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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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No. 2

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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References:

S: *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*

(S28: 559 would mean page 559 in the 28th volume of CWSA)

M: *Collected Works of the Mother, 2nd Edition*

(M3: 33-34 would mean pages 33-34 in the 3rd volume of the 2nd Edition of the Mother's Collected Works)

Mother's conversation with a disciple

(The date indicates the day the conversation with Satprem took place)

*The knowledge and right use
of the hidden forces of Nature*

(S28: 559)

PART ONE

The necessity of a wider exploration

All reality, all experience must indeed, to be held as true, be capable of verification by a same or similar experience; so, in fact, all men can have a spiritual experience and can follow it out and verify it in themselves, but only when they have acquired the capacity or can follow the inner methods by which that experience and verification are made possible. It is necessary to dwell for a moment on these obvious and elementary truths because the opposite ideas have been sovereign in a recent period of human mentality, — they are now only receding, — and have stood in the way of the development of a vast domain of possible knowledge. It is of supreme importance for the human spirit to be free to sound the depths of inner or subliminal reality, of spiritual and of what is still superconscient reality, and not to immure itself in the physical mind and its narrow domain of objective external solidities; for in that way alone can there come liberation from the Ignorance in which our mentality dwells and a release into a complete consciousness, a true and integral self-realisation and self-knowledge.

An integral knowledge demands an exploration, an unveiling of all the possible domains of consciousness and experience. For there are subjective domains of our being which lie behind the obvious surface; these have to be fathomed and whatever is ascertained must be admitted within the scope of the total reality. An inner range of spiritual experience is one very great domain of human consciousness; it has to be entered into up to its deepest depths and its vastest reaches. The supraphysical is as real as the physical; to know it is part of a complete knowledge. The knowledge of the supraphysical has been associated with mysticism and occultism, and occultism has been banned as a superstition and a fantastic error. But the occult is a part of existence; a true occultism means no more than a research into supraphysical realities and an unveiling of the hidden laws of being and Nature, of all that is not obvious on the surface. It attempts the discovery of the secret laws of mind and mental energy, the secret laws of life and life-energy, the secret laws of the subtle-physical and its energies, — all that Nature has not put into visible operation on the surface; it pursues also the application of these hidden truths and powers of Nature so as to extend the mastery of the human spirit beyond the ordinary operations of mind, the ordinary operations of life, the ordinary operations of our physical existence. In the spiritual domain, which is occult to the surface mind in so far as it passes beyond normal and enters into supernormal experience, there is possible not only the

discovery of the self and spirit, but the discovery of the uplifting, informing and guiding light of spiritual consciousness and the power of the spirit, the spiritual way of knowledge, the spiritual way of action. To know these things and to bring their truths and forces into the life of humanity is a necessary part of its evolution. Science itself is in its own way an occultism; for it brings to light the formulas which Nature has hidden and it uses its knowledge to set free operations of her energies which she has not included in her ordinary operations and to organise and place at the service of man her occult powers and processes, a vast system of physical magic, — for there is and can be no other magic than the utilisation of secret truths of being, secret powers and processes of Nature. It may even be found that a supraphysical knowledge is necessary for the completion of physical knowledge, because the processes of physical Nature have behind them a supraphysical factor, a power and action mental, vital or spiritual which is not tangible to any outer means of knowledge. (S22: 677-79)

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Four main lines

In considering the achieved course of the evolution of the spiritual being, we have to regard it from two sides, — a consideration of the means, the lines of development utilised by Nature and a view of the actual results achieved by it in the human individual. There are four main lines which Nature has followed in her attempt to open up the inner being, — religion, occultism, spiritual thought and an inner spiritual realisation and experience: the three first are approaches, the last is the decisive avenue of entry. All these four powers have worked by a simultaneous action, more or less connected, sometimes in a variable collaboration, sometimes in dispute with each other, sometimes in a separate independence. Religion has admitted an occult element in its ritual, ceremony, sacraments; it has leaned upon spiritual thinking, deriving from it sometimes a creed or theology, sometimes its supporting spiritual philosophy, — the former, ordinarily, is the occidental method, the latter the oriental: but spiritual experience is the final aim and achievement of religion, its sky and summit. But also religion has sometimes banned occultism or reduced its own occult element to a minimum; it has pushed away the philosophic mind as a dry intellectual alien, leaned with all its weight on creed and dogma, pietistic emotion and fervour and moral conduct; it has reduced to a minimum or dispensed with spiritual realisation and experience. Occultism has sometimes put forward a spiritual aim as its goal, and followed occult knowledge and experience as an approach to it, formulated some kind of mystic philosophy: but more often it has confined itself to

occult knowledge and practice without any spiritual vistas; it has turned to thaumaturgy or mere magic or even deviated into diabolism. Spiritual philosophy has very usually leaned on religion as its support or its way to experience; it has been the outcome of realisation and experience or built its structures as an approach to it: but it has also rejected all aid — or all impediment — of religion and proceeded in its own strength, either satisfied with mental knowledge or confident to discover its own path of experience and effective discipline. Spiritual experience has used all the three means as a starting-point, but it has also dispensed with them all, relying on its own pure strength: discouraging occult knowledge and powers as dangerous lures and entangling obstacles, it has sought only the pure truth of the spirit; dispensing with philosophy, it has arrived instead through the heart's fervour or a mystic inward spiritualisation; putting behind it all religious creed, worship and practice and regarding them as an inferior stage or first approach, it has passed on, leaving behind it all these supports, nude of all these trappings, to the sheer contact of the spiritual Reality. All these variations were necessary; the evolutionary endeavour of Nature has experimented on all lines in order to find her true way and her whole way towards the supreme consciousness and the integral knowledge.

For each of these means or approaches corresponds to something in our total being and therefore to something necessary to the total aim of her evolution. There are four necessities of man's self-expansion if he is not to remain this being of the surface ignorance seeking obscurely after the truth of things and collecting and systematising fragments and sections of knowledge, the small limited and half-competent creature of the cosmic Force which he now is in his phenomenal nature. He must know himself and discover and utilise all his potentialities: but to know himself and the world completely he must go behind his own and its exterior, he must dive deep below his own mental surface and the physical surface of Nature. This he can only do by knowing his inner mental, vital, physical and psychic being and its powers and movements and the universal laws and processes of the occult Mind and Life which stand behind the material front of the universe: that is the field of occultism, if we take the word in its widest significance. He must know also the hidden Power or Powers that control the world: if there is a Cosmic Self or Spirit or a Creator, he must be able to enter into relation with It or Him and be able to remain in whatever contact or communion is possible, get into some kind of tune with the master Beings of the universe or with the universal Being and its universal will or a supreme Being and His supreme will, follow the law It gives him and the assigned or revealed aim of his life and conduct, raise himself towards the highest height that It demands of him in his life now or in his existence hereafter; if there is no such universal or supreme Spirit or Being, he must know what there is and how to lift himself to it out of his present imperfection and impotence. This approach is the

aim of religion: its purpose is to link the human with the Divine and in so doing sublimate the thought and life and flesh so that they may admit the rule of the soul and spirit. But this knowledge must be something more than a creed or a mystic revelation; his thinking mind must be able to accept it, to correlate it with the principle of things and the observed truth of the universe: this is the work of philosophy, and in the field of the truth of the spirit it can only be done by a spiritual philosophy, whether intellectual in its method or intuitive. But all knowledge and endeavour can reach its fruition only if it is turned into experience and has become a part of the consciousness and its established operations; in the spiritual field all this religious, occult or philosophical knowledge and endeavour must, to bear fruition, end in an opening up of the spiritual consciousness, in experiences that found and continually heighten, expand and enrich that consciousness and in the building of a life and action that is in conformity with the truth of the spirit: this is the work of spiritual realisation and experience.

In the very nature of things all evolution must proceed at first by a slow unfolding; for each new principle that evolves its powers has to make its way out of an involution in Inconscience and Ignorance. It has a difficult task in pulling itself out of the involution, out of the hold of the obscurity of the original medium, against the pull and strains, the instinctive opposition and obstruction of the Inconscience and the hampering mixture and blind obstinate retardations of the Ignorance. Nature affirms at first a vague urge and tendency which is a sign of the push of the occult, subliminal, submerged reality towards the surface; there are then small half-suppressed hints of the thing that is to be, imperfect beginnings, crude elements, rudimentary appearances, small, insignificant, hardly recognisable quanta. Afterwards there are small or large formations; a more characteristic and recognisable quality begins to show itself, first partially, here and there or in a low intensity, then more vivid, more formative; finally, there is the decisive emergence, a reversal of the consciousness, the beginning of the possibility of its radical change: but still much has to be done in every direction, a long and difficult growth towards perfection lies before the evolutionary endeavour. The thing done has not only to be confirmed, secured against relapse and the downward gravitation, against failure and extinction, but opened out into all the fields of its possibilities, its totality of entire self-achievement, its utmost height, subtlety, riches, wideness; it has to become dominant, all-embracing, comprehensive. This is everywhere the process of Nature and to ignore it is to miss the intention in her works and get lost in the maze of her procedure.

(S22: 892-95)

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Towards deeper secrets of mind and life

As man discovers the secrets and processes of physical Nature, he moves more and more away from his early recourse to occultism and magic; the presence and felt influence of gods and invisible powers recedes as more and more is explained by natural workings, the mechanical procedure of Nature: but he still feels the need of a spiritual element and spiritual factors in his life and therefore keeps for a time the two activities running together. But the occult elements of religion, though still held as beliefs or preserved but also buried in rites and myths, lose their significance and diminish and the intellectual element increases; finally, where and when the intellectualising tendency becomes too strong, there is a movement to cut out everything but creed, institution, formal practice and ethics. Even the element of spiritual experience dwindles and it is considered sufficient to rely only on faith, emotional fervour and moral conduct; the first amalgam of religion, occultism and mystic experience is disrupted, and there is a tendency, not by any means universal or complete but still pronounced or visible, for each of these powers to follow its own way to its own goal in its own separate and free character. A complete denial of religion, occultism and all that is supraphysical is the last outcome of this stage, a hard dry paroxysm of the superficial intellect hacking away the sheltering structures that are refuges for the deeper parts of our nature. But still evolutionary Nature keeps alive her ulterior intentions in the minds of a few and uses man's greater mental evolution to raise them to a higher plane and deeper issues. In the present time itself, after an age of triumphant intellectuality and materialism, we can see evidences of this natural process, — a return towards inner self-discovery, an inner seeking and thinking, a new attempt at mystic experience, a groping after the inner self, a reawakening to some sense of the truth and power of the spirit begins to manifest itself; man's search after his self and soul and a deeper truth of things tends to revive and resume its lost force and to give a fresh life to the old creeds, erect new faiths or develop independently of sectarian religions. The intellect itself, having reached near to the natural limits of the capacity of physical discovery, having touched its bedrock and found that it explains nothing more than the outer process of Nature, has begun, still tentatively and hesitatingly, to direct an eye of research on the deeper secrets of the mind and the life force and on the domain of the occult which it had rejected *a priori*, in order to know what there may be in it that is true.

