest at all.”

My mother was perfectly right and I have always been very grateful to her for having taught me the discipline and the necessity of self-forgetfulness through concentration on what one is doing.

I have told you this because the anxiety you speak of comes from the fact that you are far too concerned about yourself. It would be better for you to pay more attention to what you are doing and to do it well (painting or music), to develop your mind, which is still very uncultivated, and to learn the elements of knowledge which are indispensable to a man if he does not want to be ignorant and uncultured.

If you worked regularly eight to nine hours a day, you would be hungry and you would eat well, you would feel sleepy and sleep peacefully, and you would have no time to wonder whether you are in a good or a bad mood.

I am telling you these things with all my affection, and I hope that you will understand them.

Some Answers from the Mother

Your mother who loves you.

15 May 1934

*

My dear little child,

I constantly envelop you in my peace: you must learn to keep it. I am constantly in your heart: you must become conscious of my presence and receive and use the force that I am pouring into you to enable you to overcome all difficulties.

Love.

21 May 1934

*

My dear child,

Carefully keep this bliss, this repose, this assurance of Victory; they are more precious than all the riches of this world, and they will keep you very close to me.

Love from your mother.

22 May 1934

*

My dear child,

Only spiritual force has the power to impose peace on the vital, for if peace is not *imposed* on it by a power greater than its own, the vital will never accept it.

So you must open yourself to the spiritual force and allow it to work in you; then you will more and more dwell in constant peace and joy.

With all my love.

24 May 1934

*

My dear child,

I carry you always in my arms, pressed close to my heart, and I have no doubt that you will become aware of it if you forget the

Series Five–To a Child

world and concentrate on me. By turning your thoughts towards me you will feel closer and closer to me and peace will come to dwell in your heart.

Love.

25 May 1934

*

My dear little child,

It is by inner identification that the true closeness can come. I am always with you in all love.

Your mother.

2 June 1934

*

My dear child,

You will no longer revolt when you understand that it is the most useless and foolish of all things; and when you give up this bad habit of revolt, you will see that suffering too will go away and be replaced by an unvarying happiness.

With all my being, I want this progress and this transformation for you.

With love.

10 June 1934

*

My sweet mother,

I shall be what you want me to be. Dear mother, accept my childlike prayer.

For you I want consciousness, knowledge, artistic capacity, self-mastery in peace and perfect equality, and the happiness that is the result of spiritual realisation. Is this too grand and vast a programme?

With your mother's blessings.

12 June 1934

*

Some Answers from the Mother

*Mother,
I want a discipline.*

This is quite excellent and I approve of it. Without outer and inner discipline, one can achieve nothing in life, either spiritually or materially. All those who have been able to create something beautiful or useful have always been persons who have known how to discipline themselves.

Always with you in all love.

23 June 1934

*

Yes, my dear child,
I am your true mother who will give birth in you to the true being, the being who is free, peaceful, strong and happy always, independently of all circumstances.
Love from your mother.

25 July 1934

*

*My dear mother,
Give energy and force to your child. Oh, take me
into your heart. Let me live in you.*

My dear child,
I carry you always in my heart and you are bathed in energy; it is through a quiet and confident aspiration that you will receive it. All my love is with you.

I hope you do not show my letters to anyone. It is better to keep them to yourself; otherwise, if you show them, all the force that I put into them evaporates.

11 August 1934

*

Series Five—To a Child

*Mother, my dear mother,
You know everything that I need. Take me into your
heart. Surround me.*

My dear child,

I know very well what you need—it is to be surrounded by my love as by a protection, and truly my love is always with you, around you; but you, on your side, must open to it and allow it to envelop you and help you.

16 August 1934

*

*My dear mother,
I want to be like the lion on the envelope I am
sending you this evening.*

My dear little lion,

I am in your heart that it may be happy, in your head that it may be peaceful, and in your hand that it may be skilful.

With all my love.

21 August 1934

*

My dear little child,

Your lions are superb. How quiet they are in their strength. A strong being is always quiet. It is weakness that causes restlessness. I am sending you (on my envelope, but in reality too) the repose that comes from concentrated energy.

Be sure that you will become strong and quiet, have faith in a perfect realisation and in the Divine's omnipotence to achieve it. The Force and Consciousness are always with you, as well as all my love.

Your mother.

21 August 1934

*

Some Answers from the Mother

*My dear mother,
Purify me. Dispel the shadows. I will not revolt any
more.*

You must never lose confidence in my unvarying love.

30 August 1934

*

*Mother,
I have a pain in my head. I am very tired.*

My child, all my love is always with you; do not push it away.

1 September 1934

*

My dear child,

I have been informed from the dining-room that you did not eat either yesterday evening or the whole day today. Why? If you are sick, you must be taken care of. I shall send the doctor to you. But if you are not sick, you must eat; if you do not eat regularly, your brain will waste away and you will lose your intelligence, and then?

It grieves me when you do not eat regularly. Do you want to grieve your mother who loves you and wants only your own good?

September 1934

*

*My dear mother,
I won't be irregular from today. You know very well
that I am not sick; it was a cloud, you know. Now I
am going to the dining-room. My mother, I want to be
good. Everything has gone now. I want to be your little
child.*

Series Five—To a Child

My dear child,

You are a very nice child, and I am very pleased that you had your meal yesterday evening and that all the clouds have gone. Now you must not allow them to come back and for that the best thing is to remain always cradled in my arms, protected by my love which never leaves you.

7 September 1934

*

My dear mother,

Have I done something that has displeased you?

My head hurts. I feel tired.

You are quite mistaken, I am not at all displeased with you. Only I am worried because you always have a headache and because you are tired.

I want all that to go away and I want you to be perfectly healthy. For that, you must follow a physical discipline: sleep regularly, eat regularly, exercise regularly, etc., etc. And unfortunately you refuse all discipline. This makes my task very difficult.

With all my love.

11 September 1934

*

Dearest mother,

I feel so tired, and my head hurts. Mother, what shall I do?

My dear child,

You know that my love is always with you and my will is that you should get well; my force is with you to give you health. I take you into my arms, I take you to my heart.

20 September 1934

*

Some Answers from the Mother

My dear child,

I don't want you to be ill and always I am with you to cure you — but you too must want to be cured. Do not torment yourself and always nestle in my arms so as to receive my love and force.

23 September 1934

*

My dear little child,

I fully agree with you that egoism, vanity and jealousy must disappear; they are indeed ugly, mean and ignorant things that stop all progress.

My force is with you to conquer these things. And my love never leaves you.

25 September 1934

*

My dear mother,

I am not unhappy. All that is a falsehood.

Mother, stay with your little child.

My dear child,

Always, always I am with you and the quieter and happier you are, the more you will feel it.

With all my love.

3 October 1934

*

My little mother,

Give me peace. Give me joy in work. Make me your instrument.

My dear child,

I am very happy to know that you want to be my instrument. To be able to be my instrument, you must be regular,

Series Five—To a Child

energetic, courageous, enduring and always good-tempered. I have no doubt that you can acquire these qualities.

With you always.

25 October 1934

*

My little mother,

*I want peace. I feel that everything is unquiet.
Mother, give me peace.*

My child,

I envelop you always in peace and force, but most of the time you close yourself and refuse what I give you.

How will you feel my help and take advantage of it if you do not even trust in me? Yet my love is always with you.

1 November 1934

*

My dearest mother,

Won't you forgive me? Mother, take me into your arms.

My child,

Certainly I forgive you, but you, on your side, must sweep your mind clean of all these bad thoughts which are harmful to you.

My love is with you.

2 November 1934

*

My dear little mother,

*Forgive the faults I have committed. Give me peace.
Remain always in my heart.*

Yes, my dear child, I forgive you; but how I would like you to become quieter, more reasonable, more studious!

Some Answers from the Mother

Don't you think it is high time for you to develop these qualities, which are absolutely indispensable if you want to do anything in life?

5 December 1934

*

*Dearest mother,
Stay with me always. You know everything.*

Yes, I know everything and that is why I know that my little child is not always reasonable and that is why he has a headache and a stomachache.

22 December 1934

*

*My dear mother,
I want to feel you near to me always. I want peace.*

My little child,

I am always with you, bringing you peace and tranquillity, calm and force. But to feel my presence, you know what you must do and especially what you must *not* do.

Love from your mother.

1 February 1935

*

My dear child,

The best thing for your headache is to take plenty of physical exercise (such as gardening for example).

25 February 1935

*

*My sweet mother,
Fill my thoughts with you. Stay always with your
little child. Give me a deep and lasting peace.*

Series Five—To a Child

My dear child,

I am putting peace in your heart; but to become conscious of it, you should repeat, as often as possible, mentally turning to me: "You have put Peace in my heart; make me aware of its presence."

With all my love.

27 February 1935

*

My dear child,

Do not forget that *I am always with you* and do only what you could do in front of me without feeling ashamed. I mean that you must *never do* what you would not dare to do in my physical presence, for I am always with you.

Love.

6 March 1935

*

My sweet mother,

I don't know why something in me is sad. Even when I am very happy, truly happy, this part is still sad. Mother, which part in me is like this? Is it the heart, the vital, or is it something very superficial and insignificant?

My dear child,

It is in fact something very superficial, but still it should be cured. It is your body that does not feel very strong and is sad because it does not have a sound balance of health. The best cure is plenty of open-air exercise and abundant food.

16 March 1935

*

My dear mother,

I don't know why I have lost all my happiness and peace. I don't know when it will come back to my heart. My sweet mother, what shall I do?

Some Answers from the Mother

My dear child,

When one's attention is always turned towards oneself, one is never happy. When one allows oneself to be ruled by every passing impulse, one is never peaceful.

It is through work and self-mastery that one can find happiness and peace.

23 March 1935

*

Sweet mother,

I want to be happy, but how? Sadness comes during my work; I cannot forget it. My dear mother, be with me always.

My dear child,

This causeless sadness may also come while you work, but if you didn't work it would be far worse. It is in work that one finds balance and joy.

I am always with you to help and support you.

Love from your mother.

12 June 1935

*

My sweet mother,

I feel very tired; some part in me is not happy. I don't know whether it is inside me or outside; something feels completely lost and lifeless. You know everything, my mother. Will you tell me what it is?

It is something in your vital that cannot bear any vexation, even the slightest. This part of the vital must learn to become stronger and more enduring.

4 August 1935

*

Series Five—To a Child

*My dear mother,
I feel very tired. I also have a slight headache.*

My dear child,
I don't need to tell you where your headache comes from; I suppose you know. Only when you become absolutely regular in your material life will you be able to have good health.
Love from your mother.

6 September 1935

*

*My sweet mother,
For three days I have been feeling sad in the evening.
This morning I felt sad too. I don't know exactly why it comes. For two days I felt a great joy, but now the joy has gone. When will all these things go away?*

My dear child,
You must not worry about these alternations. When the psychic being comes to the surface, it brings its own joy with it; but when the mind or the vital comes, then the joy seems to withdraw, though it is always there, behind, ready to manifest again. But above all you must not believe the suggestions of incapacity and failure; they come from an adverse source and ought not to be given any credence. Certainly there are difficulties on the path, but with perseverance the victory is sure.
Love from your mother.

16 December 1936

*

*Sweet mother,
You told me that I am making progress. Did you want to console me by telling me this? When I look within myself, not just now but over the past two years, I find nothing. Sometimes I feel: "Why all these efforts? They will be fruitless." You told me to open my heart*

Some Answers from the Mother

and all will be well; but you know, mother, nothing stays in me.

My dear child,

No, it is not to console you that I told you that you have made progress. The progress is undeniable even though it may not be apparent. Certainly the path of yoga is a very difficult one, and you should not expect to reap its fruits after only three or four years. It takes much longer than that. But you are young, you have all of life before you; you need not be impatient.

You say that you are often depressed. It is the vital being that gets depressed when its desires are not satisfied.

In ordinary life, one has to struggle to satisfy one's desires; here one struggles not to do so. Actually, whatever path one follows, success always comes to those who are strong, courageous, enduring. And you know that here our force and our help are always available to you; you have only to learn to make use of them.

Love from your mother.

26 July 1937

*

My dear mother,

No, I cannot do all those things. Why did you think that? Is there any special reason? Will you tell me one thing: why are you now so far away from me?

My dear child,

I don't know at all what *things* you mean. All I told you was that to develop your artistic faculties you are much better off here than anywhere else. I added that only if you wanted to marry would you have to leave the Ashram.

But you know that I never advise anyone to marry; it is a terrible bondage.

Series Five–To a Child

I have never thought that you really wanted to marry, but now and then it is good that I remind you that you are free and that it is for you to make the decision; that's all.

I don't feel that you are far from me; for me you are always in my arms. So if you feel that you are far away, it is a false feeling which does not conform to the truth.

Love from your mother.

28 July 1937

*

My sweet mother,

You told me that you saw two things while I was playing: "Garuda", and the palace and river. What do they mean?

The palace and river were the image of a moment from one of your past lives.

The great bird "Garuda" standing immobile behind you with outspread wings is the vehicle of Vishnu, the destroyer of serpents. He seemed to be standing behind you to protect and inspire you.

Love from your mother.

28 August 1937

*

The moon is the symbol of the spiritual light, one in its origin, multiple in its manifestation. There is only one moon and yet each reflection of the moon is different. This is what I wanted to say in a poetic form.

Love from your mother.

9 September 1937

*

Some Answers from the Mother

What I meant yesterday is that all people very sensitive are opened to many influences and that is why it is difficult for them to be steady.

But with discrimination one can distinguish the bad from the good influences and reject persistently the bad ones.

Love from your mother.

13 September 1937

*

My dear child,

I understand your difficulty very well. It is very common and can only be solved with much endurance in the will and much patience.

For on the one hand you want to consecrate yourself to the Divine and take your place in the divine life in the making.

On the other hand you want the satisfactions of ordinary life and the pleasures of the vital — without considering, however, that these pleasures can only be obtained through much struggle and effort and that always they go hand in hand with worry and suffering.

On the first path, there is no question of personal incapacity, since our help and protection are always there. Indeed, you must open yourself to this help and protection and learn to use them to conquer the adversary who is trying to draw you towards the lower animal consciousness.

Love from your mother who never leaves you.

15 May 1938

*

My sweet mother,

These last few days I felt that I was going down step by step — everything seemed to be gradually closing in against me, against my heart. I feel, even now, that I am suffocated.

Series Five—To a Child

Are you making me feel life without you in order to see whether I want this life or not? Mother, if you don't know what my path is, then who does?

My dear child,

I know very well what the true life for you is, and what your destiny is. But it is *you* who must become aware of it and understand it so that you can realise it. In what way do you feel yourself going down? Are desires becoming stronger in you? Whatever happens, you can always rely on my help; do not hesitate to ask for it.

Love from your mother.

29 May 1938

*

My sweet mother,

I feel completely suffocated. The struggle has become fiercer. How many days must I go on like this?

My dear child,

Do not lose heart and do not be impatient; these things take a long time to disappear. You know, don't you, that our force, our help and our blessings are always with you?

Keep your interest in the work — this too will help you to pass through the difficult moments.

Love from your mother.

28 June 1938

*

Mother,

This inner condition is getting worse and worse instead of better. You said to be patient, but as it is I am becoming like a stone, without energy, inert, and more and more closed. I feel your light and your force around me, but I cannot receive them. I am not asking you to tell me what to do — you have told me to be patient

Some Answers from the Mother

and I will be patient. I am only telling you about my condition, that's all.

You are right to tell me, my dear child; it helps you to open yourself. I know that it is troublesome to feel this resistance in yourself; but persist in your will to overcome it and it will suddenly give way.

Love from your mother.

10 July 1938

*

*My sweet mother,
I want to ask you something concerning my poetry.
It has stopped now. Is there some inner preparation
at work and is it waiting for the descent of a higher
inspiration?*

My dear child,

Yes, I think in fact that your poetry has stopped so that you can prepare yourself for a higher inspiration. You were going round and round in the same forms; something new had to come.

Of course, if you feel that something wants to express itself, you must try.

I am always with you, my dear child, and my love never leaves you.

Your mother.

17 July 1938

*

You have my full consent to write poetry, and Sri Aurobindo says that there is no doubt about your poetic capacity. Today's poem is very good. But when you try to write every day, it becomes more and more mental and you lose contact with the

Series Five—To a Child

true inspiration. That is why you should write only when you feel that the inspiration is there.

20 July 1938

*

My sweet mother,

Were you angry with me because I have decided to leave the Ashram? I want to go forward — not to revolt against you, no, not at all. But I want to be sure of my path.

Give me a chance, Mother, please.

One thing I want to ask you: Mother, will you always be in my heart?

I am not at all angry; but since you have decided to leave, I cannot detain you either, or do anything that might deprive you of the strength to leave. I am and will always be in your heart; so you are sure to find me there if you enter into it deeply enough.

Love from your mother.

30 August 1938

*

(In October 1938, at the age of eighteen, the sadhak left the Ashram for a period of eight years. The following letters were written while he was away.)

My dear child,

I have just received your letter of the 25th and I am glad to know you have recovered at last.

You tell me in your letter: “Mother, I do not want the world, not because I am afraid of my duty but because I want you.” I would like to tell you something about this. To be sure that you are meant for the Ashram life, it is necessary that the spiritual life and all the discipline it entails — in short, the search for and realisation of the Divine — must be the most important thing to you, the only thing worth living for.

Some Answers from the Mother

For this feeling of *wanting me* can mislead you. Are you sure it is the Divine in me that you want? When you come back here and cannot see me (for, since Sri Aurobindo's accident, I am no longer giving any "pranams" or interviews), won't you feel once again that you are giving up all the pleasures that ordinary life can give, without getting anything much in exchange?

Of course, if you want to lead the spiritual life at any cost, that is another thing. But in that case, you will have to rely on the *inner* help, not on an outer and superficial help.

I am telling you all this so that you may not be disappointed once again after returning here.

Read my letter *very carefully*, think it over well to be sure that you have understood it completely, and when you have seen very clearly within yourself, write to me again.

My love and blessings are always with you.

Your mother who loves you.

30 March 1939

*

My dear child,

I received your letter and I have no objection to your going to study music for three years at Lucknow, since that is what you want.

However, I do not think it would be wise to come to Pondicherry in February, for once you are here you might again become troubled and uncertain, and that would arouse an unnecessary conflict in you.

Go to Lucknow, learn all you can there, and then you will be able to consider the problem and make a definite decision concerning your future.

My love, my help and my blessings will always be with you.

Your mother.

11 January 1940

*

Series Five—To a Child

My dear child,

If you are so eager to come to the Ashram, you can come.
But I must warn you about two things:

(1) Your vital will find no gratification here, as life has become very restricted in the present war conditions.

(2) You will live here, as all of us, night and day under the constant threat of a sudden bombardment.

If you do not mind these two dangers, you can come.

With my love and blessings.

10 April 1942

*

(In April 1946, the sadhak returned to the Ashram, where he has remained ever since. The following letters were written after his return.)

O my sweet mother,

Accept my gratitude for having shown me the true path. Give me the strength to reject everything that comes from outside. May your will be done.

My love and blessings are with you to guide you on the way.

4 June 1946

*

My sweet mother,

I want to be closer to you in my heart and in all my being. Give me the power to give myself completely to you. Stay with me always.

Yes, my dear little child, I am always with you to help you, to support you, to guide you. By doing your work with conscientiousness, honesty and perseverance, you will feel my presence closer and closer to you.

With my blessings.

29 June 1946

*

Some Answers from the Mother

My sweet mother,

The more I look into myself, the more discouraged I am, and I don't know whether there is any chance of my making any progress. It seems that all the obscurities and falsehoods are rising up on every side, inside and outside, and want to swallow me up. There are times when I cannot distinguish truth from falsehood and I am then on the verge of losing my mind.

Still, there is something in me which says very weakly that all will be well; but this voice is so feeble that I cannot rely on it.¹

My faults are so numerous and so great that I think I shall fail. On the other hand, I have neither the inclination nor the capacity for the ordinary life. And I know that I shall never be able to leave this life. This is my situation right now. The struggle is getting more and more acute, and worst of all I cannot lie to you. What should I do?

Do not torment yourself, my child, and remain as quiet as you can; do not yield to the temptation to give up the struggle and let yourself fall into darkness. Persist, and one day you will realise that I am close to you to console you and help you, and then the hardest part will be over.

With all my love and blessings.

25 September 1947

*

Be sincere, always sincere, more and more sincere.

Sincerity demands of each one that he express only the truth of his being.

26 January 1950

*

¹ The Mother underlined the words "all will be well" and wrote beside them: "This is the voice of truth, the one you must listen to."

Series Five—To a Child

Sweet Mother,

*I feel that something is wrong and you are very
displeased with me.*

It is the very first proposition that is wrong, I am *not* displeased
with you — so all that follows cannot be correct.

*

*I will be very pleased to know the real cause of your
discontent and shall try my best to remove it. I cannot
tell you how it pains me to know that you are displeased
with me on any account.*

There is no real cause because there is no discontent. Your pain
is quite gratuitous, so you would [do] better [to] get rid of it
immediately.

With my love and blessings.

12 December 1953

*

Sweet Mother,

*I pray, please do not be vexed by my letter. I on my
part can bear anything except your displeasure. I feel
you are very vexed with me for some reason I cannot
yet understand. What is it you want me to do? What
is your will? I cannot express how deeply I feel your
displeasure. Do you want more work from me — more
discipline, more right attitude? I am a bundle of failings;
please pardon them for I am human. Please pardon me
for what I have done and let me know what mistakes I
have committed.*

I am *not* vexed, I am *not* displeased — this impression of yours
is quite false and imaginary — it may be the result of a bad
conscience, but you must learn once and for all that whatever

Some Answers from the Mother

mistakes people commit, it cannot vex me nor displease me. If there is bad will or revolt, Kali may come and chastise but she always does it with love.

So, throw away all this nonsense and try to be quiet and happy.

With my love and blessings.

23 March 1954

*

My dear child,

“He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite.”

Never forget this promise of Sri Aurobindo and keep courage in spite of all difficulties. You are sure to reach the goal, and the more you keep confidence, the quicker it will come.

With my love and blessings.

26 January 1956

*

(The following letters are undated. Most were written between 1932 and 1938 during the sadhak's first stay in the Ashram.)

Do not torment yourself, my dear child, and fear nothing; my grace will always be with you and never fail you. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that you will not succeed in this life; on the contrary, I see in you the signs of a vocation. And since you have resolved to be patient, the difficulties will surely be overcome.

Love from your mother.

*

Your going away will not help in the least. Exterior means are useless; it is the “inside” that must change. Keep your resolution and my help will work.

With my love and blessings.

*

Series Five—To a Child

*My little mother,
I shall be so happy when all the clouds and shadows
are dissolved. I want a new life.*

My dear child,

You are quite right in wanting a new life, and you may be sure that I shall do my best to help you in that. I am quite sure that perseverance in study and the acceptance of a discipline of work and order in life will be a powerful help to you in renewing yourself.

All my love is with you to help you and guide you.

*

My dear child,

Will and energy can be cultivated just as the muscles are: by exercise. You must exercise your will to be patient and your energy to reject depression. I am always near you to help you with all my love.

*

You need not worry and must continue as you are doing except, perhaps, that you must not allow your superficial and somewhat too light exterior being to interfere and spoil your endeavour, as it does during marching for instance.

The most important [thing] is a steady, quiet endurance that does not allow any upsetting or depression to interfere with your progress. The sincerity of the aspiration is the assurance of the victory.

With my love and blessings.

*

*My mother,
It is a lack of energy that is preventing me from
painting. Give me a strong energy. I want the inner and
outer silence — peace in all my being, from the innermost*

Some Answers from the Mother

part to the outermost. Peace, peace in all my being. I cannot express this in proper words and it is becoming melodramatic. Pardon my mistake.

I don't find your expression melodramatic and there is nothing to pardon. I know that it is from lack of energy that you cannot paint. But I can give you all the energy needed; you have only to open yourself and receive and you will see that the source is inexhaustible. It is the same thing for peace and for all the true things you can aspire for.

Love from your mother.

*

My dear mother,

I don't know what to do. I want to open to you, but something prevents me from opening.

My dear child,

You find it difficult to open because you have not yet made the resolution to allow my will, and not your own, to govern your life. As soon as you have understood the need for this, everything will become easier — and you will at last be able to acquire the peace you need so much.

I am always with you in this effort and aspiration.

*

Mother,

The vital has become very, very bad. Today especially it is very rebellious.

You did not reply to my last letter. Do you mean that it isn't necessary to make the vital peaceful?

I did not answer because what I say seems to have no effect. If you would express clearly, *in a precise way*, the nature of the revolt, it would help you very much to get rid of it, because it is

a way of opening yourself which allows the light to enter into the obscurity and illumine it.

*

Mother,

There is a depression. And most often I feel that my mind is tired. I don't know why. Today, my vital too is in terrible revolt. What can I do?

It is the same tiredness as that of the muscles when they do not work enough. Inactivity is just as tiring as over-activity. Not to work enough is just as bad as working too much.

The vital is a most bothersome character who prefers to be bad rather than to go unnoticed. You must teach him that he is not the master of the house.

*

Mother,

I don't know what to do with this vital. Will you please stop it?

SRI AUROBINDO: Do not accept it when it comes and do not believe what it says. Do not act according to its indications. Then it will not be difficult to stop it.

And when Sri Aurobindo tells you something, the first thing to do, and the most important if you want to conquer the difficulty, is to *obey*.

*

My dear child,

This craving for strong experiences belongs to the vital; it is a very frequent tendency in those whose vital is insufficiently developed and seeks violent sensations in the hope of escaping from its heaviness and inertia. But it is an ignorant movement, for violent sensations can never be a remedy; on the contrary, they increase the confusion and obscurity.

Some Answers from the Mother

The only remedy lies in opening to the higher forces in order to let them do in the vital their work of organisation and classification, of light and peace.

Love from your mother who is always there ready to help you.

*

My dear mother,

*You are displeased with me, aren't you? I feel so sad.
What can I do? I stumble at every step.*

No, my dear little child, I am not displeased — why should I be? I understand your difficulties and I know your goodwill; I know that you want to do well, that you want to conquer, and that you aspire to overcome the weaknesses. When they come, you should not think that I am displeased, but on the contrary that I am always with you, supporting you, protecting you, encouraging you with an unvarying love and tenderness.

*

My dear child,

I am always with you to help you and protect you.

Do not allow yourself to be dominated by vain imaginations. The peace is there in the depths of your heart; concentrate there and you will find it.

Love from your mother.

*

My dear sweet mother,

Transform my whole nature. I shall be what you want me to be. Give me your peace, your silence in my heart. I cannot express everything in words, but, mother, you know everything.

Yes, I understand you very well, my dear child, and my affection is always with you and it wants you to have a vast and lasting

Series Five—To a Child

peace, a deep and luminous silence, a calm and concentrated force, and the immutable joy that comes from a constant contact with the Light.

With all my love.

*

My sweet mother,

I want a deep peace — a very deep peace. I feel that I am always in your arms.

Yes, it is good to stay in my arms; there you will find the peace you aspire for so much, and also a repose from which the true energies come.

My love enfolds you and embraces you always.

*

My sweet mother,

Light, more light. Enlighten me. Now I know that you are the greatest power. My mother, take me into your heart, dissolve the obstacles.

My dear child,

Always nestle in my heart which is always ready to welcome you, in my arms which are always ready to enfold you, and fear no obstacles — we shall dispel them all.

With all my love.

*

O my dear mother,

Take me into your heart. No, no, I don't want these miserable falsehoods. Take me into your heart.

I am always taking you into my heart, but what can I do if you run away from there? You must remain quiet in my arms if you want me to be able to help you.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Mother,
Make me more peaceful.

Each time that you feel restless you ought to repeat, speaking inside yourself without exterior sound and thinking of me at the same time:

“Peace, peace, O my heart!” Do it steadily and you will be pleased with the result.

My love and blessings.

*

My dear child,

The peace is upon you; allow it to penetrate you, and in the peace you will find the light, and the light will bring you the knowledge.

With all my love. Your mother.

*

My dear child,

How happy I shall be the day when you always feel strong and happy in all circumstances.

With all my love.

Series Six

Series Six

Letters to a Young Sadhak

*To a young sadhak who later became a teacher in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.*¹

I

I hope and believe Your work does not depend upon human beings.

No, it does not depend at all upon human beings. What has to be done will be done despite all possible resistances.

*

Is there no means of uniting my will with Yours? Perhaps You have no special will, for You want nothing.

I know perfectly well what I want or rather what the divine Will is, and it is that which will triumph in time.

*

What we want to bring to the earth can hardly be called a *revolution*, although it will be the most marvellous change ever seen; in any case this cannot be compared at all with the bloody revolutions which quite uselessly tear up countries without bringing any great change after them, because they leave men as false, as ignorant, as egoistic as before.

*

¹ This Series is organised broadly by subject into thirteen parts — the form in which it was originally published; in this it differs from the other Series, which are arranged chronologically. The replies here were written between 1933 and 1949 — most of them between 1933 and 1935.

Some Answers from the Mother

I believe a day will come when the Divine will be seen quite naturally as one sees earthly things and then there will be no need to exclaim: "The Divine is everywhere" — for this will be a normal experience.

If the realisation were to be limited to this, it would hardly be worth much. It is an integral transformation of terrestrial life which is anticipated.

*

Beloved Mother, every moment I feel a great transformation taking place in me. Isn't this true?

It is quite true. But it seems to me that even the outer forms, the appearances are changing more than you say. Only, this is not very easily seen because it happens normally, in accordance with the law of the truth of things, and not arbitrarily through a mental decision.

*

Certainly the Divine Grace is always at work, it is the material world and the men living there that do not want it!

*

What does the Divine want of me?

He wants that you first find yourself; that with your true being, your psychic being, you master and govern the lower being, and then you will quite naturally take your proper place in the great Divine Work.

*

Where is my true being?

Farther within or higher above, on the other side of the emotions, beyond the mind.

*

Series Six–To a Young Sadhak

I feel indignant, Mother, for I cannot find my “self”, as soon as I try to do so, I find nothing but this body, which is like a lair of banal thoughts and lawless desires.

One must persist without getting discouraged, and first of all refuse to recognise the body as one’s “self”. Indeed, what would it be without the feelings and thoughts which animate it? An inert, lifeless mass.

*

Mother, what is it that will help me always remember that I am living a spiritual life?

The awareness of the Divine Presence in all things and always.

*

You have said in your Conversations that to prepare oneself for the Yoga one must first of all be conscious. To be conscious of the Divine Presence in us is our goal; I don’t see how I can be conscious from the beginning.

I have not said “conscious of the Divine Presence”, I have said “conscious”; that means one does not live in total ignorance of what happens within oneself.

*

I cannot accept all that happens with a calm heart.

This is, however, indispensable for yoga; and he who has so great an aim as to be united with the Divine and to manifest Him, how can he be affected by all the futilities and foolishnesses of life?

*

Some Answers from the Mother

There are people who say one must unite closely with the outer nature to be able to taste the joy which the manifested world so effectively conceals.

I don't think this is true; union with the outer nature brings more certainly sorrow than joy!

*

If you were a man of the world as you say, you would not be here; you would be in the world. These are certain elements in the being which remain attached to their old activities and refuse to change. They will have to yield and be transformed one day or another.

*

I ask You once again, Mother, what is it that divides my being?

The conflict is between that which aspires towards consciousness, the "sattwic" part of the being, and that which lets itself be invaded and governed by the inconscience, the "tamasic" part of the being, between that which pushes upwards and that which pulls downwards and therefore is subject to all outer influences.

*

Mother, Your world may hurt me, but it cannot give me any enjoyment; I myself too do not want any.

It is good to be above all enjoyments the world can give, but why accept to be hurt by it?

*

I don't like this life without any attachments.

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

If truly you are no longer attached to anything, it is a great yogic realisation and it would be wrong of you to complain about it.

*

The whole world is against me and I am in despair.

Why do you want to think the whole world is against you? This is childish.

*

My physical mind is not yet convinced that human life is capable of overcoming all suffering and even death.

It may be that human life is indeed incapable of it; but for the divine life nothing is impossible.

*

Is it strange that one should become disgusted with this world? The repetition of the same round — that is death itself.

This is one way of seeing things; but there is another in which one finds that no two things, no two moments are exactly alike in the world and that everything is in perpetual change.

*

I do not understand a phrase in Your Prayers: “and that all are equal — infinitesimal grains of dust or identical stars — before Eternity”.

All the stars (spiritually speaking) are the same. I mean that one may call human beings grains of dust if one likes, or compare them to the stars; in either case they are all alike in size and worth before Eternity.

Some Answers from the Mother

II

Beloved Mother, guide my steps, illumine my mind, and do not leave, I pray, any distance between You and me.

I too do not want any distance between us. But the relation must be a true one, that is, based on union in the divine consciousness.

*

Open your heart yet wider, yet better, and the distance will disappear.

*

This prison that separates me from You and from the Divine must be broken. O Mother, I don't know what I ought to do.

It is in a calm and persevering will that this can be accomplished.

*

May my whole being be only that love which wants to give itself, and which leads me to You.

Keep this aspiration and you are sure of victory; you will love me one day with a love which fills you with strength and with joy.

*

My Mother, with all my will and all my effort I want to realise that love which You have foreseen in your divine vision.

I shall always be with you in your endeavour.

*

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

My dear Mother, I do not say that I love You and belong to You, I must prove it in my actions; without that these would be worthless words behind which a man seeks shelter and protection. But even so, I am always Your child.

That's good. You are indeed always my child and I expect you to become even more a good child who will be able to tell me in all sincerity and truth: "I love You and I am Yours for all eternity."

*

O Mother, take me with You; I shall seat You for ever in my heart; I could not bear to lose You.

There is no question of losing me. We carry in ourselves an eternal consciousness and it is of this that one must become aware.

*

Whatever the reason may be, as soon as my consciousness loses You I become joyless and without energy.

At no moment do I forget you. Don't you rather allow too many other influences to come between you and me?

*

Mother, why is it so difficult to feel Your Presence constantly near me? In the depths of my heart I know well that without You there is no meaning in life for me; yet my mind flits hither and thither as soon as it finds the slightest occasion.

It is precisely because of this that you lose the feeling of the Presence.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

I am always with you, and to become conscious of the inner Presence is one of the most important points of the sadhana. Ask X, he will tell you that the Presence is not a matter of faith or of mental imagination, it is a fact, absolutely concrete and as real and tangible to the consciousness as the most material phenomenon.

*

My beloved Mother, if only I could convince my ignorant being that it is possible to find You in the centre of my heart.

It is not a question of *convincing* your heart, you must get the *experience* of this presence and then you will become aware that in its depths your heart has always been conscious of this presence.

*

Remove from me all obscurity which blinds me, and be always with me.

I am in every thought, every aspiration which you turn towards me; for if you were not always present in my consciousness you would not be able to think of me. So you may be sure of my presence. I add my blessings.

*

Beloved Mother, how shall I find the source of that Love which will make me feel that the divine Presence is always and everywhere?

You must find the Divine first, whether in yourself by interiorisation and concentration, or in Sri Aurobindo and me through love and self-giving. Once you have found the Divine you will naturally see Him in all things and everywhere.

*

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

There are two ways of uniting with the Divine. One is to concentrate in the heart and go deep enough to find there His Presence; the other is to fling oneself in His arms, to nestle there as a child nestles in its mother's arms, with a *complete surrender*; and of the two the latter seems to me the easier.

*

My darling Mother, if the Divine shows Himself to me in exchange for my love for Him and the giving of my soul, then it is a very easy thing for me.

Not only of the soul, but of the whole being, without reserve.

*

Who is there to hold me back far from You?

You yourself.

It is quite incorrect that I wish to remain far from you; but to be near me you must climb up close beside me, and not expect me to come down so far.

*

My beloved Mother, one day You wrote to me that I must climb to the plane where You are, to be able to have You intimately, and that I must not expect You to come down here. But Mother, You are so great and remain so high up that it seems to me almost impossible to climb up there. There is a world of difference between our two planes. I dare not dream of the moment I shall be at your side; You will always be higher, and I shall aspire to You; I shall follow You from plane to plane, but You will be always far from me. This picture does not appear bad to me, because I know there is a great

Some Answers from the Mother

joy in seeking; but it is true that my heart will always be thirsty.

From a certain point of view what you say is true; but there is also a sort of reversal of consciousness in which it comes out of its state of blind and falsifying ignorance and enters into a state of truth, and when that reversal, that conversion takes place, you will feel yourself always close to me.

*

My beloved Mother, is it not possible to meet You on some other plane than the physical? I don't mean by leaving the body; even when in the body, is it not possible to meet on some other higher plane?

Certainly, this is quite possible. But one must awaken to the consciousness of these planes.

*

Mother, I want simply to leave the body; it is the body which separates me from You.

To say that it is your body which separates you from me is sheer stupidity. It seems to me that actually it is just the opposite, for without the possibility of seeing me daily, what contact will you have with me in the present state of your consciousness? Are you capable of feeling me, experiencing concretely my presence, even when your physical eyes do not see me? I don't think so, for if it were so, you would not complain of separation, you would know, on the contrary, that there is no separation and that in the reality of your being we are always united.

To think that if you leave your body you will come closer to me is a big mistake; for the vital being remains what it is, whether the body be alive or dead, and if the vital being is, during one's life, incapable of feeling the nearness, the deep intimacy, how

can one reasonably hope it will suddenly be able to do so just because it has left the body? It is ignorant childishness.

And that other idea that if the body is changed the next one will necessarily be better, is also a mistake. It is only when one has profited fully and *to the utmost* by the opportunity for progress which life in a physical body represents, that one may hope to be reborn in a higher organism. All defection, on the contrary, naturally brings in a diminution of being.

Only the resolution to face courageously, in the present existence, all the difficulties, and to overcome them, is the sure means of attaining the union you desire.

*

My one hope is to progress as much as I can, so that my next birth may not be useless like this one.

This is all nonsense; we have not to busy ourselves with the next life, but with this one which offers us, *till our very last breath*, all its possibilities. To put off for the next birth what one can do in this life is like putting off for tomorrow what one can do this very day; it is laziness. It is only with death that the possibility of integral realisation ceases; so long as one is alive, nothing is impossible.

*

What cannot be acquired or conquered during life can certainly not be done after death. It is the physical life which is the true field for progress and realisation.

*

Beloved Mother, I must either be transformed or cease to be.

It is impossible *to cease to be*; nothing that belongs to the manifested universe can go out of it except through the door of spiritual liberation, that is, *transformation*.

Some Answers from the Mother

III

I often ask myself if there is a truth behind this desire to come close to You.

Yes, there is the Truth of perfect union with the Divine in an identity of consciousness and will.

*

My sweet Mother, do You say that I ought to overcome this desire to come to You physically?

I have never said anything of the kind. But you must prepare yourself, purify yourself within, so that this approach may be useful and profitable.

*

If you say I am there for you *alone*, obviously it is egoistic and false; but if you think I am there for all my children, that I carry them in my heart, that I want to lead them to the Divine and that I am grieved when they move away from Him, — then this is quite true.

*

I have not the least intention of keeping you away from me; I wanted only to remind you that you are not alone in the Ashram and that I have to divide my time among all those who have need of me.

*

If you are physically far from me and think of me all the time, you will surely be nearer to me than if you were seated near me but thinking about other things.

*

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

*Mother, how can I feel You concretely near me, even
when my body is far from You?*

By concentrating your thought.

*

*Beloved Mother, there are twenty-four hours in a day,
but I can't remain at Your feet for more than a few
seconds; how can I live?*

Go within into yourself, find your psychic being and you will find me at the same time, living in you, life of your life, ever present and ever near, quite concretely and tangibly.

*

Remain very quiet, open your mind and your heart to Sri Aurobindo's influence and mine, withdraw deep into an inner silence (which may be had in all circumstances), call me from the depths of this silence and you will see me standing there in the centre of your being.

*

Because I stopped the pranam for two days, you should not think that I was not with you. Wherever you work, physically near or far, *I am always with you in your work and in your consciousness*. You ought to know that.

*

*Life will no longer have any attraction for me if I do not
feel that You are with me.*

But I am always with you.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Do not leave my heart empty, Mother.

I am always in your heart.

*

The psychic being is constantly and invariably in contact with the Divine and never loses this contact.

*

The Divine is constantly present in the psychic being and the latter is quite conscious of this.

*

The psychic being is asleep in me.

The psychic being is not asleep. It is the connection with it which is not well established because the mind makes too much noise and the vital is too restless.

*

Mother, if the psychic always feels the Divine Presence, why does the human being cry and lament the lack of this Presence?

I have already told you that it is because the contact between the outer consciousness and the psychic consciousness is not well established. He in whom this contact is well established is always happy.

*

The suffering we experience proves that the psychic being is far away from the Divine.

It is not the psychic being which suffers, it is the mind, the vital and the ordinary consciousness of ignorant man.

*

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

About ten or eleven years ago I had an experience in Your presence and through You. I was in a great difficulty and was feeling quite lost. Suddenly I felt something that rose from the depths of my being, through a crowd of obstacles, and when this thing had come out above, all was changed in me; then I was in joy and peace and all difficulties suddenly disappeared. Since that day I have not had any difficulty which could bar my way.

What was this thing, Mother?

Certainly it was the psychic being, but it became active only through my intervention.

*

Now, if you don't like me to show you your faults, I can very well stop doing it. But then you should no longer ask me to help you to progress, for you cannot on the one hand ask me to intervene and on the other refuse my intervention.

*

If you are vexed by what I tell you, it proves that you do not wish to progress, and consequently that it is not necessary for me to make you aware of what is to be changed in you.

*

I feel, Mother, that I am a very frivolous fellow; won't You change me?

I would be very happy to change you, but are you quite sure that what is frivolous in you wants to change?

*

How do you expect me to help you if you have no trust in me!

*

Some Answers from the Mother

*I shall never be able to realise fully this relationship
which exists eternally, if You don't help me to do it.*

My help is there completely; you have only to open yourself to it with confidence and you will receive it.

*

Yes, my help is with you to master all the movements which are opposed to the Divine.

*

I have not the least intention in the world to push you into a corner, and if I had not the full assurance that you can overcome all these difficulties, I would not even have mentioned them. It is no good telling someone, "You have such and such a fault", if it does not help him to correct it.

*

*This morning I was thinking I would get another blow
from You.*

I don't see why I should give you blows — I don't give them for the pleasure of giving them, but only when they are altogether indispensable.

*

*After all, my whole life is consecrated to You; I shall
remain very calm without bothering about what happens
to me.*

That's very good, but if you were to add to this the idea that I know you and love you better than you yourself do and that I know better than you what is good for you — then that would be perfect.

*

Series Six–To a Young Sadhak

Mother of joy, I am surprised to find that there are people who think that You call only those sadhaks who cannot receive Your Grace from afar; and that it is a sign of weakness on the part of those who see You from time to time.

Don't bother about what people believe or say; it is almost always ignorant stupidities.

I always wonder that people imagine they can know the reasons for my actions! I act differently for each one, according to the needs of his particular case.

*

I don't think it would be bad to let You know about a thought, an idea which goes on in me, even if this idea, this thought is bad.

On the contrary, it is good to let me know immediately.

*

Nothing is better than a confession for opening the closed doors. *Tell me what you fear most to tell me*, and immediately you will feel yourself closer to me.

IV

The Divine is infinite and innumerable, and consequently the ways of approaching Him are also infinite and innumerable, and on the manner of one's approach to the Divine depends what he receives and knows of the Divine. The bhakta meets a Divine full of affection and sweetness, the wise man will find a Divine full of wisdom and knowledge. He who fears meets a severe Divine, and he who is trusting finds the Divine a friend and protector... and so on in the infinite variety of possibilities.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Fear nothing: the Divine always answers every sincere aspiration and never refuses what is offered to Him whole-heartedly; thus you may live in the peace of the certitude that you are accepted by the Divine.

*

Beloved Mother, how to master this lethargy that overcomes me? I do not live, Mother, I just exist in some way. Mother, I must find something which can divert me.

It is certainly not with such a state of mind that you can hope to find the Divine Presence. Far from seeking to fill your heart with frivolities in order to “divert” it, you must with a great obstinacy empty it of everything, absolutely everything, both great and small, so that the power of that great emptiness may attract the Marvellous Presence. One must know how to pay this supreme Grace the price it deserves.

*

Of each one is asked only what he has, what he is, nothing more, but also nothing less.

*

You are right to want to create the emptiness in you; for you will soon discover that in the depths of this emptiness is the Divine.

*

If I find some solace in books, how can I say that nothing sustains me and that I am plunged in the divine life through an absolute emptiness?

“The absolute emptiness” is more of an image than a reality. It is better to keep in one’s heart a high aspiration rather than an obscure somnolence.

*

Series Six – To a Young Sadhak

When I try to look within myself, I find there a being that is detached from everything, a great indifference reigns there.

Indifference is a stage of development which must lead to a perfect equality of soul.

*

Mother, my life is dry, it was always so; the dryness of my life constantly increases.

This does not depend upon any outer circumstance but on your inner state. It happens because you live in a very superficial region of your mind. You must try to find some depth in your consciousness and dwell there.

*

It is certainly not by becoming morose and melancholy that one draws near the Divine. One must always keep in one's heart an unshakable faith and confidence and in one's head the certitude of victory. Drive away these shadows which come between you and me and hide me from your sight. It is in the pure light of certitude that you can become conscious of my presence.

*

The sadder you are and the more you lament, the farther you move away from me. The Divine is *not sad* and to realise the Divine you must reject far from yourself all sadness and all sentimental weakness.

*

Sweet Mother, I am happy because I love You and because I suffer a little in loving You.

I don't see the need of your suffering. Psychic love is always peaceful and joyous; it is the vital which dramatises and makes

Some Answers from the Mother

itself unhappy without any reason. I hope, indeed, that you will soon become conscious of my presence always near you, and that it will give you peace and joy.

*

My most beloved Mother, the idea of separation opens between You and me like a frightening abyss. I am not satisfied; from where does this dissatisfaction come?

It is always the vital being which protests and complains. The psychic being works with perseverance and ardour to make the union an accomplished fact, but it never complains, and knows how to wait for the hour of realisations to come.

*

It is the vital which asks and asks and is never satisfied... The psychic, the true deep feelings are always satisfied and never ask for anything. The psychic feels my constant presence, is aware of my love and solicitude, and is always peaceful, happy and satisfied.

*

There is a joy in seeking, a joy in waiting, a joy in aspiring, at least as great as in possessing.

*

Indeed, nothing brings more happiness than a pure and disinterested love.

*

The true divine love is above all quarrels. It is the experience of perfect union in an invariable joy and peace.

*

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

Radha is the symbol of loving consecration to the Divine.

*

Keep always your balance and a calm serenity; it is only thus that one can attain the true Union.

*

It is in your soul that the calmness can be found and it is by contagion that it spreads through your being. It is not steady because the sovereignty of your soul is not yet definitively established over all the being.

*

I don't see anything wrong in not being sentimental; nothing is further from true love, the divine love, than sentimentality.

*

All will be done, Mother, but why is my heart becoming more and more dry and hard?

Are you quite sure it is so dry and hard? Don't you call "dry and hard" an absence of *sentimentality*, that is, of a weak and superficial emotionalism?

True love is something *very deep* and *very calm* in its intensity; it may very well not manifest itself through outer effusiveness.

*

To love is not to possess, but to give oneself.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

I don't experience a violent and uncontrollable love for anyone; nobody attracts me. And it is because of this that I told You I was losing all human feelings.

This can hardly be called a loss; I consider it an inestimable gain.

*

A love which is sufficiently strong can make a person the slave of the beloved.

You speak here of vital love, but certainly not of psychic love and still less of the Divine Love.

*

The person I love belongs to me.

This is a very ugly love, quite egoistic.

*

The Ashram is not a place for being in love with anyone. If you want to lapse into such a stupidity, you may do so elsewhere, not here.

*

It is not this person or that who attracts you... it is the eternal feminine in the lower nature which attracts the eternal masculine in the lower nature and creates an illusion in the mind; it is the great play, obscure and semi-conscious, of the forces of unilluminated nature; and as soon as one succeeds in escaping from its blind and violent whirlwind, one finds very quickly that all desires and all attractions vanish; only the ardent aspiration for the Divine remains.

*

My beloved Mother, the whole day I thought of nothing else except that red rose which signifies “Human passions changed into love for the Divine”. I want to know precisely what the human passions are.

By “passion” we mean all the violent desires which take possession of a man and finally govern his life — the drunkard has the passion for drink, the debauchee the passion for women, the gambler the passion for dice, etc. If one human being feels a violent and uncontrollable love for another, this is called a *passion*, and it is of this we are speaking; it is this impassioned love which human beings feel for one another that must be changed into love for the Divine.

*

Sensations belong to the vital domain and to that part of it which is expressed through the nerves of the body. It is sentiments and emotions which are characteristic of the heart. It is always preferable not to live in the sensations but to consider them as something outside ourselves, like the clothes we wear.

V

Be courageous and do not think of yourself so much. It is because you make your little ego the centre of your preoccupation that you are sad and unsatisfied. To forget oneself is the great remedy for all ills.

*

Certainly it is always better not to be too busy with oneself.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

An excessive depreciation is no better than an excessive praise. True humility lies in not judging oneself and in letting the Divine determine our real worth.

*

Perhaps my vanity was better than this humility which so casts me down.

You must avoid the one as carefully as the other.

*

My most beloved Mother, an introspection has revealed to me many things. There is a jealousy in me which blinds me; another part in me is very vain, it gives me the idea that I have already reached my goal.

You have just given a very correct description, but it becomes useful only from the moment you resolve that it is no longer going to be like this, and that you will strive to conquer your two great enemies: jealousy and vanity. The more we advance on the road, the more modest we become, and the more we find that we have done nothing in comparison with what remains to be done.

*

It is when one feels like a blind man that one begins to be ready for the illumination.

*

Formerly I used to repeat to myself: "I am one of the greatest sadhaks." Now I tell myself: "I am nobody."

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

The best thing is not to think oneself either great or small, very important or very insignificant; for we are nothing in ourselves. We must want to be only what the divine Will wants of us.

*

All my good intentions, since my childhood, have been of no worth. My nature is just what it was when I was a child. I can scarcely hope that it will be transformed; and after all, is it worth the trouble to try and transform it? It is better not to think of this personal nature as mine; not to identify myself with it is the best remedy I can find against the lower and inconscient nature.

Nothing of all this is the right attitude. So long as you oscillate between wanting to transform yourself and not wanting to transform yourself—making an effort to progress and becoming indifferent to all effort through fatigue—the true attitude will not be there. All your observations should lead you to one certainty, that by oneself one is nothing and can do nothing. Only the Divine is the life of our life, the consciousness of our consciousness, the Power and Capacity in us. It is to Him that we must entrust ourselves, give ourselves without reserve, and it is He who will make of us what He wants in His infinite wisdom.

VI

My sweet beloved Mother, I read in the Conversations: "Concentration alone will lead you to this goal." Should one increase the time of meditation?

Concentration does not mean meditation; on the contrary, concentration is a state one must be in continuously, whatever the outer activity. By concentration I mean that all the energy, all the

Some Answers from the Mother

will, all the aspiration must be turned only towards the Divine and His integral realisation in our consciousness.

*

To keep constantly a concentrated and in-gathered attitude is more important than having fixed hours of meditation.

*

It would have been better to have sat in my chair and thought about the moonlight playing upon the water.

Or, better still, not to have thought at all but contemplated the Divine Grace.

*

If you do your work as an offering which you lay in all sincerity at the feet of the Divine, work will do you as much good as meditation.

*

Perhaps I am mistaken in believing that I shall find myself close to you more rapidly by dissolving my being than by mixing with many people and doing much work.

I have had the experience myself that one can be fully concentrated and be in union with the Divine even while working physically with one's hands; but naturally this asks for a little practice, and for this the most important thing to avoid is *useless talking*. It is not *work* but *useless talk* which takes us away from the Divine.

*

All depends not on what one does but on the attitude behind the action.

*

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

If in all sincerity one acts only to express the Divine Will, all actions without exception can become unselfish. But so long as one has not reached this state, there are actions which are more helpful for the contact with the Divine.

*

The yogic life does not depend on what one does but on how one does it; I mean it is not so much the action which counts as the attitude, the spirit in which one acts. To know how to give yourself entirely and without egoism while washing dishes or serving a meal brings you much nearer the Divine than doing what men call “great things” in a spirit of vanity and pride.

*

First of all I must know if this work can be a means of my coming a little closer to You.

It is not the work, any work, in itself which can bring you close to me. It is the spirit in which it is done that is important.

*

Mother, which is this being that receives happily any work from You? Which is this being that loves You?

It is that part of your being which is under the influence of the psychic and obeys the Divine impulsion.

*

Do I serve You as best I can?

You serve me as best you can, but your best of tomorrow must be better than your best of today.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Without discipline it is impossible to realise anything on the physical plane. If your heart were not willing to submit to the strict discipline of beating regularly and constantly, you would not be able to live upon earth.

The great realisers have always been the great disciplined men.

*

It is not that there is a dearth of people without work in the Ashram; but those who are without work are certainly so because they do not like to work; and for that disease it is very difficult to find a remedy — it is called laziness...

*

The body is naturally phlegmatic. But in working for You it will cease being "tamasic".

Yes, this is just what will happen.

*

I try always to be more careful, but things get spoilt in my hands.

Yes, this happens often; but you must call in more and more peace and let it enter into the cells of the body; then the suggestion of awkwardness can no longer have any effect.

*

Mother, X has broken a porcelain bowl.

Yesterday you were surprised that she had never broken anything, — naturally today she has broken something; this is how mental formations work. That is why one must state only what one wishes to see realised.

*

You must abstain from thinking about a person when you cannot think anything good about him.

VII

I must find out how I can consecrate this being to You.

Keep always burning in you the fire of aspiration and purification which I have kindled there.

*

Without perseverance one never attains anything.

Because a thing is difficult it does not mean that one should give it up; on the contrary, the more difficult a thing is, the greater must be the will to carry it out successfully.

Of all things the most difficult is to bring the divine consciousness into the material world. Must the endeavour then be given up because of this?

*

Our way is *very long*, and it is indispensable to advance calmly without asking oneself at every step whether one is advancing.

*

If you persevere you are sure to succeed; as for my help you may rest assured it is always with you, and one never calls in vain.

*

If you resolve to do it, my force will be there to back up your effort.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

You would be wrong to get disturbed; nothing is done arbitrarily, and things get realised only when they are the expression of an inner truth.

*

Yes, your mind gets too excited about things. It makes formations (it thinks forcefully: this must be like that, that must be otherwise, etc.) and unknowingly it clings to its own formations in such a way that when they are contradicted it gets a shock and this gives it pain. It must become calm and develop the habit of remaining quiet.

*

Have faith in the Divine Grace and the hour of liberation will be hastened.

*

It is absolutely false that anything human can heal a human evil.

Only the Divine can heal. It is in *Him alone* that one must seek help and support, it is in *Him alone* that one must put all one's hope.

*

All my power is with you to help you; open yourself with a calm confidence, have faith in the Divine Grace, and you will overcome all your difficulties.

*

Do not worry, only keep in you always the will to do things well.

*

Why accept the idea of being weak? It is this which is bad.

*

Yes, it is in a calm and patient confidence that lies the certitude of victory.

*

Confidence in the Divine I do not lack, but it is perhaps my ego which unceasingly says that I cannot accomplish what the Divine wants of me.

Yes, and as soon as the ego surrenders and abdicates, this fear disappears giving place to the calm assurance that nothing is impossible.

*

“You will overcome all your difficulties” — I repeat this; only my whole being does not accept it.

If you repeat it with sufficient constancy, the recalcitrant part will at last be convinced.

*

Yes, you are right to have hope; it is hope which builds happy futures.

*

I have quite forgotten my past.

Yes, one must forget one's past.

*

But why torment yourself so much? Be calm, don't get disturbed, remember that the conditions of our life are not quite ordinary conditions, and keep your trust in the Divine Power to organise all and do all through the human instruments which are open to His influence.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Be with me, Mother, without You I am weak, very weak and fearful.

One must have no fear, victory is for him who is without fear; I am always with you to guide and protect you.

*

One must have no fear — fear is a bad counsellor; it acts like a magnet and attracts what we fear. One must, on the contrary, keep a calm certitude that sooner or later all will be well.

*

To be pessimistic has never been of any use except to attract towards oneself just the things one fears. One must, on the contrary, drive off all pessimistic thoughts and compel oneself to think only of what one wants to happen.

VIII

My adored Mother, Sri Aurobindo's last letter made me think much. The most obvious sign of the action of an adverse force — it is this that I want to learn to see in myself and others.

1st sign: One feels far away from Sri Aurobindo and me.
2nd: One loses confidence, begins to criticise, is not satisfied.
3rd: One revolts and sinks into falsehood.

*

Do not grieve. Always the same battle must be won several times, especially when it is waged against the hostile forces. That is why one must be armed with patience and keep faith in the final victory.

*

Series Six–To a Young Sadhak

My beloved Mother, can the adverse forces act effectively against the terrestrial evolution without using a human being as an intermediary?

It is not impossible, but it is easier for them to find a human instrument.

*

It is good to be confident and to have a living and steady faith. But in the matter of the adverse forces, it is good to be always vigilant and sincere.

*

Mother, what attitude should I take towards women? There is a part in me which prompts me to go to X. This recalcitrant part advises me to do so, telling me that this is the best means of overcoming an attraction, whether small or great.

This is childish; it is always the same trap of the adverse forces; if, instead of expressing their advice under cleverly perverted forms, they were to speak of things as they are, it would come to something like this: “Continue to drink in order to stop being a drunkard” or better: “Continue to kill to stop being a murderer!”

*

One must never be afraid, and if the adverse forces try to lodge themselves in your lower nature, you have only to dislodge them, calling me to your help.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Mother, last night I had a nightmare and was almost frightened.

One must never be afraid. Even in your sleep you must be able to remember me and call me to your help if there is some danger. You will see that the nightmares will vanish.

*

It seemed to me that there was someone in my room who wanted to suck my blood; I wanted to stretch my left hand to him so that he could do so.

If you start feeding the adverse forces, they will exact more and more and will never be satisfied.

*

Y told me that very often he becomes an instrument of the adverse forces.

Much of this is *his own imagination*; if he thought less of these so-called vital beings, most of them would be immediately dissolved.

*

If I can remain peaceful in the face of all circumstances, I can be sure that the hostile force is far from me.

Yes, on condition that the “peace” is not that of a *hardening* but of a conscious force.

*

Mother, I do not quite understand what a peace of “hardening” means.

I am speaking of the peace experienced by those who are utterly insensible and indifferent to the misfortunes of the world and

the suffering of others, those who have turned their hearts to stones and are incapable of compassion.

IX

*If I could detach myself entirely from this outer world,
if I could be quite alone, I would master this depression
which I cannot shake off.*

This is not at all correct; the experience of all recluses, all ascetics, proves indisputably the contrary. The difficulty comes from oneself, from one's own nature, and one takes it along wherever one goes, whatever the conditions one may be in. There is but one way of getting out of it — it is to conquer the difficulty, overcome one's lower nature. And is this not easier here, with a concrete and tangible help, than all alone, without anyone to shed light on the path and guide the uncertain footsteps?

*

*My darling Mamma, I want to lead a pure life and I shall
do all I can to progress towards the divine life.*

This does not depend so much on outer conditions, but above all on the inner state.

A pure being is always pure, in all circumstances.

*

*You will admit that one can't live with others without
being influenced more or less by them.*

No, this is wrong! It is true of the ordinary life but not of a yogi.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother, if my company is not good for others, should I not dissociate myself from everyone?

It would be much better to dissociate yourself from the tendency to fall into your ordinary consciousness.

*

What will be the result if I meditate on the thought that there is no difference between a certain thing, no matter which, and me; for the Divine is as much present in that thing as in me?

Probably a disastrous result; that is, a passive opening to all sorts of influences, most of which are hardly commendable.

*

A yogi ought to accept and digest all dirt with a perfect equality.

Why? I don't see that this is necessary. The effort which would be needed to become immune from the effects of dirt can be utilized much more profitably elsewhere.

*

Mother dearest, You make me very happy and I would like to see everybody as happy as I.

Of course, this shows very good feelings. But a certain amount of knowledge must be added to these sentiments. For, to communicate peace and joy to others is not so easy, and unless one has within oneself *an unshakable peace and joy*, there is a great risk of losing what one has rather than passing it on to others.

*

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

My heart is full of compassion for others and I am not insensible to their suffering, but what's the good of this feeling if I cannot come to their aid in their suffering?

One cannot help others to overcome their sorrows and sufferings unless one has overcome all this in oneself and is master of one's feelings and reactions.

*

It is to purify your own heart that you must work, instead of passing your time in judging what others do or don't do.

*

Yes, one must distrust superficial and baseless judgments.

*

It is just when one is innocent that one ought to be most indifferent to ill-treatment, because there is nothing to blame oneself for and one has the approbation of one's conscience to console oneself.

*

It would be much better for you not to busy yourself with what others say.

*

Surely those who have courage must have some for those who have none.

*

I nearly got angry and it was with an effort that I controlled myself.

Some Answers from the Mother

It is very good to control one's anger. Even if it were only to learn to do so, these contacts with others are useful.

*

I do not know of anything more foolish than these quarrels in which everybody is in the wrong. And is there anything more ridiculous than ruffled *amours-propres*?

*

In keeping quiet one never risks doing anything wrong, while one has nine chances out of ten of saying something stupid when one speaks.

*

It is never good to tell a lie, but here its results cannot but be disastrous, for falsehood is the very symbol of that which wants to oppose the divine work of Truth.

X

Health is the outer expression of a deep harmony, one must be proud of it and not despise it.

*

Why imagine always that one is ill or is going to be ill and thus open oneself to all kinds of bad suggestions? There is no reason to be ill and I don't see why you should be so.

*

Mother dearest, I have caught a cold. Should I take my bath as usual?

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

Do as you like, this is not of much importance; but what is important is to cast off fear. It is fear which makes one fall ill and it is fear which makes healing so difficult. All fear must be overcome and replaced by a complete trust in the divine Grace.

*

For several days there has been pain in the nape of the neck; I am tired of the remedies our dispensary gives me. I rely on Your Will alone to rid me of this illness.

One must have an unshakable faith to be able to do without medicines.

*

One must never lose hope or faith — there is nothing incurable, and no limit can be set to the power of the Divine.

*

One must find the inner peace and keep it constantly. In the force this peace brings, all these little miseries will disappear.

*

Mother, the inherent tendency of the material body is to dissolve, and the mind helps it; how will You be able to stop the natural propensity of my body to disintegration?

It must become aware of the immortality of the elements constituting it (which is a scientifically recognised fact), then it must submit itself to the influence and the will of the psychic being which is immortal in its very nature.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Beloved Mother, do You grant that it is possible to do without food?

For food to be no longer necessary, the body would have to be completely transformed and no longer subject to any of the laws governing it at present.

*

I don't see why people should feel guilty because they are hungry. If food is prepared, it is for eating.

*

My most beloved Mother, I think it would be better to avoid a party of this kind.

Evidently, this creates an atmosphere in which food predominates; this is not very conducive to spiritual life.

XI

The vital is at once the place of desires and energies, impulses and passions, of cowardice, but also of heroism — to bridle it is to turn all this towards the divine Will and submit it to this Will.

*

The vital being seeks only power — material possession and terrestrial power.

This also is false. The higher part of the vital being, like the higher part of the mental being, aspires for the Divine and suffers when far from Him.

*

*This desire to live in an intellectual atmosphere —
doesn't it show that my mind can govern the vital?*

No, it only shows that in your consciousness the mind takes a bigger place than the vital. What I call the domination of the mind over the vital is when the latter takes no initiative, accepts no impulse which has not been first sanctioned by the mind, when no desire, no passion arises unless the mind thinks it good; and if an impulse of desire, passion or violence comes from outside, it is enough that the mind intervenes for it to be immediately controlled.

*

*Mother dearest, the vital desires will vanish as gradually
my body becomes weaker, won't they?*

Certainly not; quite on the contrary, to be able to conquer the desires of the vital one must have an excellent physical equilibrium and sound health.

*

In the vital world attraction and repulsion are the right and wrong sides of the same thing and always indicate an attachment. One must persistently turn away one's thought from its object.

*

Should one always avoid a circumstance which is conducive to undesirable impulses? Or should one rather accept the circumstance and try to be its master?

It is always better to avoid the temptation.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

One has only to persist with a calm confidence and the vital will stop going on strike.

*

Depression is always unreasonable and leads nowhere. It is the most subtle enemy of yoga.

XII

In Your Conversations You have said that the intellect is like an intermediary between the true knowledge and its realisation here below. Does it not follow that intellectual culture is indispensable for rising above the mind to find there the true knowledge?

Intellectual culture is indispensable for preparing a good mental instrument, large, supple and rich, but its action stops there.

In rising above the mind, it is more often a hindrance than a help, for, in general, a refined and educated mind finds its satisfaction in itself and rarely seeks to silence itself so as to be surpassed.

*

It is a passing impulse which pushes me so much to study.

So long as you need to form yourself, to build your brain, you will feel this strong urge to study; but when the brain is well formed, the taste for studies will gradually die away.

*

My beloved Mother, I want to follow a systematic course of metaphysics and ethics. I am also thinking of reading The Life Divine.

Series Six—To a Young Sadhak

If you read metaphysics and ethics, you must do it just as *mental gymnastics* to give a little exercise to your brain, but never lose sight of the fact that *this is not a source of knowledge* and that it is not in this way that one can draw close to knowledge. Naturally, this does not hold good for *The Life Divine*...

*

In silence lies the source of the highest inspirations.

*

*Identification with the Divine is our goal; I don't see why
I am trying to know this or that.*

It is not the work that is of importance but the spirit in which one does it. It is difficult to keep one's mind perfectly quiet; it is better to engage it in studies than in silly ideas or unhealthy dreamings.

*

*I want to see what will happen to me if I stop reading
completely.*

It is difficult to keep one's mind always fixed on the same thing, and if it is not given enough work to occupy it, it begins to become restless. So I think it is better to choose one's books carefully rather than stop reading altogether.

*

*I am reading a book on cars, but I read it hastily; I skip
the descriptions of complicated mechanisms.*

If you don't want to learn a thing thoroughly, conscientiously and in all its details, it is better not to take it up at all. It is a great mistake to think that a little superficial and incomplete

Some Answers from the Mother

knowledge of things can be of any use whatsoever; it is good for nothing except making people conceited, for they imagine they know and in fact know nothing.

*

It is very difficult to choose games which are useful and beneficial for a child. It asks for much consideration and reflection, and all that one does unthinkingly may have unhappy consequences.

*

I am reading Molière; his writings are light.

Not as much as they seem to be. There is a deep and very wise observation in the comedies of Molière.

*

I have just finished Salammbô;² I did not find any ideal character in it.

It is not a book of ideas; it is only for the beauty of its form and style that it is remarkable.

*

When one reads a dirty book, an obscene novel, does not the vital enjoy it through the mind?

In the mind also there are perversions. It is a rather poor and unrefined vital which can take pleasure in such things!

² A novel by Gustave Flaubert.

XIII

The students talk so much in the class that I have to scold them often.

It is not with severity but with *self-mastery* that children are controlled.

*

I must tell you that if a teacher wants to be respected, he must *be respectable*. X is not the only one to say that you use violence to make yourself obeyed; nothing is less respectable. You must first control yourself and never use brute force to impose your will.

*

I have always thought that something in the teacher's character was responsible for the indiscipline of his students.

*

I hope you will give me precise instructions which will help me keep order in my classes.

The most important is to master yourself and never lose your temper. If you don't have control over yourself, how can you expect to control others, above all, children, who feel it immediately when someone is not master of himself?

*

The students cannot learn their lessons even when they have their books.

One must have a lot of patience with young children, and repeat the same thing to them several times, explaining it to them in various ways. It is only gradually that it enters their mind.

Series Seven

Series Seven

Letters to a Sadhak

To the sadhak who was the dentist at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram during the 1930s and then served from 1938 to 1950 as one of Sri Aurobindo's personal attendants.¹

To talk of surrender is easy, very easy indeed. To think of surrender in all its complexity is not so easy, it is not so easy at all. But to achieve even the beginning of a genuine surrender of self — oh, how difficult it is, Mother!

There are many things wrong with me, I know. But there must be something fundamentally wrong. What is it, Mother?

Nothing special to you. It is the same difficulty that exists for all human beings: the pride and blindness of the physical mind.

8 July 1935

*

There is an old Hindu belief that one should not lie down or sleep with one's head towards the North. Has it got any real significance, Mother?

Many things have been said on the subject but, as far as my own experience goes, I do not attach much importance to that belief.

24 March 1936

*

¹ This correspondence was written entirely in English.

Some Answers from the Mother

A prayer:

“O Lord, awaken my entire being that it may be for Thee the needed instrument, the perfect servant.”

27 March 1936

*

Has X spoken to you about some influence of Saturn he has found in my horoscope? I forgot to ask you about it on my birthday.

Yes, he spoke to me about it. But you must know that yoga frees us from subjection to the horoscope; the horoscope expresses the position one has in relation with the material world, but by the sadhana we get free from the slavery to that world.

14 September 1936

*

I know that the work I get nowadays is often very slight. But I submit reports about it because once you expressed a desire that I should do so.

Yes, I like to receive the book from you. It helps to keep the contact materially.

5 December 1936

*

I am getting tired of taking and taking, and giving nothing in return. It is almost indecent. But, then, I do not know what I can do unless it is to pray to you to deliver me from myself.

From your mother you can always take, it is quite natural, especially when things are given to you full-heartedly — and am I not your mother who loves you?...

3 January 1937

*

Series Seven – To a Sadhak

Will you say to your cousin that I know only one way out of all troubles and difficulties; it is entire self-giving and consecration to the Divine.

13 November 1937

*

What a letter you have written to Y, Mother! You will turn my head some day, if it is not turned already! But, I know, it is only to give her confidence.

No, I always mean what I say.

Love and blessings to my dear child.

4 May 1938

*

Eternal Mother,

I have sunk very low in my consciousness and you seem farther away than ever. You are the Infinite Mother of all your creation and many are your children. But your Grace is our sole refuge and to whom shall we turn but to you for our protection? But may your Grace now intervene in a more overt form so that my earthly eyes can see and understand somewhat of its working in spite of the dull and heavy veil which lies thick upon them. And may your Grace open up fully the lotus of my heart so that I may be blessed with a vision of your soul-captivating Presence in the full glory of its enrapturing beauty and goodness and sweetness, so that all my impurities be washed out, and restlessness of the mind and stormy uprisings of passions laid at rest.

I commend my soul to your keeping.

Yet I feel you much closer to me and I see in you an opening that was never there before. It seems to me that soon you will

Some Answers from the Mother

discover, behind the apparent dryness of the surface, the always burning flame of a conscious Love.

Blessings.

4 July 1938

*

Z has told me that you have received complaints against me for hurting people's feelings.

I know that it is only the weak who complain. The strong never do because they can't be hurt. So I never attach much importance to complaints.