(S22: 899-900)

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Creators of religion

It is possible indeed that it is the mystic or the incipient occultist who was everywhere the creator of religion and imposed his secret discoveries in the form of belief, myth and practice on the mass human mind; for it is always the individual who receives the intuitions of Nature and takes the step forward dragging or drawing the rest of humanity behind him. But even if we give the credit of this new creation to the subconscious mass mind, it is the occultist and mystic element in that mind which created it and it must have found individuals through whom it could emerge; for a mass experience or discovery or expression is not the first method of Nature; it is at some one point or a few points that the fire is lit and spreads from hearth to hearth, from altar to altar. But the spiritual aspiration and experience of the mystics was usually casketed in secret formulas and given only to a few initiates; it was conveyed to the rest or rather preserved for them in a mass of religious or traditional symbols. It is these symbols that were the heart's core of religion in the mind of an early humanity. (S22: 902)

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Discovering the secret movements and dynamics

Occultism is in its essence man's effort to arrive at a knowledge of secret truths and potentialities of Nature which will lift him out of slavery to his physical limits of being, an attempt in particular to possess and organise the mysterious, occult, outwardly still undeveloped direct power of Mind upon Life and of both Mind and Life over Matter. There is at the same time an endeavour to establish communication with worlds and entities belonging to the supraphysical heights, depths and intermediate levels of cosmic Being and to utilise this communion for the mastery of a higher Truth and for a help to man in his will to make himself sovereign over Nature's powers and forces. This human aspiration takes its stand on the belief, intuition or intimation that we are not mere creatures of the mud, but souls, minds, wills that can know all the mysteries of this and every world and become not only Nature's pupils but her adepts and masters. The occultist sought to know the secret of physical things also and in this effort he furthered astronomy, created chemistry, gave an impulse to other sciences, for he utilised geometry also and the science of numbers; but still more he sought to know the secrets of supernature. In this sense occultism might be described as the science of the supernatural; but it is in fact only the discovery of the supraphysical, the surpassing of the material limit, — the heart of occultism is not the impossible chimera which hopes to go beyond or outside all

force of Nature and make pure phantasy and arbitrary miracle omnipotently effective. What seems to us supernatural is in fact either a spontaneous irruption of the phenomena of other-Nature into physical Nature or, in the work of the occultist, a possession of the knowledge and power of the higher orders or grades of cosmic Being and Energy and the direction of their forces and processes towards the production of effects in the physical world by seizing on possibilities of interconnection and means for a material effectuality. There are powers of the mind and the life-force which have not been included in Nature's present systematisation of mind and life in matter, but are potential and can be brought to bear upon material things and happenings or even brought in and added to the present systematisation so as to enlarge the control of mind over our own life and body or to act on the minds, lives, bodies of others or on the movements of cosmic Forces. The modern admission of hypnotism is an example of such a discovery and systematised application, — though still narrow and limited, limited by its method and formula, — of occult powers which otherwise touch us only by a casual or a hidden action whose process is unknown to us or imperfectly caught by a few; for we are all the time undergoing a battery of suggestions, thought suggestions, impulse suggestions, will suggestions, emotional and sensational suggestions, thought waves, life waves that come on us or into us from others or from the universal Energy, but act and produce their effects without our knowledge. A systematised endeavour to know these movements and their law and possibilities, to master and use the power or Nature-force behind them or to protect ourselves from them would fall within one province of occultism: but it would only be a small part even of that province; for wide and multiple are the possible fields, uses, processes of this vast range of little explored Knowledge.

In modern times, as physical Science enlarged its discoveries and released the secret material forces of Nature into an action governed by human knowledge for human use, occultism receded and was finally set aside on the ground that the physical alone is real and mind and life are only departmental activities of Matter. On this basis, believing material Energy to be the key of all things, Science has attempted to move towards a control of mind and life processes by a knowledge of the material instrumentation and process of our normal and abnormal mind and life functionings and activities; the spiritual is ignored as only one form of mentality. It may be observed in passing that if this endeavour succeeded, it might not be without danger for the existence of the human race, even as now are certain other scientific discoveries misused or clumsily used by a humanity mentally and morally unready for the handling of powers so great and perilous; for it would be an artificial control applied without any knowledge of the secret forces which underlie and sustain our existence. Occultism in the West could be thus easily pushed aside because it never reached its majority, never acquired ripeness and a philosophic or sound systematic

foundation. It indulged too freely in the romance of the supernatural or made the mistake of concentrating its major effort on the discovery of formulas and effective modes for using supernormal powers. It deviated into magic white and black or into a romantic or thaumaturgic paraphernalia of occult mysticism and the exaggeration of what was after all a limited and scanty knowledge. These tendencies and this insecurity of mental foundation made it difficult to defend and easy to discredit, a target facile and vulnerable. In Egypt and the East this line of knowledge arrived at a greater and more comprehensive endeavour: this ampler maturity can be seen still intact in the remarkable system of the Tantras; it was not only a many-sided science of the supernormal but supplied the basis of all the occult elements of religion and even developed a great and powerful system of spiritual discipline and self-realisation. For the highest occultism is that which discovers the secret movements and dynamic supernormal possibilities of mind and life and spirit and uses them in their native force or by an applied process for the greater effectivity of our mental, vital and spiritual being.

Occultism is associated in popular idea with magic and magical formulae and a supposed mechanism of the supernatural. But this is only one side, nor is it altogether a superstition as is vainly imagined by those who have not looked deeply or at all at this covert side of secret Nature-Force or experimented with its possibilities. Formulas and their application, a mechanisation of latent forces, can be astonishingly effective in the occult use of mind power and life power just as it is in physical Science, but this is only a subordinate method and a limited direction. For mind and life forces are plastic, subtle and variable in their action and have not the material rigidity; they need a subtle and plastic intuition in the knowledge of them, in the interpretation of their action and process and in their application, — even in the interpretation and action of their established formulas. An overstress on mechanisation and rigid formulation is likely to result in sterilisation or a formalised limitation of knowledge and, on the pragmatic side, to much error, ignorant convention, misuse and failure. Now that we are outgrowing the superstition of the sole truth of Matter, a swing backward towards the old occultism and to new formulations, as well as to a scientific investigation of the still hidden secrets and powers of mind and a close study of psychic and abnormal or supernormal psychological phenomena, is possible and, in parts, already visible. But if it is to fulfil itself, the true foundation, the true aim and direction, the necessary restrictions and precautions of this line of inquiry have to be rediscovered; its most important aim must be the discovery of the hidden truths and powers of the mind-force and the life-power and the greater forces of the concealed spirit. Occult science is, essentially, the science of the subliminal, the subliminal in ourselves and the subliminal in world-nature, and of all that is in connection with the subliminal, including the subconscious and the superconscious,

and the use of it as part of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and for the right dynamisation of that knowledge. (S22: 906-10)

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The test of reason

If reason finds itself obliged to admit the dynamics of occultism, there too it will be most concerned with the truth and right system and real significance of the forces that it sees brought into play; it must inquire whether the significance is that which the occultist attaches to it or something other and perhaps deeper which has been misinterpreted in its essential relations and values or not given its true place in the whole of experience. For the action of our intellect is primarily the function of understanding, but secondarily critical and finally organising, controlling and formative. (S22: 911)

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There are no such things as miracles

Let us have done with cant and pretension in all matters. There are no such things as miracles in this world of divine processes, for either there is no such thing as a miracle or, if we consider more closely, everything in this world is a miracle. A miracle is, literally, a marvel, a thing to be wondered at — so long as the process is [not] known. Wireless telegraphy is a great marvel, the speechless passage of a thought from brain to brain is a yet greater, yet it happens daily even in the most commonplace minds and existences. But when the process is known, nothing is left to be wondered at except the admirable greatness of wisdom, width & variety of conception & subtlety & minuteness in execution with which this universe is managed. And even that wonder ceases when we know God and realise that the most wonderful movements of the cosmos are but trifles and “conjuring-tricks” compared with His infinite Reality. And as it is with this siddhi of science which we call wireless telegraphy and with this other siddhi of nature which is exemplified in the momentary or rapid spread of a single thought or emotion in a mob, a nation, an army, so it is with the Yogic siddhis. Explain & master their processes, put them in their proper relation to the rest of the economy of the universe and we shall find that they are neither miraculous nor marvellous nor supernatural. They are supernormal only in the way in which aviation is supernormal or motoring or the Chinese alphabet. Nor is there anything magical in them except in so far as magic, the science of the Persian Magi, means originally & properly the operations of

superior power or superior knowledge. And in that sense the occultism of the present day is magic precisely in the same sense as the scientific experiments of Roger Bacon or Paracelsus. There is a good deal of fraud and error and self-deception mixed up with it, but so there was with the earliest efforts of the European scientists. The defects of Western practitioners or Eastern quacks do not get rid of our true & ancient Yoga. (S12: 16-17)

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Freedom — the first requisite

It is essential for the faculties of the reason to be freed as far as may be from this ever increasing accumulation of thought-sensations good and bad, false and true which we call mind — manas. It is this freedom which is called the scientific spirit. To form no conclusions which are not justified by observation and reasoning, to doubt everything until it is proved but to deny nothing until it is disproved, to be always ready to reconsider old conclusions in the light of new facts, to give a candid consideration to every new idea or old idea revived if it deserves a hearing, no matter how contradictory it may be of previously ascertained experience or previously formed conclusion, is the sceptical temper, the temper of the inquirer, the true scientist, the untrammelled thinker. The interference of prejudgment and predilection means bondage and until the higher mind has shaken off these fetters, it is not free; it works in chains, it sees in blinkers. This is as true of the materialist refusing to consider spiritualism and occultism as it is of the religionist refusing to consider Science. Freedom is the first requisite of full working power, the freedom of the higher from the lower. The mind must be free from the body if it is to be purified from the grossness which clogs its motions, the heart must be free from the obsessions of the body if love and high aspiration are to increase, the reason must be free from the heart and the lower mind if it is to reflect perfectly, — for the heart can inspire, it cannot think, it is a vehicle of direct knowledge coloured by emotion, not of ratiocination. By [a] similar process if there is anything higher than the reason it can only be set free to work by the stillness of the whole mind not excluding the reflective faculties. This is a conclusion from analogy, indeed, and not entirely binding until confirmed by experience and observation. But we have given reason in past articles for supposing that there is a higher force than the logical reason — and the experience and observation of Yoga confirm the inference from analogy that the stillness of the mind is the first requisite for discovering, distinguishing and perfecting the action of this higher element in the psychology of man. (S12: 23-24)

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Credo quia impossibile

Materialism seems to me the most daring of occultisms, the most reckless and presumptuous exploiter of the principle, *Credo quia impossibile*, I believe it because it is impossible. If these minute cells can invent wireless telegraphy, why should it be impossible for them to precipitate letters or divine the past and the future? Until one can say of investigation “It is finished” and of knowledge “There is nothing beyond”, no one has a right to set down men as charlatans because they profess to be the pioneers of a new kind of Science. (S12: 67)

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To know all that is below or behind

It is not enough to observe and know the movements of our surface nature and the superficial nature of other living creatures just as it [is] not enough for Science to observe and know as electricity only the movements of lightning in the clouds or for the astronomer to observe and know only those movements and properties of the stars that are visible to the unaided eye. Here as there a whole world of occult phenomena have to be laid bare and brought under control before the psychologist can hope to be master of his province.

Our observable consciousness, that which we call ourselves, is only the little visible part of our being. It is a small field below which are depths and farther depths and widths and ever wider widths which support and supply it but to which it has no visible access. All that is our self, our being, — what we see at the top is only our ego and its visible nature.