Love and blessings to my dear child.

9 October 1938

*

(In his notebook the sadhak drew a simple pencil sketch of a foot extended to touch a lotus.) Please excuse me for spoiling the book with this very crude offering.

Nothing to excuse, all is in the spirit of the offering....

Love and blessings to my dear child.

14 October 1938

*

Has the psychic flame any correspondence to the Vedic Agni? They seem to have more or less the same leading qualities.

Yes, these are two names for the same thing.

Love and blessings to my dear child.

20 October 1938

*

Series Seven—To a Sadhak

Lead me to thy own home in Truth, Mother. I offer thee my will of progressive submission and increasing adoration.

The way is opened, my dear child, and I am waiting for you with my arms wide to receive and enfold you affectionately — with my love and blessings.

22 October 1938

*

Life of my life, I also want to come to you; for, in your arms alone will I have peace and joy and Ananda and the true truth and fulfilment of my life and being. But still, O my Shining Light, the way is not clear to me. And how shall I be ever able to climb to your dizzying heights with the heavy chains of a mortal's nature pulling at my feet?

Let me carry you in my arms and the climbing will become easy. Love and blessings to my dear child.

25 October 1938

*

How shall I ever repay you for your exquisite act of Love, Mother? How did you know it was the inmost desire of my heart? You are very, very adorable and very, very kind to your little child who loves you and is happy.

My very dear child, live in my love, feel it, be filled with it and be happy — nothing can please me more than that.

Most affectionately.

28 October 1938

*

Some Answers from the Mother

I am your child first and last and this work has no other value for me except that through it I can serve your will, except that through it I can grow to be a better and truer child to you, O my beloved Mother.

Yes, you are my child and it is true that of all things it is the most important.... Dear child, I am always with you and my love and blessings never leave you.

31 October 1938

*

On my last birthday, your parting words to me were: "Keep your faith." I am still wondering what exactly you meant, dear Mother. What kind of faith would you like me to aspire for?

Faith in the Divine's Grace and its power to transform you.
Love and blessings to my dear child.

4 November 1938

*

*Dear, dear, dear Mother,
Every day you are growing more and more lovable and more and more adorable to me. By what divine Mystery do you cast this sweet spell on us?*

The only mystery, the only spell is my love — my love which is spread over my children and calls down upon them the Divine's Grace to help and to protect.

6 November 1938

*

You send me your love and blessings every day of late, dear Mother, and in rare blessed moments I do sense that we are always surrounded by your love. But as for a real response, my heart does seem to be made of stone; otherwise, why should it refuse to open itself to such a love?

Series Seven – To a Sadhak

Nothing can resist the steady action of love. It melts all resistances and triumphs over all difficulties...

Love and blessings to my dear child.

9 November 1938

*

I know your love and blessings are always with me and I sometimes wish you had not been so invariably kind and gracious to me. For it makes it still more hard for me to tell you that there are difficulties of my nature which make it difficult for me to accept you and your Yoga in the requisite spirit. And without this, what is discipleship?

It is not as a Guru that I love and bless, it is as the Mother who asks nothing in return for what she gives.

9 July 1939

*

Mataji,

It was very sweet of you to tell me that yours was the love of the Mother who does not ask for anything in return. That is all right for you, for yours is a self-fulfilled life. But I have yet to achieve everything, yet to satisfy my human existence. I have yet to know my soul and my Self, to know and love the Divine Godhead and fulfil Her in my life and to know the worlds, if it is Her Will that I should do so. But above all, I must have the Darshan of the World-Mother, Adya Shakti Mahakali. She will know what is best for me. Then how can I do without a Guru who will lead me to Her Feet?

I do not see anybody in the world more qualified than Sri Aurobindo to lead you to the feet of the Mahashakti.

With my love and blessings.

16 July 1939

*

Some Answers from the Mother

My dear child,

Your good and kind letter has made me happy.

Last night, in silence, I told you, “To arrive at that to which you aspire, the way is Love and the goal too is Love” — is it not the best answer to your letter?...

With my love and blessings.

17 July 1939

*

There happen to be bad sons now and then, but a bad mother never.

But what a joy and love it is when both mother and son are good!

My love and blessings to my dear (good) child.

27 July 1939

*

I know you mean well, but to be good, truly good, may be possible only for those who have gone beyond all egoism. But if my Mother chooses to see only the good in her child, that only speaks of the goodness of the Mother's heart.

My child's heart is filled with love and light from the Divine; let them shine throughout your whole being and the clouds, if any, will soon disappear.

Love and blessings to my dear child.

28 July 1939

*

*(The sadhak received a jar of pickles from the Mother.)
You overwhelm me with your love, dear Mother. I know I do not deserve one iota of the kindness you show to me. What shall I say to you, you whose very nature is an*

Series Seven—To a Sadhak

overwhelming divine love? Your love itself is a priceless gift. Why then these other gifts?

There is a great joy in giving; there is a still greater joy in pleasing those we love... and when you will eat the pickles you may remember me and think, Mother loves me...

Love and blessings to my dear child.

6 August 1939

*

Dear, dear, dear Mother,

I send you heaps and heaps of love. In the lotus of my heart may I have your lotus feet permanently installed on a throne of love.

My dear loving child,

Your heart is quite a sweet place because of your love — let me remain always there so that I may fill your whole being with light and love and joy.

My love and blessings.

8 August 1939

*

O Devi, O Mother!

In the secret recesses of my heart's chamber I have always been aware of an instinctive belief that you are an Avatar of the Divine Mother whom I adore, but whom I know not except by Her lotus-feet. That is the reason why my eyes seek Her in your lotus-feet, and my heart yearns to press them to itself knowing them as its sole refuge.

My dear, dear child, let the Light of a conscious certitude and the joy of an everlasting Presence be always with you — concretely — in the sweetness of love divine.

10 August 1939

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Will you kindly tell me, dear Mother, if you love me truly and genuinely in spite of my poor humanity or is it all an experiment? I feel ashamed to pose such a question to you, but I hear the word “experiment” used so often and in such a variety of ways that I feel frightened and would like to hear from you personally if you are not merely experimenting with us? Praying to be excused.

My dear child,

Well — the best thing you could do is not to listen to what people say; it would save you from many falls of consciousness. This afternoon when I looked at you in silence I told you, “*Be faithful to your love.*” I suppose this is a sufficient answer and you do not expect me to justify my love in front of the foolish ignorance of such interpretations. Whether you believe or doubt, my love and blessings are with you.

12 August 1939

*

Dear Mother,

I apologise humbly for my query yesterday and pray to be forgiven for my stupidity.

O! How could I question your love, you who are the soul of truth and love and goodness?

My dear child,

I knew that it was a passing mood and that you would soon come out of it — but let this love and this truth be your shield and protect you against the intrusion of any force of falsehood.

My love and blessings will lead you to the goal.

13 August 1939

*

Series Seven – To a Sadhak

My very dear child,

If only you could keep always your inner happiness, it would please me immensely and help you very much on the way.

My love and blessings to you, dear child.

17 August 1939

*

*Your love for me is my true refuge and sole strength.
What I offer you, my Mother, is a turbid mixture of
which I am ashamed but which you alone can purify.*

My very dear child,

Whatever is the nature of the offering, when it is made with sincerity it always contains a spark of divine light which can grow into a full sun and illuminate the whole being. You can be sure of my love, you can be sure of my help, and our blessings are always with you.

19 August 1939

*

*How extremely lovable you are, dear Mama! Is there
anyone like you in the whole world? LOVE.*

Love, love, love to my very dear child; all the joy, all the light, all the peace of the divine love and also my loving blessings.

20 August 1939

*

Dearest Mama,

I have returned the pot of pickles but I still have the pickles, and whenever I see them I remember you and say to myself, "The Mother loves me." On the crest of a great wave of love the gift came to me and I felt the presence of the ocean which projected that wave. With that pot in hand when you called me, do you know of whom I was thinking? I was thinking of Kali standing before me ready to give a boon! In fact, I was

Some Answers from the Mother

*invoking Her and there you were with the pot of pickles
and an ocean of Love! Such is your play, dear playful
Mother!*

Indeed, that day I had heard you distinctly calling me and I
wanted to answer very concretely to your call... My love and
blessings to my very dear child.

24 August 1939

*

*You were asking me this morning what was the matter
with me. It is the same old thing, but nonetheless dis-
tressing. It is civil war, a conflict between two different
tendencies and ideals, a pull from two different types
of leadership, the Deva type and the saint type (not in
the western sense), a war on all fronts, the mental, the
vital and the physical. But I am deeply sensible of your
kindness, my Mother, and grateful too.*

There is no contradiction that cannot be solved and harmonised
in a synthesis if you rise high enough in the intuitive mind and
yours is not at all irreducible. I am sure that one day you will
find this out.

My love and blessings.

27 August 1939

*

*Life of my life! My own sweetest Mama!
Accept my love and forgive me my lapses — as you
have been doing for so many years. I expect these moods
will come and go. But may I never lose sight of your
luminous smiling face through all these passing clouds!*

My very dear child,

I truly hope you will soon be out of all your troubles. Just
one good jump to the higher consciousness where all problems

Series Seven—To a Sadhak

are solved and you will get rid of your difficulties. I never feel that I am forgiving. Love does not forgive, it understands and cures.

My love and blessings always.

28 August 1939

*

Let divine love be your goal.

Let pure love be your way.

Be always true to your love and all difficulties will be conquered.

Love and blessings to my dear child.

9 September 1939

*

My dear loving Mother,

In my birthday book Sri Aurobindo has written, "Rise into the higher Consciousness, let its light control and transform the nature." Some time back you wrote to me, "One good jump to the higher consciousness where all problems are solved and you will get rid of your difficulties." Now what exactly is this higher consciousness and how may I rise or jump into it? And again you have said, "Let divine love be your goal. Let pure love be your way. Be always true to your love and all difficulties will be conquered." Is this higher consciousness the same thing as a state of pure love and, if so, how would it be related to a state of higher knowledge?

The higher Consciousness is a state of pure love but it is also a state of pure openness to divine knowledge. There is no opposition there between these two kindred things; it is the mind that makes them separate.

The best way to get to it is to refuse all mental agitation when it comes, also all vital desires and turmoils, and to keep the mind

Some Answers from the Mother

and heart turned as constantly as possible towards the Divine.
The love for the Divine is the strongest force for doing this.
My love and blessings.

19 October 1939

*

Beloved!

Why did the Mother choose this frail vessel for Her abode? I know that so long as She chooses to make her abode here, sooner or later poor me will have to abdicate in favour of Her Imperial Majesty and till that day comes there will be no rest for poor me.

My dear child,

So, the best thing to do is to abdicate at once and to get rest, peace and joy. When you have to get rid of an obstinate resistance, you must not make more delay than when you have to pull out a bad tooth.

Inside, outside and everywhere is the help of the Mother... with her love and blessings.

28 October 1939

*

Dear Mother,

Your love for poor me is still my lodestar and I am grateful.

My dear child,

My love wants to lead you to the goal and it is bound to succeed.

With my blessings.

29 March 1940

*

Dear Mother,

I thank you very much for all your kindness and compassion and solicitude and love which I do not deserve. And yet, although I feel a personal tie with you which I expect is psychic, I still do not feel that I want this Yoga very badly. I still do not feel about this ideal the way I used to feel for the old ideal of liberation. The path, the ideal you represent, your values still leave me very cold. I still do not feel at home here. I do not know what I should do. And time waits for no one. Please excuse me, but I feel tired of having to wage a constant war against my whole outer being. And, anyway, it seems too late now to begin at the beginning and teach myself to ask for a new ideal, the realisation of which seems none too near.

That which the Divine has destined for each of us — *that will be.*
My love and blessings to my dear child.

29 June 1940

*

Your answer to my letter of July 22, which you kindly meant to reassure me, did not reassure me.² Why is that so, Mother? Perhaps you do not approve of my tone; perhaps you are dissatisfied with my disability; possibly you are getting tired of me altogether. If so, I would not be surprised, I would not blame you. For I am myself tired of the problem called me.

If it is not going to make any difference to your love and kindness, as you assure me it won't, I would rather like to keep this sum of money and to keep up this arrangement. But if you do mind, kindly tell me

² The sadhak asked if he could accept money sent to him by relatives. The Mother answered: "My dear child, you can be sure of my love and blessings."

Some Answers from the Mother

*so in words which I can understand and I will drop it.
So please rest assured that I can drop this scheme if it
displeases you.*

My dear child,

It does not displease me in the least. If I did not answer to what you wrote about it the other day, it is because I did not attach much importance to it. My sentence meant simply that my love is capable of understanding and that my blessings do not depend on such surface movements.

I can add today that I am not at all tired of the “problem called me” and that I remain convinced that it will be solved successfully....

With my love and blessings.

25 July 1940

*

My dear child,

Whenever you require spiritual help I am always there to give you that help under whatever form it can take.

With my love and blessings.

9 September 1941

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My dear child,

Let this year bring you the power to smile in all circumstances. For, a smile acts upon difficulties as the sun upon the clouds — it disperses them.

With my love and blessings.

9 September 1942

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My dear child, here is the programme for this year: Unify your whole being around your highest consciousness and do not let your mind work at random. Doubt is not a sport to indulge in

Series Seven – To a Sadhak

with impunity: it is a poison which drop by drop corrodes the soul.

With my love and blessings.

9 September 1943

*

The Divine's Grace is there — open your door and welcome it.

With my love and blessings.

9 September 1944

Series Eight

Series Eight

Letters to a Young Captain

To a young captain in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Department of Physical Education.

Sweet Mother,

What is the difference between the psychic change and the spiritual change?

The psychic change is the change that puts you in contact with the immanent Divine, the Divine who is at the centre of each being and of whom the psychic being is the sheath and the expression. By the psychic change one passes from the individual Divine to the universal Divine and finally to the Transcendent.

The spiritual change puts you directly in contact with the Supreme.

9 September 1959

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Sweet Mother,

How can one make one's psychic personality grow?

It is through all the experiences of life that the psychic personality forms, grows, develops and finally becomes a complete, conscious and free being.

This process of development goes on tirelessly through innumerable lives, and if one is not conscious of it, it is because one is not conscious of one's psychic being — for that is the indispensable starting-point. Through interiorisation and concentration one has to enter into conscious contact with one's psychic being. This psychic being always has an influence on the

Some Answers from the Mother

outer being, but that influence is almost always occult, neither seen nor perceived nor felt, save on truly exceptional occasions.

In order to strengthen the contact and aid, if possible, the development of the conscious psychic personality, one should, while concentrating, turn towards it, aspire to know it and feel it, open oneself to receive its influence, and take great care, each time that one receives an indication from it, to follow it very scrupulously and sincerely. To live in a great aspiration, to take care to become inwardly calm and remain so always as far as possible, to cultivate a perfect sincerity in all the activities of one's being — these are the essential conditions for the growth of the psychic being.

10 September 1959

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Sweet Mother,

How can one draw energy into oneself from outside?

That depends on the kind of energy one wants to absorb, for each region of the being has a corresponding kind of energy. If it is physical energy, we absorb it principally through respiration, and all that facilitates and improves respiration increases at the same time the absorption of physical energy.

But there are many other kinds of energies, or rather many other forms of Energy, which is *one* and universal.

And it is through the various yogic exercises of breathing, meditation, *japa* and concentration that one puts oneself in contact with these various forms of Energy.

10 September 1959

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Sweet Mother,

What are these other forms of Energy and how do they help us in our sadhana?

Each region of the being and each activity has its energies. We

Series Eight – To a Young Captain

may classify them generally into vital energies, mental energies, spiritual energies. Modern science tells us that Matter is ultimately nothing but energy condensed.

Our yoga being integral, all these various forms or kinds of energy are indispensable to our realisation.

12 September 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

What is meant by “a subtle physical prolongation of the superficial form of the mental envelope”?

It means that the ghost one sees and wrongly takes for the departed being itself, is only an *image* of it, an imprint (like a photographic imprint) left in the subtle physical by the superficial mental form, an image that can become visible under certain conditions. These images can move about (like cinema images), but they have no substantial reality. It is the fear or emotion of those who see these images that sometimes gives them the appearance of a power or an action they do not possess in themselves. Hence the necessity of never being afraid and of recognising them for what they are — a deceptive appearance.

14 September 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one silence the mind, remain quiet, and at the same time have an aspiration, an intensity or a widening? Because as soon as one aspires, isn't it the mind that aspires?

No; aspiration, as well as widening and intensity, comes from the heart, the emotional centre, the door of the psychic or rather the door leading to the psychic.

Some Answers from the Mother

The mind by its nature is curious and interested; it sees, it observes, it tries to understand and explain; and with all this activity, it disturbs the experience and diminishes its intensity and force.

On the other hand, the more quiet and silent the mind is, the more can aspiration rise up from the depths of the heart in the fullness of its ardour.

17 September 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one eliminate the will of the ego?

This amounts to asking how one can eliminate the ego. It is only by yoga that one can do it. There have been, throughout the spiritual history of humanity, many methods of yoga — which Sri Aurobindo has described and explained for us in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

But before *eliminating* the will of the ego, which takes a very long time, one can begin by surrendering the will of the ego to the Divine Will at every opportunity and finally in a constant way. For this, the first step is to understand that the Divine knows better than we what is good for us and what we truly need, not only for our spiritual progress but also for our material well-being, the health of our body and the proper functioning of all the activities of our being.

Naturally, this is not the opinion of the ego, which thinks it knows better than anyone else what it needs, and claims for itself independence of judgment and decision. But it thinks and feels this way because it is ignorant, and gradually one has to convince it that its perception and understanding are too limited for it truly to be able to know and that it judges only according to its desires, which are blind, and not according to truth.

Series Eight – To a Young Captain

For the desires are not the expression of needs but of preferences.

19 September 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

Why has the Divine made His path so difficult? He can make it easier if He wants, can't He?

First of all, one should know that the intellect, the mind, can understand nothing of the Divine, neither what He does nor *how* He does it and still less *why* He does it. To know something of the Divine, one has to rise above thought and enter into the psychic consciousness, the consciousness of the soul, or into the spiritual consciousness.

Those who have had the experience have always said that the difficulties and sufferings of the path are not real, but a creation of human ignorance, and that as soon as one gets out of this ignorance one also gets out of the difficulties, to say nothing of the inalienable state of bliss in which one dwells as soon as one is in conscious contact with the Divine.

So according to them, the question has no real basis and cannot be posed.

21 September 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

You have written that to enter into conscious contact with one's psychic being, one must "aspire to know it and feel it, open oneself to receive its influence, and take great care... to follow it very scrupulously and sincerely". But, Sweet Mother, I don't know how to do this. I find it easier when I think of you, try to enter into contact with you and open to you.

This too is a way which is certainly as good as the other.

Some Answers from the Mother

There are many ways to attain self-realisation, and each one must choose the way that comes to him most naturally.

But each way has its demands in order to be truly effective.

In thinking of me, you must think not only of the outer person. but of what she represents, what stands behind her. For you must never forget that the outer person is only the form and symbol of an eternal Reality, and through the physical appearance, it is to this higher Reality that you must turn. The physical being cannot become truly expressive of the eternal Reality until it is completely transformed by the supramental manifestation. And until then, it is *through* it that you must find the Truth.

22 September 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

Is it possible to have control over oneself during sleep? For example, if I want to see you in my dreams, can I do it at will?

Control during sleep is entirely possible and it is progressive if you persist in the effort. You begin by remembering your dreams, then gradually you remain more and more conscious during your sleep, and not only can you control your dreams but you can guide and organise your activities during sleep.

If you persist in your will and your effort, you are sure to learn how to come and find me at night during your sleep and afterwards to remember what has happened.

For this, two things are necessary, which you must develop by aspiration and by calm and persistent effort.

(1) Concentrate your thought on the will to come and find me; then pursue this thought, first by an effort of imagination, afterwards in a tangible and increasingly real way, until you are in my presence.

Series Eight – To a Young Captain

(2) Establish a sort of bridge between the waking and the sleeping consciousness, so that when you wake up you remember what has happened.

It may be that you succeed immediately, but more often it takes a certain time and you must persist in the effort.

25 September 1959

*

*Sweet Mother,
What is the role of the soul?*

But without the soul we wouldn't exist!

The soul is that which comes from the Divine without ever leaving Him, and returns to the Divine without ceasing to be manifest.

The soul is the Divine made individual without ceasing to be divine.

In the soul the individual and the Divine are eternally one; therefore, to find one's soul is to find God; to identify with one's soul is to unite with the Divine.

Thus it may be said that the role of the soul is to make a true being of man.

29 September 1959

*

*Sweet Mother,
Is there anything like good luck and bad luck, or is
it something that one creates for oneself?*

There is nothing that can truly be called *luck*. What men call luck are the *effects* of *causes* they do not know.

Nor is there anything that in itself is good or bad luck; each one characterises circumstances as good or bad depending on whether they are more or less favourable to him; and this estimation itself is very superficial and ignorant, for one must

Some Answers from the Mother

already be a great sage to know what is truly favourable or unfavourable to oneself.

Moreover, the same event may be very good for one person and at the same time very bad for another. These estimations are purely subjective and depend on each one's reaction to contacts coming from outside.

Finally, the circumstances of our life, the surroundings in which we live and the way in which people regard us are the expression, the objective projection of what we ourselves are, within and without. So we may say with certainty that what we carry in ourselves in all our states of being, mentally, vitally and physically, is that which constitutes our life objectified in what surrounds us.

And this is easily verifiable, for in proportion as we improve ourselves and advance towards perfection, our circumstances also improve.

Likewise, in the case of those who degenerate and fall back, the circumstances of their lives also worsen.

5 October 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

*What do you give us in the morning at the balcony,¹
and what should we try to do in order to receive what
you are giving?*

Every morning at the balcony, after establishing a conscious contact with each of those who are present, I identify myself with the Supreme Lord and dissolve myself completely in Him. Then my body, completely passive, is nothing but a channel through which the Lord passes His forces freely and pours upon all His Light, His Consciousness and His Joy, according to each one's receptivity.

¹ During this period the Mother stood for a while every morning on a balcony facing the street and gazed at the sadhaks assembled below.

Series Eight – To a Young Captain

The best way to receive what He gives is to come to the balcony with trust and aspiration and to keep oneself as *calm and quiet* as one can in a *silent and passive state of expectation*. If one has something precise to ask, it is better to ask it *beforehand*, not while I am there, because any activity lessens the receptivity.

12 October 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

What is meant by the “silence of the physical consciousness”² and how can one remain in this silence?

The physical consciousness is not only the consciousness of our body, but of all that surrounds us as well — all that we perceive with our senses. It is a sort of apparatus for recording and transmission which is open to all the contacts and shocks coming from outside and responds to them by reactions of pleasure and pain which welcome or repel. This makes in our outer being a constant activity and noise that we are only partially aware of, because we are so accustomed to them.

But if through meditation or concentration we turn inward or upward, we can bring down into ourselves or raise up from the depths calm, quiet, peace and finally silence. It is a concrete, positive silence (not the negative silence of the absence of noise), immutable so long as it remains, a silence one can experience even in the outer tumult of a hurricane or battlefield. This silence is synonymous with peace and it is all-powerful; it is the perfectly effective remedy for the fatigue, tension and exhaustion arising from that internal over-activity and noise which generally escape our control and cease neither by day nor night.

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 906.

Some Answers from the Mother

This is why the first thing required when one wants to do Yoga is to bring down and establish in oneself the calm, the peace, the silence.

15 October 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one enter into the feelings of a piece of music played by someone else?

In the same way that one can share the emotions of another person — by sympathy, spontaneously, by an affinity more or less deep, or else by an effort of concentration which ends in identification. It is this latter process that we adopt when we listen to music with an intense and concentrated attention, to the point of stopping all other noise in the head and obtaining a complete silence into which fall, drop by drop, the notes of the music whose sound alone remains; and with the sound all the feelings, all the movements of emotion can be captured, experienced, re-felt as if they were produced in ourselves.

20 October 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one distinguish between good and evil in a dream?

In principle, to judge the activities of sleep one needs the same capacity of discrimination as to judge the waking activities.

But since we usually give the name “dream” to a considerable number of activities that differ completely from one another, the first point is to learn to distinguish between these various activities — that is, to recognise what part of the being it is that “dreams”, what domain it is that one “dreams” in, and what the nature of that activity is. In his letters, Sri Aurobindo has given

Series Eight – To a Young Captain

very complete and detailed descriptions and explanations of all the activities of sleep. Reading these letters is a good introduction to the study of this subject and to its practical application .

2 November 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

How should we read your books and the books of Sri Aurobindo so that they may enter into our consciousness instead of being understood only by the mind?

To read my books is not difficult because they are written in the simplest language, almost the spoken language. To get help from them, it is enough to read with attention and concentration and an attitude of inner good-will, with a desire to receive and live what is taught.

To read what Sri Aurobindo writes is more difficult because the expression is highly intellectual and the language far more literary and philosophic. The brain needs a preparation to really be able to understand and generally this preparation takes time, unless one is specially gifted with an innate intuitive faculty.

In any case, I always advise reading *a little* at a time, keeping the mind as quiet as one can, without making an effort to understand, but keeping the head as silent as possible and letting *the force* contained in what one reads *enter deep inside*. This force, received in calm and silence, will do its work of illumining and will create in the brain, if necessary, the cells required for understanding. Thus, when one re-reads the same thing some months later, one finds that the thought expressed has become much clearer and closer and even at times quite familiar.

It is preferable to read regularly, a little every day and at a fixed hour if possible; this facilitates the brain's receptivity.

2 November 1959

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

*Why does meditation in front of different photos of
you give different experiences?*

It is because each photo represents a different aspect, sometimes even a different personality of my being; and by concentrating on the photo, one enters into relation with that special aspect or different personality which the photo has captured and whose image it conveys.

The photo is a real and concrete presence, but fragmentary and limited.

4 November 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

Why is the photo a fragmentary and limited presence?

Because the photo catches only the image of a moment, an instant of a person's appearance and of what that appearance can reveal of a passing psychological condition and fragmentary soul-state. Even if the photograph is taken under the best possible conditions at an exceptional and particularly expressive moment, it cannot in any way reproduce the whole personality.

5 November 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

What exactly are the subconscious and the inconscient?

The inconscient is that part of Nature which is so obscure and asleep that it seems to be wholly devoid of consciousness; at any rate, as in the stone, the mineral kingdom, the consciousness there is entirely inactive and hidden. The history of the earth begins with this inconscience.

Series Eight – To a Young Captain

We too carry it in ourselves, in the substance of our body, since the substance of our body is the same as that of the earth.

But by evolution, this sleeping and hidden consciousness gradually awakens through the vegetal and animal kingdoms, and in them subconsciousness begins; this subconsciousness, with the appearance of mind in man, culminates in consciousness. This consciousness likewise is progressive, and in proportion as man evolves, it will change into superconsciousness.

We too, then, carry in ourselves the subconsciousness which links us to the animal, and the superconsciousness which is our hope and assurance of future realisation.

7 November 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

*What should one try to do when one meditates with
your music at the Playground?*

This music aims at awakening certain profound feelings.

In listening to it, one should make oneself as silent and passive as possible. And if, in the mental silence, a part of the being can take the attitude of the witness who observes without reacting or participating, then one can notice the effect that the music produces on the feelings and emotions; and if it produces a state of deep calm and semi-trance, that is very good.

15 November 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the work of the Overmind?³

The overmind is the region of the gods, the beings of divine origin who have been charged with supervising, directing and

³ This question and the three that follow are based on terms used by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine*, especially in its final chapters.

Some Answers from the Mother

organising the evolution of the universe; and more specifically, since the formation of the earth they have served as messengers and intermediaries to bring to the earth the aid of the higher regions and to preside over the formation of the mind and its progressive ascension. It is usually to the gods of the overmind that the prayers of the various religions are addressed. These religions most often choose, for various reasons, one of these gods and transform him for their personal use into the supreme God.

In the individual evolution, one must develop in oneself a zone corresponding to the overmind and an overmind consciousness, before one can rise above it, to the Supermind, or open oneself to it.

Almost all the occult systems and disciplines aim at the development and mastery of the overmind.

27 November 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

What is meant by “a zone corresponding to the overmind” and how can one develop it in oneself? What is meant by the “mastery of the overmind”?

The individual being is made up of states of being corresponding to cosmic zones or planes, and it is as these inner states of being are developed that one becomes conscious of those domains. This consciousness is double, at first psychological and subjective, within oneself, expressing itself through thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations; then objective and concrete when one is able to go beyond the limits of the body in order to move about in the various cosmic regions, grow conscious of them and act freely in them — it is this that is called “mastery”; it is this that I spoke of when I mentioned the mastery of the overmind.

It goes without saying that all this is not done in a day, nor even in a year. This mastery, in whatever domain it may be, vital, mental, overmental, demands assiduous effort and a great

Series Eight – To a Young Captain

concentration. These masteries are no easier than the mastery of the physical world; and everyone knows how much time and effort are needed merely to learn the things indispensable for leading one's life properly, not to speak of "mastery", which is truly something exceptional on earth.

28 November 1959

*

*Sweet Mother,
What is Supernature?*

Supernature is the Nature superior to material or physical Nature — what we usually call "Nature". But this Nature that we see, feel and study, this Nature that has been our familiar environment since our birth upon earth, is not the only one. There is a vital nature, a mental nature, and so on. It is this that, for the ordinary consciousness, is Supernature.

Very often the word "Nature" is used as a synonym for Prakriti, the executive force of Purusha. But to answer your question more precisely, the context would be needed in order to know on what occasion Sri Aurobindo spoke about Supernature.

15 December 1959

*

*Sweet Mother,
Sri Aurobindo has written in The Life Divine:
"There is as yet no overmind being or organised over-
mind nature, no supramental being or organised su-
permind nature acting either on our surface or in our
normal subliminal parts."⁴ Sweet Mother, now after the
descent of the Supermind,⁵ is it still like that?*

⁴ SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 921.

⁵ On 29 February 1956 there took place, in the Mother's words, "the manifestation of the Supramental upon earth"; "Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow."

Some Answers from the Mother

What Sri Aurobindo means is that only a few exceptional beings who do not belong to the ordinary humanity, have a conscious and organised overmind being and overmind life, and still fewer are those who have an organised supramental being and supramental life, even admitting that there are any at all. Certainly the very recent descent of the first elements of the Supermind into the earth's atmosphere (not yet quite four years ago) cannot have changed this state of things.

We are still only in a period of preparation.

18 December 1959

*

Sweet Mother,

What is meant by the yoga of devotion and the yoga of knowledge?

The yoga of knowledge is the path that leads to the Divine through the exclusive pursuit of the pure and absolute Truth.

The yoga of devotion is the path that leads to union with the Divine through perfect, total and eternal love.

In the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the two combine with the yoga of works and the yoga of self-perfection to make a homogeneous whole, culminating in the yoga of supramental realisation.

5 February 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

What are the "supreme faculties"?

It is difficult to reply without having the context. Which "supreme faculties" are being referred to here? Those of man on the way to becoming superman, or those that the supramental being will possess when he appears on earth?

In the first case, they are the faculties that develop in man as he opens to the higher mind and overmind, and through those

Series Eight – To a Young Captain

regions he receives the light of the Truth. These faculties are not a direct expression of the supreme Truth, but a transcription, an indirect reflection of it. They include intuition, foreknowledge, knowledge by identity and certain powers such as that of healing and, to an extent, of acting upon circumstances.

If it refers to the supreme faculties of the supramental being, we cannot say much about them, for all we can say at the moment belongs more to the realm of imagination than to the realm of knowledge, since this supramental being has not yet manifested on earth.

23 April 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

What are “the different psychological divisions of the human being”?

These divisions are merely arbitrary. They have been established in order to facilitate the study of human nature and especially to constitute a definite basis for the various methods of self-development and self-discipline. That is why each philosophic, educational or Yogic system has, as it were, its own division based on the experience of its founder. Nevertheless, despite these divergences, there is a sort of tradition which, behind the different terms, makes for an essential analogy. This analogy can be expressed by a quaternary: the physical, the vital, the mental and the psychic or soul.

Sri Aurobindo has written on this subject in great detail in some of his letters, in *The Synthesis of Yoga* and in *Essays on the Gita*.

30 May 1960

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

*Is it possible to have a correct conception of the
Divine?*

No conception of the Divine can be correct; for conceptions are mental activities, and no mental activity is fit to manifest the Divine.

It is only by experience that one can know Him, and the experience cannot be translated into words.

20 June 1960

Series Nine

Series Nine

Letters to a Young Teacher

To a young teacher in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

Sweet Mother,

With what attitude should I read Sri Aurobindo's books when they are difficult and when I don't understand? Savitri, The Life Divine, for example.

Read a little at a time, read again and again until you have understood.

*

Sri Aurobindo says: "Yoga is nothing but practical psychology."¹ What does this sentence mean? The whole paragraph is not clear to me.

Because you know nothing about psychology. Study psychology and you will understand what he means.

*

Sri Aurobindo says: "In whatever form and with whatever spirit we approach him, in that form and with that spirit he receives the sacrifice."² What does this mean?

It means that all we offer, we necessarily offer to the Supreme, because He is the sole Reality behind everything.

*

¹ *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 39.

² *Ibid.*, p. 102.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sri Aurobindo has written: "He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite."³ And what about the others, Mother? What good is life if the Divine does not want us? I believe that in truth the Divine has chosen us all; but what does this sentence mean, then?

In truth the Divine has chosen everyone and everything, and everyone and everything will return to Him. But for some it will take thousands of lives, while for others it will happen in this very lifetime. This is what makes the difference.

23 May 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

You have said that I do not think well. How can one develop one's thought?

You must read with much attention and concentration, not novels or dramas, but books that make you think. You must meditate on what you have read, reflect on a thought until you have understood it. Talk little, remain quiet and concentrated, and speak only when it is indispensable.

1 June 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

You have asked the teachers "to think with ideas instead of with words".⁴ You have also said that later on you will ask them to think with experiences. Will you throw some light on these three ways of thinking?

Our house has a very high tower; at the very top of this tower there is a bright and bare room, the last before we emerge into the open air, into the full light.

³ *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 47.

⁴ *On Education*, CWM, Vol. 12, p. 185.

Series Nine – To a Young Teacher

Sometimes, when we are free to do so, we climb up to this bright room, and there, if we remain very quiet, one or more visitors come to call on us; some are tall, others small, some single, others in groups; all are bright and graceful.

Usually, in our joy at their arrival and our haste to welcome them, we lose our tranquillity and come galloping down to rush into the great hall that forms the base of the tower and is the storeroom of words. Here, more or less excited, we select, reject, assemble, combine, disarrange, rearrange all the words in our reach, in an attempt to portray this or that visitor who has come to us. But most often, the picture we succeed in making of our visitor is more like a caricature than a portrait.

And yet if we were wiser, we would remain up above, at the summit of the tower, quite calm, in joyful contemplation. Then, after a certain length of time, we would see the visitors themselves slowly, gracefully, calmly descend, without losing anything of their elegance or beauty and, as they cross the storeroom of words, clothe themselves effortlessly, automatically, with the words needed to make themselves perceptible even in the material house.

This is what I call thinking with ideas.

When this process is no longer mysterious to you, I shall explain what is meant by thinking with experiences.

1 June 1960

*

My dear child, I have just read your good letter. Fear nothing: those who are sincere in their aspiration will remain here and receive all the help needed to be able to change in themselves what needs to be changed. You can be sure that my force will always be with you so that you can make all the progress you want to make.

Have confidence, my child; everything will be all right.

5 June 1960

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo speaks of a “central knot of desires” which must be cut. How can one do it, where should one start?

The central knot of desires is the sense of separate personality; it is the ego. With the disappearance of the ego, the desires disappear.

13 June 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

One day in class you said, with your hands wide open, that we should give you everything, even our defects and vices and all the dirt in us. Is this the only way to get rid of them, and how can one do it?

One keeps one's defects because one hangs on to them as if they were something precious; one clings to one's vices as one clings to a part of one's body, and pulling out a bad habit hurts as much as pulling out a tooth. That is why one does not progress.

Whereas if one generously makes an offering of one's defect, vice or bad habit, then one has the joy of making an offering and one receives in exchange the force to replace what has been given, by a better and truer vibration.

13 June 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

It happens that when we love You deeply and are intimately in contact with You, we have the impression that the Divine belongs to us exclusively (and not that we belong to Him). Why?

Series Nine – To a Young Teacher

The two are equally true and they ought to be felt simultaneously. But human egoism always has the tendency to take rather than to give. This is where that impression comes from.

3 July 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

It is much easier for me to approach You than to approach Sri Aurobindo. Why? You are all that Sri Aurobindo is for us, as well as a divine and loving Mother. So is it necessary to try to establish the same relation with him?

You yourself have answered your own question. I am for you a mother who is very close to you, who loves and understands you; that is why it is easy for you to approach me with a loving confidence, without fear and without hesitation. Sri Aurobindo is always there to help you and guide you; but it is natural that you should approach Him with the reverence due to the Master of Yoga.

3 July 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

What exactly is the soul or psychic being? And what is meant by the evolution of the psychic being? What is its relation to the Supreme?

The soul and the psychic being are not exactly the same thing, although their essence is the same.

The soul is the divine spark that dwells at the centre of each being; it is identical with its Divine Origin; it is the divine in man.

The psychic being is formed progressively around this divine centre, the soul, in the course of its innumerable lives in the

Some Answers from the Mother

terrestrial evolution, until the time comes when the psychic being, fully formed and wholly awakened, becomes the conscious sheath of the soul around which it is formed.

And thus identified with the Divine, it becomes His perfect instrument in the world.

16 July 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

You have said that once we have found our psychic being, we can never lose it. Isn't that so? But can we come into contact with it from time to time when we are receptive?

When you have established contact with your psychic being, it is, in effect, definitive.

But before this contact is established, you can, in certain circumstances, consciously receive the psychic *influence* which always produces an illumination in the being and has more or less lasting effects.

16 July 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

The soul individualises itself and progressively transforms itself into a psychic being. What are the best conditions for its rapid growth?

It would be more correct to say that the soul puts on a progressive individual form which becomes the psychic being. For since the soul is itself a portion of the Supreme, it is immutable and eternal. The psychic being is progressive and immortal.

All the methods of self-knowledge, self-control and self-mastery are good. You have to choose the one that comes to you spontaneously and best corresponds to your nature. And once

Series Nine – To a Young Teacher

having chosen the method, you must use your intelligent will to apply it with an unfailing perseverance that does not shrink from any obstacle, any difficulty. It is a long and minute work which must be undertaken with sincerity and continued with an increasing sincerity ever more scrupulous and integral.

The easy paths generally lead nowhere.

28 July 1960

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Sweet Mother,

Does an outer life of evil deeds and a base consciousness have an effect on the psychic being? Is there a possibility of its degradation?

A base and evil life can only have the effect of separating the outer being more and more completely from the psychic being, which retires into the depths of the higher consciousness and sometimes even cuts off all relation with the body, which is then usually possessed by an asuric or rakshasic being.

The psychic being itself is above all possibility of degradation.

28 July 1960

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Sweet Mother,

How does the soul influence a being who is normally unconscious?

The soul's influence is a kind of radiance that penetrates through the most opaque substances and acts even in the unconsciousness.

But then its action is slow and takes a very long time to obtain a perceptible result.

31 July 1960

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo says that the voice of the ordinary conscience is not the voice of the soul. What is it then?

The voice of the ordinary conscience is an ethical voice, a moral voice which distinguishes between good and evil, encourages us to do good and forbids us to do evil. This voice is very useful in ordinary life, until one is able to become conscious of one's psychic being and allow oneself to be entirely guided by it — in other words, to rise above ordinary humanity, free oneself from all egoism and become a conscious instrument of the Divine Will. The soul itself, being a portion of the Divine, is above all moral and ethical notions; it bathes in the Divine Light and manifests it, but it can truly govern the whole being only when the ego has been dissolved.

12 August 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

You have said that to be allowed to sit in Sri Aurobindo's room and meditate there, "one must have done much for Him".⁵ What do You mean by that, Mother? What can one do for the Lord which will be this "much"?

To do something for the Lord is to give Him something of what one has or of what one does or of what one is. In other words, to offer Him a part of our belongings or all our possessions, to consecrate to Him a part of our work or all our activities, or to give ourselves to Him totally and unreservedly so that He can take possession of our nature in order to transform and divinise it. But there are many persons who, without giving anything,

⁵ *Words of the Mother—I*, CWM, Vol. 13, p. 29.

Series Nine – To a Young Teacher

always want to take and to receive. These people are selfish and they are not worthy of meditating in Sri Aurobindo's room.

26 September 1960

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Sweet Mother,

How are the messages that You give us on Blessings days chosen? How should we read them and what new things in particular should we look for in them?

The messages are usually chosen according to the occasion or the need of the moment, so that each person may be able to find in them either the force or the knowledge that will help him to make progress.

In each one the will to progress is the needed thing — that is what opens us to the divine influence and makes us capable of receiving what it brings us.

26 September 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo tells us: "First be sure of the call and of thy soul's answer"⁶ before following the path of Yoga, or else the end will be a disaster. But how can we know if the call is really there or not? And as for our soul, would it not always choose Yoga?

Sri Aurobindo means that one should not mistake a mental ambition or a vital caprice for the spiritual call — for that alone is a sure sign that one should take up Yoga. The spiritual call is heard only when the time has come, and then the soul responds and sets out on the path; it does not allow itself to be deceived by any ambition, pride or desire, and so long as it does not receive the Divine command to take up the path, it waits patiently,

⁶ *The Hour of God and Other Writings*, SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 39.

Some Answers from the Mother

knowing that to start out too soon is useless, to say the least, and may be harmful.

17 October 1960

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Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo tells us: "God's grace is more difficult to have or to keep than the nectar of the Immortals."⁷ What does this mean? Doesn't the Divine Grace always pour down on us, depending only on our receptivity?

The Grace is always there, eternally present and active, but Sri Aurobindo says that it is extremely difficult for us to be in a condition to receive it, keep it and make use of what it gives us.

Sri Aurobindo even says that it is more difficult than to drink from the cup of the gods who are immortal.

To receive the divine grace, not only must one have a great aspiration, but also a sincere humility and an absolute trust.

17 October 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

Why isn't it possible to live always on the same height of consciousness? Sometimes I fall despite every effort and aspiration.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of a "period of assimilation". What is it, Mother?

It is because an individual is not made up all of one piece, but of many different entities which are sometimes even contrary to one another: some want the spiritual life, others are attached to the things of this world. To make all these parts agree and to unify them is a long and difficult task.

⁷ *The Hour of God and Other Writings*, SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 40.

Series Nine – To a Young Teacher

The force and the light received by the more developed parts spread gradually into the rest of the being by a process of assimilation, and during this period of assimilation the progress of the more developed parts seems to be interrupted. This is what Sri Aurobindo has spoken of.

29 October 1960

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Sweet Mother,

Often it is possible to live moments of supreme ecstasy because one is in contact with one's Personal Divine. How to approach the Transcendent Divine?

It is utterly certain that if you were *truly* in contact with “your personal divine”, you would know perfectly well “how to approach the Transcendent Divine”. For the two are identical; it is only the mode of approach that differs: one is through the heart, the other through the mind.

29 October 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

In the last question, I expressed myself very poorly and Your reply made me feel very insincere. What I wanted to say is that in our best moments of receptivity, we are in contact with a Presence to whom we feel an imperative need to give ourselves and who is the object of all our love and adoration. This Presence I have called the “Personal Divine”, who is in fact none other than You. I know that it is not possible to have a complete conception of the Divine at this stage.

So now tell me, Mother, if it is possible to have an idea of the “Transcendent Divine”.

Some Answers from the Mother

My reply contained the answer to your question, for I understood very well that you were not claiming anything, but had expressed yourself poorly.

To discover the Transcendent Divine one has to follow the intellectual discipline, the way of knowledge, and by successive eliminations arrive at the one sole Truth, the Absolute beyond form and time and space. It is a long and difficult path, a very arduous path.

Whereas with one's heart, one can set out to discover the Immanent Divine. And if one knows truly how to love, without desire or egoism, one finds Him very soon, for always He comes to meet you in order to help you.

12 November 1960

*

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo tells us: "God in his perfection embraces everything; we also must become all-embracing." There is a lot of misunderstanding among the young people about this sentence. What does it mean exactly?

It should be understood clearly that there is no question here of any physical embracing, as practical jokers with the tastes and habits of street-urchins might like to suggest and who seek in what Sri Aurobindo has written an excuse for their excesses. The divine embraces are embraces of soul and of consciousness, and they can be reproduced among human beings only by a widening of the consciousness, understanding and feelings — a widening that enables you to understand everything and love everything, without preference or exclusiveness.

26 November 1960

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Series Nine – To a Young Teacher

Sweet Mother,

We are told that before the children came to the Ashram, the conditions were a lot stricter and the discipline more rigorous. How and why have these conditions changed now?

Before the children came, only those who wanted to do sadhana were admitted to the Ashram, and the only habits and activities tolerated were those that were useful for the practice of sadhana.

But as it would be unreasonable to demand that children should do sadhana, this rigidity had to disappear the moment the children were introduced into the Ashram.

26 November 1960

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Sweet Mother,

Is it possible to love You perfectly, absolutely, before finding the psychic being within us?

In terrestrial man, it is only the psychic being that knows true love. As for *perfect* love, it exists only in the Divine.

26 April 1961

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Sweet Mother,

In the New Year Message of 1961 You say: “This wonderful world of delight waiting at our gates for our call to come down upon earth...” Will you please explain this? Hasn’t it already come down?

It is not the world of delight that has come down, but only the supramental Light, Consciousness and Force.

26 April 1961

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

How can one most effectively call this wonderful world of delight?

An absolute sincerity in the aspiration.

26 April 1961

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Sweet Mother,

When this delight comes down, what will the visible results be in the world?

A generalised goodwill and harmony.

26 April 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

These days they print your symbol and Sri Aurobindo's name on all sorts of things, on all the thousand and one little trifles of daily life which have to be thrown away once they have served their purpose, as for example matchboxes, pencils, toothbrushes, combs, even the borders of a sari, which are much trampled on. Is it good to use these precious things in such a free and common way?

And then what can we do with these things, Mother, when we no longer need them? We can't throw them away. The old calendars, for example; we have a thick pile of them.

The Lord is everywhere, in everything, in what we throw away as in what we keep precious, in what we trample on as in what we adore. We must learn to live with respect and never forget His constant and immutable Presence.

2 June 1961

*

Series Nine – To a Young Teacher

If you are speaking of calendars with photographs, it is preferable to cut out the photos, and if you do not want to keep them, give them to X who makes good use of them.

And if you are telling me that the photos are *damaged*, this will make you understand how necessary it is to take care of the things we use. That is what I mean when I speak of living with *respect*.

June 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

*Is there a dynamic and rapid way to find one's
psychic being and to raise one's consciousness?*

The only way that can be rapid is to think only of *that* and to want only *that*.

It is effective, but not very practical for the work!

27 May 1963

Series Ten

Series Ten

Letters to a Young Captain

To a young captain in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Department of Physical Education. He began writing to the Mother at the age of nineteen.

Sweet Mother,

On the night of Friday the 8th, I had a very peculiar dream. As I could not tell it to You at the Playground, I am going to tell You now.

It was a very fine day — very special. There was an important meeting at the Playground, so I was hurrying there. But near the Playground in front of Standard Stores, the road was covered with innumerable snakes. I was taken aback and rather afraid. So I was about to go round by another way to the Playground. But just then something spoke to me within: “What! Are you afraid of snakes? Come, take courage and walk through them. They will not harm you.” I walked through them quite confidently. Not one of them disturbed me nor did I disturb them. When I reached the Playground, I started talking to a friend. Suddenly he jumped back in fright and said: “Be careful, there is a snake coiled around your arm, and another around your other arm, and others around your legs and ankles.” Though I had not felt their presence till then, I was not in the least alarmed. I took them off one by one and threw them away. One snake was dead because I had stepped on it.

This is all I can remember clearly. I cannot remember exactly what happened at the Playground afterwards.

Mother, what do You think of this dream?

Some Answers from the Mother

The dream is indeed very interesting. Snakes usually signify bad thoughts or bad will from people around you — or an adverse attack that can manifest as an illness. But, as you clearly experienced in your dream, if you are not frightened and go on your way unperturbed, nothing bad will happen to you.

With my blessings.

13 October 1954

*

Sweet Mother,

From time to time there is an upsurge of bad thoughts; the mind becomes like a mire of passions and I wallow in it like a worm. After a while I wake up and regret my thoughts. But this kind of struggle keeps on recurring. Please help me to get out of it.

You must continue to fight against the bad thoughts until you gain a total victory. My help is always with you as well as my blessings.

26 January 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

Here our activities are so varied that it is difficult to stick to one thing till the end. Perhaps that is why we are not able to go beyond a mediocre average. Or is it because of our lack of solid concentration?

The cause of mediocre work is neither the variety nor the number of activities, but the lack of power of concentration.

One must learn to concentrate and do all that one does with full concentration.

4 July 1961

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

It really is a problem to know how to create interest in the students, whether in games, athletics or gymnastics. Even our own enthusiasm dwindles when we see their lack of interest in everything.

The interest of the students is proportionate to the *true capacity* of the teacher.

12 July 1961

*

(Regarding The Lost Footsteps by Silviu Craciunas) This book shows how Sri Aurobindo is working in every corner of the world. We who are here in the Ashram still haven't even had a glimpse of him.

There are people here who see him and are constantly in contact with him. They are those who love him sincerely and sufficiently to live according to his ideal.

14 July 1961

*

(Regarding the Mother's message of March 1961 to the captains; in it she asks them to "be the elite") We are very far from what You ask of us, at least I am. It is a most arduous task and it will take time, a long time, but what can be done at present! To change our consciousness and become an elite will take a lot of time. At present, we are on the same level as our students, so the immediate problem is not solved. How can we create an interest in them for each thing and every day?

This is even more impossible than to change and become an elite. So the best thing to do is to set to work immediately. The rest is simply an excuse that our laziness gives to itself.

15 July 1961

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

I went to work only for one hour, because I had too much work at home.

This is not good; the collective work should not suffer because of personal work.

19 July 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

When I came to You this evening for “Prosperity”,¹ I felt a sort of uneasiness — as if I had done something wrong — instead of feeling joy at seeing You. One ought to be eager to receive Your blessings, but why do I not have that feeling?

There must still be some insincerity in your being, hidden in a dark corner, something that does not want to change and is afraid of the Light.

1 August 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

Today I did not have that feeling of apprehension about coming to You, but I was in a passive state. I want, on the contrary, to feel an intense joy, a moment of ecstasy. How can I obtain it?

Come with the aspiration to give yourself, to offer your whole being, without reserve, to the Divine Grace, and you will feel the felicity for which you aspire.

6 August 1961

*

¹ On the first of each month, the sadhaks received “Prosperity” — their basic material requirements.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

I want an electric lamp in the corridor of my room.

It would be more proper to write (and above all, to think):
“Would it be possible to have an electric lamp in the corridor?”

The ego would do well to become a little more modest.

13 August 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

*I have certain things to confess to You, but I cannot
bring myself to do it. What shall I do? Confess or let
past things be effaced by forgetting the past?*

If you can really allow them to be effaced and cease to exist,
even in your memory, it is better.

3 September 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

*You told us: “All of you here are taking life very
lightly, you are amusing yourselves all the time, you are
so self-centred.” It is quite true that we are taking life
very lightly, and it has become so natural that we believe
it to be the right attitude. And we are self-centred. How
can we get out of this trap? In any case, the dose You
gave us this morning was really just right. I feel very
happy.*

The first point is not to place oneself in thought, feeling or
action *at the centre of the universe* so that it exists only in terms
of oneself — one is part of the universe. One can unite with it,
but the Supreme Lord alone is its centre because He surpasses
and contains it.

19 September 1961

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

In Aphorism 95, Sri Aurobindo says that it is only by renunciation or by perfect satisfaction of desire that one can have the total experience of God.² But isn't the second method (perfect satisfaction of desire) very dangerous, for is it possible to satisfy man's desire?

Elsewhere he says explicitly that it is useless to try to satisfy desire, for desire is insatiable and can never be satisfied.

What he writes ought not to be taken separately; it is always part of a whole which is a synthesis of all opposites.

27 September 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

We speak very often of the psychic and the soul, but I understand nothing about them. What are these two things and how can one experience them?

Sri Aurobindo has written a lot on this subject (in his letters) and I too have explained everything in the book *Education*. One has to read, study and, *above all, practise*.

4 October 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

I have noticed one thing: When I sit for a few minutes and make an effort to concentrate before going to sleep, the next day I wake up quite early and am quite fresh. I concentrate on the tiny luminous tip of an

² "Only by perfect renunciation of desire or by perfect satisfaction of desire can the utter embrace of God be experienced, for in both ways the essential precondition is effected, — desire perishes."

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 89.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

incense-stick. But how is it that I wake up early because of that? There is no relation between these two things!

On the contrary, there is a very concrete relation. When you concentrate before sleeping, then in your sleep you remain in contact with the Divine force; but when you fall heavily to sleep without any preliminary concentration, you sink into the unconscious and the sleep is more tiring than restful, and it is difficult to come out of this sluggishness.

8 October 1961

*

I would like you to look attentively into yourself and try to explain to me what exactly it is that you enjoy in detective stories.

16 October 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

I read them as a relaxation. In detective stories — especially Perry Mason — there is always a courtroom scene in which the lawyer Perry Mason seems certain to lose his case; his client is accused of murder, all the evidence is against him, but the master-stroke of the lawyer Perry Mason changes the situation. Throughout the story there are mysteries, and the trial is like the mental acrobatics of a master gymnast. But each time I finish one of his books, I feel that I have gained nothing, learned nothing new — that it was a waste of time.

It is not *absolutely* useless. You probably had a great deal of *tamas* in your mind, and the mental acrobatics of the author shakes up this *tamas* a little and awakens the mind. But this cannot last for long and soon you must turn to higher things.

16 October 1961

*

Some Answers from the Mother

(After seeing the Mother on Lakshmi Puja Day) I await the day when this joy and this felicity will be established in me for ever. Now, it is only a dream and a passing experience like today's. But I hope to realise it for ever with Your Help.

Persist in your aspiration and the dream will be realised.

23 October 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

I have noticed something which applies to all of us; it is that we take part in as many items as possible in the 2nd December programme.³ Would it not be better to choose one or two items and give a very good demonstration in them, rather than to do several in a mediocre way?

Each one acts according to his nature and if he (or she) courageously and sincerely follows the law of that nature, he or she acts according to truth. Thus, it is impossible to judge and decide for others. One can know only for oneself, and even then one has to be very *sincere* so as not to deceive oneself.

4 November 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

In Aphorism 133, Sri Aurobindo says that "the gods were able to accept only the pleasant burden of His love and kindlier rapture."⁴ So the gods are cowards! Where then is their greatness and their splendour? Why do we

³ The annual demonstration of physical culture, held at the Ashram Sportsground.

⁴ "The Titans are stronger than the gods because they have agreed with God to front and bear the burden of His wrath and enmity; the gods were able to accept only the pleasant burden of His love and kindlier rapture."

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 94.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

worship inferior entities? And the Titans must be the most lovable sons of the Divine!

What Sri Aurobindo writes here is a paradox to awaken sleepy minds. But we must understand all the irony in these sayings, and especially the intention behind his words. Moreover, cowards or not, I see no need for us to worship the gods, great or small. Our adoration ought to go only to the Supreme Lord, who is one in all things and all beings.

6 November 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

For a long time I have noticed that I am rather shy. I always have an inferiority complex. I think I am afraid that people will discover my ignorance. Why am I like that? And how can I come out of it?

Behind all that and this famous inferiority complex, there is the ego and its vanity which wants to cut a good figure and be appreciated by others. But if all your activity were an offering to the Divine, you would not care at all about the appreciation of others.

14 November 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

You have often told us that our activities should be an offering to the Divine. What does this mean exactly, and how can it be done? For instance, when we play tennis or basketball, how can we do it as an offering? Mental formations are not enough, of course!

It means that what you do should not be done with a personal, egoistic aim, for success, for glory, for gain, for material profit or out of pride, but as a service and an offering, in order to become

Some Answers from the Mother

more conscious of the divine will and to give yourself more entirely to it, until you have made enough progress to know and *to feel* that it is the Divine who acts in you, His force that impels you and His will that supports you — not just a mental knowledge, but the sincerity of a state of consciousness and the power of a living experience.

For that to be possible, all egoistic motives and all egoistic reactions must disappear.

20 November 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

I pray to You, on behalf of everyone, that this evening's demonstration may be a success. Everyone thinks it will be the opposite. It is true that our performance is not up to the mark. I hope and I pray to You that the performance this evening may be at its best. Sweet Mother, take our actions and guide us. You told us You would be there — if only I had eyes to see You!

What I saw on the 26th was satisfactory (of course it can always be better) and I have heard *a great many compliments* about the 2nd December performance. You should not listen to people who only know how to criticise. Exaggerated criticism is not an aid to progress.

2 December 1961

*

Sweet Mother,

I am very lazy and I lack the fervour and perseverance to continue on the chosen path. I am like a flame that is roused by the wind and rises upwards, but falls back dead or dying as soon as the wind drops. Vigilant, that is what I should be. But how?

All the psychological qualities can be cultivated as the muscles

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

are—by regular, daily exercise. Above all, turn towards the Divine Force in a sincere aspiration and implore It to deliver you from your limitations. If you are *sincere* in your will to progress, you are sure to advance.

21 January 1962

*

Sweet Mother,

I was surprised to see this new ritual, “Sri Aurobindo sharanam mama”,⁵ introduced into the cemetery ceremonies. X stands in meditation in front of the body and pronounces the phrase, “Sri Aurobindo sharanam mama”, and the others, standing round the body, must repeat it after him. This is done a hundred times. Personally, I don’t like this ceremony. I find it empty of feeling. I don’t like Sri Aurobindo’s name to be invoked without feeling and turned into a ritual. It is much better to read one of Your prayers and then invoke the Divine Grace in silence, each in his own way, for the departed person, as was done before. That is my opinion.

The ceremony in itself is only of secondary importance. It is merely a form and more a matter of custom than anything else.

What is important is to infuse into whatever ceremony one adopts the sincere fervour and ardent aspiration which give life to any ceremony, whatever it may be, and yet do not depend on it.

6 February 1962

*

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo says that five thousand years have passed since the great battle of Kurukshetra was fought. But the benign influence of Sri Krishna’s political genius

⁵ Sri Aurobindo is my refuge.

Some Answers from the Mother

ended only yesterday with Rani Lakshmibai.⁶ After that, to protect India and the world anew, there had to be a Purna Avatar.⁷ This Avatar will awaken the Brahmatej⁸, which is dormant. Sri Aurobindo also says that it is only in the Kaliyuga⁹ that the Divine manifests fully because man is in great danger in this age. And here he is! He himself reveals the great secret: the Divine has fully manifested in India. But he has the modesty not to say that he himself is this manifestation!

Those who accomplish the work are not in the habit of boasting. They keep their energy for the task and leave the glory of the results to the Eternal Lord.

6 March 1962

*

Sweet Mother,

I can tell You this without vanity: I am much better than I was before; but all the same I am quite far, perhaps very far, from the Ideal You have given us. This does not discourage me, for I have full confidence in You.

Yes, you must persevere with courage and sincerity. You are sure to succeed one day.

2 September 1962

*

Sweet Mother,

We have had a discussion among friends about the problem and various possible methods of physical education. The fundamental problem is this: how can we

⁶ The Queen of Jhansi who died on the battlefield in 1858 while fighting British troops.

⁷ Full or perfect Divine incarnation.

⁸ Power of the Spirit.

⁹ The "Iron Age" in which we live.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

establish a programme that will satisfy everyone and be as effective as possible for all the members? Are the tournaments necessary? Should there be no compulsion whatever? And if complete freedom is given, will it be practical? And so on. It is a subject on which it is not easy to find a solution satisfactory enough for everyone, unless the Mother Herself intervenes.

It is impossible. Each one has his own taste and his own temperament. Nothing can be done without *discipline* — the whole of life is a discipline.

20 September 1962

*

*Sweet Mother,
Is it bad to go to the cinema in town?*

For those who want to do yoga, it is *very bad*. Moreover, I have already said this a considerable number of times, and if you do not know it, it is because you find it more convenient to forget it.

27 September 1962

*

*Sweet Mother,
There are too many tight knots in the immense organisation of this Ashram. When will the promised day come when there will be nothing but unmixed harmony, joy and peace?*

If each one were more concerned with correcting his own faults than with criticising those of others, the work would go more quickly.

29 September 1962

*

Some Answers from the Mother

A little sincere and regular practice is worth more than a lot of short-lived resolutions.

2 October 1962

*

Sweet Mother,

I heard this morning that X was very severely beaten by Y. I don't think it is fair at all.

One can speak only of what one has seen with one's own eyes — and even then... What knowledge do you possess that gives you the right to judge? Only the Lord sees and knows — He alone is the Truth.

You ought to study Sri Aurobindo's aphorisms a little more carefully. It would cure you of passing judgments.

15 October 1962

*

Sweet Mother,

I had written a letter to the Mother asking why She had not given Her darshan to Z. But now I am afraid that Mother may be angry at my audacity in writing such a letter. Because it is none of my business!

I read your letter and I was not at all angry. But Z was not at all ready for a darshan.

19 October 1962

*

(Regarding a threat by China to occupy disputed borderland in northern Kashmir and northeastern India) Sometimes I have the impression that our leaders do not seem to have the sort of backbone displayed by Kennedy with his decision about Cuba.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

This kind of comment is quite out of place at the moment. One should never criticise someone unless one has proved beyond dispute that in the same circumstances one can do better than he.

Do you feel capable of being an unequalled Prime Minister of India? I reply: “Certainly not”, and I advise you to keep silent and remain calm.

24 October 1962

*

(Regarding a prayer for Kali Puja Day)

It is all right, my children, but it is not enough to pray; you must also make a persevering effort.

26 October 1962

*

Sweet Mother,

In a discussion with a friend about our physical education programme and the countless other activities we have here, he asked me: “Can you give me a valid example of even one person who takes part in so many activities and maintains a fairly high standard — one single person in the whole world?”

Do not forget — all of you who are here — that we want to realise something which does not yet exist upon earth; so it is absurd to seek elsewhere for an example of what we want to do.

*

He also told me this: “Mother says that there is full freedom and every facility for those who are gifted in a particular subject and want to pursue it to the full. But where is this freedom to become, for instance, a

Some Answers from the Mother

great musician?" Sweet Mother, can you please say a few words on the subject of this freedom?

The freedom I speak of is the freedom to follow the will of the soul, not all the whims of the mind and vital.

The freedom I speak of is an austere truth which strives to surmount all the weaknesses and desires of the lower, ignorant being.

The freedom I speak of is the freedom to consecrate oneself wholly and without reserve to one's highest, noblest, divinest aspiration.

Who among you sincerely follows this path? It is easy to judge, but more difficult to understand, and far more difficult still to realise.

18 November 1962

*

(Regarding the captain's estimate of someone)

Remember that all these individual virtues and faults are only the deceptive appearance of a great play of universal forces which one does not understand.

5 January 1963

*

(Regarding a friend)

Find your happiness and your joy in the very fact of loving, and it will help you in your inner progress; because if you are *sincere*, you will one day realise that it is the Divine in her that you love and that the outer person is merely a pretext.

27 January 1963

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

What is the difference between meditating here in my room and going to meditate at the Playground with everyone else?

Is it better to meditate there or here in my room?

Meditate where you meditate best — that is to say, wherever you are most silent and calm.

31 January 1963

*

(Regarding a bad dream)

I call that mental fermentation. As soon as your waking consciousness falls asleep or leaves your body, the brain-cells you have not taken the trouble to quiet down begin to fidget restlessly and produce what is called a dream, but it is nothing more than disorderly activity. It has no meaning and can serve only one purpose: to make you aware of what goes on in your head.

19 March 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I have received a certain sum of money. I want to offer it to You, and if I need anything I will ask You for it; in that way You can decide what is necessary or best for me. But I am advised to keep as much as I want for my personal needs and to offer the rest to You. Otherwise people will say that I ask for anything I want just because I have given You a little money. Mother, what do You want me to do?

Do as you feel — and you may be sure that whatever you do, people will always have something to say.

Some Answers from the Mother

Besides, who is perfectly disinterested? One should not pretend to be what one is not. It is better to be frank than hypocritical.

12 April 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Is it right to pray to the Mother for little things and selfish gains?

It all depends on one's point of view. It is quite possible that one will obtain the thing one has prayed for. But for spiritual progress, it is harmful.

4 May 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the true significance of marriage?

It has hardly any *true* significance — it is a social custom for the perpetuation of the species.

10 May 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

We see too many films these days and I fail to see how they educate us!

When one has the true attitude, everything can be an opportunity to learn.

In any case, this abundance should make you understand that the desire to see films, which is so imperious in some people, is just as pernicious as any other desire.

11 May 1963

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

Each time I have encountered an obstacle in my life, each time I have been deprived of some happiness — some apparent happiness — a consolation has come immediately to dispel my psychological pain. For something tells me: “All that happens is done for your own good and is done by the Divine Grace.” Is it good, is it healthy to think like this?

Not only is it right, good and healthy to think like this, but it is an absolutely indispensable attitude if one wants to advance on the spiritual path. As a matter of fact, it is the first step without which one cannot advance at all. That is why I always say: “Whatever you do, do the *best* you can, and leave the result to the Lord; then your heart will be at peace.”

13 May 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Can the lines of our hands reflect our past, present and future life?

Yes, certainly, for someone who knows how to see, and X is very gifted.

15 May 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I have often noticed that the work we do is done much better and more quickly than if it were done by paid workers. I don't know why!

Because you are more conscious, or rather less unconscious.

23 May 1963

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Girls are always at a disadvantage: they cannot do what they want, as boys can.

Why not?

There are hundreds of proofs to the contrary.

31 May 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the best relationship between two human beings? Mother and son? Brother, friend or lover, etc?

All the relationships are good *in principle* and each one expresses a mode of the Eternal. But each can be perverted and become bad due to the selfish falsehood of human nature which prevents the vibrations of love from manifesting in their purity.

4 June 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

About the hero of the film Reach for the Sky, I said that nothing could ever discourage him. For even after having lost both legs in an accident, he vowed that he would continue his career as a pilot. He is a man of fantastic vitality, full of energy...

That is exactly the kind of determination one must have to practise the yoga of integral perfection.

7 June 1963

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

*There are moments when I feel it would be better
to sit silently instead of reading or doing something else.
But I am afraid of wasting time. What should I do?*

It all depends on the quality of the silence — if it is a luminous silence, full of force and conscious concentration, it is good. If it is a tamasic and unconscious silence, it is harmful.

10 June 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

*After a long time I had a beautiful dream in which I
saw the Mother and received Her Blessings.*

It is not a dream, but the result of the preceding meditation and of your aspiration.

12 June 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

*I have too much “grey” matter in my head, which
prevents me from thinking clearly and grasping new
ideas quickly. How can I free myself from this?*

By studying much, by reflecting much, by doing intellectual exercises. For instance, state a general idea clearly, then state the opposite idea, then look for the synthesis of both — that is, find a third idea which harmonises the other two.

25 June 1963

*

(On reading novels)

Why do you read novels? It is a stupid occupation and a waste of time. It is certainly one of the reasons why your brain is still in a muddle and lacks clarity.

27 June 1963

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Man is so weak that he is influenced even by the wind that blows about him, by a book he reads or a picture he sees. He is most vulnerable.

That happens when he has not taken care to organise his conscious being around the psychic centre, which is the Truth of his being.

28 June 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Most people here quote the Mother to suit their own convenience.

Before criticising others, it is better to be sure that one is perfectly sincere oneself.

30 June 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

A few days ago I noticed something very odd in the children of Group A2: the boys don't want to work with the girls; they don't even want to stand side by side. They cannot work together. How did this idea of difference come to these little children who are barely eleven years old! It is strange.

It is atavistic and comes from the subconscious.

This instinct is based both on masculine pride, the foolish idea of superiority, and on the still more foolish fear due to the idea that woman is a dangerous being who entices you into sin. In children, all this is still subconscious, but it influences their actions.

3 July 1963

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

I caused a sensation with my new clothes! Blue shorts and a grey shirt. X was shocked to see me dressed like that.

How frivolous and superficial people must be to attach importance to such things!! Even so, if you wore those clothes in your capacity as a captain, you did wrong, for the captains have a uniform which they should wear when they are acting as captains.

4 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

There are moments when one feels a kind of emptiness within; one is dejected and lonely — it is because one wants to be loved.

Or *better*, it is because one is awaking to the need of knowing one's soul and uniting with the Divine.

5 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I sit down every day to meditate, but I am afraid that this ten minutes' meditation has become merely mechanical. I want a dynamic meditation, but how to have it?

Become *sincere*.

6 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

This creation has a purpose — therefore is it possible that even the most "insignificant" individual has come

Some Answers from the Mother

*upon earth to fulfil a mission? That is not my conception
— what are beggars and people like that doing?*

Who said that? And what “mission” are you referring to? The creation is a *single whole* advancing as a totality towards its single goal — the Divine — through a collective evolution which is continuous and endless.

7 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

*I have heard that You have written somewhere that each person here in the Ashram represents a particular human difficulty, and that this difficulty will be mastered and transformed in him in his lifetime.*¹⁰

I have never made this statement.

Things are not so cut and dried as the mind thinks and even desires in order to simplify the problem.

There is an almost infinite variety of shades and combinations of character, and although there are categories of very similar types, no two cases are identical.

One is aware of one’s difficulties only insofar as one can change them and at the moment when one can make the change.

8 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Suddenly I feel very happy, my heart is filled with an inexpressible joy, but this experience does not last very

¹⁰ The Mother underlined the phrase “in his lifetime”.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

long. I have often tried to observe and find out the cause of this fleeting joy, but in vain.

Because you are looking for the cause outside, around you, whereas it is *within*.

11 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

You have explained that this separation of girls and boys is atavistic, but it remains to ask You what we captains should do about it. Personally, I think it is better to close one's eyes to it, but there are others who prefer to give advice or even to scold. I think that by closing one's eyes to it, one minimises the importance of the problem and thus this idea of difference between girls and boys will be less striking. What do You think?

One cannot make a general rule; everything depends on the case and the occasion. Both methods have their good and bad points, their advantages and drawbacks. For the captains, the main thing is to have tact and sufficient inner perception to intervene when necessary or to close one's eyes when it is preferable not to see.

15 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

What do You mean by "an ignorant goodwill and an indolent energy"?

(1) Goodwill means wanting to do good always. The only true "good" is the will of the Supreme Lord. Do you know what the Lord's will is, always, at every moment and in all circumstances? No, so you are ignorant of what "good" is — therefore: ignorant goodwill.

Some Answers from the Mother

(2) The very nature of energy is to be inexhaustible, unfailing, tireless. Are you never tired? Yes, very often — therefore: indolent energy.