Even the movements of this little surface nature cannot be understood nor its true law discovered until we know all that is below or behind and supplies it — and know too all that is around it and above. (S12: 317)

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Only by Yoga

It is only by Yoga process that one can arrive at an instrumentation which will drive large wide roads into the psychological Unknown and not only obscure and narrow tunnels. The field of psychology needs a direct inner psychological instrumentation by which we can arrive at sure data and sure results in ourselves verified [by] equally sure data [and] results in our observation of others and of the hidden

psychological world and its play of unseen forces. The physical is the outwardly seen and sensed and needs physical instruments for its exploration; the psychological is the physically unseen and unsensed, to be discovered only by an organisation of the inward senses and other now undeveloped and occult means. It is through consciousness, by an instrumentation of consciousness only that the nature and laws and movements of consciousness can be discovered — and this is the method of Yoga. (S12: 323)

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Occult phenomena only an outer fringe of Yoga

This consciousness is aware of external things not only through the physical mind and senses but by other though often similar means of Mind, an inner sense or senses, an inner tact or feeling such as a projective or responsive awareness of things at a slight or great distance, a premonitory sense of things about to happen [or] preparing to happen, a feeling of things or persons not seen, an inner vision of physical objects and happenings not before the eye and hundreds of other phenomena not normal to the ordinary mind. These phenomena are ordinarily labelled occult or psychic or described as hallucinatory according to the point of view of the speaker, but such epithets explain nothing. This range of phenomena exists and for anyone who would know the nature and origin and possibilities of consciousness an examination of them is imperative.

This range of phenomena is however only an outer fringe of Yoga. It is more important that it admits to an inner field of experiences of the utmost import, to a growth of psyche and spirit, to deepest realities and [?finally] to the deepest of all; [.] (S12: 328-29)

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Nothing intrinsically hidden, occult or mystic about Yoga

The exclusive pursuit of Yoga by men who seclude themselves either physically or mentally from the contact of the world has led to an erroneous view of this science as something mystic, far-off and unreal. The secrecy which has been observed with regard to Yogic practices, — a necessary secrecy in the former stages of human evolution, — has stereotyped this error. Practices followed by men who form secret circles and confine the instruction in the mysteries strictly to those who have a certain preparatory fitness, inevitably bear the stamp to the outside world of occultism.

In reality there is nothing intrinsically hidden, occult or mystic about Yoga. Yoga is based upon certain laws of human psychology, a certain knowledge about the power of the mind over the body and the inner spirit over the mind which are not generally realised and have hitherto been considered by those in the secret too momentous in their consequences for disclosure until men should be trained to use them aright.

(S13: 13)

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Old laws must be modified

It is still the orthodox view that the experiences of Yoga must not be revealed to the uninitiated. But a new era dawns upon us in which the old laws must be modified. Already the West is beginning to discover the secrets of Yoga. Some of its laws have revealed themselves however dimly and imperfectly to the scientists of Europe while others through Spiritualism, Christian Science, clairvoyance, telepathy and other modern forms of occultism are being almost discovered by accident as if by men groping in the dark and stumbling over truths they cannot understand. The time has almost come when India can no longer keep her light to herself but must pour it out upon the world. Yoga must be revealed to mankind because without it mankind cannot take the next step in the human evolution. (S13: 14)

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A hidden consciousness everywhere

The other line of psychological investigation is still frowned upon by orthodox science, but it thrives and yields its results in spite of the anathema of the doctors. It leads us into bypaths of psychical research, hypnotism, mesmerism, occultism and all sorts of strange psychological gropings. Certainly, there is nothing here of the assured clearness and firmly-grounded positivism of the physical method. Yet facts emerge and with the facts a momentous conclusion, — the conclusion, that there is a “subliminal” self behind our superficial waking mind not inconscient but conscient, greater than the waking mind, endowed with surprising faculties and capable of a much surer action and experience, conscient of the superficial mind though of it the superficial mind is inconscient. And then a question rises. What if there were really no Inconscient at all, but a hidden Consciousness everywhere perfect in power and wisdom, of which our mind is the first slow, hesitating and imperfect disclosure and into the image of which the human mentality is destined progressively to grow?

It would at least be no less valid a generalisation and it would explain all the facts that we now know considerably better than the blind and purposeless determinism of the materialistic theory. (S13: 180)

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Need to replace old symbols by new ones

It is a sign that the lore of the early Mystics had been lost, the spiritual sense had departed out of their symbols, even as in Vedic India; but there took place in Greece no new and powerful movement which could, as in India, replace them by new symbols, new and more philosophic restatements of their hidden truths, new disciplines, schools of Yoga. Attempts, such as that of Pythagoras, were made; but Greece at large followed the turn given by Heraclitus, developed the cult of the reason and left the remnants of the old occult religion to become a solemn superstition and a conventional pomp. (S13: 246)

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Occult knowledge possessed by the ancient sages

Are any of the following queries touched in Sanatan Dharma books of philosophy?

- 1) *The nature and formation of animal souls.*
- 2) *The shape, size, formations, nature and colour of subtle bodies.*
- 3) *The difference between the subtle bodies of saints and ordinary people and the process of developing one into the other.*
- 4) *The rationale of the reincarnation theory.*
- 5) *The nature, constituents and situation of invisible worlds.*

The first three questions are of a curious interest, the last two cover a very wide field. All except the fourth belong more or less to a kind of knowledge pursued with eager interest by a growing number of inquirers, but still looked on askance by the human mind in general, — the occult sciences. The Hindu Scriptures and books of philosophy do not as a rule handle such questions very directly or in any systematic fashion. They are concerned either with the great and central questions which have always occupied the human mind, the origin and nature of the universe, the why, whence and whither of life, the highest good and the means of attaining it,

the nature of man and the destiny of the human soul and its relation with the Supreme, or else they deal with the regulation of ethics, society and the conduct of daily life. Occult knowledge has been left to be acquired by occult teaching. Nevertheless it was possessed by the ancient sages and our correspondent will find a great deal of more or less scattered information on these and cognate questions in the Veda, Upanishads and Puranas. But it is doubtful whether he would obtain a satisfactory answer to his queries in the form in which he has put them. He will find for instance a long description of invisible worlds, — invisible, that is to say, to our physical senses, — in the Vishnu Purana, but it is picturesque rather than precise. We do not think he will find much about the constituents of the worlds or the size of subtle bodies.

The form of the third question lends itself to misconception. Obviously the method for an ordinary man to develop his subtle body into that of a saint, is to cease to be an ordinary man and to become a saint. There can be no other means. The subtle body is the mental case and reflects the changes of the mentality which is housed in it or the influence exercised on it by the activities and experiences of our physical existence.

Reincarnation is much more prominent and the ideas about it more systematised in Buddhist than in Hindu books. But most of the Hindu philosophies took some kind of reincarnation for granted. It was part of the ancient teaching which had come down to them from the earliest times. They are more concerned with its causes and the method of escape from the obligation of rebirth; the thing itself was for them a fact beyond question. But the nature of reincarnation is not the same for all the old thinkers. The Upanishads, for instance, seem to teach that the physical self is dissolved at death into its principle, ether; it is the mental being that appears to be born and reborn, but in reality birth and death are merely semblances and operations of Nature, — of Aditi full of the gods, *Aditi devatāmayī*; the spirit is really one in all bodies and is neither born nor dies. Nachiketas in the Katha Upanishad raises the question whether the man as we know and conceive him really survives death and this seems to be the sense of the answer that he receives. (S13: 451-52)

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A next step?

Occultism means rightly the use of the higher powers of our nature, soul, mind, life-force and the faculties of the subtle physical consciousness to bring about results on their own or on the material plane by some pressure of their own secret law and its potentialities, for manifestation and result in human or earthly mind and life and body

or in objects and events in the world of Matter. A discovery or an extension of these little known or yet undeveloped powers is now envisaged by some well-known thinkers as a next step to be taken by mankind in its immediate evolution . . . (S13: 548)

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Evolving evolution

If man began to develop the powers and means of a higher knowledge in something like fullness, if the developing animal opened the door of his mentality to beginnings of conscious thought and even a rudimentary reason, — at his highest he is not so irrevocably far from that even now, — if the plant developed its first subconscious reactions and attained to some kind of primary nervous sensitiveness, if Matter, which is a blind form of the Spirit, were to become more alive with the hidden power within it and to offer more readily the secret sense of things, the occult realities it covers, as for instance, the record of the past it always preserves even in its dumb inconscience or the working of its involved forces and invisible movements revealing veiled powers in material nature to a subtler generalised perception of the new human intelligence, this would be an immense change promising greater changes in the future, but it would mean only an uplifting and not a disturbance of the universal order. Evolution would itself evolve, but it would not be perturbed or founder. (S13: 570-71)

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Extraordinary vitality of ancient cultures

Nor is it a certain conclusion from the data we possess that the early Aryan cultures — supposing the Celt, Teuton, Greek and Indian to represent one common cultural origin, — were really undeveloped and barbarous. A certain pure and high simplicity in their outward life and its organisation, a certain concreteness and vivid human familiarity in their conception of and relations with the gods they worshipped, distinguish the Aryan type from the more sumptuous and materialistic Egypto-Chaldean civilisation and its solemn and occult religions. But those characteristics are not inconsistent with a high internal culture. On the contrary, indications of a great spiritual tradition meet us at many points and negate the ordinary theory. The old Celtic races certainly possessed some of the highest philosophical conceptions and they preserve stamped upon them even to the present day the result of an early mystic and intuitional development which must have been of long standing and

highly evolved to have produced such enduring results. In Greece it is probable that the Hellenic type was moulded in the same way by Orphic and Eleusinian influences and that Greek mythology, as it has come down to us, full of delicate psychological suggestions, is a legacy of the Orphic teaching. It would be only consonant with the general tradition if it turned out that Indian civilisation has throughout been the prolongation of tendencies and ideas sown in us by the Vedic forefathers. The extraordinary vitality of these early cultures which still determine for us the principal types of modern man, the main elements of his temperament, the chief tendencies of his thought, art and religion, can have proceeded from no primitive savagery. They are the result of a deep and puissant prehistoric development. (S15: 27)

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Occult powers often a hindrance

. . . the possession of occult powers cannot be an assistance, it is indeed often a hindrance to salvation. Or rites and ceremonies may purify and prepare the mind and fit it for starting on one of the paths to salvation. This indeed is their only helpfulness for the true aim of our existence. They are no more than an infant or preparatory class in the school of Brahmavidya. (S17: 203)

*

Field for experiment is ourselves

. . . our only field for full experiment is ourselves. In matter we can examine any object by bringing it sufficiently near to be within the vicinity of our senses; but in mind we are unable to see the movements & processes of the minds of others except in so far as we can judge them from their gestures, action & physical expression, — indices unutterably perilous to the reasoner, inconceivably misleading. Unless, therefore, we can discover & use mental instruments, answering to the microscope, telescope, retorts of the astronomer, chemist & physicist, by which we can see, study & analyse the mental processes of thought, feeling & sensation in others as well as in ourselves, we may know indeed the physical movements & organs corresponding to some of the motions of mind, but we shall never know mind itself. It is an obscure perception of this truth that explains the powerful revival in our own day of the occult. Erratic & ignorant as much of it is, it was inevitable & it is salutary. (S17: 586)

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The key is in our hand

[*Our modern age,*] masterful with knowledge in the positive and external, tries to extend its autocracy in the shape of a confident ignorance over the bounds of the occult world within, occult . . . only because we reject a key that is in everyone's hand, himself. (S4: 953)

*

Contribution of the mystics

. . . the largest part in determining and deepening this inward turn must be attributed to the Mystics who had an enormous influence on these early civilisations; there was indeed almost everywhere an age of the Mysteries in which men of a deeper knowledge and self-knowledge established their practices, significant rites, symbols, secret lore within or on the border of the more primitive exterior religions. This took different forms in different countries; in Greece there were the Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries, in Egypt and Chaldea the priests and their occult lore and magic, in Persia the Magi, in India the Rishis. The preoccupation of the Mystics was with self-knowledge and a profounder world-knowledge; they found out that in man there was a deeper self and inner being behind the surface of the outward physical man, which it was his highest business to discover and know. "Know thyself" was their great precept, just as in India to know the Self, the Atman became the great spiritual need, the highest thing for the human being. They found also a Truth, a Reality behind the outward aspects of the universe and to discover, follow, realise this Truth was their great aspiration. They discovered secrets and powers of Nature which were not those of the physical world but which could bring occult mastery over the physical world and physical things and to systematise this occult knowledge and power was also one of their strong preoccupations. But all this could only be safely done by a difficult and careful training, discipline, purification of the nature; it could not be done by the ordinary man. If men entered into these things without a severe test and training it would be dangerous to themselves and others; this knowledge, these powers could be misused, misinterpreted, turned from truth to falsehood, from good to evil. A strict secrecy was therefore maintained, the knowledge handed down behind a veil from master to disciple. A veil of symbols was created behind which these mysteries could shelter, formulas of speech also which could be understood by the initiated but were either not known by others or were taken by them in an outward sense which carefully covered their true meaning and secret. This was the substance of Mysticism everywhere. (S16: 5-6)

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The spirit within us

“For the gods immortal wander always over the earth and come unguessed to the dwellings of mortals; but rare is the eye that can look on them and rarer the mind that can distinguish the disguise from the deity.”