17 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Would it not be better to have a basic discipline here instead of so much freedom, a freedom we are not able to profit by?

You say this, but you are one of those who revolt (at least in thought) against the very little discipline that is demanded when it is utterly indispensable, as in physical education, for example.

21 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Why do I hesitate to ask You for money? What prevents me from doing so? Am I still not intimate enough with You, or is there another reason? I do not understand myself.

It is probably a kind of inner discretion; it is rather a good sign, because this kind of discretion comes from the psychic consciousness which would rather give than *ask*.

24 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I still lack confidence in my work. I am too shy. I think that in order to progress one should be a little bolder.

It is not bolder you should be, but persistent and persevering.

27 July 1963

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

X told us the favourite story of Dr. Y, the mathematics teacher: “A sculptor was working on a block of stone near a village. One by one the villagers gathered round the sculptor, curious to see why he was breaking the stone. After much labour the work was finished and a masterpiece came to light — a dancing goddess instead of a block of stone stood there in front of the sculptor. All the villagers around him who had watched him work were astonished, and they marvelled at the sight of the beautiful figure which had emerged from the stone. So they asked the sculptor: “How did you know that this figure was there in the stone?”

The question is admirable — and if the sculptor had been witty, he would have replied: “Because I saw it inside.”

11 August 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Your remarks often amuse me.

You would do better to make an effort to understand them, for behind the words there is always something profound to be understood.

12 August 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

This morning I saw a man with protruding ribs, deeply depressed hips and twisted legs. It was a pitiful sight. One wonders why God has made all these deformations in Nature. The only answer — which answers

Some Answers from the Mother

nothing — is that it is “the Divine’s play”. It is incomprehensible.

That is an easy answer which one gives when one will not or cannot take the trouble to understand.

But if one rises above the individual mentality and enters into the consciousness of Unity, then one can understand.

18 August 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

What does “Yoga” mean and how many among us are practising it?

Why do you ask me this question? All those who are here should at least know what yoga means — as for practising it, that is another matter!...

19 August 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I feel miserable because I asked the Mother for incense. It would be much better to buy it from the market, for She does not like her children to beg.

To ask from me is not begging and you may do so whenever you really need something. But at the same time, you must be prepared not to receive it and not to get upset if I fail to give it. In this case, I said that you should be given some incense, but I am not sure if it has been done. It is X who keeps it and you should ask him for it.

22 August 1963

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

Our teacher Y gave us a talk in a grave and significant tone: “Be prepared to go through hard tests, we are on the eve of something very difficult and dangerous.” But he did not explain.

It is a pity he did not explain his thought, because I don’t know what he wanted to say — probably he wanted to caution you against your light-heartedness, your air of indifference, your carelessness and laxity.

All of you young people here have had a very easy life, and instead of taking advantage of it to concentrate your efforts on spiritual progress, you have enjoyed yourselves as much as you could without creating too much scandal, and your vigilance has been lulled to sleep.

Y probably spoke as he did in order to reawaken it.

27 August 1963

*

(Regarding someone’s observations on the captain’s character)

Everything people say is of little importance, because human judgments are always partial and therefore ignorant.

To know oneself, one must look at oneself with a higher and deeper consciousness which can discern the true causes of reactions and feelings.

A superficial observation cannot help. And so long as one is not in contact with one’s psychic being, it would be better to strive always to do as well as possible and be as good as one can, instead of passing one’s time in useless analysis.

12 September 1963

*

Some Answers from the Mother

(Regarding X, who related her misfortunes to the captain, blaming herself for all her troubles) To console her, I told her that blaming oneself was perhaps not always saintly or healthy.

It is X who is spiritually right and you who are wrong with a superficial and ignorant so-called “reason”.

When something goes wrong, one must always find the reason in oneself, not superficially but deep inside oneself, and not in order to uselessly bewail the fault, but to cure it by calling to one’s aid the all-powerful force of the Divine.

To be sure of making myself clearly understood, I will add that it is not due to any fault of hers that he is inconstant and fickle — it is his nature to be like that and he acts according to his nature — but if she suffers and is unhappy because of what he does, then it is her own fault, for it means that her own feeling is tainted with egoism. It is this egoism that she must conquer, and as soon as she does she will no longer suffer.

17 September 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I have again received an invitation for dinner. One cannot refuse if one is invited, can one?

No, unless there are serious reasons for doing so. I am not speaking of the outward act — whether one eats here or there comes to the same thing — I am speaking of the inner attitude, of the excessive importance one gives to food, and of greediness.

21 September 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

If I look at my whole life and its circumstances, I am very happy, but I am not satisfied. Often I am

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

plunged into an unbearable melancholy. What should I do?

True happiness does not depend on the external circumstances of life. One can obtain true happiness and keep it constantly only by discovering one's psychic being and uniting with it.

22 September 1963

*

*Sweet Mother,
I often remember a poem by Francis Thompson and
its refrain:
“For though I knew His love who followèd
Yet was I sore adread
Lest having Him, I must have naught beside.”
That is our malady!*

Yes, that is what Sri Aurobindo has written many times; man clings to his misery, his pettiness, his weakness, his ignorance and his limits — that is why he does not change.

24 September 1963

*

*Sweet Mother,
I am not properly prepared for the 1st December
performance,¹¹ and, what is more, I don't feel at all
enthusiastic.*

From the moment one has decided and accepted to do something, it must be done as well as one can.

One can find in everything a chance to progress in consciousness and self-mastery. And this effort for progress immediately makes the thing interesting, no matter what it is.

26 September 1963

*

¹¹ The annual cultural programme.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

In Aphorism 172, Sri Aurobindo has said: “Law released into freedom is the liberator.”¹² What does that mean? How can law be released into freedom? By law we understand something determined and fixed. Or is it a flexibility that is required, as opposed to rigidity: law that will be free to mould itself according to circumstances?

I regret to have to tell you that you have understood absolutely nothing of what Sri Aurobindo has written — for you have tried to understand with your superficial mind, while what Sri Aurobindo has said comes from the highest intellectual light, far above the mind. All I can tell you, which perhaps will put you on the right track, is that behind law there is a spirit of order and organisation. But law itself is something fixed and therefore contrary to the highest truth. If the same spirit of order and organisation is put at the service of freedom, it can become a means of attaining liberation, that is to say, union with the Truth.

29 September 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo writes in one of his aphorisms: “Those who are deficient in the free, full and intelligent observation of a self-imposed law, must be placed in subjection to the will of others.”¹³ Mother, I am one of those. Will You take me and discipline me?

My child, that is exactly what I have been trying to do for quite

¹² “Law cannot save the world, therefore Moses’ ordinances are dead for humanity and the Shastra of the Brahmins is corrupt and dying. Law released into freedom is the liberator. Not the Pundit, but the Yogin, not monasticism, but the inner renunciation of desire and ignorance and egoism.”

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 100.

¹³ *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 99.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

a long time, especially since I have been receiving your notebook and correcting it.

It is with that disciplinary aim that I asked you to write one single sentence a day — it did not have to be long, but it ought to have been *free from mistakes* — alas!

Up till now, I have hardly succeeded — your sentences are often long and unclear, others are short, but *all* contain mistakes and often, very often, the *same mistakes* of gender, agreement and conjugation which I have corrected many times.

One would think that even if you read your notebook when I return it to you, you do not study it and try to use it as a means to make progress.

To discipline one's life is not easy, even for those who are strong, severe with themselves, courageous and enduring.

But before trying to discipline one's whole life, one should at least try to discipline *one* activity, and persist until one succeeds.

13 October 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I have formed the bad habit of nearly always being late everywhere.

There is no habit that cannot be changed.

14 October 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

It seems that a list of books (English classics) was sent to You for Your approval, but that You wish only the works of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to be read. You have even remarked that to read these old classics is to lower the level of one's consciousness.

Some Answers from the Mother

Mother, do You advise this only for those who are practising yoga or for everybody?

First of all, what has been reported is not correct. Secondly, the advice is adapted to each case and cannot be made a general rule.

12 November 1963

*

(Written by the Mother at the beginning of a notebook containing quotations from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri)

Some extracts from *Savitri*, that marvellous prophetic poem which will be humanity's guide towards its future realisation.

27 November 1963

*

*Sweet Mother,
I am very irregular in my studies; I don't know what to do.*

Shake off your "tamas" a little — otherwise you will become a blockhead!

27 December 1963

*

*Sweet Mother,
The ardour of making an effort is waning. I feel contented. But time passes so quickly that one feels one has not made the most out of what is given to us.*

That proves that life is too easy here and that for the most part you are all too tamasic to make an effort unless goaded by the difficulties of ordinary life. Only a very ardent aspiration can remedy this deadly condition. But the aspiration is absent and your soul is asleep!

2 January 1964

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

1964

Bonne Année

I hope that this new year will see the reawakening of your soul
and the awakening in your consciousness of a will to progress.

3 January 1964

*

I have kept your notebook in the hope of finding time to read and
correct it. But the weeks go by and I see that it is impossible. I
am therefore returning it to you without having read it, and I ask
you not to send it again until it is possible for me to start looking
at it once more. Continue your translation of the Aphorisms; I
shall send you more at a time for correction.

My blessings are always with you.

17 February 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*You blessed me that I may be born to the true life,
but what are the conditions needed to be born to that
life and how can they be fulfilled?*

The first condition is to decide not to live for oneself any more,
but to live exclusively for the Divine.

Naturally, this decision should be renewed every day and
manifested in a constant and effective will.

29 April 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*“Not to live for oneself” is understandable and one
can try to put it into practice; but what does “to live
exclusively for the Divine” mean exactly? For me it is*

Some Answers from the Mother

*only an idea mechanically repeated by the mind; but,
Mother, what can one do to realise it?*

To live for the Divine means to offer all that one does to the Divine without desiring a personal result from what one does. Certainly at the beginning, when the Divine is only a word or at most an idea and not *an experience*, the whole thing remains purely mental. But if one makes a sincere and repeated effort, one day the experience comes and one feels that the offering made is made to something real, tangible, concrete and beneficent. The more sincere and assiduous one is, the sooner the experience comes and the longer it remains.

For each person the way differs in its details, but sincerity and perseverance are equally indispensable for all.

6 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*Would it be possible to have an electric fan? X
promised me one three years ago, but now he advises
me to ask You.*

You may have one if there is one or if you can find one. But do you think it will help you to find the Divine?

7 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*Regarding the fan, I don't think it will help me to
find the Divine, but is it an obstacle? If You think it
is better for me not to have it, all right, I accept Your
decision without complaint.*

What is an obstacle to the spiritual life is to attach importance to material comfort and to take one's desires for needs — in other words, self-deception. Now, *if you have a fan* and wish to use

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

it, you may do so, knowing that it will not help you in any way to make progress — that it will only give your body the illusion of being more comfortable.

These things ought to have no importance in life.

13 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

One is often afraid of doing what is new; the body refuses to act in a new way, such as trying a new gymnastic figure or another kind of dive. Where does this fear come from? How can one get rid of it? And again, how can one encourage others to do so?

The body is afraid of anything new because its very base is inertia, tamas; it is the vital which brings in a dominant note of rajas, activity. That is why, as a general rule, the intrusion of the vital in the form of ambition, emulation and vanity, compels the body to shake off the tamas and make the necessary effort to progress.

Naturally, those in whom the mind is dominant can lecture their body and provide it with all the reasons needed to overcome its fear.

The best way for everyone is self-giving to the Divine and trust in His infinite Grace.

13 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Self-deception has a thousand faces and a thousand ways of disguising itself in us. How can one discover it and get rid of it?

It is a long, slow task which can only be accomplished by a perfect sincerity. One must be very attentive, always on guard,

Some Answers from the Mother

watch all one's emotional movements and vital reactions, never close one's eyes with indulgence to one's own weaknesses, and catch oneself each time one makes a mistake, even a small one.

If one continues with persistence, this becomes very interesting and gets easier and easier.

20 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the difference between pleasure, joy, happiness, ecstasy and Ananda? Can we find one in the other?

Ananda belongs to the Supreme Lord.

Ecstasy belongs to the perfected yogi.

Joy belongs to the desireless man.

Pleasure is within the reach of all living beings, but with its inevitable accompaniment of suffering.

27 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Your answers last week were very succinct. Isn't a perfected yogi identified with the Supreme Lord? Isn't a desireless man a sincere sadhak?

My answers are given in order to open your mind and to make you exceed, little by little, your present mental limits.

The Supreme Lord can give his Ananda to whomever He wants and as He wants.

A sadhak is one who has chosen a yogic discipline and practises it. There are desireless men who are not pursuing any yoga.

Widen your thought — it is very necessary!

3 June 1964

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

*(Regarding love) How can one direct this human love
towards the ideal love, the true love?*

There is only one true love — it is the Divine Love; all other loves are diminutions, limitations and deformations of that Love. Even the love of the bhakta for his God is a diminution and often is tainted by egoism. But as one tends quite naturally to become like what one loves, the bhakta, if he is sincere, begins to become like the Divine whom he adores, and thus his love becomes purer and purer. To adore the Divine in the one whom one loves has often been suggested as a solution, but unless one's heart and thought are *very pure*, it can lead to deplorable abasements.

It would seem that in your situation, the best solution would be to use your mutual attachment to unite your efforts in a common and combined aspiration to attain the Divine, and in perfect sincerity to let each bring to the other, as far as possible, what the other needs to attain that goal.

10 June 1964

*

*Sweet Mother,
How can one know the other's need and help him?*

I was not speaking of external things and mental faculties! True love is in the soul (all the rest is vital attraction or mental and physical attachment, nothing else) and the soul (the psychic being) knows instinctively what the other needs to receive and is always ready to give it to him.

17 June 1964

*

*Sweet Mother,
Is it because we have defects in ourselves that we
cannot tolerate them in others? What is the origin of the
shock we feel?*

Some Answers from the Mother

Yes, in a general way it is the defects you have in yourselves which seem to you most shocking in others.

Later on, you come to understand that others are a mirror reflecting the image of what you are.

24 June 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Just as there are tangible and concrete bodily exercises and disciplines for physical culture, is there not something tangible and concrete for the progress of the soul and the consciousness?

Since the most ancient times, each system of yoga has developed its own discipline in all its details. All that can be studied, learned and practised. But according to Sri Aurobindo's teaching, each of these practices has its limitations and gives only a partial result. That is why he advised those who want to follow the integral yoga to find their *own* discipline, based on the ancient knowledge but adapted to the needs and the condition of each individual.

1 July 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I thought that illness came from some impurity or weakness in the being, but what does this epidemic in the Ashram mean? Even X was a victim. Where does this epidemic come from?

An epidemic is a *collective* illness and comes from a *collective* impurity. The Ashram as a whole is evidently very far from what it should be to be equal to its task and give to the world the example of a total consecration to the Divine Work and the

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

preparation of the future. The forms of illness vary according to the condition of each person and his link with the whole.

8 July 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I am trying to concentrate in the heart and to enter deep within as You advised me to do, but in vain. The only result is that I get a headache, a kind of dizziness, but as soon as I open my eyes everything becomes normal again. What should I do?

This means that you are not yet ready for a spiritual discipline and that you must wait until life has moulded you a little more and your psychic consciousness awakens from the slumber in which it lies.

15 July 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Until I am ready for a spiritual discipline, what should I do, apart from aspiring that the Mother may pull me out of the slumber and awaken my psychic consciousness?

To develop your intelligence, read the teachings of Sri Aurobindo regularly and very attentively. To develop and master your vital, carefully observe your movements and reactions with a will to overcome desires, and aspire to find your psychic being and unite with it. Physically, continue with what you are doing, develop and control your body methodically, make yourself useful by working at the Playground and your place of work, and try to do it as selflessly as possible.

If you are sincere and scrupulously honest, my help is certainly with you and one day you will become aware of it.

22 July 1964

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

When a stranger asks us what the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is, how can we give him a reply that is both short and correct?

The Ashram is the cradle of a new world, of the creation of tomorrow.

And if other questions are put to you, the only reply to be made is: you must read the books and study the teaching.

29 July 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Are there really any tragedies in life, since everything leads to the Divine?

They are tragedies for those who take them tragically — the immense majority of human beings.

One must live in the consciousness of the Divine Unity to see the Grace behind everything.

5 August 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

People often say that our food does not contain enough vitamins and protein. The doctors claim that this is why we have so much physical and bodily suffering.¹⁴ Is it really the cause? Does food have such an important place in life?

For those whose consciousness is centred *in the body*, who live for the body, its desires and satisfactions, those for whom the *truth* begins and ends *with the body*, it is evident that food is of capital importance since they *live to eat*.

¹⁴ Beside this sentence, the Mother wrote: "So much as that???"

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

The doctors are always anxious to throw the responsibility for their incompetence to cure on the external conditions of life.

If one wants to see the truth of the problem, it is this: only an enlightened body, balanced and free from all vital desire and mental preconception, is capable of knowing what it needs in regard to quantity and kind of food — and it is so exceptional to find such a body that we need not speak of it.

Apart from that, one must act for the best and not attach too much importance to it.

Let those who have confidence in doctors do as they advise and see if it helps them to suffer less!

12 August 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

There are times when I feel like abandoning all my activities — the Playground, band, studies, etc. — and devoting all my time to work. But my logic does not accept this. Where does this idea come from and why?

In this case your logic is right. In the outer nature there is often a tamasic tendency to simplify the conditions of life in order to avoid the effort of organising more complicated circumstances. But when one wants to progress in the integrality of the being, this simplification is hardly advisable.

19 August 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the most effective way of overcoming desires and attachments: to cut them off all at one stroke, even at the risk of breaking down, or to advance slowly and surely by eliminating them carefully one by one?

Some Answers from the Mother

Both these ways are equally ineffective. The normal result of both these methods is that you deceive yourself, you delude yourself that you have overcome your desires, whereas at best you are merely sitting on them — they remain repressed in the subconscious until they explode there and cause an upheaval in the whole being.

It is from *within* that you must become master of your lower nature by establishing your consciousness firmly in a domain that is free of all desire and attachment because it is under the influence of the divine Light and Force. It is a long and exacting labour which must be undertaken with an unfailing sincerity and a tireless perseverance.

In any case, you should never pretend to be more perfect than you are, and still less should you be satisfied with false appearances.

26 August 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

When one is very sensitive, one easily suffers. Since this sensitivity is the sign of a strong ego, how can one eliminate the ego?

Why do you say that sensitivity is the sign of a strong ego? It does not seem to be evident at all. Moreover, there are many different kinds of sensitivity: some stem from weakness, others — the best — are the result of refinement. The ego generally governs the development of the individual, but the most developed individualities are not necessarily those in whom the ego is strongest — on the contrary. As the individuality perfects itself, the power of the ego diminishes, and indeed it is by perfecting himself that the individual arrives at that state of divinisation which liberates him from the ego.

2 September 1964

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

*How can one know whether we are progressing or
not, individually and collectively?*

It is always preferable not to try to assess the progress one is making because it does not help one to make it — on the contrary. Aspiration for progress, if it is SINCERE, is sure to have an effect. But whatever the progress made, individually or collectively, the progress still remaining to be made is so considerable that there is no reason to stop on the way to assess the ground one has covered.

The perception that some progress has been made should come spontaneously, by the sudden and unexpected awareness of what one is in comparison with what one was some time before. That is all — but that in itself requires a fairly high degree of development of the consciousness.

9 September 1964

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Sweet Mother,

*I put my question badly last time. I did not mean
the progress one has made, that is to say, the results of
the past, but the state one is in. I do not want to assess
the ground I have covered, but to know whether I am
advancing on the path continually, without stoppage.*

The advance is rarely in a straight and continuous line because a human being is made up of many different parts, and generally one part or another progresses in its turn while the other parts remain quiescent until their turn comes. It is only when the consciousness grows enough to have an overall view that one can see exactly what is happening. But in order to be sure of advancing progressively and regularly, one must always keep alive the flame of one's aspiration.

16 September 1964

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

What is the use of Japa?¹⁵ Is it a good method to repeat words like “Silence” and “Peace” in order to establish silence and peace in oneself when one sits down to meditate?

A mere repetition of words cannot have much effect.

There are classical or traditional Japas which are intended to subdue the lower mind and establish a connection with higher forces or with deities. These Japas must be given by the Guru, who at the same time infuses them with the power of realisation. They are useful only for those who want to do an intensive yoga and spend five or six hours a day in yogic practices.

Japa such as you describe it cannot have much effect except to create a tamasic dullness, which should not be mistaken for mental silence.

23 September 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I heard that an astrologer has predicted that in six months’ time Lal Bahadur Shastri will no longer be Prime Minister and that he will be replaced by Indira Gandhi, but only for a fortnight. Then a period of chaos in the Government will follow. After that, a young man will appear on the scene who will be guided by a divine force coming from a woman of great spiritual power. What do You think about it?

People say many things — especially astrologers!

We have only to wait; we shall surely see what happens.

30 September 1964

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¹⁵ Japa: continuous repetition of a mantra.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

*Is a mistake or a bad action pardonable if one is sure
that what one is doing is right and that one is sincere?
How can one know that one is mistaken?*

The very fact of being mistaken proves that one is not sincere in some part of the being. For the psychic being *knows* and is not mistaken; but more often than not, we do not listen to what it says because it speaks without violence or insistence — it is a murmur in the depths of our heart which is easy to ignore.

However, there are cases where one acts wrongly *out of ignorance*, and this error is effaced as soon as the ignorance is replaced by knowledge and the way of acting completely changed. What man in his ignorance calls “pardon” is the effacement, the dissolution of errors committed.

7 October 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

There are moments when, in spite of myself, a little black cloud of jealousy comes and upsets my activities during my working hours. I dispel it immediately by reasoning, but all the same its effect remains and makes me a little sullen and very touchy.

How can one get rid of this?

By widening one’s consciousness and making it universal.

There is another way, but it is still more difficult. It is by realising the supreme Unity.

14 October 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

People often ask us this question: “What are you doing for society or even for the people of Pondicherry? You are preoccupied with your own community, your own

Some Answers from the Mother

*progress. Nothing exists for you outside the Ashram.
Isn't this a kind of isolation, a form of egoism?"*

To this rather silly kind of question, Sri Aurobindo always used to reply:

“The greatest egoist is the Supreme Lord because He never bothers about anything but Himself!”

27 October 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

There are moments during meditation when I feel that something in me wants to soar aloft and enjoy full freedom. There is a kind of enthusiasm in the soul (I do not know whether it comes from the soul) to enjoy the supreme Ananda and forget life as it really is. What does all this mean?

It is the natural and indispensable counterpart of the moments — so numerous and so frequent! — when you are attached to the physical life and you understand and appreciate only that. The two extremes always alternate in experience until one has found the poise of the total and synthetic truth.

That alone can give the true Freedom which is experienced in all circumstances.

28 October 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Although one part of the being aspires and wants the Divine, the other part is so tamasic and heavy! How can it be awakened? What blows does it need? It is not that this part is against the Divine — it does not even seem to be interested in Him (which is perhaps worse).

That is indeed an indication of complete inertia. Sri Aurobindo has written: “If you cannot love God, at least find a way to fight

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

with Him so that He may be your enemy”¹⁶ (implying that you are sure to be conquered by Him). It is a humorous remark, but it means that of all conditions, inertia is the worst.

Aspiration is the only remedy—an aspiration that rises constantly like a clear flame burning up all the impurities of the being.

4 November 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

We see many people leaving the Ashram, either to seek a career or to study; and they are mostly those who have been here since childhood. There is a kind of uncertainty in our young people when they see others leave here and they say cautiously: “Who knows whether it won’t be my turn some day!” I feel there is a force behind all this. What is it?

This uncertainty and these departures are due to the lower nature, which resists the influence of the yogic power and tries to slow down the divine action, not out of ill-will but in order to be sure that nothing is forgotten or neglected in the haste to reach the goal. Few are ready for a total consecration. Many children who have studied here need to come to grips with life before they can be ready for the divine work, and that is why they leave to undergo the test of ordinary life.

11 November 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I have a habit of blaming myself, of making myself responsible for all misunderstandings; this is a weakness

¹⁶ “If you cannot make God love you, make Him fight you. If He will not give you the embrace of the lover, compel Him to give you the embrace of the wrestler.”

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 130.

Some Answers from the Mother

rather than a virtue, for I feel that I take them upon myself in order to end the matter as quickly as possible — it is a kind of escapism.

Mother, I also feel that I have a very strong inferiority complex.

Where does all this come from and how can I get rid of it?

All this comes from your ego which is very much occupied with itself and far prefers to blame and criticise itself than to think of something else... (the Divine for example) and forget itself.

18 November 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the meaning of one's birthday, apart from its commemorative character? How can one take advantage of this occasion?

Because of the rhythm of the universal forces, a person is supposed to have a special receptivity on his birthday each year.

He can therefore take advantage of this receptivity by making good resolutions and fresh progress on the path of his integral development.

25 November 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Often when I read Sri Aurobindo's works or listen to his words, I am wonder-struck: how can this eternal truth, this beauty of expression escape people! It is really strange that he is not yet recognised, at least as a supreme creator, a pure artist, a poet par excellence! So I tell myself that my judgments, my appreciations are influenced by my devotion for the Master — and not everyone is

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

*devoted. I do not think this is true. But then, why are
men's hearts not yet enchanted by His Words?*

Who can understand Sri Aurobindo? He is as vast as the universe
and his teaching is limitless...

The only way to come a little close to him is to love him
sincerely and give oneself unreservedly to his work. In that
way, each one does his best and contributes as much as he can
to the transformation of the world which Sri Aurobindo has
predicted.

2 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*How can one empty the mind of all thought? When
one tries during meditation, the thought that one must
not think of anything is always there.*

It is not *during* meditation that one must learn to be silent,
because the very fact of trying makes a noise.

One must learn to concentrate one's energies in the heart
—then, when one succeeds in that, silence comes automati-
cally.

9 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*Sri Aurobindo has said somewhere that if we sur-
render to the Divine Grace, it will do everything for us.
Then what is the value of tapasya?*

If you want to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on a given
subject, you must at least read all he has written on that subject.
You will then see that he seems to have said the most contradict-
ory things. But when one has read everything and understood

Some Answers from the Mother

a little, one sees that all the contradictions complement one another and are organised and unified in an integral synthesis.

Here is another quotation by Sri Aurobindo which will show you that your question is an ignorant one. There are many others which you could read to advantage and which will make your intelligence more supple:

“If there is not a complete surrender, then it is not possible to adopt the baby cat attitude, — it becomes mere tamasic passivity calling itself surrender. If a complete surrender is not possible in the beginning, it follows that personal effort is necessary.”¹⁷

16 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*Often after a long meditation (an effort to meditate),
I feel very tired and want to rest. Why is this and how
can I feel differently?*

So long as you are making an effort, it is not meditation and there is not much use in prolonging this state.

To obtain mental silence, one must learn to relax, to let oneself float on the waves of the universal force as a plank floats on water, *motionless* but *relaxed*.

Effort is never silent.

23 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*How can one make use of every moment of this
unique privilege of living here in the Ashram?*

Never forget where you are.

¹⁷ *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 23, pp. 593–94.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Never forget where you are living and the true aim of life.
Remember this at every moment and in all circumstances. In this
way you will make the best use of your existence.

Happy New Year for 1965.

30 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*What is the eternal truth behind this sympathy or
attraction of man for woman and of woman for man?*

The relationship between Purusha and Prakriti.

You have only to read what Sri Aurobindo has written on
this subject.

5 January 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

*You have said in Your New Year message for this
year: “Salute to the advent of Truth.” Is it therefore very
near? What must we do during 1965 to prepare ourselves
to recognise it and receive it?*

The best thing to do is to distinguish in oneself the origin of all
one’s movements — those that come from the light of truth and
those that come from the old inertia and falsehood — in order
to accept the first and to refuse or reject the others.

With practice one learns to distinguish more and more
clearly, but one can establish as a general rule that all that
tends towards disharmony, disorder and inertia comes from
the falsehood and all that favours union, harmony, order and
consciousness comes from the Truth.

This is only a hint, nothing more, about how to take the
first steps on the path.

13 January 1965

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Does Your message for this year announce an Age of Truth — what is called the Satya Yuga in the ancient Scriptures (the Mahabharata)?

An age of truth is sure to come before the earth is transformed.

21 January 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

What does this extraordinary Asuric attack on the Ashram mean?¹⁸ Are we responsible for it because of our faults and because we disobey the Supreme Truth in our daily lives?

Very certainly such a thing has been made possible because the atmosphere of the Ashram is not pure enough to be invulnerable to falsehood.

17 February 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Somebody asked me this question: “Is it not a great loss for human society if persons endowed with an exceptional capacity to serve mankind, such as a gifted doctor or barrister, come to stay here in the Ashram for their own salvation? They could perhaps serve the Divine better by serving men and the world!”

Nobody comes here for his *own salvation* because Sri Aurobindo does not believe in *salvation*; for us *salvation* is a meaningless word. We are here to prepare the transformation of the earth and men so that the new creation may take place, and if we

¹⁸ On the evening of February 11, many Ashram buildings were stoned, burned or looted, ostensibly as part of an anti-Hindi agitation.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

make individual efforts to progress, it is because this progress is indispensable for the accomplishment of the work.

I am surprised that after having lived in the Ashram for so long, you can still think in this way and be open to this Sunday-school drivel.

I am sending you a quotation from Sri Aurobindo which will perhaps help to enlighten your thought.

“It is equally ignorant and one thousand miles away from my teaching to find it in your relations with human beings or in the nobility of the human character or an idea that we are here to establish mental and moral and social Truth and justice on human and egoistic lines. I have never promised to do anything of the kind. Human nature is made up of imperfections, even its righteousness and virtue are pretensions, imperfections and prancings of self-approbatory egoism.... What is aimed at by us is a spiritual truth as the basis of life, the first words of which are surrender and union with the Divine and the transcendence of ego. So long as that basis is not established, a sadhak is only an ignorant and imperfect human being struggling with the evils of the lower nature.... What is created by spiritual progress is an inner closeness and intimacy in the inner being, the sense of the Mother’s love and presence etc.”

24 February 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

*What is the best way of expressing one’s gratitude
towards man and towards the Divine?*

Why do you put man and the Divine together?

It is true that man is essentially divine, but at present, apart from a few very rare exceptions, man is quite unconscious of the Divine he carries within him; and it is just this unconsciousness which constitutes the falsehood of the material world.

Some Answers from the Mother

I have already written to you that our gratitude should go to the Divine and that as for men what is required is an attitude of goodwill, understanding and mutual help.

To feel deeply, intensely and constantly a total gratitude towards the Divine is the best way to be happy and peaceful.

And the only true way of expressing one's gratitude to the Divine is to identify with Him.

3 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

When can one say with certitude that one has started Sri Aurobindo's yoga? What is the sure sign of it?

It is impossible to say, because for each person it is different. It depends on the part of one's being that awakens first and responds to Sri Aurobindo's influence.

And no one can tell about another person.

10 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

I aspire to live the yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the life divine. But I feel that I am in a virgin forest in which I have lost my sense of direction. Where exactly am I?

I would like to have an indication, a way to get out, onto the right path, the path leading to the Divine.

Generally, the starting-point must be an experience, however small, which serves as a compass on the way, an experience one refers to in order to be sure of not going astray, until one is ready for another more important and conclusive experience.

The real landmarks on the way are the spontaneous experiences, not those that come from a mental formation and are always unreliable.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

The experience must come *first* and the explanation afterwards. That is why Sri Aurobindo has said: Never distrust your experience; but you may distrust your explanation, which is a mental activity.¹⁹

It is very important to take note of one's experiences and remember them. To construct a system of development is secondary and sometimes harmful.

17 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one distinguish a dream from an experience?

In a general way, a dream leaves a confused and fleeting impression, whereas an experience awakens a deep and lasting feeling.

But the shades of difference are subtle and many, and it is by a very attentive and *sincere* observation (that is to say, free from bias and preference) that one gradually learns to discern the one from the other.

24 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Just as there is a methodical progression of exercises for mental and physical education, isn't there a similar method to progress towards Sri Aurobindo's yoga? It should vary with each individual. Could you make a step-by-step programme for me to follow daily?

The mechanical regularity of a fixed programme is indispensable for physical, mental and vital development; but this mechanical

¹⁹ "Experience in thy soul the truth of the Scripture; afterwards, if thou wilt, reason and state thy experience intellectually and even then distrust thy statement; but distrust never thy experience."

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 89

Some Answers from the Mother

rigidity has little or no effect on spiritual development where the spontaneity of an absolute sincerity is indispensable.

Sri Aurobindo has written very clearly on this subject. And what he has written on it has appeared in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

However, as an initial help to set you on the path, I can tell you: (1) that on getting up, before starting the day, it is good to make an offering of this day to the Divine, an offering of all that one thinks, all that one is, all that one will do; (2) and at night, before going to sleep, it is good to review the day, taking note of all the times one has forgotten or neglected to make an offering of one's self or one's action, and to aspire or pray that these lapses do not recur.

This is a minimum, a very small beginning — and it should increase with the sincerity of your consecration.

31 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one increase single-mindedness and will-power? They are so necessary for doing anything.

Through regular, persevering, obstinate, unflagging exercise — I mean exercise of concentration and will.

*

Mother, I have started reading French books — X has given me a list.

It is good for you to read a lot of French; it will teach you how to write.

7 April 1965

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

You have written: “Of all renunciations, the most difficult is to renounce one’s good habits.” What exactly do you mean by this? Does it suggest that good habits are not necessary in the yoga?

Good habits are indispensable so long as one acts out of habit. But to attain the supreme goal of yoga, one must abandon all ties, whatever they may be. And good habits are also a tie which must one day be abandoned when one wants to obey and *is able* to obey nothing but the one supreme impulse, the Will of the Supreme.

14 April 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You have written: “So long as you have to renounce anything, you are not on this path.”²⁰ But doesn’t all renunciation begin when one is on the path?

What I call “being on the path” is being in a state of consciousness in which only union with the Divine has any value — this union is the only thing worth living, the sole object of aspiration. Everything else has lost all value and is not worth seeking, so there is no longer any question of renouncing it because it is no longer an object of desire.

As long as union with the Divine is not *the* thing for which one lives, one is not yet on the path.

21 April 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Why is India, which has such a rich past and the promise of such a brilliant future, in such a miserable

²⁰ *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, p. 128.

Some Answers from the Mother

condition at present? When will she emerge from this pitiful condition and reaffirm her greatness?

When she renounces falsehood and lives in the Truth.

28 April 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

*Why did Sri Aurobindo advise India's leaders to accept the Cripps Proposal in 1942, when He knew fully well that they would not?*²¹

The Divine often advises or tries to guide man, knowing very well that His help will be refused. Why then does He do it?

The Divine *always* informs, but it is rare indeed for men to listen to Him. Either they do not hear Him or do not believe Him.

Men always complain of not being helped, but the truth is that they refuse the help which is *always* with them.

5 May 1965

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Sweet Mother,

You say that to hope to partake of the new realisation, "you must feel that this world is ugly, stupid, brutal and full of intolerable suffering".²² But what would be the state of one who feels that everything here is the play

²¹ Sri Aurobindo sent a special messenger to Delhi advising Indian leaders to accept, as a first step towards independence, Sir Stafford Cripps' proposal of Dominion status for India. Sri Aurobindo held that this proposal conferred essential independence on India by putting her on a par with the various Dominions already associated with the United Kingdom. Had his advice been heeded, the partition of India might have been avoided.

²² *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, p. 128.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

of a benevolent God? Would he not also participate in this new realisation?

It is in the depths of the consciousness, beyond the mind, that one can in all sincerity have the experience that all is the Divine and that only the Divine exists. But the manifestation is progressive, and in order to have the strength to advance by rejecting what ought to disappear, one must strongly feel one's unworthiness and incapacity to express the divine perfection.