. . .

“And men too live disguised in the sunlight and never from their birth to their death shalt thou see the mask uplifted. Nay, thou thyself, O Pelops, hast thou seen even once the daemon within thee?” (S4: 955-56)

*

True meaning of Vedas can be known only by the seers or mystics

It has been the tradition in India from the earliest times that the Rishis, the poet-seers of the Veda, were men of this type, men with a great spiritual and occult knowledge not shared by ordinary human beings, men who handed down this knowledge and their powers by a secret initiation to their descendants and chosen disciples. It is a gratuitous assumption to suppose that this tradition was wholly unfounded, a superstition that arose suddenly or slowly formed in a void, with nothing whatever to support it; some foundation there must have been however small or however swelled by legend and the accretions of centuries. But if it is true, then inevitably the poet-seers must have expressed something of their secret knowledge, their mystic lore in their writings and such an element must be present, however well-concealed by an occult language or behind a technique of symbols, and if it is there it must be to some extent discoverable. It is true that an antique language, obsolete words, — Yaska counts more than four hundred of which he did not know the meaning, — and often a difficult and out-of-date diction helped to obscure their meaning; the loss of the sense of their symbols, the glossary of which they kept to themselves, made them unintelligible to later generations; even in the time of the Upanishads the spiritual seekers of the age had to resort to initiation and meditation to penetrate into their secret knowledge, while the scholars afterwards were at sea and had to resort to conjecture and to concentrate on a mental interpretation or to explain by myths, by the legends of the Brahmanas themselves often symbolic and obscure. But still to make this discovery will be the sole way of getting at the true sense and the true value of the Veda. We must take seriously the hint of Yaska, accept the Rishi’s description of the Veda’s contents as “seer-wisdoms,

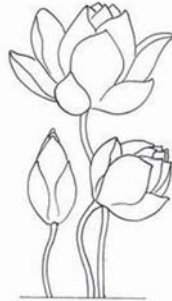
secret words”, and look for whatever clue we can find to this ancient wisdom. Otherwise the Veda must remain for ever a sealed book; grammarians, etymologists, scholastic conjectures will not open to us the sealed chamber.

For it is a fact that the tradition of a secret meaning and a mystic wisdom couched in the Riks of the ancient Veda was as old as the Veda itself. The Vedic Rishis believed that their Mantras were inspired from higher hidden planes of consciousness and contained this secret knowledge. The words of the Veda could only be known in their true meaning by one who was himself a seer or mystic; from others the verses withheld their hidden knowledge. (S16: 6-8)

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Those who seeing see not . . .

Those who do not know the inner sense are as men who seeing see not, hearing hear not, only to one here and there the Word desiring him like a beautifully robed wife to a husband lays open her body. Others unable to drink steadily of the milk of the Word, the Vedic cow, move with it as with one that gives no milk, to him the Word is a tree without flowers or fruits. This is quite clear and precise; it results from it beyond doubt that even then while the Rig Veda was being written the Riks were regarded as having a secret sense which was not open to all. There was an occult and spiritual knowledge in the sacred hymns and by this knowledge alone, it is said, one can know the truth and rise to a higher existence. This belief was not a later tradition but held, probably, by all and evidently by some of the greatest Rishis such as Dirghatamas and Vamadeva. (S16: 8)



PART TWO

Dealing with adverse forces

How is one to meet adverse forces — forces that are invisible and yet quite living and tangible?

A great deal depends upon the stage of development of your consciousness. At the beginning, if you have no special occult knowledge and power, the best you can do is to keep as quiet and peaceful as possible. If the attack takes the form of adverse suggestions try quietly to push them away, as you would some material object. The quieter you are, the stronger you become. The firm basis of all spiritual power is equanimity. (M3: 33-34)

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The wisest way with these beings is to cut off all connection and have nothing to do with them — unless indeed you have great occult knowledge and power and have learned how to cover and protect yourself — but even then it is always a dangerous thing to move about with them. To hope to transform them, as some people do, is a vain illusion; for they do not want to be transformed. They have no intention of allowing any transformation and all effort in that direction is useless. (M3: 43)

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Great modern musicians

Among the great modern musicians there have been several whose consciousness, when they created, came into touch with a higher consciousness. César Franck played on the organ as one inspired; he had an opening into the psychic life and he was conscious of it and to a great extent expressed it. Beethoven, when he composed the Ninth Symphony, had the vision of an opening into a higher world and of the descent of a higher world into this earthly plane. Wagner had strong and powerful intimations of the occult world; he had the instinct of occultism and the sense of the occult and through it he received his greatest inspirations. But he worked mainly on the vital level and his mind came in constantly to interfere and mechanised his inspiration. His work for the greater part is too mixed, too often obscure and heavy,

although powerful. But when he could cross the vital and the mental levels and reach a higher world, some of the glimpses he had were of an exceptional beauty, as in Parsifal, in some parts of Tristan and Iseult and most in its last great Act.

(M 3: 111)

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Mediums and clairvoyants

“Many people would tell you wonderful tales of how the world was built and how it will proceed in the future, how and where you were born in the past and what you will be hereafter, the lives you have lived and the lives you will still live. All this has nothing to do with spiritual life.”

Is what such people say a complete humbug? Is there a process other than the spiritual by which one can know all these things?

Often it is, but even if it is correct, it has nothing spiritual in it. Many mediums, clairvoyants or people with a special faculty, tell you these things. That faculty is no more spiritual than the capacity to build a bridge or to cook a nice dish or to solve a mathematical problem. There are intellectual capacities, there are occult capacities — that is all. (M3: 309)

*

Earth-memory

To be able to enter the “earth-memory” consciously, a discipline is needed. What discipline?

A discipline much more difficult than the discipline of yoga! It is an occult discipline.

First of all, one must learn to go out of one’s body consciously and to enter into another more subtle body; to use one’s will to go where one wants to go, never to fear and sometimes to face unexpected and even terrible things; to remain calm, to develop the mind’s visual sense, to accustom one’s mind to be altogether peaceful and quiet. . . . You know, the list is long and I could continue like this for hours!

Who among you has had the experience of going out of the body — going out and knowing about it? I do not even speak of doing it at will, for that is another stage. (M4: 124)

*

Clairvoyant

... I knew quite a remarkable clairvoyant. One day she had to undergo an operation and she was chloroformed; she went out of her body. Suddenly she began to see what was going on in the minds of the people who were there. She had the habit of talking, even while asleep, and she began to speak out quite aloud: she said that so-and-so had worries, that another had a problem to solve, and that its solution was such and such a thing.

This was an exceptional case — that happens only to gifted persons and there are not many of these. But the number of persons who remain conscious under chloroform is greater than one thinks; but generally, when one wakes up from chloroform one feels pretty uneasy and remembers but vaguely his experiences outside the body. Is there anyone here who has fainted suddenly, as if by accident? You see your body, don't you? And you ask yourself, "But what is it doing there in that ridiculous position?" And you rush back into it! That happened to me once in Paris. I had been treated to a good dinner, and then I went to a conference hall, I believe. There were many people, it was very hot, I was standing there with the good dinner in my stomach, and suddenly I felt ill at ease. I told the person who was with me, "I must go out immediately." Once outside (it was in Trocadero Square) I fainted away completely. I saw my body there, stretched out, and I found it so ridiculous that I rushed into it and I gave it a good scolding, saying, "You must not play such tricks with me!"

Many people faint like this and see themselves. There is one condition for this: the organ of sight in the subtle physical body or in the most material vital must be developed.

I must tell you that this kind of capacity may come spontaneously, without effort — one may be a born clairvoyant. They are not necessarily very intelligent people, their vital consciousness may be mediocre, but they are born clairvoyant. It is not a sign of a great development — it comes from something else, from a capacity of the parents, of past lives, etc. But if you are not born clairvoyant, and if you do not carry in you the other extreme, I mean a psychic being wholly conscious and fully developed which leads its own independent life in the body, and you want to learn to see and have visions, then it is a very long, very slow discipline and there are very few people who have the necessary patience and endurance to go to the end of the training.

It is interesting but it is not essential, one can do without it. It is the same as with dreams. But if you can develop this capacity, it can make your life more rich, it can make your consciousness progress more quickly. (M4: 125-26)

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Mental formations

Generally, when you want to study occultism, the first thing that the Master does is never to speak to you about it, never to explain it to you, precisely because of this ridiculous phenomenon of the mind which begins to “think” about it and brings you “experiences” which have no value: they are mental formations which make a plaything of you, that is all. They have no reality. (M4: 230)

*

Beautiful periods

. . . from an occult point of view it is almost always the same forces and same beings which incarnate during all the ages of artistic beauty upon earth and that, according to occultists, there are cycles of rebirth: beings return, group themselves through affinity at the time of birth; so it happens that regularly, almost all come together for a similar action. Some occultists have studied this question and given very precise numbers based upon the actual facts of the development of the earth: they have said that once in a hundred years, once in a thousand years, once in five thousand years, etc., certain cycles were repeated; that certain great civilisations appeared every five thousand years, and that it was (according to their special knowledge) the same people who came back. This is not quite exact, that is why I am not going into details, but in a sense this is true: it is the same forces which are at work. It is the same forces and they are grouped according to their affinities and, for a reason which may be quite material or for a mental or cyclic reason, they reunite at a certain place, and in this place there is a new civilisation or a special progress in a civilisation or a kind of effervescence, blossoming, flowering of beauty, as in the great ages in Greece, Egypt, India, Italy, Spain. . . . Everywhere, in all the countries of the world, there have been more or less beautiful periods.

If you put the question to astrologers, they will explain this to you by the position of the stars; they will say that certain positions of the stars have a certain effect on the earth. But, as I have told you, all these things are “languages”, a way of expression, of making oneself understood; the truth is deeper, it is more complex, more complete. (M4: 310:11)

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Hierarchy

What is a “hierarchy”?

It is a grouping organised in order of merit. For instance, you have a chief at the centre and you may have four persons around him, and around these four, 8, then 12, 24, 36, 48, 124, and so on, each with his special mission, his special work, his particular authority, and all referring in an ascending order to the centre. That is a hierarchy. In governments they try to form hierarchies, but these are untrue, they are arbitrary and not worth anything. But in all ancient initiations there were hierarchies which were expressions of individual merit — individual powers and merits — having always at their centre the representative of the Supreme and the Shakti; sometimes having only the Supreme, depending on the religions. But the groups were always organised in that way, that is, with a growing number of individuals, each one having to refer to the officer immediately above him. For instance, the 124 had to refer to the 48, the 48 had to refer to the 24, the 24 refer to the 12, the 12 to the 8, and so on. That is a hierarchy. The word is used in a very imprecise and vague way. They speak of a hierarchy and think it is the men who govern and have subordinates. But the true hierarchy is an occult hierarchy, and this occult hierarchy had as its purpose the manifesting, the expressing of a more profound hierarchy which is a hierarchy of the invisible worlds. (M4: 391)

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‘Emanations’

We said the other day that “Vibhutis” are aspects, qualities (what are called in occultism emanations) of a being. They are like certain forces, powers, qualities, attributes which are put in contact with an outer form — a physical form, for instance — and which manifest themselves through this form. This may be a human form. (M4: 397-98)

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Black magic

There is a misguided, perverted occultism which is called black magic, it is a thing one must never touch. But unfortunately, there are people who touch it through pure wickedness. You must not believe it is an illusion, a superstition; it is real.

There are people who know how to do magic and do it, and with their magic they obtain altogether detestable results. . . . It is understood of course that when you have no fear and remain under protection, you are sheltered. But there is a “when”, there is a condition, and then if the condition is not always fulfilled, very unpleasant things may happen. So long as you are in a state full of strength, full of purity — that is, in a state of invincibility, if anybody does anything against you, that falls back upon him automatically, as when you throw a tennis-ball against the wall, it comes back to you; the thing comes back to them exactly in the same way, sometimes with a greater force, and they are punished by their own wickedness. But naturally it all depends on the person against whom the magic is done, on his inner force and purity. . . . I have come across such things, many cases like this. And in such cases, in order to resist, one must be, as I said, a warrior in the vital, that is, a spiritual fighter in the vital. All who do yoga sincerely must become that, and when they do become that, they are altogether sheltered. But one of the conditions for becoming it is never to have bad will or a bad thought towards others. For if you have a bad feeling or bad will or a bad thought, you come down to their level and when you are on the same level with them, well, you may receive blows from them.

Now, without going to that extreme, there are in the physical atmosphere, the earth-atmosphere, numerous small entities which you do not see, for your sight is too limited, but which move about in your atmosphere. Some of them are quite nice, others very wicked. Generally these little entities are produced by the disintegration of vital beings — they pullulate — and these form quite an unpleasant mass. There are some which do very fine things. I believe I narrated to you the story of the little beings who tugged at my sari to tell me that the milk was about to boil and that I had to go and see that it did not boil over. But all of them are not so good. Some of them like to play ugly little tricks, wicked little pranks. And so most often it is they who are behind an accident. They like little accidents, they like the whole whirl of forces that gather round an accident: a mass of people, you know, it is very amusing! And then that gives them their food, because, in reality, they feed upon human vitality thrown out of the body by emotions and excitements. So they say: just a small accident, it is quite nice, many accidents! . . .

And then if there is a group of such small entities, they may clash with one another, because among themselves they do not have a very peaceful life: clashing with one another, fighting, destroying, demolishing each other. And that is the origin of microbes. They are forces of disintegration. But they continue to be alive even in their divided forms and this is the origin of germs and microbes. Therefore most microbes have behind them a bad will and that is what makes them so dangerous. And unless one knows the quality and kind of bad will and is capable of acting upon it, there is a ninety-nine per cent chance of not finding the true and complete

remedy. The microbe is a very material expression of something living in a subtle physical world and that is why these very microbes (as I have said there) that are always around you, within you, for years together do not make you ill and then suddenly they make you fall ill.

There is another reason. The origin of the microbes and their support lie in a disharmony, in the being's receptivity to the adverse force. I will tell you a story. I do not know whether I have already told it to you, but I am going to tell you now for it will give you an illustration.

I was in Japan. It was at the beginning of January 1919. Anyway, it was the time when a terrible flu raged there in the whole of Japan, which killed hundreds of thousands of people. It was one of those epidemics the like of which is rarely seen. In Tokyo, every day there were hundreds and hundreds of new cases. The disease appeared to take this turn: it lasted three days and on the third day the patient died. And people died in such large numbers that they could not even be cremated, you understand, it was impossible, there were too many of them. Or otherwise, if one did not die on the third day, at the end of seven days one was altogether cured; a little exhausted but all the same completely cured. There was a panic in the town, for epidemics are very rare in Japan. They are a very clean people, very careful and with a fine morale. Illnesses are very rare. But still this came, it came as a catastrophe. There was a terrible fear. For example, people were seen walking about in the streets with a mask on the nose, a mask to purify the air they were breathing, so that it might not be full of the microbes of the illness. It was a common fear. . . . Now, it so happened I was living with someone who never ceased troubling me: "But what is this disease? What is there behind this disease?" What I was doing, you know, was simply to cover myself with my force, my protection so as not to catch it and I did not think of it any more and continued doing my work. Nothing happened and I was not thinking of it. But constantly I heard: "What is this? Oh, I would like to know what is there behind this illness. But could you not tell me what this illness is, why it is there?" etc. One day I was called to the other end of the town by a young woman whom I knew and who wished to introduce me to some friends and show me certain things. I do not remember now what exactly was the matter, but anyway I had to cross the whole town in a tram-car. And I was in the tram and seeing these people with masks on their noses, and then there was in the atmosphere this constant fear, and so there came a suggestion to me; I began to ask myself: "Truly, what is this illness? What is there behind this illness? What are the forces that are in this illness?" I came to the house, I passed an hour there and I returned. And I returned with a terrible fever. I had caught it. It came to you thus, without preparation, instantaneously. Illnesses, generally illnesses from germs and microbes take a few days in the system: they come, there is a little battle inside; you win or you lose, if

you lose you catch the illness, it is not complicated. But there, you just receive a letter, open the envelope, hop! puff! The next minute you have the fever. Well, that evening I had a terrible fever. The doctor was called (it was not I who called him), the doctor was called and he told me: "I must absolutely give you this medicine." It was one of the best medicines for the fever, he had just a little (all their stocks were exhausted, everyone was taking it); he said: "I have still a few packets, I shall give you some" — "I beg of you, do not give it to me, I won't take it. Keep it for someone who has faith in it and will take it." He was quite disgusted: "It was no use my coming here." So I said: "Perhaps it was no use!" And I remained in my bed, with my fever, a violent fever. All the while I was asking myself: "What is this illness? Why is it there? What is there behind it? . . ." At the end of the second day, as I was lying all alone, I saw clearly a being, with a part of the head cut off, in a military uniform (or the remains of a military uniform) approaching me and suddenly flinging himself upon my chest, with that half a head to suck my force. I took a good look, then realised that I was about to die. He was drawing all my life out (for I must tell you that people were dying of pneumonia in three days). I was completely nailed to the bed, without movement, in a deep trance. I could no longer stir and he was pulling. I thought: now it is the end. Then I called on my occult power, I gave a big fight and I succeeded in turning him back so that he could not stay there any longer. And I woke up.

But I had seen. And I had learnt, I had understood that the illness originated from beings who had been thrown out of their bodies. I had seen this during the First Great War, towards its end, when people used to live in trenches and were killed by bombardment. They were in perfect health, altogether healthy and in a second they were thrown out of their bodies, not conscious that they were dead. They did not know they hadn't a body any more and they tried to find in others the life they could not find in themselves. That is, they were turned into so many countless vampires. And they vampirised upon men. And then over and above that, there was a decomposition of the vital forces of people who fell ill and died. One lived in a kind of sticky and thick cloud made up of all that. And so those who took in this cloud fell ill and usually got cured, but those who were attacked by a being of that kind invariably died, they could not resist. I know how much knowledge and force were necessary for me to resist. It was irresistible. That is, if they were attacked by a being who was a centre of this whirl of bad forces, they died. And there must have been many of these, a very great number. I saw all that and I understood.

When someone came to see me, I asked to be left alone, I lay quietly in my bed and I passed two or three days absolutely quiet, in concentration, with my consciousness. Subsequently, a friend of ours (a Japanese, a very good friend) came and told me: "Ah! you were ill? So what I thought was true. . . . Just imagine

for the last two or three days, there hasn't been a single new case of illness in the town and most of the people who were ill have been cured and the number of deaths has become almost negligible, and now it is all over. The illness is wholly under control." Then I narrated what had happened to me and he went and narrated it to everybody. They even published articles about it in the papers.

Well, consciousness, to be sure, is more effective than doctors' pills! . . . The condition was critical. Just imagine, there were entire villages where everyone had died. There was a village in Japan, not very big, but still with more than a hundred people, and it happened, by some extraordinary stroke of luck, that one of the villagers was to receive a letter (the postman went there only if there was a letter; naturally, it was a village far in the countryside); so he went to the countryside; there was a snowfall; the whole village was under snow . . . and there was not a living person. It was exactly so. It was that kind of epidemic. And Tokyo was also like that; but Tokyo was a big town and things did not happen in the same fashion. And it was in this way the epidemic ended. That is my story. (M5: 178-83)

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Worth the trouble

When I began studying occultism, I became aware that — just when I began to work upon my nights in order to make them conscious — I became aware that there was between the subtle-physical and the most material vital a small region, very small, which was not sufficiently developed to serve as a conscious link between the two activities. So what took place in the consciousness of the most material vital did not get translated exactly in the consciousness of the most subtle physical. Some of it got lost on the way because it was like a — not positively a void but something only half-conscious, not sufficiently developed. I knew there was only one way, that was to work to develop it. I began working. This happened sometime about the month of February, I believe. One month, two months, three, four, no result. We go on. Five months, six months . . . it was at the end of July or the beginning of August. I left Paris, the house I was staying in, and went to the countryside, quite a small place on the seashore, to stay with some friends who had a garden. Now, in that garden there was a lawn — you know what a lawn is, don't you? grass — where there were flowers and around it some trees. It was a fine place, very quiet, very silent. I lay on the grass, like this, flat on my stomach, my elbows in the grass, and then suddenly all the life of that Nature, all the life of that region between the subtle-physical and the most material vital, which is very living in plants and in Nature, all that region became all at once, suddenly, without any

transition, absolutely living, intense, conscious, marvellous; and this was the result, wasn't it?, of six months of work which had given nothing. I had not noticed anything; but just a little shift like that and the result was there! It is like the chick in the egg, yes! It is there for a very long time and yet one sees nothing at all. And one wonders whether there is indeed a chick in the egg; and then, suddenly "Tick!", there is a tiny hole, you know, and then everything bursts and out comes the chick! It is quite ready, but it took all that time to be formed; that's how it is. When you want to prepare something within you, that is how it is, it is like the chick in the egg. You need a very long time, and this without having the least result, never getting discouraged, and continuing your effort, absolutely regularly, as though you had eternity before you and, moreover, as though you were quite disinterested about the result. You do the work because you do it. And then, suddenly, one day, it bursts and you see before you the full result of your work.

But you understand, don't you? One speaks like this, very easily, of becoming conscious of one's nights, having control over one's sleep-activities and all sorts of things of this kind, but you need to do many such little works like the one I have just described to you. Many of these are needed to obtain this result. When one is accomplished, you realise that there is another missing, and when this is done, you realise there is still another, and so on, until one fine day you can do what I said, and you go from one plane to another, like that, putting all to rest, until you come out of all activity and enter the supreme rest, consciously. It is worth the trouble.

(M6: 186-88)

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Occultism and mysticism

What is the difference between occultism and mysticism?

They are not at all the same thing.

Mysticism is a more or less emotive relation with what one senses to be a divine power — that kind of highly emotional, affective, very intense relation with something invisible which is or is taken for the Divine. That is mysticism.