The two states of consciousness should be simultaneous and complementary, not successive and contradictory, and this too is possible only when the seat of consciousness is beyond the mind and its limitations.

12 May 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

When department heads or superiors make mistakes or commit an injustice towards their subordinates, what should be the attitude of those affected by these errors? Should one keep silent and say, "It is none of my business", or should one try to point out the mistake to them?

Neither the one nor the other.

First and always, we must ask ourselves what our instrument of judgment is. One must ask, "What is my judgment based on? Do I have perfect knowledge? What in me is judging? Do I have the divine consciousness? Am I completely disinterested in this matter? Am I free of all desire and all ego?"

And since the answer to all these questions will be the same, namely, "NO", the honest and sincere conclusion must be: "I cannot judge, I do not have the elements needed for a true judgment; therefore I will not judge, I will keep quiet."

19 May 1965

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Being far from the Truth-Consciousness, must one always remain silent, even though as an individual one is obliged to make decisions and give opinions?

What constitutes an individuality?

An individuality is a conscious being organised around a divine centre. All the divine centres are essentially One in their origin, but they act as separate beings in the manifestation.

The individual must make decisions in order to live, but it is not indispensable that he should have opinions, and still less that he should air them.

It is ignorance that has opinions.

Knowledge *knows*.

26 May 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

The descent of the Supermind, which You announced on the 29th of February 1956, is still only "something one hears about" for most people here.

When shall we feel and see this supreme and radical change of the whole nature which You have predicted?

The descent of the forerunners of the supramental forces is a *fact* (not a prediction). The incapacity of the vast majority of human beings to become conscious of it is a *fact* which can in no way affect the fact of the advent of these forces and powers in the physical world.

The "supreme and radical" change of the whole nature can only come about after a long and slow preparation, and men will perceive it only when their consciousness has become enlightened.

2 June 1965

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

The resolutions I make lose their intensity and ardour after a time. How can I keep this enthusiasm and increase it more and more?

BY WANTING TO.

9 June 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You have written: “The force which, when absorbed in the Ignorance, assumes the form of vital desires is the same which, in its pure form, constitutes the dynamis towards transformation.”²³

Is this dynamis that of aspiration? If so, could one say that aspiration is a purified desire?

One can say whatever one likes, provided one knows what one is talking about.

The words are of little importance; it is the experience and the sincerity of the experience that count.

23 June 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You speak (in Conversations) of the plunge we must take in order to have the true spiritual experience. Is it possible to achieve it by aspiration alone, or is there a method or discipline to be followed?

Everything is possible. All paths lead to the goal provided they are followed with persistence and sincerity.

²³ *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, p. 133.

Some Answers from the Mother

It is best for each person to find his own path, but for this the aspiration must be ardent, the will unshakable, the patience unfailing.

30 June 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Are illnesses and accidents the result of something bad one has thought or done, of a fall in one's consciousness? If the cause is a mistake one has made, how can one find out what it is?

It has nothing to do with *punishment*; it is the natural and normal consequence of an error, shortcoming or fault which necessarily has consequences. Actually, everything in the world is a question of equilibrium or disequilibrium, of harmony or disorder. Vibrations of harmony attract and encourage harmonious events; vibrations of disequilibrium create, as it were, a disequilibrium in circumstances (illnesses, accidents, etc.). This may be collective or individual, but the principle is the same — and so is the remedy: to cultivate in oneself order and harmony, peace and equilibrium by surrendering unreservedly to the Divine Will.

7 July 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

*Sri Aurobindo says: "If the transformation of the body is complete, that means no subjection to death.... One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change...."*²⁴

Mother, what does he mean by "One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change"? Does this change take place in the present body or does one have

²⁴ *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 11.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

to leave it? If one has to leave the body, there seems to be death. So...?

What he means is that when one will have the power to withdraw the physical body from the influence of death, the power of transformation will be such that one will also be able to change the form of that body at will.

14 July 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

What do You mean by “to change the form of that body at will”? For example, will a hundred-year old man be able to renew his body and become a young man of twenty-five?

Those who have a supramentalised body will not be subject to the law of aging; consequently the question of age will not arise for them.

21 July 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Once, in one of Your Wednesday classes, You said that in order not to feel pain one must, so to speak, cut the nerve that conveys this sensation to the brain. How can this be done?

I did not say “cut the nerve” — that would be a surgical operation! I said, cut the conscious connection with the brain.

It is an occult operation, certainly more difficult than the other for those who don’t know how to do it, but less dangerous.

28 July 1965

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Does every person who comes to earth have a definite goal he must achieve in this life, and does he achieve it unconsciously in spite of himself?

YES.

11 August 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

People who come to the Ashram for the first time are often delighted with their visit and full of praise for the efficient administration of this organisation. But when they get to know the Ashram and the sadhaks better, their admiration begins to wane and they find that Ashram people are far more egoistic than people from outside, more arrogant, lacking any sympathy, incapable of cooperation, etc. What do You say to all this, Mother?

Sometimes it is like that, as a matter of fact, and sometimes it is the opposite: at first a total incomprehension, but later, little by little, one comes to understand and appreciate.

Both are equally true and equally incomplete.

In the world as it is now, everything is mixed and each one sees and feels that which corresponds to his own nature.

To tell the truth, *it doesn't matter at all.*

25 August 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

I really feel that there is a great lack of harmony and cooperation here among us and among the various departments. This results in a great waste of money and energy. Where does this disharmony come from and when will it be set right?

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Or is this feeling I have only a reflection of my own nature!

Here is the best answer to your questions, written by Sri Aurobindo:

Each one carries in himself the seeds of this disharmony, and his most urgent work is to purify himself of it by a constant aspiration.

1 September 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo writes in His Essays on the Gita: “The law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid.” What does this mean?

Mother, is the present situation in India²⁵ like the debt that must be paid to Rudra?

Here is the whole quotation which I had prepared in advance for those who want to know the reason for the present situation. I am sending it to you so that your question becomes unnecessary.

“No real peace can be till the heart of man deserves peace; the law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid. To turn aside then and preach to a still unevolved mankind the law of love and oneness? Teachers of the law of love and oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation. But not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality. Christ and Buddha have come and gone but it is Rudra who still holds the world in the hollow of his hand. And meanwhile the fierce forward labour of mankind tormented and oppressed by the powers that are profiteers of egoistic force and their servants

²⁵ On September 1, Pakistan invaded India’s border at Jammu-Kashmir.

Some Answers from the Mother

cries for the sword of the Hero of the struggle and the word of its prophet.”²⁶

8 September 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

*In spite of Your message of September 16 to the Prime Minister and the Army Chief of Staff, was not our Government's acceptance of the cease-fire the best that could be done under the circumstances?*²⁷

They could not do otherwise.

29 September 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

I often feel, and very concretely too, that You are constantly protecting me from all the misfortunes of life. But I very often ask myself: "Why does Mother protect me and keep me in such happiness, I who so little deserve it?"

Because it is not a question of merit but of Grace.

6 October 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

One sees that the world as a whole is presently in a sort of disequilibrium and chaos. Does this mean that it is preparing for the manifestation of a new force, for the descent of the Truth, or is it the result of the action

²⁶ Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, SABCL, Vol. 13, p. 372.

²⁷ The Indo-Pakistan conflict ended in a cease-fire on September 22. The Mother's message, sent six days prior to the cease-fire, was: "It is for the sake and the triumph of Truth that India is fighting and must fight until India and Pakistan have become *One* because that is the truth of their being."

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

of hostile forces in revolt against this descent? And what place does India occupy in all this?

It is both at the same time — a chaotic means of preparation. India ought to be the spiritual guide who explains what is happening and helps to hasten the movement. But unfortunately, in her blind ambition to imitate the West, she has become materialistic and neglectful of her soul.

13 October 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

We know that we should not do certain things and we do not really want to do them, but still we do them. Why does this happen? How can we avoid it?

That's how it is when one is lacking in will and in force of consciousness.

Both of these can be acquired if one is sincere in one's aspiration.

20 October 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

About individual transformation and social transformation You say: "Since the environment reacts upon the individual and, on the other hand, the value of the environment depends upon the value of the individual, the two works should proceed side by side. But this can be done only through division of labour, and that necessitates the formation of a group, hierarchicised, if possible."²⁸

²⁸ Words of Long Ago, CWM, Vol. 2, p. 50.

Some Answers from the Mother

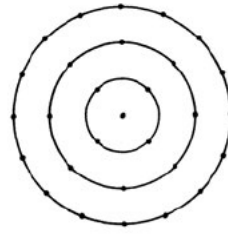
Mother, I do not understand what You mean by the formation of a hierarchicised group.

A hierarchicised group means a group in which the activities and functions are organised according to individual ability, with a leader at the centre. A military organisation, for example, is a hierarchy.

Here is a diagram of the ancient traditional hierarchies.

1 — 4 — 8 — 16

and so on.



27 October 1965

Sweet Mother,

*Is there a hierarchicised group here in the Ashram?
Mother, I want to know more about it, but I don't know
how to formulate it.*

Every group, if it is a real one—that is, one made up according to the ability of the individuals who compose it—must necessarily be hierarchical.

But there are considerable obstacles to the realisation of this hierarchy:

(1) First, when the group is incomplete—that is, when it does not have all the members necessary to constitute the hierarchy and certain functions or intermediaries are missing.

(2) The indiscipline of certain members refusing wholly or in part to occupy the place assigned to them.

When order and harmony are established, the hierarchy is organised quite naturally and spontaneously.

3 November 1965

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

Why does one feel afraid? Where does fear come from?

Fear is an invention of the hostile forces who have created it as the best means of dominating living beings, animals and men.

Those who are *pure* — that is to say, exclusively under the Divine influence — have no fear.

10 November 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You write in Your Conversations: “Each time that something of the Divine Truth and the Divine Force comes down to manifest upon earth, some change is effected in the earth’s atmosphere.”²⁹

(1) Is this change always violent and destructive, such as a revolution or a war?

Not necessarily. What expresses itself as a war or a revolution is the resistance in the human consciousness to the New Force. When the resistance is less, everything takes place harmoniously.

*

(2) And is the converse always valid: if there is a war or a revolution, is it the sign of a descent of the Truth?

Not necessarily. Human folly takes advantage of the slightest cause to manifest itself.

17 November 1965

*

²⁹ *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, p. 79.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

You write: "Each one here represents an impossibility to be solved."³⁰ Could You explain to me what this means exactly?

It is an ironic way of saying that the most difficult cases, from the standpoint of transformation, are gathered here to concretise and synthesise the work of transforming the earth in order to prepare the new creation.

1 December 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You told me to enter within, into the depths of my heart, to find You seated there. But, Mother, I cannot manage to enter into the heart. I feel during meditation that my consciousness is flying around an impenetrable fortress. What should I do to succeed in what You have told me?

This happens because you are trying to enter with a superficial consciousness which does not have contact with the inner states of being. You have to go out of this external consciousness and penetrate into a subtler consciousness; then the fortress will no longer be impenetrable.

22 December 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

What must we do to serve the Truth? Must it first of all be lived?

To serve It, you must live it.

To live it, you must necessarily serve it.

³⁰ *Words of the Mother—II*, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 84.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

And for both, you must want it with sincerity and persistence.

5 January 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

There is a tendency among most of us here to conduct our lives and programmes according to the customs of society. We say: "We must also think of the opinion of people from outside. Since we live in society, we must be reasonable and lead a life in keeping with theirs." Sweet Mother, what do You say to all this and what should our attitude be towards the customs and laws of society?

If most people here think and feel like that, it is an obvious proof that most are not at all ready for the new life, nor even ready to *prepare* for the new life. And to tell the truth, they would do far better to return to the ordinary life and experience it, instead of taking advantage of the exceptional conditions of existence they have here, without being worthy of enjoying them.

12 January 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Formerly, You were very strict about permitting people to come and live in the Ashram. Now it is no longer so. Why?

So long as the Ashram was reserved for those who wanted to practise the yoga, it was natural to be strict.

As soon as the children were admitted here, it was no longer possible to be strict and the nature of the life changed.

Now the Ashram has become a symbolic representation of life on earth and everything can find a place in it, provided it has the will to progress towards a diviner life.

19 January 1966

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

I ask myself whether I am practising yoga! But the answer is not sure. Can You tell me where I am and how I can progress on this path?

By the very fact that you are living on earth, you are doing a yoga, even if you do not know it; and by the very fact that you are living here, you are helped in your yoga to the utmost of your possibilities. The only thing you lack is being conscious.

2 February 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

You say that “by the very fact that you are living on earth, you are doing a yoga” and You also told me that “the Ashram was reserved for those who wanted to practise the yoga”; and again, I believe you have said somewhere, “Not everyone here is meant for yoga.” So... ?

Poor boy! Now you are perplexed...

Well, all three are true, but on different planes, and to understand something of the problem one has to reach the domain where the three complement one another and unite.

9 February 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

When You say:

(1) “By the very fact that you are living on earth, you are doing a yoga” — do You mean that it is the yoga of the natural and inevitable progress of evolution?

(2) “The Ashram was reserved for those who wanted to practise the yoga” — that is to say, only for those who are practising consciously?

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

(3) *“Not everyone here is meant for yoga” — that is, they are incapable of doing it consciously?*

YES.

16 February 1966

*

*Sweet Mother,
How can one increase one’s receptivity?*

Receptivity is proportionate to self-giving.

2 March 1966

*

*Sweet Mother,
There was a time when I used to see You often in my dreams and sometimes I even saw Sri Aurobindo too. But I haven’t enjoyed this happiness for a long time. Why? What does it mean?*

The best way of seeing us in your dreams is to concentrate on us before going to sleep. Do you do this now as you used to before? This is also the way to avoid going to undesirable places during your sleep, for in those places you are sure not to meet us. Try, and you will see the result.

23 March 1966

*

*Sweet Mother,
We are supposed to be attempting something that no one has ever tried before. But, Mother, isn’t it true that we now tend to direct our lives and activities more and more towards the principles and ways of ordinary life? In that case, aren’t we straying from the true path?*

You are still in the old rut that separates spirituality from life. Whereas Sri Aurobindo has declared, “All life is Yoga” and

Some Answers from the Mother

affirmed that it is *in* life that one must do Yoga. You seem to have forgotten this.

30 March 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Isn't this immense freedom we are given dangerous for those of us who are not yet awake, who are still unconscious? What is the explanation for this opportunity, this good fortune we have been granted?

Danger and risk are part of every forward movement. Without them nothing would ever stir; and also they are indispensable for moulding the character of those who want to progress.

13 April 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

How should I prepare myself for the April 24th Darshan?

Look attentively into yourself to find out what for you is the most important thing, the thing you feel that you couldn't do without.

It is an interesting discovery.

19 April 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Why does anger exist?

I suppose you are asking where anger comes from.

Anger is a violent reaction of the vital to some shock that is unpleasant to it; and when it involves words or thoughts,

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

the mind responds to the influence of the vital and also reacts violently. Any expression of anger is the sign of a lack of self-control.

11 May 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Two days ago I was with You in my dream and You spoke with me for quite a long time. I don't remember the whole conversation, but the impression that remains is that You are not very pleased with the questions I ask You every Wednesday. Is this true?

That you saw and heard me is a sign of progress, and with this I am pleased. But it is true that I find you mentally a bit lazy and indifferent to the opportunity I give you each week to ask me a question. Your questions are rather commonplace and don't give the impression that you are really searching for the secrets of life and the world.

18 May 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Are mental indifference and lack of curiosity a sort of mental inertia?

Usually they are due to mental inertia, unless one has obtained this calm and indifference through a very intense sadhana resulting in a perfect equality for which good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant no longer exist. But in that case, mental activity is replaced by an intuitive activity of a much higher kind.

25 May 1966

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

How can one get out of this mental laziness and inertia?

By wanting to do so, with persistence and obstinacy. By doing every day a mental exercise of reading, organisation and development.

This should alternate in the course of the day with exercises of mental silence in concentration.

1 June 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Are the presence and intervention of the Americans in Vietnam justifiable?

From what point of view are you asking this question?

If it is from the political point of view, politics is steeped in falsehood, and I am not interested in it.

If it is from the moral point of view, morality is a shield which ordinary men flourish to protect themselves from the Truth.

If it is from the spiritual point of view, the Divine Will alone is justifiable, and it is That which men travesty and deform in all their actions.

6 July 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

I had asked my last question from the spiritual point of view and from Your answer I conclude that the American action is not at all justifiable. But, Mother, isn't the world in danger of being swallowed by the Communists and isn't that why the Americans and their Allies are

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

engaged in safeguarding the freedom of man? Is that the Divine Will?

The opinion you express is the opinion of the Americans and of a large number of human beings who think like them. But the Communists and all those who have faith in the Communist ideal have the opposite opinion, not to mention all the many and varied opinions on social and political subjects. All these are only OPINIONS and have no value at all from the Divine point of view—the Divine who does not have an opinion but a total vision of everything as a whole and of the goal to be achieved, which is the only thing that matters.

Everything *mental* is necessarily an opinion and expresses only an infinitesimal fraction of the Truth.

13 July 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Some say that You have stated: “Among the 1500 people who are here, there are only 250 or so who understand Sri Aurobindo’s yoga, only forty-five who practise it, five who are capable of realisation and only one who can be transformed.” What is the truth?

I may have said something of the kind. But the exactness of the numbers is certainly fanciful.

It is true that the number of those who take the yoga seriously is not considerable...

But the Divine Grace is infinite!

20 July 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

I feel it is most shameful on our part to waste the Divine Grace, to misuse this unique privilege granted to

Some Answers from the Mother

us here. But, Mother, why do we do this? For, each one of us has surely felt and enjoyed — at least once in his life, in a blessed moment — the infinite Splendour which is within our reach and awaits us. Yet there are so few of us who take the yoga seriously. Why?

It is quite simply *unconsciousness*, incoercible TAMAS.

27 July 1966

*

(Regarding an invitation to the captain to follow a course of practical studies in Calcutta)

Those who *sincerely want* to learn have all the possibilities to do so here. The only thing that one has outside, but does not have here, is the moral constraint of an external discipline.

Here one is free and the only constraint is the one that one puts *on oneself* when one is SINCERE.

Now it is for you to decide.

3 August 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

I was very happy to receive Your reply and I have decided not to go. In any case I doubted that You would approve of this proposal, but all the same I had the following reasons when I asked You if I could accept the invitation. (Here the reasons are enumerated.)

From your letter I can see that you really have a great desire to accept the invitation... I do not want, then, to deprive you of this experience and I say to you: "You may go."

This decision is final.

4 August 1966

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

*May I have photographs of Sri Aurobindo and You,
with Your blessings, to keep with me when I am far from
Pondicherry?*

Do you really want to go?

22 August 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

One final note on this famous affair of the invitation which has created a lot of misunderstandings everywhere.

Mother, I do not understand You! On one occasion You say to me: “You may go. This decision is final”; later when I come to You, You affirm it once again and send me away with the assurance that You will be with me always, that I can go without fear, that it will do me good, etc., in spite of my insistence that I no longer feel like going after having received Your first letter.

Naturally, after that, I go and make all the necessary arrangements. X arranges for my departure. But later on, You reply to X that You have given me permission because You learned from me that he approves of my going there. Strange!

Truly, I understand nothing about all this except that You are not enthusiastic about my going. But why all this complication? I don’t know what X thinks of me, but it is true that I have got him into a very complicated situation and I regret it.

Mother, after Your last question, I no longer feel like going. I WILL NOT GO. This is my final decision. This famous chapter is closed.

Some Answers from the Mother

Very good. And everything I did was precisely to bring you to this decision!

23 August 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

India is supposed to be the Guru of the world in order to establish the spiritual life on earth. But, Mother, in order to occupy this high position she must be worthy politically, morally and physically, mustn't she?

Without any doubt — and just now, there is much to be done!

7 September 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Why this chaotic condition in our present government? Is it the sign of a change for the better, for the reign of Truth?

It is the pressure of the force of Truth on the whole earth which is causing disorder, confusion and falsehood to spring up everywhere in a refusal to be transformed.

The victory of the Truth is certain, but it is difficult to say when and how it will come about.

14 September 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one practise yogic disciplines without believing in God or the Divine?³¹

Why? It is very easy. Because these are only words. When one practises without believing in God or the Divine, one practises

³¹ The Mother replied to this question orally; she was speaking to someone other than the captain.

in order to attain some perfection, to make progress, for all sorts of reasons.

Are there many people — I am not speaking of those who have a religion: they learn a catechism when they are young and that doesn't mean much; but out of people taken as they are — are there many who believe in the Divine? Not in Europe anyway. But even here, there are quite a number who by tradition have a "family deity", yet it doesn't bother them at all to take their deity and throw it into the Ganges when they get displeased! It does happen — I know some people who did it. They had a family Kali in their house, they actually did take her and throw her into the Ganges because they were displeased with her. If one believes in the Divine, one cannot do things like that.

I don't know — believe in the Divine? One thirsts for a certain perfection, perhaps even to transcend oneself, to arrive at something higher than what one is; if one is a philanthropist, one has an aspiration that mankind should become better, or less unhappy, less miserable; all sorts of things like that. One can practise yoga for that, but that is not believing. To believe is to have the faith that there cannot be a world without the Divine, that the very existence of the world proves the existence of the Divine. And not just a "belief", not something one has thought out or been taught, nothing like that: faith. A faith that is a living knowledge, not an acquired one, that the existence of the world is enough to prove the Divine. Without the Divine, no world. And this is so obvious, you see, that one has the impression that in order to think otherwise, one has to be a bit dense. And the "Divine" not in the sense of "purpose" or "goal" or "end", not that sort of thing: the world as it is proves the Divine. Because it is the Divine under a certain aspect — a rather distorted one, but still...

For me it is even stronger than that. I look at a rose, a thing that contains such a concentration of spontaneous beauty — not man-made: spontaneous, a blossoming; one has only to

Some Answers from the Mother

see it to be sure that there is a Divine. It is a certainty. One cannot... it is impossible not to believe. It is like those people (this is fantastic!), those people who study Nature, really study it thoroughly, how everything functions and is brought about and exists — how can one study sincerely, with attention and care, without being absolutely convinced that the Divine is there? We call it the Divine — the Divine is tiny! (*Mother laughs.*) For me existence is an incontestable proof that there is... that there is nothing but That — something we cannot name, cannot define, cannot describe, but something we can feel and can more and more become. A Something that is more perfect than all the perfections, more beautiful than all the beauties, more marvelous than all the marvels, so that even the totality of all that exists cannot express it. And there is nothing but That. And it is not a Something floating in nothingness: there is nothing but That.

8 October 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

*How can we know that our acts, our thoughts and
our aspirations are not tainted by vital desire, though
they may seem right to our common sense?*

It is a question of *inner sincerity*. Common sense is not a judge because it is a mental function of a rather inferior order.

Moreover, there is a very simple way of knowing. One has only to imagine that the thing one wants to do will not be done, and if this imagination creates the least uneasiness, then one can be sure of the presence of desire.

12 October 1966

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

In this integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo, work has a place of capital importance, doesn't it? This being the case, what place does meditation have?

Work does not go on twenty-four hours a day.

There is room for many other activities which have their purpose in an *integral* Yoga.

26 October 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

In the story You wrote, "The Virtues", You describe several virtues. Which is the most necessary?

SINCERITY.

2 November 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

For several years now, we have been hearing that the Ashram is in a terrible financial condition, and from time to time we clearly see this for ourselves. But, Mother, we also see extravagant spending by certain individuals and certain departments. Moreover, these expenditures are possible only through Your generosity. So how can it be said that the Ashram is undergoing a financial crisis?

But perhaps it is just *because* certain individuals and certain departments are spending extravagantly that there is a financial crisis!...

Otherwise all is well.

30 November 1966

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Your reply explains nothing, for isn't it You who orders these expenditures?

Not always.

At least You give Your consent.

Sometimes.

*

When one sits for meditation, one can sometimes succeed in establishing mental silence. But how can one fix this as a constant experience? Because the moment one throws oneself into activity, the mental disturbance begins again!

One can have a quiet mind without being in a complete state of silence; one can carry on an activity without being disturbed. The ideal is to be able to act without coming out of the mental quietude.

One can do everything while keeping the mind quiet, and what one does is better done.

*

In order to achieve self-mastery, should one follow the method of "widening the consciousness"?

Widening the consciousness is necessary for all who want to live a free and intelligent life, even without there being any question of Yoga or aspiration for the Divine Life.

7 December 1966

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

When I heard that X was drowned in a lake at Gingee during the outing, I was unable to believe it or to be shocked by this news. The only question that arose in me was: How is it possible! Mother knew we were at Gingee, so Her protection was with us. Then how is it possible?

The protection is over the group — and if the action of the group is coordinated and disciplined, the protection acts. But when an individual acts independently, the protection acts only in the measure of his faith.

14 December 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

In the Darshan message of November 24th, Sri Aurobindo speaks of the influence of the Divine Compassion and the Divine Grace.³² But what is the difference between the two?

The compassion seeks to relieve the suffering of all, whether they deserve it or not.

The Grace does not recognise the right of suffering to exist and abolishes it.

21 December 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

What are the qualities needed for one to be called “a true child of the Ashram”?

³² “There are these three powers: (1) The Cosmic Law, of Karma or what else; (2) the Divine Compassion acting on as many as it can reach through the nets of the Law and giving them their chance; (3) the Divine Grace which acts more incalculably but also more irresistibly than the others.” — *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 23, p. 609.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sincerity, courage, discipline, endurance, absolute faith in the Divine work and unshakable trust in the Divine Grace. All this must be accompanied by a sustained, ardent, persevering aspiration and a boundless patience.

Happy New Year

28 December 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

It is said that nothing is in us, everything comes from outside. It is also said elsewhere that our vision of the outside (of the world around us) is the reflection of our inner being. Could you explain these two sentences a little?

In order to understand these apparent contradictions, one has to rise to the intellectual level on which all opposite ideas can be set face to face and assembled in a comprehensive synthesis.

*

You once wrote to me that “others are a mirror reflecting the image of what you are.” Can you explain this to me a little?

The things that shock you most in others are those that you are struggling against in yourself or trying to suppress in yourself. Knowing this teaches you to be patient.

1 February 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

On the cards that You send to people on their birthdays, often You simply write: “Bonne fête to X, with my blessings.” But sometimes You write various other things, such as: “May he be born to the true life” or

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

“For a year of great progress”, etc. On what do all these variations depend?

On the condition of the one to whom I write the card and on his state of consciousness, which varies according to the moment and the year.

8 February 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

The ordinary man is often guided in life by his conscience, isn't he? So what becomes of one who has no conscience, who has lost it by having disregarded it too often?

What is usually called “conscience” is a mental formation based on the idea of good and evil, a moral entity or rather an element of goodwill which tries to keep the individual on what is commonly known as the straight path.

This element acts as a defence against the hostile forces which can quite easily take possession of one who has disregarded the advice of his conscience.

But all this is a mental approximation of the Truth. It is not the Truth itself.

15 February 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

Why is it that whenever one thinks of You one feels a need for physical closeness? What is the value of this physical contact?

(1) When one is more conscious in the physical than in the vital and mental, the physical relation seems more real and tangible.

(2) For those who have seriously begun the yoga in the body, the physical relation is of course a powerful aid.

Some Answers from the Mother

I ask the first to make an effort to establish not only a psychic relation (which is always there even when they are not conscious of it) but also a mental and vital relation, which makes the outer relation less indispensable.

I try to teach the others to widen their physical consciousness so as to be able to benefit from my physical presence even at a distance.

22 March 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

When one goes away from here, one feels a sort of emptiness inside. Even if one has all the physical comforts, there is still something missing. One doesn't feel very joyful. One wants to come back as soon as possible. Can You explain to me the reason for this feeling? Why doesn't one even feel free?

Perhaps it is because you have a soul.

12 April 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

What do You mean by Your last answer? Doesn't everyone have a soul?

Not everyone is conscious of his soul and very few are those who are guided by their soul.

19 April 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

Normally, I feel quite happy with life as it is — time passes quickly. But there are periods when I feel that I

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

am not making much progress. I am still in the rut of old petty habits which do not allow me to be free.

The character can change and must change, but it is a long and minute work which requires sustained effort and a great sincerity.

26 April 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

People are saying many things about the 4th of May³³ — sometimes You too are quoted. But in spite of all this, I have not quite understood its significance.

Is it necessary that it should have a significance?

Sri Aurobindo announced that from that date onwards something would happen.³⁴ And it did happen.

That is all that is needed.

21 June 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

It is said that the vibrations of the being develop from one life to another, become richer and form the psychic personality behind the surface personality. But then how does the psychic, weighed down by these vibrations and memories, remain free?³⁵

But why does he say “weighed down”?

³³ The numerical sequence of this date is 4.5.67.

³⁴ Sri Aurobindo wrote: “1.2.34. It is supposed to be always a year of manifestation. 2.3.45 is the year of power — when the thing manifested gets full force. 4.5.67 is the year of complete realisation.” (Letter of 2 February 1934)

³⁵ The Mother replied to this question orally; she was speaking to someone other than the captain.

Some Answers from the Mother

No, the psychic *decants* — that is exactly what happens. The psychic does not retain things in their totality — it decants, it gradually decants the vibrations.

The psychic memory is a decanted memory of events. For example, in past lives there have been moments when, for some reason or other, the psychic was present and participated; in that case it retains the memory of the circumstance. But the memory it retains is that of the *psychic* life of that moment; so even if it retains the memory of the image, it is a simplified image such as it is translated in the psychic consciousness and according to the psychic vibration of all the people present.

He would not ask such a question if he had ever had a psychic memory, because when one has one, it is quite evident.

Before knowing these things, I had had psychic memories and always they struck me by their special character. It was as if one had, one cannot exactly say an emotion, but a certain emotional vibration of a circumstance; and that is what is solid, what remains, what lasts. And so with that, one has a perception — a little vague, a little blurred — of the people who were there, of the circumstances, of the events, and that makes a psychic memory; it is rarely the events that mentally are considered as the most memorable or most important in a lifetime, but the moments when the psychic has participated — consciously participated — in the event. And that is what remains.

15 July 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

You are with us always and at every moment, only we are not conscious of it. Only danger makes us recall Your Presence so that we may have Your protection. But the other day while we were on a long journey, we felt the presence of someone other than ourselves in the car, and it was very strong, even though we were not conscious

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

of any danger. Was there a possibility of danger on that day? If so, why didn't we sense it?

I was very strongly and consciously with you because X had written to me that the tyres of the car were in poor condition.

You did not feel the danger because *I did not want you to feel it.*

19 July 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

Why is it that in the Ashram itself people feel the need to form little groups and societies: for example, World Union, New Age Association, etc.? What is their purpose?

It is because men still imagine that to do something useful, they have to form groups.

It is the caricature of organisation.

20 September 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

Does the Divine punish injustice? Is it possible that He ever punishes anyone?

16 October 1967

16 October 1967 – 25 July 1970

After all these years I have found the forgotten notebook, and I reply:

The Divine does not see things as men do and has no need to punish or reward.

All actions carry in themselves their fruits with their consequences.

Some Answers from the Mother

According to its nature, an action brings one nearer to the Divine or takes one farther from Him — and that is the supreme consequence.

25 July 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

The other day I had a discussion with X about Sri Aurobindo's Action. He said that had there been an enlightened person like Vivekananda, the work could have been done better, but that Mother has to do Her work with the instruments She has at her disposal. Finally he told me that he had no opinion on the subject. "My business," he said, "is to write." And he asked me what my "business" was. I replied that I didn't know what my "business" was — all I knew was that I had to concentrate on myself in order to perfect myself more and more. Was that correct? Mother, what actually is my "business"?

Certainly, the most important occupation is to develop and perfect oneself, but that can be done very well, and even better, while working. It is for you to know what work it is that most interests you, the one that opens for you a path towards perfection. It may be something apparently very modest; it is not the apparent importance of a work which gives it its real value for the yoga.

5 August 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

I have read and heard much about past and future lives, but I feel very strongly that it is in this very life that we must realise our highest aspirations, as if this were the last chance given to us. For me, allusions to other lives are intangible and academic rather than a help and

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

a hope. It is not that I don't believe in reincarnation, but this idea comes back to my mind very often. Mother, is this a narrowness of vision on my part, or what?

Knowledge of past lives is interesting for an understanding of one's nature and a mastery of one's imperfections. But to tell the truth, it is not of capital importance, and it is far more important to concentrate on the future, on the consciousness to be acquired and on the development of the nature, which is almost unlimited for those who know how to do it.

We are at an especially favourable moment in the universal existence, a moment when, upon earth, everything is being prepared for a new creation, or rather, for a new manifestation in the eternal creation.

7 November 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

When You are physically stricken, I always feel very sad. I tell myself that it is not an ordinary illness, that it is an experience leading towards physical transformation. But when I think of Your suffering body, I am sad. And then, is this not part of the Sacrifice of the Supreme spoken of by Sri Aurobindo? Are we worthy of this Sacrifice?

Sweet Mother, at times like this, how should we be? What is the best attitude on our part?

The best for each one is to progress as sincerely as he can. The material difficulties are part of the work of transformation and they should be accepted calmly.

14 November 1970

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

I have the impression that Your Force responds according to the intensity of our prayer. But my case seems to be different. Or am I not conscious of my prayers? Or is everything done for me, for my good, in spite of myself?

It is always that way for everyone. The difference lies in each one's state of consciousness. Some are entirely conscious of what is done for them. Those who make an effort become conscious of the answer they receive, and there are those whose aspiration is sufficiently strong and sincere for them to be constantly conscious of the help they are given.

28 November 1970

Series Eleven

Series Eleven

Letters to a Sadhak

To a sadhak of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

How can my effort to serve the Divine become more perfect?

By wanting Him more and more in every part of your being — integrally.

11 October 1966

*

In 1958 the Mother said, “If things go on advancing at this speed, it seems more than possible, almost evident, that what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter is a prophetic announcement: The supramental consciousness will enter a phase of realising power in 1967.”¹

Have things advanced at the required speed?

Yes.

2 January 1967

*

May I try to make my nights conscious? I pray for guidance.

1) A short concentration before going to sleep, with an aspiration to remember the activities of the night when you wake up.

¹ *Questions and Answers 1957–1958*, CWM, Vol. 9, p. 315.

Some Answers from the Mother

2) *When you wake up, do not make any sudden movement of the head and keep still for a few minutes, with a concentration to remember what happened during your sleep.*

3) *Repeat these exercises every day until you begin to perceive a result.*

18 January 1967

*

In the human being, is the psychic being the entire soul or do both the soul (in its essence as a divine spark in all creatures) and the psychic being exist together?

The soul is the eternal essence at the centre of the psychic being. The soul is in fact like a divine spark which puts on many states of being of increasing density, down to the most material; it is inside the body, within the solar plexus, so to say.² These states of being take form and develop, progress, become individualised and perfected in the course of many earthly lives and form the psychic being. When the psychic being is fully formed, it is aware of the consciousness of the soul and manifests it perfectly.

1 February 1967

*

As soon as I meet or see certain people, certain lower and wrong vibrations arise in me. This is an invariable habit, in spite of the fact that I want to get rid of these reactions. What should I do?

The radical method is to cut off all mental and vital connection with these people; but until you know how to do this, you

² By “solar plexus”, the Mother is referring to the heart (not the navel) region; this is clear from statements she has made elsewhere; see, for example, in Series Thirteen of this volume, the last paragraph of her reply of 20 September 1969.

Series Eleven—To a Sadhak

must persistently eliminate from your consciousness the effect produced by their influence.

18 February 1967

*

You have said: “The Divine is with you according to your aspirations. Naturally, this does not mean that he gives way to the fancies of your outer nature—I am speaking here of the truth of your being. Moreover, he sometimes moulds himself according to your outer aspirations, and if you live like the devotees who alternate between periods of estrangement and embrace, of ecstasy and despair, the Divine too will be farther from you or nearer, depending on what you believe. The attitude is therefore very important, even the outer attitude.”

What is the meaning of “outer aspiration” and “outer attitude”? What is the best outer attitude?

Unless one practises yoga in the physical being (outer being), it remains ignorant—even its aspiration is ignorant and so is its goodwill; all its movements are ignorant and so they distort and disfigure the Divine Presence.

That is why the yoga of the body-cells is indispensable.

25 February 1967

*

“The Dawn that does not pass away”³—what spiritual state does this marvellous dawn represent?

Perpetual renewal.

6 March 1967

*

³ The Mother, *Prayers and Meditations*, 24 August 1914.

Some Answers from the Mother

This is how I understand the Purusha:

The Lord is the Supreme Purusha, the Purushotama.

The Atman is the universal Purusha.

The Jivatman is the individual Purusha, and the physical Purusha, the vital Purusha, the mental Purusha and the secret Purusha in the heart are projections of it.

The soul is the Purusha that enters into the evolution.

Is my understanding correct?

This is one way of putting it. Mental definitions are never more than approximations, ways of speaking.

10 March 1967

*

My body is very weak and full of unconsciousness and tamas. How can this body become Your good instrument?

At the centre of each cell lies the Divine Consciousness. By aspiration and repeated self-giving, the cells must be made transparent.

18 March 1967

*

“To be aware of the consciousness of the soul” — is this the same thing as uniting with the Divine?

To become aware of the consciousness of the soul is the surest and easiest way of uniting with the Divine.

25 March 1967

*

Series Eleven—To a Sadhak

You give everything we need, but my capacity to receive is very limited since it takes me a long time to assimilate even the little I am able to receive. Untroubled, I pray: How can the situation be improved?

This difficulty usually comes from a lack of unification of the being. Certain parts are recalcitrant and refuse to receive. They have to be educated little by little, just as one educates a child — and little by little too the situation will improve.

7 April 1967

*

Looking at the present state of the world, we can say that the worst has already happened. We await the day when the Lord will take the earth into His arms and “the earth will be transformed”. Is that day drawing near?

It may very well be that this is what is happening now — but it is not on the human scale.

One moment of the Lord probably means many years for us!

12 April 1967

*

Although there is a certain charm and poetry in the fact that there is no formal date for the creation of our Ashram, could it be said from the true occult point of view that the Ashram was born with the Mother’s arrival?

The Ashram was born a few years after my return from Japan, in 1926.

17 April 1967

*

Some Answers from the Mother

The Lord told You: "One day thou wilt be my head but for the moment turn thy gaze towards the earth."⁴

Sweet Mother, what does "thou wilt be my head" mean?

The head is the original conceiving Consciousness.

22 April 1967

*

When I want to be closer to You, I see that I must overcome my ego. But when I think of overcoming my ego, I see that I must be closer to You. How can I solve this problem?

The Grace is there to solve it.

1 May 1967

*

How can I be Your good child?

By being yourself, quite simply, very simply.

5 May 1967

*

When I am able to offer You money or some object, it brings me great joy, and when some part of my being offers itself to You the joy I feel is greater still. But in spite of this experience my whole being is not offered to You. What stupidity! How can I change this?

We are made up of many different parts which have to be unified around the psychic being, if we are conscious of it or at least around the central aspiration. If this unification is not done, we carry this division within us.

⁴ The Mother, *Prayers and Meditations*, 17 May 1914.

Series Eleven—To a Sadhak

To do this, each thought, each feeling, each sensation, each impulse, each reaction, as it manifests, must be presented in the consciousness to the central being or its aspiration. What is in accord is accepted; what is not in accord is refused, rejected or transformed.

It is a long endeavour which may take many years—but once it is done, the unification is achieved and the path becomes easy and swift.

10 May 1967

*

How can I get rid of the habit of feeling that I own the material things that belong to me?

If you belong entirely and totally to the Divine, then all that belongs to you, all that forms part of your material being, belongs to the Divine.

16 May 1967

*

Sometimes I think that the Agni You have kindled in me is going to burn up everything that separates me from You. What should I do to contribute to its fulfilment?

Each time that you discover in yourself something that denies or resists, throw it into the flame of Agni, which is the fire of aspiration.

19 May 1967

*

Is it possible to make my hands conscious so that they do nothing imperfect, incorrect or wrong? What is the way to do it, Divine Mother?

It is quite possible, by concentrating on the hands when they are doing something.

Some Answers from the Mother

The hands of painters, sculptors, musicians (especially pianists) are usually very conscious and always are skilful. It is a question of training.

29 May 1967

*

I want to overcome a difficulty: it is that when I perceive faults or weaknesses in myself, something tries to justify them or to prevent me from attending to them.

This “something” is the insincerity of an ignorant self-esteem which has not yet understood that it is nobler and loftier to recognise one’s faults in order to correct them, than to conceal them in the hope that they will not be noticed.

As for all psychological problems, here too sincerity, a total and uncompromising sincerity, is the true remedy.

1 June 1967

*

Please tell me how I can get rid of the past, which clings so heavily.

To get rid of the past is something so difficult that it seems almost impossible.

But if you *give* yourself entirely and without reserve to the future, and if this giving is constantly renewed, the past will *fall away by itself* and no longer encumber you.

14 June 1967

*

One morning as I was reading Your book Prayers and Meditations, I wished to know which movement comes first, “to live in Thee” or “to live for Thee”. Before the mind could set to work to find the answer, the reply that

Series Eleven—To a Sadhak

came to me spontaneously was this: "The two states are complementary to each other."

Yes, the two states are complementary, but that does not necessarily mean that they are simultaneous. Most often, "to live for Thee" comes first and if the being is unified and sincere, "to live in Thee" soon follows.

But of course, for the first to be perfect, the second must be present.

24 June 1967

*

Your hands are open to give everything, but I can only receive a small part of it because I am not receptive enough.

This is the exact image of the state of the world which suffers because it is not receptive, when it could live in beatitude if it would open to the Divine Love.

But there is a remedy:

Sincere and constant aspiration.

6 July 1967

*

I have begun to see that both the personal effort of the sadhak and its result depend on the Divine Grace.

About this, one could say humorously that we are all divine, but we are hardly even aware of it, and what we call "ourselves" is that in us which is unaware that it is divine.

13 July 1967

*

To establish the reign of the Divine on earth, who is slower — man or the Divine Himself?

Some Answers from the Mother

To man the Divine seems slow.

In the eyes of the Divine man is slow indeed!

But perhaps in these two cases, the slowness is not the same.

20 July 1967

*

May I know whether it is true that after death a dead man very often returns in his daughter's child?

First the dead man must have a daughter in order to be reborn in her child.

It is not an absolute rule — far from it — but the case is quite frequent in India where the belief in frequent reincarnations is still quite common.

30 July 1967

*

I asked myself, "How can one express the inexpressible?" The reply came, "By living it, by becoming it, by being it." What does the Mother say?

That is correct.

7 August 1967

*

One thing escapes my understanding: how can You find time to do all that You do? Perhaps physical time does not exist for You!

The body is able to bear the pressure of time because it knows and feels quite concretely that it does not itself live and act, but that only the Supreme Lord exists and that He alone lives and acts.

This, moreover, is the secret of all endurance.

12 August 1967

*

*Here is an amusing phrase from an anonymous author:
“Thank God, I am an atheist.”*

The phrase would be even more amusing if he had written:
“Thank God for making me an atheist.”

22 August 1967

*

*From what I understand, You said that the psychic beings
of the disciples of the Ashram all belong to the same fam-
ily. In spite of this, there is often a lack of collaboration
among us. Why is that, Mother?*

If I did say this (probably not quite in these words), it could only
refer to a universal family open to all differences and even all
divergences.

But in any case, mutual misunderstanding and lack of col-
laboration can only come from the outer physical and vital being
which is formed in this life and is not yet under the rule and
influence of the psychic. As soon as one is united with one's
psychic, all the conflicts due to clashing bad wills can no longer
exist.

24 August 1967

*

How can one use shadow to realise the Light?

Painters use shadow to bring out the light.

Shadow is the symbol of the inconscient. This is where men
rest at night from the effort of the day to become conscious.
When consciousness becomes all-powerful, shadow will no
longer be necessary and will disappear.

4 September 1967

*

Some Answers from the Mother

It is said that there are certain methods in the Tantras to open the chakras from below, whereas in the integral yoga the chakras open from above by the descent of the Mother's force.

What is the difference between the results of the opening of the chakras in these two systems?

In Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga, there are no such rigid rules and distinctions. Each one follows his own path and has his own experiences. Nevertheless, Sri Aurobindo has often said and written that his yoga begins where the others leave off.

This is to say that yoga ordinarily consists in awakening the physical consciousness and making it rise gradually towards the Divine. Whereas Sri Aurobindo has said that to do his yoga, one must already have found the Divine and united with Him — then the consciousness descends through all the states of being down to the most material, bringing the Divine Force with it so that the Force can transform the whole being and finally divinise the physical body.

20 September 1967

*

In the message for the radio You substituted the word "union" for the word "unity".⁵ May I know, Sweet Mother, why this change was made?

Because most people, when they hear the word "unity", understand *uniformity* and nothing can be further from the truth.

25 September 1967

*

⁵ "O India, land of light and spiritual knowledge! Wake up to your true mission in the world, show the way to union and harmony." — Message for the inauguration of All India Radio, Pondicherry, 23 September 1967. *Words of the Mother—I*, CWM, Vol. 13, p. 367.

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

Does spontaneity come spontaneously or does one have to follow a discipline to obtain it?

Spontaneity in feelings and action comes from a permanent contact with the psychic, which brings order into the thoughts and automatically controls the vital impulses.

30 September 1967

*

You have taught me the importance of awakening the divine consciousness in the body, and now I pray to You to awaken my body's aspiration towards You.

The cells of the body thirst for the Divine Consciousness and when they are brought into contact with It their aspiration becomes very intense.

21 October 1967

*

I have heard about the aspiration to be simply what You want.

That is the best state for advancing swiftly on the path.

26 October 1967

*

Two extremely rich men who claim to be very religious and virtuous, are not paying what they owe according to their accounts. One of them refuses to speak to me about it and the other says, "Have trust in God, you will not lose your money."

If the Mother could make these two men honest (even temporarily, long enough for them to settle this affair)...

It is said that Christ healed the sick and even raised the dead. One day an idiot was brought to him to be cured. But Christ

Some Answers from the Mother

slipped away, saying that to make a stupid man intelligent is an impossibility.

To make a dishonest man honest is an even more impossible miracle.

8 November 1967

*

Which is swifter for transformation: Divine Love or Mahakali's force?

Kali's force is necessary only for those who are not yet open to Divine Love. For one who is open to Divine Love, nothing more is needed.

11 November 1967

*

By Your Grace, my body is now collaborating to get rid of its laziness. That even the body has a will of its own is a new experience for me.

When the body is converted, it knows how to collaborate.

29 November 1967

*

Which came first in the manifestation, the god or the Asura?

The oldest tradition says that the first four emanations of the Mahashakti — Consciousness, Love, Truth and Life — cut themselves off (separated themselves) from their Supreme Origin and became Unconsciousness, Suffering, Falsehood and Death.

Then a second emanation was made to repair the damage. They are the Gods.

Naturally, this is a way of speaking which corresponds to a Reality that is difficult to put into words.

2 December 1967

*

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

Transformation demands a very high degree of aspiration, surrender and receptivity, doesn't it?

Transformation demands a total and integral consecration. But isn't that the aspiration of every sincere sadhak?

Total means vertically in all the states of being, from the most material to the most subtle.

Integral means horizontally in all the different and often contradictory parts which make up the outer being (physical, vital and mental).

4 December 1967

*

The fragrance of the flowers given by the Mother is often something extraordinary.

Flowers are very receptive and they are happy when they are loved.

15 December 1967

*

I have forgotten the Divine for so long in this life and in former lives. But a drop of Your Grace can enable me to make up for all the lost time.

Whatever the past may have been, it is not time that is needed to establish contact with the Divine, but sincerity of aspiration.

19 December 1967

*

Can one's aspiration for the Divine have the required intensity and sincerity without the tears and anguish that are mentioned in nearly all the old legends of the saints?

Tears and anguish indicate the presence of a weak and paltry nature which is still unable to receive the Divine in all his power

Some Answers from the Mother

and glory. Not only are they unnecessary, they are useless and an obstacle to realisation.

23 December 1967

*

You put something into Your words which enables us to see the Truth that words cannot convey. What is it that accompanies Your words?

Consciousness.

27 December 1967

*

I think that always, at every moment, someone or other is calling You, and You answer. Doesn't this disturb Your sleep or Your rest?

Day and night hundreds of calls are coming — but the Consciousness is always alert and it answers.

One is limited only materially by time and space.

3 January 1968

*

How is it that ordinarily the richer one is (materially), the more dishonest one is?

It is because material wealth is controlled by the adverse forces — and because they have not yet been converted to the Divine Influence, though the work has begun.

That victory will form part of the triumph of Truth.

Wealth should not be a personal property and should be at the disposal of the Divine for the welfare of all.

4 January 1968

*

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

When Mother says that wealth should not be a personal property, I understand that what should come is more a change of psychological attitude on the part of those who own money than any change in the law of property.

Undoubtedly.

Only the psychological change can be a solution.

6 January 1968

*

The disciples of the Ashram have a sure and easy way to put their money at the disposal of the Divine: they offer it to the Mother.

But how can others do it? Can it be said that each one should get rid of the sense of property and spend his money according to the Divine command within, from time to time?

I am sure that if someone is advanced enough on the path to receive the knowledge that money is an impersonal power and should be used for the progress of the earth, this person will be developed enough inwardly to receive the knowledge of how best to make use of the money.

8 January 1968

*

The day before yesterday, as I was arranging my vase for You, I said to a flower, "Oh, you are going to Mother!" and it really smiled. The same thing happened again yesterday and today.

That is very interesting indeed. Was it a rose or a hibiscus?

27 January 1968

*

Some Answers from the Mother

A hibiscus gave me this experience.

Yes, it is a very conscious flower — I have had many proofs of it.

27 January 1968

*

Is constant remembrance of the Divine the beginning of union?

A beginning of union comes even before constant remembrance. When the remembrance is constant, one often feels a Presence that imposes itself on the remembrance.

29 January 1968

*

While speaking about the “Transcendent Mother” (and the upper petal of the Transformation flower), You said, “The Transcendent is both one and two (or dual) at the same time.” What does this mean?

Beyond the creation lies the perfect Oneness, but potentially it contains duality since the Mahashakti will manifest for the needs of the creation.

5 February 1968

*

Last Monday You spoke to me about the Transcendent which is both one and two at the same time. Naturally, I shall wait for the true consciousness to come in order to have this knowledge. But yesterday I tried to note down what You had said:

“The mind thinks about things in succession. But beyond and above, everything exists at the same time. The One is both one and two; the manifested and the unmanifested, everything exists at the same time. When

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

It is objectified in the creation, in the manifestation, there is a succession: one, two... But this is only a way of speaking. There is no succession, no beginning. Beyond, in the perfect Oneness, everything exists at the same time, simultaneously. This cannot be understood, it must be experienced; one can have the experience of it."

Please correct these lines.

They are correct.

9 February 1968

*

What is the difference between an emanation and a formation?

These words do not apply to the physical world as it is at present.

The explanation is only an approximation. Still, one can say that the emanation is made up of the very substance of the emanator, whereas the formation is made up of a substance external to the formator.

To make a comparison, one could say that the emanation is like a child made from the substance of its mother and that the formation is like a living statue made out of a material external to the sculptor.

But naturally this is only a very approximate explanation.

11 March 1968

*

The path is long, very long, almost interminable.

It is true that the path is very long, but for one who follows it with *sincerity*, it is *really very interesting*, and at every step one is rewarded for one's trouble.

16 March 1968

*

Some Answers from the Mother

It seems to me that the very land of Auroville aspires. Is it true, Sweet Mother?

Yes, the land itself has a consciousness, even though this consciousness is not intellectualised and cannot express itself.

21 March 1968

*

Today You have shown me the basic incompatibility between human law and the Truth. But this is a problem that confronts me very often.

Politics and so-called justice are still, in humanity, what is most closed to the Truth. But their turn for conversion will also come, perhaps sooner than we think.

28 March 1968

*

Can one say that all waste reflects a waste of consciousness?

Waste of any kind is the result of unconsciousness.

Consciousness in its purity is perfect and infallible.

2 April 1968

*

The Upanishad says that when one sleeps, one reaches pure Being. Does this apply only to the Yogi or to everyone?

In theory, it applies to everyone. But the vast majority of human beings fall into unconsciousness, and if there is a contact with pure Being it is quite unconscious. Very few persons are conscious of this relation. It is usually the result of Yoga.

8 April 1968

*

(Concerning unconsciousness during sleep)

During sleep the inner beings become consciously active. When one wakes up, it is the waking being that *is not conscious* of the activities of the night.

16 April 1968

*

In the quotation chosen for tomorrow⁶ Sri Aurobindo speaks of “the Truth that seeks to descend upon us” and “is already there within us”. Please explain this paradox which, as I can feel, is only apparent.

It is not a paradox.

It is the same phenomenon as for the Divine who is at the centre of our being, etc. and at the same time is beyond the creation, the Divine towards whom the whole creation is moving, but whom it could never reach if it did not carry him in itself.

One must go beyond notions of space and Matter to be able to understand.

23 April 1968

*

When I thought of writing to You this morning about the night of bonds and attachments that have enveloped me for the last three weeks, I felt that all these things have actually been there for a long time and that now Your Grace has brought them to my notice so that the next step may be taken.

Mother, the night has already been very long for me. But it matters little, so long as I can continue to hold myself at Your feet.

⁶ “In the spiritual order of things, the higher we project our view and our aspiration, the greater the Truth that seeks to descend upon us, because it is already there within us and calls for its release from the covering that conceals it in manifested Nature.”

Sri Aurobindo

Some Answers from the Mother

According to my experience, one should not try to destroy or to eliminate. One should concentrate all one's effort on building up and strengthening the *true consciousness*, which will automatically do the work of unifying the being.

In this way, everything that has to be transformed will be transformed quite naturally, without clash or damage.

13 May 1968

*

How can one hasten the day when the whole being will be able to say, "I am Yours — Yours alone"?

There are two actions which in practice merge into one.

(1) *Never forget* the goal that one wants to attain.

(2) Never allow any part of the being or any of its movements to contradict one's aspiration.

This also makes it necessary to become conscious of one's nights, because the activities of the night often contradict the aspiration of the day and undo its work.

Vigilance, sincerity, continuity of effort, and the Grace will do the rest.

20 May 1968

*

Even "good and innocent movements" are said to take on different colours in the light of the psychic flame.

The very notion of good and bad is completely changed.

One can say very simply that all that leads to the Divine is good, and all that leads away from the Divine is bad.

Many virtues lead away from the Divine by making men satisfied with what they are.

22 May 1968

*

Series Eleven—To a Sadhak

Sri Aurobindo has written in Savitri:

*“Yes, there are happy ways near to God’s sun;
But few are they who tread the sunlit path;
Only the pure in soul can walk in light.”⁷
What a joy it would be to possess the required purity!*

When one is living among men with all their miseries, it is only the Grace that can bestow this state—even in those who by Tapasya have abolished their ego.

It is beyond all personal effort.

27 May 1968

*

What is the most effective way to overcome the ego?

The simplest and most effective way is *to offer it to the Divine*; the more sincere and radical this offering is, the more quickly the result will come.

28 May 1968

*

To remain turned upwards and to live in the true consciousness—the two seem complementary to each other.

Are they not two ways of saying the same thing?—certainly two ways of doing the same thing.

3 June 1968

*

Who should be put on guard to give the alert: “Be careful! Look upwards”?

It is what is usually called conscience, but in fact it is the psychic being. And one can hear it only if one is very attentive, because it does not make any clamour.

5 June 1968

*

⁷ *Savitri*, Book VI, Canto 2.

Some Answers from the Mother

Is transparent sincerity a more effective, indispensable means, or is it a realisation in itself?

Without sincerity nothing can be done. With total sincerity everything is possible.

12 June 1968

*

What is the origin of man's love for his own ignorance?

It is inconscience.

Inconscience is the negation of all effort. Ignorance (that is, the acknowledgement that there is something to be known which we do not know) is the first effect of the divine influence on the inconscient.

15 June 1968

*

Sri Aurobindo speaks of Savitri's firmness of purpose in the following line:

"Immutable like a fixed eternal star."⁸

Can one say that such determination is demanded of the sadhak who aspires for transformation?

This is the great mystery of creation: immutable and yet eternally renewed.

17 June 1968

*

Savitri says:

*"Not only is there hope for godheads pure;
The violent and darkened deities
Leaped down from the one breast in rage to find
What the white gods had missed: they too are safe;*

⁸ *Savitri*, Book X, Canto 1.

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

*A Mother's eyes are on them and her arms
Stretched out in love desire her rebel sons.”⁹
What had the white gods missed?*

The conversion of the Asuras.

24 June 1968

*

*Isn't the power of the Asuras as boundless as the power
of the gods?*

The vibrations of evil are in truth less powerful than the vibrations of good.

26 June 1968

*

*Can one say that total sincerity and the abolition of the
ego are closely interdependent?*

Only the Supreme Lord is perfectly sincere.

And when the ego is abolished, only the Supreme Lord exists.

28 June 1968

*

In spiritual life, even to sit down is to fall back.

This is so true that one could rightly say: even while sleeping one must move forward.

But there comes a time when the ascent becomes a perfect repose.

2 July 1968

*

⁹ *Savitri*, Book X, Canto 2.

Some Answers from the Mother

Once Mother spoke to me about total sincerity. What does transparent sincerity mean?

Sincerity is compared to an atmosphere or a sheet of glass. If the one or the other is completely transparent, it lets light through without distorting it.

Similarly, a sincere consciousness lets divine vibrations through without distorting them.

8 July 1968

*

Can an individual achieve transformation even if the universe continues to be such as it is?

In the evolution, the individual is far ahead of the earth, but as long as he lives on earth there is a certain interdependence. But the condition of the earth is sure to become such that a supramental being will soon be able to live on it.

9 July 1968

*

The Buddha said that Nirvana results in the cessation of rebirth. But isn't the Divine always free to send back into the manifestation the spark that extinguishes itself in Him?

Naturally, each time that one makes a rule one makes a mistake.

Besides, although he has not taken up another physical body, the Buddha himself has returned to work in the earth-atmosphere.

26 July 1968

*

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

If the universe is one, shouldn't the liberation of one single person on earth have the power to liberate everyone?

Oneness means identity in origin; but in the manifestation each entity follows its own path of conscious return to the Oneness.

28 September 1968

*

In 1953 Mother said: "Whatever the way one follows, whether it be the religious way, the philosophical way, the yogic way, the mystic way, no one has realised transformation."¹⁰

Can one hope that the sadhaks have now made good progress towards this goal?

Now the conditions are such that every sincere effort must necessarily tend towards this goal.

30 September 1968

*

How can one collaborate in the transformation?

Things are now arranged in such a way that as soon as one collaborates for the Divine Dawn in any form, one necessarily collaborates in the transformation.

7 October 1968

*

The Divine is the goal, the path and the one who treads the path. But isn't a person who is not advancing towards the Divine also the Divine?

All are the Divine, but very few are those who know it and fewer still are those who want to realise it consciously. This explains

¹⁰ *Questions and Answers 1953*, CWM, Vol. 5, p. 82.

Some Answers from the Mother

the long duration and difficulty of the creation if its goal is that all and everything should once more become *consciously* divine.

14 October 1968

*

One would like to have the fundamental realisation that the Divine is all and everything.

For that one must identify oneself with the Supreme Divine.

Once one is identified, when one turns towards the creation, one sees and knows that the Divine alone exists both in the Essence and in the manifestation.

16 October 1968

*

Is immunity to the attack of adverse forces possible without transformation?

Immunity does not come automatically from transformation.

One has to cut off all connection with the manifested world in order to be immune.

But in any case, transformation gives the power of victory.

18 October 1968

*

Is the Divine Love equal for all even in the manifestation?

Yes, equal and immutable.

But the capacity to perceive and receive it and the habit of distorting it differ with each one.

22 October 1968

*

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

“The ideal Sadhaka should be able to say in the Biblical phrase: ‘My zeal for the Lord has eaten me up.’ ”¹¹

Does this mean an intense, constant and integral aspiration?

Yes, it means that the entire being is absorbed in its consecration.

24 October 1968

*

Does the subconscious go on recording during sleep?

For most people, in their sleep, it is precisely what has been recorded in the subconscious during the day or previously which becomes active again and constitutes their dreams.

26 October 1968

*

*Aswapathy was very fortunate. For him,
“Each day was a spiritual romance,...
Each happening was a deep experience.”¹²*

This possibility is open to all whose aspiration is fervent.

1 November 1968

*

How can one keep what You give?

It does not go away, but enters the subconscious and continues to act.

To remain conscious of it, one must reduce the range of the subconscious in oneself and thus increase the consciousness.

3 November 1968

*

¹¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 52.

¹² Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book I, Canto 3.

Some Answers from the Mother

What should one do to reduce the range of the subconscious?

To grow in consciousness is the very aim of life on earth. It is through the experience of successive lives that the range of the subconscious is gradually reduced.

By yoga and the effort to find the Divine in oneself and in life, one hastens the work considerably and it can be done in a few years.

5 November 1968

*

*“A knowledge which became what it perceived,
Replaced the separated sense and heart
And drew all Nature into its embrace.”¹³*

Is Sri Aurobindo referring here to knowledge by identity?

Yes, it is a very exact description.

7 November 1968

*

*“A greater force than the earthly held his limbs,...
Unwound the triple cord of mind and freed
The heavenly wideness of a Godhead’s gaze.”¹⁴*

What does “the triple cord of mind” mean?

The cords symbolise the limitations of the mind; and there are three of them because there is a physical mind, a vital mind and a mental mind.

9 November 1968

*

¹³ *Savitri*, Book I, Canto 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Book I, Canto 5.

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

*“The days were travellers on a destined road,
The nights companions of his musing spirit.”¹⁵*

Yes, there comes a time when nothing, absolutely nothing is outside the yoga and the Divine’s Presence is felt and found in all things and all circumstances.

11 November 1968

*

*“A last high world was seen where all worlds meet;
In its summit gleam where Night is not nor Sleep,
The light began of the Trinity supreme.”¹⁶
Is the “Trinity supreme” Sachchidananda?*

Yes.

15 November 1968

*

*Through Krishna’s Grace, Arjuna realised the cosmic
Divine and Virat in the twinkling of an eye. What a
good Guru and what a good disciple!*

Speed is not necessarily a sign of superiority.

These “instantaneous” conversions are most often the result of many lives of preparation.

17 November 1968

*

*“Our body’s cells must hold the Immortal’s flame.”¹⁷
Is this the secret of the luminous body?*

It is a poetic way of expressing the transformation which is going to take place and which is more complicated than that.

19 November 1968

*

¹⁵ *Savitri*, Book I, Canto 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Book I, Canto 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Book I Canto 3.

Some Answers from the Mother

It seems to me, Mother, that when man does not accept the Divine, it is more out of ignorance than out of wickedness. Isn't it so?

It is undoubtedly out of ignorance and fear of what he doesn't know.

It is only the Asuras and a few great hostile beings who refuse and oppose the Divine even though they know who He is.

21 November 1968

*

It seems to me, Mother, that the flame that calls and the flame that responds are one and the same.

Essentially they are the same; but the plenitude of the response far exceeds the intensity of the call. The response always exceeds our receptivity by far.

25 November 1968

*

Can one say, Mother, that perfect receptivity comes only with constant union with the Divine?

If we call "perfect receptivity" the receptivity that receives only the Divine Influence and no other, it is certain — and at the same time it is perfect purity.

This is what we should strive for.

27 November 1968

*

"None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell."¹⁸

But still, Mother, doesn't the soul chosen by the Divine go through hell in a different way than others?

¹⁸ *Savitri*, Book II, Canto 8.

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

The quotation means that in order to reach the divine regions one must, while on earth, pass through the vital, which in some of its parts is a veritable hell. But those who have surrendered to the Divine and been adopted by Him are surrounded by the divine protection and for them the passage is not difficult.

29 November 1968

*

*“His failure is not failure whom God leads”¹⁹
Because it is part of the play?*

It is the human mind that has the conception of success and failure. It is the human mind that wants one thing and does not want another. In the divine plan each thing has its place and its importance. So it is not success that matters. What matters is to be a docile and if possible a *conscious* instrument of the Divine Will.

To be and to do what the Divine wants, this is the truly important thing.

3 December 1968

*

“The one original transcendent Shakti, the Mother stands above all the worlds and bears in her eternal consciousness the Supreme Divine.”²⁰

Similarly, can one say that the Supreme Divine carries the Mother in his eternal consciousness?

Beyond all question.

They are ONE in essence and manifestation.

5 December 1968

*

¹⁹ *Savitri*, Book III, Canto 4.

²⁰ Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, SABCL, Vol. 25, p. 20.

Some Answers from the Mother

Cannot the ego consent to its own abolition?

The ego was created for the work of individualisation; when the work is achieved, it is not unusual for the ego to accept its own dissolution .

7 December 1968

*

The human pleasure of possessing is a perversion of what, Mother?

All pleasure is a perversion, by egoistic limitation, of the Ananda which is the purpose of the universal manifestation.

11 December 1968

*

“When we eat, we should be conscious that we are giving our food to that Presence in us....”²¹

When I try to take this attitude, the food tastes better and the atmosphere becomes quieter.

The Presence is always there whatever we do, and it is because of ignorance, negligence or absent-mindedness that we do not feel it. But each time that we are attentive and concentrated, we become aware of a wonderful transformation in all things.

13 December 1968

*

In order to be conscious of the constant Presence, is memory a good aid?

Memory is a mental faculty and helps the mental consciousness. But feeling and sensation must also participate.

17 December 1968

*

²¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 103.

Series Eleven – To a Sadhak

*When the Presence becomes concrete, does this indicate
the participation of feeling and sensation?*

To have the perception of the Presence, the participation of feeling is indispensable, and when sensation collaborates, then the perception becomes concrete and tangible.

19 December 1968

*

*“All things shall change in God’s transfiguring hour.”²²
Can man delay or hasten the coming of this hour?*

Neither the one nor the other in their apparent contradiction created by the separative consciousness, but something else that our words cannot express.

In the present state of human consciousness, it is good for it to think that aspiration and human effort can hasten the advent of the divine transformation, because effort and aspiration are needed for the transformation to take place.

21 December 1968

*

The Upanishad says: “When That is known, all is known.” All is known in its essential truth or also in detail?

In its essential truth, but one usually keeps the perception of the illusory appearance at the same time.

23 December 1968

*

²² *Savitri*, Book III, Canto 4.

Some Answers from the Mother

It seems to me that to know things in detail, the ordinary instrumentation is necessary for the yogi too, but that the yogi puts this knowledge to the test of the essential truth.

Yes, one can put it that way. But above all, it is the attitude towards the outward appearance that changes completely.

25 December 1968

*

In fact, Mother, what is the yogi's attitude towards the outward appearance?

The usefulness of seeing clearly instead of being blind.

The usefulness of no longer being deceived by outward appearances.

The usefulness of knowing the true purpose of life instead of living in ignorance and falsehood.

27 December 1968

*

Is the perception of the illusory appearance automatic for the yogi?

That probably depends on the yogi and his condition.

But when one is united with the Supreme Consciousness and when the body is undergoing transformation, the body keeps its automatic perception of the outer world; but this perception is more complete than the ordinary one, as if it revealed something of its content.

29 December 1968

*

Therefore, Mother, the transformation of the body is necessary even to live in the Integral Knowledge!

Certainly.

Series Eleven– To a Sadhak

In Sri Aurobindo's yoga, the transformation of the body is indispensable so far as it can be done. Because the aim of this yoga is not an escape from the physical consciousness but a divinisation of that consciousness.

31 December 1968

Series Twelve

Series Twelve

Letters to a Student

To a student in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education who began writing to the Mother at the age of sixteen.

Sweet Mother,

I used to have the habit of reading Savitri or one of Your books before going to bed at night. But now I have lost the habit and I do not even go to the Samadhi very regularly. I do not understand the true value of these things. Should one do them regularly or only when one feels like doing them? Why should one do these things and how should one do them?

One reads *Savitri* to develop one's intelligence and to understand deeper things.

One concentrates at the Samadhi to grow in devotion and to put oneself in contact with Sri Aurobindo in order to receive his help.

If these things have any value for you, you must do them regularly, because it is the laziness of unconsciousness that keeps you from doing them.

You are born for a spiritual and conscious life — but perhaps you are still too young to have the will to realise it.

Blessings.

23 July 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

Each time I decide to work well, I see that my effort does not last more than two days. What do You think I

Some Answers from the Mother

should do so that I do well what I have decided to do? I think there is something in me that refuses to obey me.

It is the same for everybody as long as one has not consciously unified the whole of one's being around the psychic centre.

This unification is indispensable if one wants to be the master of one's being and of all its actions.

It is a long and meticulous work that requires much perseverance, but the result is worth the trouble, for it brings not only mastery but also the possibility of the transformation and illumination of the consciousness.

Do you want to do it?

If so, I will help you.

Blessings.

28 August 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one remember at every moment that whatever one does is for You? Particularly when one wants to make a complete offering, how should one proceed, never forgetting that it is for the Divine?

To achieve that, one must have an *obstinate will* and a *great patience*. But once one has taken the resolution to do it, the divine help will be there to support and to help. This help is felt inwardly in the heart.

Blessings.

9 September 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

I would like to know the true meaning of birthdays, for it is an important day here.

Series Twelve—To a Student

From the viewpoint of the inner nature, the individual is more receptive on his birthday from year to year, and thus it is an opportune moment to help him to make some new progress each year.
Blessings.

25 September 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

You wrote to me that it is not easy to come in contact with the psychic being. Why do You consider it difficult? How should I begin?

I said “not easy” because the contact is not spontaneous—it is voluntary. The psychic being always has an influence on the thoughts and actions, but one is rarely conscious of it. To become conscious of the psychic being, one must want to do so, make one’s mind as silent as possible, and enter deep into the heart of one’s being, beyond sensations and thoughts. One must form the habit of silent concentration and descent into the depths of one’s being.

The discovery of the psychic being is a definite and very concrete fact, as all who have had the experience know.

Blessings.

6 October 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

I have seen that I am not able to force my physical body to do a little better than my actual capacity. I would like to know how I can force it. But, Sweet Mother, is it good to force one’s body?

No.

The body is capable of progressing and it can gradually learn to do what it could not do before. But its capacity for progress

Some Answers from the Mother

is much slower than the vital desire for progress and the mental will for progress. And if the vital and the mind are left in charge of action, they simply harass the body, destroy its balance and upset its health.

Therefore, one must be patient and follow the rhythm of one's body, which is more reasonable and knows what it can and cannot do.

Naturally, some bodies are tamasic and need a little encouragement in order to progress.

But in all things and in all cases, one has to keep a balance. Blessings.

13 October 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

Why do we believe in rebirth? What were we before our present state?

Those who have had the memory of past lives have declared the reality of rebirth.

There have been — and there still are — beings whose inner consciousness is sufficiently developed for them to know for certain that this consciousness has manifested in bodies other than their present one and that it will survive the disappearance of this body.