Occultism is exactly what he has said: it is the knowledge of invisible forces and the power to handle them. It is a science. It is altogether a science. I always compare occultism with chemistry, for it is the same kind of knowledge as the knowledge of chemistry for material things. It is a knowledge of invisible forces, their different vibrations, their interrelations, the combinations which can be made by bringing them together and the power one can exercise over them. It is absolutely

scientific; and it ought to be learnt like a science; that is, one cannot practise occultism as something emotional or something vague and imprecise. You must work at it as you would do at chemistry, and learn all the rules or find them if there is nobody to teach you. But it is at some risk to yourself that you can find them. There are combinations here as explosive as certain chemical combinations.

Is occultism necessary in this life?

In this life? That depends upon what one wants to do. You mean in the life of yoga? Not at all necessary. And besides, as he says, there are many who are not gifted, who don't have the faculty. Lots of people, as soon as they have the least experience, the least experience, for instance when they just begin to come out of their body, are panic-stricken, and this indeed is something very difficult to cure. It can be cured if one has a strong will and a great self-mastery. But many people are not able to dissociate their states of being. If they dissociate them, something goes wrong, their body suffers; while there are others who go out, take a walk, return. For them this is quite natural. Usually, those who are interested in this — unless it is only a kind of mental curiosity — are also gifted. They may not know it but they can be taught. But these things have to be practised with precaution. For instance — I am going to give you an example: as soon as one goes out of the body, no matter how slightly, and even just mentally, well, that part of the mind which controls the functioning goes out; and the automatic side of the mind which makes or produces movements or glandular secretions, that whole automatic side, you see, remains without the protection and control of the conscious, thinking part. Well, in the atmosphere there are always numerous little entities, very tiny, usually originating from human disintegrations, which are like physical microbes, some kind of microbes of the vital. They are more visible and have a will of their own. One can't say they are wicked but they are full of mischief. They like to have a good time and enjoy themselves at people's expense. So, as soon as they see that you are not sufficiently protected, they get hold of the automatic mind and bring upon you all sorts of quite unpleasant things — as, for example, some people swallow their tongue when in a trance; this suffocates them if they don't take care. Others bite their tongue; sometimes this hurts very badly. All sorts of things like this may happen to you — which means that normally you should never enter into a trance without having somebody nearby to watch over you, and not only watch just physically but . . . watch with the conscious power of preventing these little entities from getting hold of your nervous centres which are not protected by the conscious Presence. This is a general rule. There are greater dangers than that. When one goes out of the body materially — and nothing but the contact of a link remains, you understand, it is a kind of link

like a thread of light joining the being that has gone out with the one that remains behind — if this link is protected, nothing happens. But if it is not protected, there may be adverse forces, not only full of mischief but with much ill-will also, which could come and cut it. And then, once it is cut, you may try as hard as you like, but you cannot get back into the body.

One dies?

Yes, after a while. Which means that all this is not at all a joke, you understand, or just a matter of having fun or something one can do simply to amuse oneself. It must be done in the right way and in the required conditions, and with great care. And then, one thing is *absolutely* essential, absolutely: you must not touch this occult science if you have the least fear in you. For instance, if in your dreams you meet terrible things and get frightened, you should not practise occultism. If, on the other hand, the most frightful dreams you have leave you absolutely calm, and even at times amused and very much interested, if you can handle all that and know how to get out of the difficulty in every circumstance, then that means you have the ability and can do it. Some people are very brave warriors in their dreams. When they meet enemies, they know how to fight; they know not only how to defend themselves, but also to conquer; they are full of ardour, energy, courage; these indeed are the true candidates for occultism. But those who rush back into their body as fast as a rat into its hole, they should surely not touch it. And then, you must also have an infinite patience; because just as it takes many years to learn how to handle the different chemical substances, just as you have to work for long periods without getting any visible results when you want to discover the least thing that's new, so in occultism you may try for years together and not have the least experience. And that becomes very monotonous and hardly interesting; and there is always in man that kind of physical mind, practical and positive, which keeps on telling you, "Why are you trying? You see quite well there is nothing in it, these are all stories people tell you; why are you working for nothing? You are wasting your time. There is nothing at all in it, it is all imagination." It is very difficult to keep one's conviction and faith when there is nothing upon which to found them.

(M6: 189-93)

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Threshold of occultism

The other question is about a phrase I used — I believe it was last week — when I spoke of the “threshold of occultism”. So a question is put to me about this occult world, that is to say, the world invisible to ordinary physical eyes, and I am asked for explanations or comments on the beings who live in these worlds which are invisible to ordinary eyes.

I am even told that I speak very often of negative entities, that is to say, of hostile formations, of small beings formed from the disintegration of human beings after their death — the disintegration of the vital or mental being at death — but that I have never spoken of the great beings, the magnificent beings or positive entities which help the evolution. I believe I have spoken to you about these quite often, but still I have been asked once again for explanations.

Well, the occult world is not one single region where everything is mixed, which only becomes occult because we can't see it. The occult world is a gradation of regions, one could perhaps say, of more and more etherial or subtle regions, anyway, those farther and farther removed in their nature from the physical materiality we ordinarily see. And each one of these domains is a world in itself, having its forms and inhabited by beings with a density, one might say, analogous to that of the domain in which they live. Just as in the physical world we are of the same materiality as the physical world, so in the vital world, in the mental world, in the overmind world and in the supramental world — and in many others, infinite others — there are beings which have a form whose substance is similar to the one of that world. This means that if you are able to enter consciously into that world with the part of your being which corresponds to that domain, you can move there quite objectively, as in the material world.

And there, there are as many, and even many more things to see and observe than in our poor little material world, which belongs to only *one* zone of this infinite gradation. You meet all sorts of things in these domains, and you need to make a study as profound, perhaps still more profound than in the physical world, to be able to know what is happening there, to have relations with the beings who live there.

It is obvious that as one goes farther, as it were, from the material world, the forms and consciousness of those beings are of a purity, beauty and perfection much higher than our ordinary physical forms. It is only in the nearest vital world, the one which is, so to say, mixed with our material life — though it lies beyond it and there is a zone where the vital is no longer mixed with the material world — of that material vital one can say that in some of its aspects it is even uglier than things here, for it is filled with a bad will which is not counterbalanced by the presence of

the psychic being which, in the physical world, amends, corrects, puts right, directs this bad will. But it is rather a limited zone and, as soon as one goes beyond it, one can find and meet things that are not favourable to human life, beings not on the same scale as human existence, but having their own beauty and grandeur, with whom one may establish relations which may become quite pleasant and even useful.

Only, as I have already told you, it is not very prudent to venture into these domains without a previous initiation and, above all, a purification of nature which prevents you from entering there all weighed down and deformed by your desires, your passions, egoisms, fears and weaknesses. Before undertaking these activities one needs a complete preparation of self-purification and widening of the consciousness which is absolutely indispensable.

In these invisible worlds there are also regions which are the result of human mental formations. One can find there all one wants. In fact, one very often finds there exactly what one expects to find. There are hells, there are paradises, there are purgatories. There are all sorts of things in accordance with the different religions and their conceptions. These things have only a very relative existence, but with a relativity similar to that of material things here; that is to say, for someone who finds himself there, they are entirely real and their effects quite tangible. One needs an inner liberation, a wideness of the consciousness and a contact with a deeper and higher truth to be able to escape from the illusion of their reality. But this is something almost similar to what happens here: human beings here are mostly convinced that the only reality is the physical reality — the reality of what one can touch, can see — and for them, all that cannot be seen, cannot be touched, cannot be felt, is after all, problematical; well, what happens there is an identical phenomenon. People who at the moment of death are convinced, for one reason or another, that they are going to paradise or maybe to hell, *do find* themselves there after their death; and for them it is truly a paradise or a hell. And it is extremely difficult to make them come out of it and go to a place which is more true, more real.

So it is difficult to speak of all these worlds, these innumerable worlds, in a few minutes. It is a knowledge which needs a lived experience of many years, thoroughly systematic, and which requires, as I said, an inner preparation absolutely indispensable, to make it harmless.

We all get the chance to have a little contact — very partial, very superficial — with these worlds in our dreams. And the study of dreams itself already demands much time and care, and in itself may constitute a preparation for a deeper study of the invisible worlds. (M8: 215-18)

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Occultism and supramental life

Mother, what place will occultism have in the supramental life?

Why particularly occultism?

Because everything will be known, won't it?

Why occultism? There is a place for everything in the supramental life.

Does this interest you specially?

According to what we know about occultism, it is the science which shows us things that are invisible to us, the invisible world, the invisible forces. . . . But in the supramental world all this will be known.

What do you understand by occultism?

The knowledge of the invisible world and invisible forces.

And so — I don't quite understand. In the supermind one will no longer have any knowledge, or what?

One will have the knowledge already, so . . .

Already. . . . But then it will be an occult knowledge! I don't quite understand. Occultism is a special way of dealing with things. In *The Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo has explained this in great detail. It is a special approach to knowledge and action, and there is no reason why it should disappear or why. . . .

It will become the natural consciousness. Then perhaps one won't need to learn this occult knowledge.

Oh, you think one learns occultism as one learns to play the piano! (*Laughter*) But it is not quite like that, anyway, that things happen. In fact, those who have no special aptitude could read all the books on occultism in the world and never know how to practise it. It needs a special capacity.

It is true that you may also read all the books in the world on how to play the piano — if you do not play, you will never know how to play. But there are born musicians, born artists, and there are people who may work at it all their lives and

never come to anything at all. It is the same thing with occultism. If you mean that when one becomes a supramental being, one will have the gift of doing everything, very well, but that doesn't imply that the gift is spontaneous. It is possible that you might have to concentrate on the subject and then learn your work. And it is also possible that one may be potentially capable of doing everything but it is not necessary that one has to do everything! There will be differences and classifications all the same, and special functions according to people and their individual tastes. I don't see why you should deprive the supramental world particularly of occult activity more than of any other.

How do you conceive of the supramental life? As a paradise in which everyone will do the same thing in the same way? . . . The old conception of paradise where everybody became an angel playing the harp? It is not quite like that! All the differences will be there, all differentiations and different activities, but instead of acting in the ordinary human ignorance, one will act with knowledge, that's all; that is what will make the difference.

And the capacities will also increase, won't they?

Capacities? . . . You take occultism in the sense of the power to act on life and things, as a process; but that is not occultism, that is magic.

Occultism is a special use of the consciousness, that's all. That is, at the moment, as it is practised by human beings, it is a direct and conscious perception of the forces behind appearances and the play of these forces, and because one has the direct perception of them, one has the power to act on them, and one makes some higher will intervene in the play of these forces in order to obtain a required result.

In the supramental world one will have these powers spontaneously.

Spontaneously! . . . But everybody practises occultism without knowing that he does. Everybody has this power spontaneously but doesn't know he has it. It may be a very slight one, like a pin-head; it may be as vast as the Earth or even the universe. But you cannot live without practising occultism, only you don't know it. So the only difference you can make is that when one has the supramental consciousness one will know it. That is all. So, your question automatically vanishes.

When you think — I have explained this to you I don't know how many times — when you think, you are practising occultism. Only, you don't know it. When you are thinking of someone, some part of you is automatically in contact with this person, and if to your thought is added a will that this person may be like this or like that or do this or that or understand this or that — whatever it may be — well, you

are practising occultism, only you don't know it. . . . There are people who do this with power, and when they have a strong thought it manifests and is realised. There are people in whom it is very feeble and they do not obtain many results. It depends on the power of your thought and also on your power of concentration. But this kind of occultism everybody practises without even knowing it. So the difference from someone who really practises occultism is that he knows he is doing it and perhaps how he does it.

But as you have spoken to us so often of Mr. X who was a great occultist, I thought that in the supramental world it would be something natural. All would be as capable as he.

But why this in particular? That is what I don't understand! Why particularly occultism?

Because I thought that all knowledge of the invisible world entered the sphere of occultism.

Yes.

So, now, in ordinary life man is unconscious, half conscious; but in the full consciousness he would also have the full consciousness of occultism.

No, this is all very well, but do you believe that in the supramental life there will no longer be any classification of activities, or what? That everything will be mixed up in a general spontaneous capacity?

No, there will also be a hierarchy.

There will always be different ways of dealing with things. Perhaps the occult power will be more common, but if you imagine a world where everyone has equally the same occult power, there will no longer be any difference. You understand? There are people who have the occult power and act on those who haven't, but if everyone has it equally it will no longer be occultism! . . . Is that what you meant?

Yes.

Ah! . . . Well, I am convinced that even in the most perfect supramental realisation there will *always* be a differentiation between the capacities and functions of each one; but instead of being or not being in one's right place, of doing or not doing what one ought to do, unconsciously, one will be in one's right place — I hope always in one's place — and will always do what one ought to do, consciously. That is, instead of always trying to know and groping in the dark, one will know what one ought to do and do it well. But that is the whole difference. Differentiations will be there, each one will have his own role, his own place, each one will have his own activity. Don't think that everybody will begin to look alike and do the same thing in the same way! That would be a terrible world.

We could say that the difference between the supramental world and our present world will be this: what you don't know, you will know, what you can't do, you will be able to do, and what you don't understand, you will understand, and of what you are unconscious, you will become conscious. But fundamentally this is the basis of the new creation: to replace ignorance by knowledge and unconsciousness by consciousness, and weakness by strength. But this does not necessarily mean that everything is going to be so mixed up that it is scarcely recognisable!

(Long silence)

Sri Aurobindo has told us that in the Supermind itself there are different planes of realisation and that these planes will manifest successively, with the same progressive movement that has always presided over the universal development. And simply because, till today, it is a world that is closed to the greater part of mankind or hardly half-open to some, it is difficult to conceive of this progress in the supramental life, but it will exist; and the moment there is progress, there is ascension, and there is a perfection which develops according to a law of its own, which is gradually unveiled to the consciousness — *even* to a fully illumined consciousness — and works in the truth instead of working in ignorance. . . . This something¹ which is not there completely, totally, all at once — it could almost be said massively — in the Manifestation but is progressive, will follow the same law of development as that of the world we live in now, but instead of not knowing where we are going, well, we shall know the way and follow it consciously. Instead of standing there imagining or guessing or speculating about what ought to be, we shall see where we are going and know how to go there. That will be the essential difference. Certainly it will not be a dull existence in which everything goes on indefinitely

1. When this talk was first published, Mother defined this 'something': "The unmanifest which will use the supramental world to manifest itself."

without changing.

I believe there is always a tendency in the human consciousness to want to get somewhere, to sit down and feel it is at last all over: “We have arrived, we settle down and don’t move any more!” That would be a poor type of Supermind.

But this ascending, progressive movement towards a growing perfection will be still more prominent, certainly, and instead of unfolding itself in the darkness where everybody is blind and gropes along, it will unfold in the light and one will have the joy of knowing where one is going and what one is doing. That’s all.

So one must not come and ask, “Will this be there?” or “Won’t that be there?” There will be many more things still than we have now. Every possible thing will be there. (M9: 185-90)

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Mother, can physical science by its progress open to occultism?

It does not call it “occultism”, that’s all. It is only a question of words. . . . They are making sensational discoveries which people with occult knowledge already knew thousands of years ago! They have made a long circuit and come to the same thing.

With the most recent discoveries in medicine, in the applied sciences, for instance, they are contacting in this way, with a wonder-struck interest, things which were known to certain sages a very, very long time ago. And then they present all this before you as new marvels — but indeed they are rather old, their marvels!

They will end up by practising occultism without knowing that they are doing so! For, in fact, as soon as one draws close, however slightly, to the truth of things and when one is sincere in one’s search, not satisfied by mere appearances, when one really wants to find something and goes deep, penetrates behind appearances, then one begins to advance towards the truth of things; and as one comes closer to it, well, one finds again the same knowledge that others who began by going within have brought back from their inner discoveries.

Only the method and the path are different but the thing discovered will be the same, because there are not two things to be found, there is only one. It will necessarily be the same. It all depends on the path one follows; some go fast, others slowly, some go straight, others, as I said, go a long way round — and what labour! How they have laboured! . . . Besides, it is very respectable.

(Silence)

Now they are finding out that they can replace anaesthetics by hypnotism with infinitely better results. Well, hypnotism is a form — a form modernised in its

expression — of occultism; a very limited, very small form of a very tiny power compared with occult power, but still it is a form of occultism which has been put in modern terms to make the thing modern. And I don't know if you have heard about these things, but they are very interesting from a certain point of view: for instance, this process of hypnotism has been tried on someone who had to have a skin-graft on a wound. I don't remember all the details now, but the arm had to remain attached to the leg for a fortnight. . . . If the person were immobilised by plaster and bandages and all sorts of things, at the end of the fortnight he wouldn't be able to move — everything would become stiff and he would need weeks of treatment to recover the free use of his arm. In this case, nothing was tied up, nothing was physically immobilised — no plaster, no bandages, nothing — the person was just hypnotised and told to keep his arm in that position. He kept it for a fortnight, without any effort, any difficulty, without any intervention from his will: it was the will of the hypnotiser which intervened. It was perfectly successful, the arm remained in the required position, and when the fortnight was over and the hypnotism removed, and the person was told, "Now you may move", he began to move! Well, that's a step forward.

They are soon going to meet — it will be nothing more than a question of words — then, if they are not too rigid, they can agree on the value given to the words! (M9: 393-95)

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Forewarning

I know of a very interesting example. There was a time when in the newspaper *Le Matin* — it was a long time ago, you must have been very young — every day there was a little cartoon of a boy pointing to something — a kind of page-boy dressed like that — and always showing the date or something — a little cartoon. Now the gentleman in this story was travelling and he was staying in a big hotel, I do not remember in which town, and one night or early in the morning, very early, he had a dream. He saw this page-boy pointing to his funeral carriage — you know, when they take people to the cemetery, in Europe — and inviting him to step into it! He saw that and then in the morning when he was ready, he left his room which was on the top floor, and there, on the landing, the same boy, dressed in the same way, was pointing out the lift for him to go down. That gave him a shock. He refused and said, "No thank you." The lift fell and crashed, killing the people inside.

He told me that after that he believed in dreams.

It was a vision. He saw the boy, but instead of the lift, the boy was showing him his hearse. So when he saw the same gesture, the same boy — like the cartoon, you see — he said, “No thank you, I’ll walk down”, and the machine — it was one of those hydraulic lifts — broke and fell. It was right at the top. It was crushed to a pulp.

My explanation is that an entity had forewarned him. The image of the page-boy seems to indicate that an intelligence, a consciousness had intervened; it does not seem to have been his own subconscious. Or it might be that his subconscious was aware and had seen in the subtle physical that this was going to happen. But why did his subconscious give him an image like that? I do not know. Perhaps something in the subconscious knew, because it was already there, it was already in the subtle physical. The accident already existed before it happened — the law of the accident.

Obviously, there is always, in every case, some difference, sometimes a few hours — but that is the maximum — sometimes a few seconds. And very often, things tell you that they are there, and it takes them sometimes a few minutes, sometimes a few seconds to come into contact with your consciousness. Constantly, constantly I know what is going to happen, and for things that are of absolutely no interest — there is no advantage in knowing it beforehand, it changes nothing; but it exists, it is all around you. If your consciousness is wide enough, you know all that, for example, that a certain person is going to bring you a parcel, things like that. And it is like that every day. Or that a certain person is about to arrive. It is because the consciousness is extended, so it contacts things.

But in that case we cannot say that it is a premonition, for it already exists, only the contact with our senses takes a few seconds to be realised, because there is a door or a wall or something that prevents us from seeing.

But several times I have had experiences like this. For example, once when I was walking in the mountains, I was on a path where there was only room for one — on one side the precipice, on the other sheer rock. There were three children behind me and a fourth person bringing up the rear. I was leading. The path ran along the edge of the rock; we could not see where we were going — and besides, it was very dangerous; if anyone had slipped, he would have been over the edge. I was walking in front when suddenly I saw, with other eyes than these — although I was watching my steps carefully — I saw a snake, there, on the rock, waiting on the other side. Then I took one step, gently, and indeed on the other side there was a snake. That spared me the shock of surprise, because I had seen and I was advancing cautiously; and as there was no shock of surprise, I was able to tell the children without giving them a shock, “Stop, keep quiet, don’t stir.” If there had been a shock, something might have happened. The snake had heard a noise, it was already coiled and on the defensive in front of its hole, with its head swaying — it was a

viper. This was in France. Nothing happened, whereas if there had been any confusion or commotion, anything could have happened.

This kind of thing has happened to me very, very often — with snakes it happened to me four times. Once, it was completely dark, here, near the fishing village of Ariankuppam. There was a river and it happened just at the place where it flows into the sea. It was dark — the night had fallen very quickly. We were walking along the road and just as I was about to put my foot down — I had already lifted my foot and I was going to put it down — I distinctly heard a voice in my ear: “Be careful!” And yet nobody had spoken. So I looked and saw, just as my foot was about to touch the ground, an enormous black cobra, which I would have comfortably stepped on — those people don’t like that. He streaked away and across the water — what a beauty, my child! His hood open, head erect above the water, he went across like a king. Obviously, I would have been punished for my impertinence.

I have had hundreds and hundreds of experiences like that; at the very last moment, not a second too soon, I was informed. And in the most varied circumstances. Once, in Paris, I was crossing the Boulevard Saint Michel. It was during the last weeks; I had decided that within a certain number of months I would achieve union with the psychic Presence, the inner Divine, and I no longer had any other thought, any other concern. I lived near the Luxembourg Gardens and every evening I used to walk there — but always deeply absorbed within. There is a kind of intersection there, and it is not a place to cross when one is deeply absorbed within; it was not very sensible. And so I was like that, I was walking, when I suddenly received a shock, as if I had received a blow, as if something had hit me, and I jumped back instinctively. And as soon as I had jumped back, a tram went past — it was the tram that I had felt at a little more than arm’s length. It had touched the aura, the aura of protection — it was very strong at that time, I was deeply immersed in occultism and I knew how to keep it — the aura of protection had been hit and that had literally thrown me backwards, as if I had received a physical shock. And what insults from the driver! I jumped back just in time and the tram went by.

I could tell scores of such stories, if I could remember them.

The protection may come from many different sources. Very often it was someone who informed me: a little entity, or some kind of being; sometimes it was the aura that protected me. And it was for all kinds of things. That is to say, life was seldom limited to the physical body — this is convenient, this is good. It is necessary, it increases your capacities. This is what the person who taught me occultism told me straightaway: “You are depriving yourself of senses which are most useful *even for the most ordinary life.*” And this is true, quite true. We can know infinitely more

things than we usually do, simply by using our own senses. And not only from the mental point of view, but also from the vital and even the physical point of view.

But what is the method?

Oh, the method is very easy. There are disciplines. It depends on what you want to do.

It depends. For each thing there is a method. And the first method is to want it, to begin with, that is, to take a decision. Then you are given a description of all these senses and how they work — that takes some time. You take one sense or several, or the one which is easiest for you to start with, and you decide. Then you follow the discipline. It is the equivalent of exercises for developing the muscles. You can even succeed in creating a will in yourself.