It is not a theory to be discussed — it is an indisputable experience for one who has had it.

Blessings.

5 November 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

When we are in the midst of Nature, what should we think about? Does being in contact with Nature help us in any way?

Series Twelve – To a Student

It is not by thinking that one can be in contact with Nature, for Nature does not think.

But if one deeply feels the beauty of Nature and communes with her, that can help in widening the consciousness.

Blessings.

9 November 1969

*

Love of Nature is usually the sign of a pure and healthy being uncorrupted by modern civilisation. It is in the silence of a peaceful mind that one can best commune with Nature.

Blessings.

13 November 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one get rid of, or rather correct, jealousy and laziness?

It is selfishness that makes one jealous; it is weakness that makes one lazy.

In either case the only truly effective remedy is conscious union with the Divine. Indeed, as soon as one becomes conscious of the Divine and is united with Him, one learns to love with the true love: the love that *loves for the joy of loving* and has no need to be loved in return; one also learns to draw Force from the inexhaustible source and one knows by experience that by using this Force in the service of the Divine one receives from Him all that one has spent and much more.

All the remedies suggested by the mind, even the most enlightened mind, are only palliatives and not a true cure.

Blessings.

16 November 1969

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

At times I talk in my sleep. It is a sign that the mind lacks control, isn't it? So what should I do to keep it quiet at night?

Generally when the body is asleep at night, the mind goes out because it is difficult for it to remain quiet for a long time; and that is why most people do not talk.

But your mind seems to remain in your body, so you must ask it to remain perfectly quiet and silent so that your body can rest properly. A little concentration for that, before going to sleep, will surely be effective.

Blessings.

29 November 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

When the body is asleep, is it better for the mind to go out of the body? Where does the mind go?

The possibilities are different for each person: there are as many cases as there are persons. But each one can learn which conditions are best for his rest.

You can become conscious of your nights and your sleep just as you are conscious of your days. It is a matter of inner development and discipline of the consciousness.

Blessings.

1 December 1969

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Sweet Mother,

What do You mean by "becoming conscious"? Is becoming conscious of the Divine Presence in oneself the only thing or does becoming conscious of one's movements, of one's speech, etc. also count?

Series Twelve—To a Student

You may be sure that becoming conscious of the Divine Presence in oneself considerably changes one's whole way of being and gives an exceptional control over all activities, mental, vital and physical.

And this control is infinitely more powerful and luminous than anything one can obtain through external means.

Blessings.

9 December 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

*Is our vital formed solely of desires, selfish feelings,
etc., or is there something good in it too?*

Energy, strength, enthusiasm, artistic taste, boldness, forcefulness are there too, if we know how to use them in the true way.

A vital converted and consecrated to the Divine Will becomes a bold and forceful instrument that can overcome all obstacles. But it first has to be disciplined, and this it consents to only when the Divine is its master.

Blessings.

11 December 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

*What does Sri Aurobindo mean when he speaks of
change of consciousness?*

Passing from the general ignorant human consciousness to the yogic consciousness founded on the knowledge of the Divine Presence.

Blessings.

13 December 1969

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Why is it better to go to bed early and to get up early?

When the sun sets, a kind of peace descends on earth and this peace is helpful for sleep.

When the sun rises, a vigorous energy descends on earth and this energy is helpful for work.

When you go to bed late and get up late, you contradict the forces of Nature, and that is not very wise.

Blessings.

21 December 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

Do astrology and other studies always predict things correctly, or are men still unable to do that?

Human incapacity is necessarily behind all that men do. Only he who has become conscious of the Divine and become His faithful instrument can avoid error, if he is careful to act only at the divine command and to add nothing personal to it.

It must be said that this is not easy. Only he who no longer has any ego can do it correctly.

Blessings.

25 December 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

What are knowledge and intelligence? Do they play important roles in our life?

Knowledge and intelligence are precisely the higher mental qualities in man, those that differentiate him from the animal.

Series Twelve–To a Student

Without knowledge and intelligence, one is not a man but
an animal in human form.

Blessings.

30 December 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

In the new race, will our body change form?

Between the body of the supramental being and the body of
man, there will surely be a difference comparable to that which
exists between man and the most advanced ape; but what this
difference will be we can hardly know until the new species
appears on earth.

Blessings.

13 January 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

*What is the difference between sports and physical
education?*

Sports are all the games, competitions, tournaments, etc. that
are based on competition and lead to placings and prizes.

Physical education means principally all the various exer-
cises for the development and maintenance of the body.

Naturally, here we have combined the two. But this is mainly
because human beings, especially in their childhood, still need a
certain excitement in order to make effort.

Blessings.

14 January 1970

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Sweet Mother,

*What should our attitude be towards the captains
and teachers here?*

Some Answers from the Mother

An obedient, willing and affectionate attitude. They are your elder brothers and sisters who take a lot of trouble to help you. Blessings.

1 February 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

Why has the Creator made this world and human beings? Does He expect something of us?

This world is Himself. He wants everything — ourselves and the world and the whole universe — to become conscious once more of being Him.

Blessings.

5 February 1970

Series Thirteen

Series Thirteen

Letters to a Student

To a student in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education who began writing to the Mother at the age of sixteen.

*Sweet Mother,
Should one give money to beggars or not?*

In a well-organized society, there should not be any beggars.
But as long as there are, do as you feel.
There are good reasons both for doing it and for not doing it.

Blessings

8 July 1969

*

There is no one for whom it is impossible to realise the Divine. Only, for some it will take many, many lives, whereas there are others who will do it in this very lifetime. It is a question of will. It is for you to choose.

But I must say that at the present moment conditions are particularly favourable.

Blessings.

22 July 1969

*

*Sweet Mother,
What does it mean, really, “to realise the Divine”?*

It means to become conscious of the Divine Presence in oneself or on the spiritual heights, and, once one is conscious of His Presence, to surrender to Him completely so that one no

Some Answers from the Mother

longer has any other will than His, and finally to unite one's consciousness with His. That is "to realise the Divine".

Blessings.

23 July 1969

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Sweet Mother,

When we sleep, our consciousness goes out, doesn't it? But other people have dreams in which I appear. So what happens? Does the consciousness divide itself or are other people's dreams only their own imagination?

Most often, it is the vital consciousness that goes out of the body and has the form, the appearance of the person's body. If one person dreams of another, it means that both have met at night, most often in the vital region, but it can also happen elsewhere, in the subtle physical or the mental. There are any number of different possibilities in dreams.

Blessings.

1 August 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

Why is the night darker just before dawn — from the scientific as well as the spiritual point of view?

Because the darkness tries to prevent the light from coming.

Blessings.

11 August 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

Why are the hours before midnight better for sleep than the hours after it?

Series Thirteen – To a Student

Because, symbolically, during the hours before midnight the sun is setting, while from the first hour after midnight it begins to rise.

Blessings.

22 August 1969

*

There is only one love, the Divine Love, eternal, universal, equal for everyone and everything.

It is man (the human being) who calls all kinds of feelings “love”: all the desires, attractions, vital exchanges, sexual relations, attachments, even friendships, and many other things besides.

But all that is not even the shadow of love nor even its deformation.

These are all mental and vital, sentimental or sexual activities, and nothing more.

Blessings.

6 September 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

*What is the difference between desire and aspiration,
and between selfishness and self-realisation?*

Desire is a vital movement, aspiration is a psychic movement.

When one has had a true aspiration, unselfish and sincere, one cannot even ask the question anymore; for the vibration of aspiration, luminous and calm, has nothing to do with the vibration of desire, which is passionate, dark and often violent.

Selfishness means wanting everything for oneself, understanding nothing but oneself, caring for others only insofar as they are necessary or important to oneself. In French, self-realisation (*réalisation du Soi*) means discovering the divine centre in one's being. In English, self-fulfilment is generally taken

Some Answers from the Mother

in the sense “to be successful”. Sri Aurobindo in his writings uses the word “self-realisation” to mean realisation of the Self, that is to say, becoming conscious of the Divine in oneself and identifying with Him.

Blessings.

14 September 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one unify one's being?

The first step is to find, deep within oneself, behind the desires and impulses, a luminous consciousness which is always present and manifests the physical being.

Ordinarily, one becomes aware of the presence of this consciousness only when one has to face some danger or an unexpected event or a great sorrow.

One has, then, to come into conscious contact with that and learn to do so at will. The rest will follow.

Generally it is in the heart, behind the solar plexus, that one finds this luminous presence.

Blessings.

20 September 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

What will be the result of changing the vital into something good; in other words, what will be the change?

The vital is the receptacle of all the bad impulses, all wickedness, cowardice, weakness and avarice.

When the vital is converted, the impulses are good instead of being bad; wickedness is replaced by kindness, avarice by generosity; weakness disappears and strength and endurance take its place; cowardice is replaced by courage and energy.

Series Thirteen – To a Student

The seat of power in action is in the purified vital.
Blessings.

20 October 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

I have never discussed with my friends the question of knowing why we are here on earth, but I have thought about it and the only answer I could get is that at least we are here in the Ashram to manifest the Divine upon earth. But there remains one question: if everything is divine, even the adverse forces, and if everything has been created by Him and He can do everything, then how is it that He takes so much time and uses such roundabout ways? What joy does He get in creating unconscious things and making them conscious? And why all these misfortunes and sufferings?

It is a question that all thinking people have asked.

Some have considered the problem more deeply and asked themselves whether human beings, who are so small and limited, could see things as they really are; and in the hope of understanding better, they have sought for a diviner vision, a global and true vision — with the result of Yoga. And those who have succeeded in their endeavour have found that when one is united with the Divine, one's vision of things changes totally, and they have all come to the same conclusion: unite with the Divine and you will understand.

Blessings.

28 October 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

Why and how does one lose one's spiritual gain by going elsewhere? One can make a conscious effort and Your protection is always there, isn't it?

Some Answers from the Mother

To visit one's parents is to return to an influence which is generally stronger than any other; and there are not many cases where the parents help you in your spiritual progress, because they are usually more interested in a worldly realisation.

Parents who are primarily interested in spiritual realisation usually do not ask their children to come back to them.

Blessings.

8 November 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

Why should one take part in the sports' competitions and demonstrations?

Because it is a chance to put in greater effort and thus make faster progress.

Blessings.

16 November 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

I would like to know the second step towards unifying one's being. You told me about the first step.

The work of unifying the being consists of:

(1) becoming aware of one's psychic being.

(2) putting before the psychic being, as one becomes aware of them, all one's movements, impulses, thoughts and acts of will, so that the psychic being may accept or reject each of these movements, impulses, thoughts or acts of will. Those that are accepted will be kept and carried out; those that are rejected will be driven out of the consciousness so that they may never come back again.

It is a long and meticulous work that may take years to be done properly.

Blessings.

8 December 1969

*

Series Thirteen – To a Student

Sweet Mother,

*How should one spend the Darshan days, December
fifth and ninth, and one's birthday?*

In search of a knowledge truer than ordinary knowledge.
The fifth and ninth in understanding what death is.
The birthday in finding out the purpose of life.
Blessings.

13 December 1969

*

(Regarding accidents in sports at the Ashram)

I do not think that there are more accidents here than elsewhere.
Certainly there ought to be less. But for that, the children who
study here must make an effort to grow in consciousness (a thing
they could do more easily here than elsewhere). Unfortunately,
however, few of them take the trouble to do it, so they lose the
fine opportunity that has been given to them.

22 December 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

*What is the difference between persons who have
developed their consciousness and those who have not?*

Those who have done it and *done it well* become conscious; the
others remain half conscious like the vast majority of human
beings.

Consciousness, the *true* consciousness, gives control over
one's own character and, to a large extent, over events.

23 December 1969

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

*Do you think it isn't good to visit the churches here
to see the midnight ceremony?*

Why go to church? Are you Christians or do you want to become Christians?

Sri Aurobindo spent his whole life working to free men from the bondage of religions. Do you want to contradict his work for the sake of a childish idle curiosity?

Up to now, all those who have gone have done so without asking for permission, because they sensed that it would not be given.

25 December 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

*In The Hour of God Sri Aurobindo has written:
"There are moments when the Spirit moves among men
and the breath of the Lord is abroad upon the waters
of our being; there are others when it retires and men
are left to act in the strength or the weakness of their
own egoism"¹ and in one of your letters, you have said
that one must not rely on one's ego but on the psychic.
Mother, will you explain this to me?*

It so happens that we are not in an age when men have been left to their own means. The Divine has sent down His Consciousness to give them light. All who are able to do so should profit by it.

Blessings.

29 December 1969

*

¹ SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 1.

Series Thirteen – To a Student

Sweet Mother,

About what you told me yesterday: had the Divine not sent His Consciousness down upon earth? But the whole creation has had the Divine in it from the very beginning, hasn't it?

Yes.

And why were primitive men left to their own means?

Primitive men were still too close to the animal to be able to enter into relation with the Inner Divine; it is only gradually, through thousands of years of ascending evolution, that men have learned to be conscious. Now they are ready to manifest a far higher consciousness, the consciousness that will act fully in the superman; and that is why this consciousness has come down on earth to work in all who are ready to receive it.

Blessings.

30 December 1969

*

Sweet Mother,

"The world is preparing for a big change. Will you help?"²

What is this great change that you speak of? And how can we be of help to it?

This great change is the appearance on earth of a new race that will be to man what man is to the animal. The consciousness of this new race is already at work on earth to give light to all who are capable of receiving it and heeding it.

Blessings.

2 January 1970

*

² The Mother's New Year Message of 1970.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

How should the news of death be received, especially when it is someone close to us?

Say to the Supreme Lord: "Let Thy Will be done", and remain as peaceful as possible.

If the departed one is a person one loves, one should concentrate one's love on him in peace and calm, for that is what can most help the one who has departed.

Blessings.

16 January 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

How should we watch a film? If we identify with the characters and if the film is tragic or full of suspense, we get so involved that we cry or feel frightened. And if we keep aloof we cannot appreciate it properly. So what should we do?

It is the vital that gets touched and moved.

If you watch mentally, the interest is no longer the same; instead of being moved or troubled, you can calmly judge the value of a film, whether it is well made or well acted, or whether the scenes have any artistic value.

In the first case you are a "good audience", in the second case you are more peaceful.

Blessings.

30 January 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

How would we know what is happening in other countries and even in our own if we did not read newspapers? At least we get some idea from them, don't we? Or would it be better not to read them at all?

Series Thirteen – To a Student

I did not say that you must not read newspapers. I said that you must not blindly believe everything you read; you should know that the truth is altogether different.

Blessings.

4 February 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

How can we know the truth of the facts when reading newspapers? What is the best way of knowing the truth of the world?

The best way is to find the truth in ourselves — then we shall be able to see the Truth wherever it is.

Blessings.

5 February 1970

Series Fourteen

Series Fourteen

Letters to a Sadhak

To a sadhak of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram

We are at a moment of transition in the history of the earth. It is merely a moment in eternal time, but this moment is long compared to human life. Matter is changing in order to prepare itself for the new manifestation, but the human body is not plastic enough and offers resistance; this is why the number of incomprehensible disorders and even diseases is increasing and becoming a problem for medical science.

The remedy lies in union with the divine forces that are at work and a receptivity full of trust and peace which makes the task easier.

18 November 1971

*

Those who want to progress now have an exceptional chance, because the transformation begins with the opening of the consciousness to the action of the new forces; thus individuals have a unique and wonderful opportunity to open themselves to the divine influence.

20 November 1971

*

The purpose of individual existence is the joy of discovering the Divine and uniting with Him. When one has understood this, then one is ready to gain the strength to surmount all difficulties.

22 November 1971

*

Some Answers from the Mother

A victory won over the lower nature gives a deeper and more lasting joy than any external success.

24 November 1971

*

Sri Aurobindo has revealed to us a few of the marvels that the future will bring to the earth and has encouraged us to prepare ourselves for it.

27 November 1971

*

Each one has his ego and all the egos are at odds with one another. It is only when one gets rid of the ego that one becomes a free being.

To be free, one must belong only to the Divine.

3 December 1971

*

In the difficult hours of life, the imperative duty of each one is to overcome his ego in a total and unconditional self-giving to the Divine. Then the Divine will make you do what you have to do.

4 December 1971

*

Supreme Lord, Infinite Wisdom,

At this perilous hour when egoisms are at odds and asserting themselves, the only safety lies in taking refuge in Thee!

Grant that nothing in us may be an obstacle to the fulfilment of Thy Will.

Grant that we may become conscious and effective collaborators in the fulfilment of Thy Will.

5 December 1971

*

Series Fourteen – To a Sadhak

Difficult hours come to the earth to compel men to overcome their small personal egoism and turn exclusively to the Divine for help and light. The wisdom of men is ignorant. Only the Divine knows.

7 December 1971

*

Our human consciousness has windows that open upon the Infinite. But generally men keep these windows carefully closed. We have to open them wide and allow the Infinite to enter us freely in order to transform us.

Two conditions are necessary to open the windows:

- (1) ardent aspiration;
- (2) progressive abolition of the ego.

The divine help is assured to those who set to work sincerely.

8 December 1971

*

The ego was necessary to form the individual being. Its destruction is therefore difficult. There is a much better, though more difficult solution: to transform it and make it an instrument of the Divine.

Egos that are converted and wholly consecrated to the Divine become especially powerful and effective instruments.

The endeavour is difficult and demands an absolute and steadfast sincerity, but for those who have a strong will, an ardent aspiration and an unshakable sincerity, it is well worth undertaking.

The method for each individual is worked out as the activity proceeds, for each ego has its own character and needs a particular method. The only qualities indispensable for all are absolute perseverance and sincerity. The least tendency to deceive oneself makes success impossible.

9 December 1971

*

Some Answers from the Mother

For you, the best way to begin is to find your psychic being, to concentrate on it by making it the witness of all your inner movements and the judge of all that you should or should not do, and to strive to submit your external nature to its decisions.

11 December 1971

*

The psychic being is the individual sheath of the Divine Presence. It is found deep within oneself, beyond all thoughts.

11 December 1971

*

Communications from the psychic do not come in a mental form. They are not ideas or reasonings. They have their own character quite distinct from the mind, something like a feeling that comprehends itself and acts.

By its very nature, the psychic is calm, quiet and luminous, understanding and generous, wide and progressive. Its constant effort is to understand and progress.

The mind describes and explains.

The psychic sees and understands.

13 December 1971

*

The psychic is conscious of its progressive formation during successive lives upon earth, so it has the memory of the important moments in its previous lives.

The more the psychic has taken part in these physical lives on earth, the more numerous and precise its memories are.

14 December 1971

*

Feeling alone in the midst of human beings is the sign that you are beginning to feel the need to find in your own being contact with the Divine Presence. So you must concentrate in silence and

Series Fourteen – To a Sadhak

try to enter deep within to discover the Divine Presence in the depths of your consciousness, beyond all mental activity.

16 December 1971

*

There comes a moment when life becomes intolerable without the Divine Presence. Therefore, give yourself entirely to the Divine and you will emerge into the Light.

17 December 1971

*

One moment of conscious communion with the Divine can shatter all resistance, however powerful it may be.

18 December 1971

*

In silence lies the greatest receptivity. And in an immobile silence the vastest action is done.

Let us learn to be silent so that the Lord may make use of us.

19 December 1971

*

We shall have made a great leap towards realisation when we have driven all defeatism out of our consciousness.

It is by perfecting our faith in the Divine Grace that we shall be able to conquer the defeatism of the subconscious.

20 December 1971

*

Total union and the perfect manifestation of the Divine are the sole means of putting an end to the suffering and misery of the physical world which are the cause of subconscious pessimism. It is only in perfect union with the Divine that the consciousness can emerge into the eternal delight. And this conscious union is the true goal of earthly existence.

21 December 1971

*

Some Answers from the Mother

To know why we live: discovery of the Divine and conscious union with Him.

The aspiration to concentrate solely on this realisation.

To know how to transform all circumstances into a means of reaching this goal.

22 December 1971

*

Prayer

O Lord, awaken in me the ardent desire to know You.

I aspire to consecrate my life to Your service.

24 December 1971

*

The best thing we can do to express our gratitude is to overcome all egoism in ourselves and make a constant effort towards this transformation. Human egoism refuses to abdicate on the grounds that others are not transformed. But that is the stronghold of bad will, for each one's duty is to transform himself regardless of what others may do.

If men knew that this transformation, the abolition of egoism, is the only way to gain constant peace and delight, they would consent to make the necessary effort. This, then, is the conviction that must awaken in them.

Everyone should repeatedly be told: abolish your ego and peace will reign in you.

The Divine help always responds to a sincere aspiration.

25 December 1971

*

Human beings could be classified under four principal categories according to the attitude they take in life:

(1) Those who live for themselves. They consider everything in relation to themselves and act accordingly. The vast majority of men are like this.

Series Fourteen – To a Sadhak

(2) Those who give their love to another human being and live for him. As for the result, everything naturally depends on the person one chooses to love.

(3) Those who consecrate their life to the service of humanity through some activity done not for personal satisfaction but truly to be useful to others without calculation and without expecting any personal gain from their work.

(4) Those who give themselves entirely to the Divine and live only for Him and through Him. This implies making the effort required to find the Divine, to be conscious of His Will and to work exclusively to serve Him.

In the first three categories, one is naturally subject to the ordinary law of suffering, disappointment and sorrow.

It is only in the last category — if one has chosen it in all sincerity and pursued it with an unfailing patience — that one finds the certitude of total fulfilment and a constant luminous peace.

26 December 1971

*

Do not live to be happy, live to serve the Divine, and the happiness you enjoy will exceed all expectation.

28 December 1971

*

We are at a decisive hour in the history of the earth. It is preparing for the coming of the superman and because of this the old way of life is losing its value. We must strike out boldly on the path of the future despite its new demands. The pettinesses once tolerable, are tolerable no longer. We must widen ourselves to receive what is going to come.

29 December 1971

*

The result of the creation is a detailed multiplication of consciousness.

Some Answers from the Mother

When the vision of the whole and the vision of all the details are united in a single active consciousness, the creation will have attained its progressive perfection.

8 January 1972

*

In time and space no two human beings have the same consciousness, and the sum of all these consciousnesses is but a partial and diminished manifestation of the Divine Consciousness.

That is why I said “progressive perfection”, because the manifestation of the consciousness of detail is infinite and unending.

9 January 1972

*

The first condition is not to have one’s own personal interest as a goal.

The first qualities needed are boldness, courage and perseverance.

And then to be conscious that one knows nothing compared to what one ought to know, that one can do nothing compared to what one ought to do, that one is nothing compared to what one ought to be.

One must have an invariable will to acquire what is lacking in one’s nature, to know what one does not yet know, to be able to do what one is not yet able to do.

One must constantly progress in the light and peace that come from the absence of personal desires.

One could take as a programme:

“Always better. Forward!”

And to have only one goal: to know the Divine in order to be able to manifest Him.

Persevere, and what you cannot do today you will be able to do tomorrow.

11 January 1972

*

Series Fourteen – To a Sadhak

Mother, is it possible to develop in oneself the capacity to heal?

In principle, everything is possible by uniting consciously with the Divine Force.

But a method has to be found, and this depends on the case and the individual.

The first condition is to have a physical nature that gives energy rather than draws energy from others.

The second indispensable condition is to know how to draw energy from above, from the inexhaustible impersonal source.

12 January 1972

*

In this way the more one spends the more one receives, and one becomes an inexhaustible channel rather than a vessel that empties itself by giving.

It is through steadfast aspiration that one learns.

13 January 1972

*

Sincerity, humility, perseverance and an insatiable thirst for progress are essential for a happy and fruitful life. Above all, one must be convinced that the possibility of progress is unlimited. Progress is youth; one can be young at a hundred.

14 January 1972

*

When the body has learned the art of constantly progressing towards an increasing perfection, we shall be well on the way to overcoming the inevitability of death.

16 January 1972

*

Some Answers from the Mother

If the growth of consciousness were considered as the principal goal of life, many difficulties would find their solution.

The best way to avoid growing old is to make progress the goal of our life.

18 January 1972

*

To learn constantly, not just intellectually but psychologically, to progress in regard to character, to cultivate our qualities and correct our defects, so that everything may be an opportunity to cure ourselves of ignorance and incapacity — then life becomes tremendously interesting and worth living.

27 January 1972

*

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to announce the manifestation of the supramental world. And not only did he announce this manifestation but he also embodied in part the supramental force and gave us the example of what we must do to prepare ourselves for this manifestation. The best thing we can do is to study all he has told us, strive to follow his example and prepare ourselves for the new manifestation.

This gives life its true meaning and will help us to overcome all obstacles.

Let us live for the new creation and we shall grow stronger and stronger while remaining young and progressive.

30 January 1972

*

The energies that human beings use for reproduction and that occupy such a predominant place in their lives, should on the contrary be sublimated and used for progress and higher development so as to prepare the coming of the new race. But first, the vital and the physical have to be free of all desire — otherwise one is courting disaster.

31 January 1972

*

The first thing the physical consciousness must understand is that all the difficulties we meet with in life come from the fact that we do not rely exclusively on the Divine for the help we need.

The Divine alone can liberate us from the mechanism of universal Nature. And this liberation is indispensable for the birth and development of the new race.

It is only by giving ourselves entirely to the Divine in perfect trust and gratitude that the difficulties will be overcome.

1 February 1972

*

To want what the Divine wants, in all sincerity, is the essential condition for peace and joy in life. Almost all human miseries come from the fact that men are nearly always convinced that they know better than the Divine what they need and what life ought to give them. Most human beings want other human beings to conform to their expectations and circumstances to conform to their desires — therefore they suffer and are unhappy.

It is only when one gives oneself in all sincerity to the Divine Will that one has the peace and calm joy which come from the abolition of desires.

The psychic being knows this with certainty; so, by uniting with one's psychic, one can know it. But the first condition is not to be subject to one's desires and mistake them for the truth of one's being.

4 February 1972

*

The first necessity for each one is his own transformation, and the best way to help the world is to realise the Divine oneself.

5 February 1972

*

Some Answers from the Mother

In the depths of our being, in the silence of contemplation, a luminous force floods our consciousness with a vast and luminous peace which prevails over all petty reactions and prepares us for union with the Divine — the very purpose of individual existence.

6 February 1972

*

Thus, the purpose and goal of life is not suffering and struggle but an all-powerful and happy realisation.
All the rest is painful illusion.

7 February 1972

*

When humanity was first created, the ego was the unifying element. It was around the ego that the different states of being were grouped; but now that the birth of superhumanity is being prepared, the ego has to disappear and give way to the psychic being, which has slowly been formed by divine intervention in order to manifest the Divine in the human being.

It is under the psychic influence that the Divine manifests in man and thus prepares the coming of superhumanity.

The psychic is immortal and it is through the psychic that immortality can be manifested on earth.

So the important thing now is to find one's psychic, unite with it and allow it to replace the ego, which will be compelled either to get converted or disappear.

8 February 1972

*

The first thing one learns on the way is that the joy of giving is far greater than the joy of taking.

Then gradually one learns that to forget oneself is the source of immutable peace. Later on, in this self-forgetfulness, one finds the Divine, and that is the source of an ever-increasing bliss.

Series Fourteen – To a Sadhak

Sri Aurobindo told me one day that if men knew this and were convinced of it, they would all want to do yoga.

9 February 1972

*

Human consciousness is so corrupted that men prefer the miseries of the ego and its ignorance to the luminous joy that comes from a sincere surrender to the Divine. So great is their blindness that they refuse even to try the experiment and would rather be subject to the miseries of their ego than make the effort needed to get rid of them.

So completely blind are they that they would not hesitate to make the Divine a slave of their ego, if such a thing were possible, in order to avoid giving themselves to the Divine.

10 February 1972

*

Supreme Lord, teach us to be silent, that in the silence we may receive Your force and understand Your will.

11 February 1972

*

We want to be true servitors of the Divine.

“Supreme Lord, Perfect Consciousness, You alone know truly what we are, what we can do, what progress we must make to be capable and worthy of serving You as we would. Make us conscious of our possibilities, but also of our difficulties so that we may overcome them in order to serve You faithfully.”

The supreme happiness is to be true servitors of the Divine.

14 February 1972

*

For those who want always to progress, there are three major ways of progressing:

(1) To widen the field of one's consciousness.

Some Answers from the Mother

(2) To understand ever better and more completely what one knows.

(3) To find the Divine and surrender more and more to his Will.

In other words, this means:

(1) To constantly enrich the possibilities of the instrument.

(2) To ceaselessly perfect the functioning of this instrument.

(3) To make this instrument increasingly receptive and obedient to the Divine.

To learn to understand and do more and more things. To purify oneself of all that prevents one from being totally surrendered to the Divine. To make one's consciousness more and more receptive to the Divine Influence.

One could say: to widen oneself more and more, to deepen oneself more and more, to surrender oneself more and more completely.

15 February 1972

*

What is commonly called faithfulness is a scrupulous compliance with the promises one has made. But the only true and binding faithfulness is faithfulness to the Divine — and that is the faithfulness we all ought to acquire through sincere and sustained effort.

When the whole being, in all its parts and all its activities, can say to the Divine in all sincerity:

“Whatever You will, whatever You will”,
then one is well on the way to the true faithfulness.

17 February 1972

*

Life on earth is essentially a field for progress. But how brief life is for all the progress that has to be made!

Series Fourteen – To a Sadhak

To waste one's time seeking the satisfaction of one's petty desires is sheer folly. True happiness is possible only when one has found the Divine.

19 February 1972

*

Supreme Lord, Perfection that we must become, Perfection that we must manifest.

This body lives by You alone and goes on repeating to You:
“Whatever You will, whatever You will”

until the day when it shall automatically know what You will because its consciousness will be totally united with Yours.

23 February 1972

*

Grant that I may become conscious of Your Presence.

9 March 1972

*

Lord, we implore You, grant that nothing in us may reject Your Presence and that we may become what You want us to be; grant that all in us may conform to Your Will.

12 March 1972

*

Lord, give us the silence of Your contemplation, the silence rich with Your effective Presence.

13 March 1972

*

Grant that our silence may be filled with Your Presence and that we may be fully conscious of it.

Grant that we may know that You are our life, our consciousness and our being, and that without You everything is merely illusion.

14 March 1972

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Grant that we may identify ourselves with Your Eternal Consciousness so that we may know truly what Immortality is.

16 March 1972

*

To prepare for immortality, the consciousness of the body must first identify itself with the Eternal Consciousness.

17 March 1972

*

A fifteen-year-old girl asked: “What is Truth?”

I answered: “The Will of the Supreme Lord.”

It is a subject for contemplative meditation.

18 March 1972

*

This truth that man has vainly sought to know will be the birthright of the new race, the race of tomorrow, the superman.

To live according to Truth will be his birthright.

Let us do our best to prepare the coming of the New Being. The mind must fall silent and be replaced by the Truth-Consciousness — the consciousness of details harmonised with the consciousness of the whole.

19 March 1972

Note on the Texts

The fourteen correspondences in this volume were first brought out separately in books and journals published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Most of them appeared either in the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, a bi-lingual quarterly in French and English, or in *Mother India*, a monthly in English. The correspondences were first published together in English in 1987 in the first edition of this volume. They were first published together in French in 1994 under the title *Quelques Réponses de la Mère-1*.

Twelve of these correspondences were written wholly or partly in French; two were written entirely in English. The original translations of material in French were revised for publication in 1987 in the first edition.

In five correspondences some part of the originally published material has been removed—namely the Mother's brief words of encouragement or solicitude (unless they occur within a longer reply), her comments and decisions on mundane affairs (unless they indicate her viewpoint or way of working), and any replies of little general interest. In two of the series, hitherto unpublished material has been added.

The texts of this second edition (2003) are the same as those of the first edition, except for the correction of typographical errors and the revision of a few translations.

Details about the individual series follow.

Series One. Original in French. First published in French in February 1978 in Cahier No. 31 of the Centre d'Études Sri Aurobindo (Paris). Subsequently published in French, with an English translation, in the *Bulletin* of August 1979. The same material is included in this volume.

Series Two. Original in French, excepting twenty-eight replies in English. First published in English translation in *My Little Smile* (1977). About sixty per cent of that material is included here. In addition,

Some Answers from the Mother

there are about twenty-five pages of new material, selected from the original manuscripts, which were published for the first time in 1980. The following replies of the Mother were written in English: the first six, eighth and tenth undated replies at the beginning of the series; the reply of 14 December 1931; the replies in 1932 of 9, 14 and 15 June; 25 June (except the final entry of that date); 27 June and 1 July; 20 July (first reply of that date); 21 July (except the second and final entries); 29 July (final paragraph only); 30 July; 6, 10, 15, 16 and 25 August; 5 and 26 September; 9 November and 3 December; and the reply of 1940 beginning "A year".

Series Three. Original in French, excepting the two replies of 6 September 1936, which were written in English. About one quarter of the correspondence was published in the *Bulletin* issues of August and November 1974 and February 1975. The complete correspondence appeared in *My Little Smile* (1977). About thirty-five per cent of the whole is presented here.

Series Four. Original in English. The full correspondence, containing the replies of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, was first published in the October and November 1977 issues of *Mother India*. About half the replies of the Mother are included in this volume.

Series Five. Original in French, excepting thirteen replies in English. A small part of the correspondence was published in *Breath of Grace* (1973), pages 94–105. A comprehensive selection, containing the replies of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, was serialised in the *Bulletin* issues of February, April and August 1980. Of that material, about half the replies of the Mother are included in this volume. The following replies were written in English: 14 March and 22 August 1932, 6 and 9 March 1934, 13 September 1937, 10 April 1942, 12 December 1953, 23 March 1954, 26 January 1956, and at the end of the series the undated replies beginning "Your going away", "You need not", "Do not accept" and "Each time that" (except the phrase

Note on the Texts

“Peace, peace, O my heart!”, the original of which is “*Paix, paix, O mon coeur!*”).

Series Six. Original in French. About twenty per cent of the correspondence appeared in English translation in the *Sri Aurobindo Circle* of 1955. The full correspondence first came out in 1964 — in French as *Quelques réponses de la Mère*, and in English as *Some Answers from the Mother*. The same material is presented here. This series is not arranged in chronological order, as the others are, but is broadly divided into thirteen sections according to subject; this is the form in which it was published in 1964.

Series Seven. Original in English. About half the correspondence was published in *Breath of Grace* (1973), pages 182–94. The complete collection, containing the replies of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, came out in the *Bulletin* issues of February, April and August 1981. Of that material, about half the replies of the Mother appear in the present volume.

Series Eight. Original in French. First published in French, with an English translation, in *Mother India* from February to August 1960. The same material, set in chronological order, appears here.

Series Nine. Original in French. About half these replies were published in the French original, with an English translation, in the *Mother India* issues of June, August, October and December 1960. Two other replies appeared in the *Bulletin* issues of August 1962 and February 1963. The rest of the material was first published in 1980 in the first edition of this volume.

Series Ten. Original in French. First published in the *Bulletin* from April 1973 to November 1975. About ten per cent of the letters — those specifically on education — were brought out in 1978 in *On Education*, Collected Works Volume 12, Part Two, Section VI. The

Some Answers from the Mother

present volume contains the entire correspondence. The first sentence of the Mother's reply of 30 December 1964 was written in English.

Series Eleven. Original in French. First published in the *Bulletin* issues of November 1978 and February 1979.

Series Twelve. Original in French. First published in the *Bulletin* issues of August and November 1970.

Series Thirteen. Original in French. First published in the *Bulletin* issues of February and April 1971. The third paragraph of the Mother's reply of 6 September 1969 was written in English, as were the words "self-fulfilment", "to be successful" and "self-realisation" in the reply of 14 September 1969.

Series Fourteen. Original in French. First published in the *Bulletin* from April 1972 to February 1973.