But for more subtle things, the method is to make for yourself an exact image of what you want, to come into contact with the corresponding vibration, and then to concentrate and do exercises — such as to practise seeing through an object or hearing through a sound,¹ or seeing at a distance. For example, once, for a long time, for several months, I was confined to bed and I found it rather boring — I wanted to see. I was in a room and at one end there was another little room and at the end of the little room there was a kind of bridge; in the middle of the garden the bridge became a staircase leading down into a very big and very beautiful studio, standing in the middle of the garden. I wanted to go and see what was happening in the studio, for I was feeling bored in my room. So I would remain very quiet, close my eyes and send out my consciousness, little by little, little by little, little by little. And day after day — I chose a fixed time and did the exercise regularly. At first you make use of your imagination and then it becomes a fact. After some time I really had the physical sensation that my vision was moving; I followed it and then I could see things downstairs which I knew nothing about. I would check afterwards. In the evening I would ask, “Was this like that? And was that like this?”

But for each one of these things you must practise for months with patience, with a kind of obstinacy. You take the senses one by one, hearing, sight, and you can even arrive at subtle realities of taste, smell and touch.

From the mental point of view it is easier, for there you are accustomed to concentration. When you want to think and find a solution, instead of following the

1. *The Mother explained later:*

“To hear behind the sound is to come into contact with the subtle reality which is behind the material fact, behind the word or the physical sound or behind music, for example. One concentrates and then one hears what is behind. It means coming into contact with the vital reality which is behind the appearances. There can also be a mental reality, but generally, what lies immediately behind the physical sound is a vital reality.”

deductions of thought, you stop everything and try to concentrate and concentrate, intensify the point of the problem. You stop everything and wait until, by the intensity of the concentration, you obtain an answer. This also requires some time. But if you used to be a good student, you must be quite used to doing that and it is not very difficult.

There is a kind of extension of the physical senses. Red Indians, for example, possess a sense of hearing and smell with a far greater range than our own — and dogs! I knew an Indian — he was my friend when I was eight or ten years old. He had come with Buffalo Bill, at the time of the Hippodrome — it was a long time ago, I was eight years old — and he would put his ear to the ground and was so clever that he knew how far away . . . according to the intensity of the vibration, he knew how far away someone's footsteps were. After that, the children would immediately say, "I wish I knew how to do that!"

And then you try. That is how you prepare yourself. You think you are playing but you are preparing yourself for later on. (M10: 128-33)

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Dangerous!

Stop reading all this nonsense. The occultism that can be found in books is vital and most dangerous. (M12: 148)

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True 'occultism'

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*, and so the formation did not have a power of truth sufficient to dissolve X's counter-formation. (This is true "occultism".) (M16: 48-49)

PART THREE

Little entities

One of the most common activities of these intolerable little entities which are in the human physical atmosphere and amuse themselves at men's expense, is to blind you to such an extent that when you look for something, and the thing is staring you in the face, you do not see it! This happens very often. You search in vain, you turn everything over, you look into all possible corners, but you don't find the thing. Then you give up the problem and some time later (precisely when "the hand over the eyes" is removed), you come back to the same place and it is exactly there where you have looked, quietly lying there, it had not stirred! Only you were unconscious, you did not see. This is a very, very frequent amusement of these little entities. They also take pleasure in removing things, then they put them back, but at times they also don't put them back! They displace them, indeed they have all sorts of little pranks. They are intolerable. Madame Blavatsky made much use of them, but I don't know how she managed to make them so amiable, because generally they are quite unpleasant.

I had the experience — among innumerable instances — but precisely of two very striking cases, of two opposite things, only it was not the same beings. . . . There are little beings like fairies who are very sweet, very obliging, but they are not always there, they come from time to time when it pleases them. I remember the time I used to cook for Sri Aurobindo; I was also doing many other things at the same time, so I often happened to leave the milk on the fire and go for some other work or to see something with him, to discuss with somebody, and truly I was not always aware of the time, I used to forget the milk on the fire. And whenever I forgot the milk on the fire, I felt suddenly (in those days I used to wear a sari) a little hand catching a fold of my sari and pulling it, like this. Then I used to run quickly and would see that the milk was just on the point of boiling over. This did not happen just once, but several times, and very clearly, like a little child's hand clutching and pulling.

The other story is of the days Sri Aurobindo had the habit of walking up and down in his rooms. He used to walk for several hours like that, it was his way of meditating. Only, he wanted to know the time, so a clock had been put in each room to enable him to see the time at any moment. There were three such clocks. One was in the room where I worked; it was, so to say, his starting-point. One day he came and asked, "What time is it?" He looked and the clock had stopped. He went into the next room, saying, "I shall see the time there" — the clock had stopped.

And it had stopped at the same minute as the other, you understand, with the difference of a few seconds. He went to the third room . . . the clock had stopped. He continued walking three times like that — all the clocks had stopped! Then he returned to my room and said, “But this is impossible! This is a bad joke!” and all the clocks, one after the other, started working again. I saw it myself, you know, it was a charming incident. He was annoyed, he said, “This is a bad joke!” And all the clocks started going again! (M4: 274-76)

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Story of the stones

You had said you would tell us the story of the stones.

That is quite another domain. . . . it is a domain of the material vital, the most material vital, that which controls the physical, is just behind the physical — the material vital.

There was a time we were living in the Guest House. Sri Aurobindo lived on the first floor, in the room right at the end which is now the meditation-room of the children’s boarding. I believe there are two rooms side by side, one used to be a bathroom but is now an ordinary room, and a room next to it which was mine — the bathroom and another room. Sri Aurobindo was on one side.

How many of us were there in that house? . . . Amrita was there (*turning to the disciple*), weren’t you, Amrita, do you remember that day? (*Laughter*) We had a cook called Vatel. This cook was rather bad-tempered and didn’t like being reprovved about his work. Moreover, he was in contact with some Musulmans who had it seems, magical powers — they had a book of magic and the ability to practise magic. One day, this cook had done something very bad and had been scolded — I don’t know if any of you knew Datta, it was Datta who had scolded him — and he was furious. He had threatened us, saying, “You will see, you will be compelled to leave this house.” We had taken no notice of it.

Two or three days later, I think, someone came and told me that stones had fallen in the courtyard — a few stones, three or four: bits of brick. We wondered who was throwing stones from the next house. We did exactly what we forbid children to do: we went round on the walls and roofs to see if we could find someone or the stones or something — we found nothing.

That happened, I believe, between four and five in the afternoon. As the day declined, the number of stones increased. The next day, there were still more. They started striking specially the door of the kitchen and one of them struck Datta’s arm

as she was going across the courtyard. The number increased very much. The interest was growing. And as the interest grew, it produced a kind of effect of multiplication! And the stones began falling in several directions at the same time, in places where there were neither doors nor windows; there was a staircase, but it had no opening in those days: there was only a small bull's-eye. And the stones were falling on the staircase this way (*vertical gesture*); if they had come through the bull's-eye, they would have come like this (*slantwise movement*), but they were falling straight down. So, I think everyone started to become truly interested. I must tell you that this Vatel had informed us that he was ill and for the last two days — since the stones had started falling — he hadn't come. But he had left with us his under-cook, a young boy of about thirteen or fourteen, quite fat, somewhat lifeless and a little quiet, perhaps a little stupid. And we noticed that when this boy moved around, wherever he went the stones increased. The young men who were there — Amrita among them — shut the boy up in a room, with all the doors and windows closed; they started making experiments like the spiritists (*laughing*): "Close all the doors, close all the windows." And there was the boy sitting there inside and the stones began falling, with all the doors and windows closed! And more and more fell, and finally the boy was wounded in the leg. Then they started feeling the thing was going too far.

I was with Sri Aurobindo: quietly we were working, meditating together. The boys cast a furtive glance to see what was going on and began warning us, for it was perhaps time to tell us that the thing was taking pretty serious proportions. I understood immediately what the matter was.

I must tell you that we had made an attempt earlier to exhaust all possibilities of an ordinary, physical explanation. We had called in the police, informed them that there was somebody throwing stones at us, and they wanted very much to come and see what was happening. So a policeman — who was a fine good fellow — immediately told us, "Oh! You have Vatel as your cook. Yes, yes, we know what it is!" He had a loaded pistol and stood waiting there in the courtyard — not a stone! I was on the terrace with Sri Aurobindo; I said to Sri Aurobindo, "That's a bit too bad, we call the police and just then the stones stop falling! But that is very annoying, in this way he will think we haven't told the truth, for no stones are falling." Instantaneously the stones began falling again. (*Laughter*)

You should note that the stones were falling quite a long way off from the terrace and not one of them came anywhere near us.

So the policeman said, "It's not worthwhile, my staying here, I know what it is, it is Vatel who has done this against you, I am going."

It was after this that we made the experiment of shutting up the boy, and the stones began to fall in the closed room and I was informed that the boy had been

wounded. Then I said, “All right, send the boy out of the house immediately. Send him to another house, anywhere, and let him be looked after, but don’t keep him here, and then, that’s all. Keep quiet and don’t be afraid.” I was in the room with Sri Aurobindo and I thought, “We’ll see what it is.” I went into meditation and gave a little call. I said, “Let us see, who is throwing stones at us now? You must come and tell us who is throwing stones.” . . . I saw three little entities of the vital, those small entities which have no strength and just enough consciousness confined to one action — it is nothing at all; but these entities are at the service of people who practise magic. When people practise magic, they order them to come and they are compelled to obey. There are signs, there are words. So, they came, they were frightened — they were terribly frightened! I said, “But why do you fling stones like that? What does it mean, this bad joke?” They replied, “We are compelled, we are compelled . . . (*Laughter*) It is not our fault, we have been ordered to do it, it is not our fault.”

I really felt so much like laughing but still I kept a serious face and told them, “Well, you must stop this, you understand!” Then they told me, “Don’t you want to keep us? We shall do all that you ask.” “Ah!” I thought, “Let us see, this is perhaps going to be interesting.” I said to them, “But what can you do?” — “We know how to throw stones.” (*Laughter*) — “That doesn’t interest me at all, I don’t want to throw stones at anyone . . . but could you perchance bring me flowers? Can you bring me some roses?” Then they looked at one another in great dismay and answered, “No, we are not made for that, we don’t know how to do it.” I said, “I don’t need you, go away, and take care specially never to come back, for otherwise it will be disastrous!” They ran away and never came back.

There was one thing I had noticed: it was only at the level of the roof that the stones were seen — from the roof downwards, we saw the stones; just till the roof, above it there were no stones. This meant that it was like an automatic formation. In the air nothing could be seen: they materialised in the atmosphere of the house and fell.

And to complete the movement, the next morning — all this happened in the evening — the next morning I came down to pay a visit to the kitchen — there were pillars in the kitchen — and upon one of the pillars I found some signs with numbers as though made with a bit of charcoal, very roughly drawn — I don’t remember the signs now — and also words in Tamil. Then I rubbed out everything carefully and made an invocation, and so it was finished, the comedy was over.

However, not quite. Vatel’s daughter was *ayah* in the house, the maid-servant. She came early in the afternoon in a state of intense fright saying, “My father is in the hospital, he is dying; this morning something happened to him; suddenly he felt very ill and he is dying, he has been taken to the hospital, I am terribly frightened.”

I knew what it was. I went to Sri Aurobindo and said to him, “You know, Vatel is in the hospital, he is dying.” Then Sri Aurobindo looked at me, he smiled: “Oh, just for a few stones!” (*Laughter*)

That very evening Vatel was cured. But he never started anything again.

How could the stones be seen?

That’s what is remarkable. There are beings that have the power of dematerialising and rematerialising objects. These were quite ordinary pieces of bricks, but these pieces materialised only in the field where the magic acted. The magic was practised for this house, especially for its courtyard, and the action of vital forces worked only there. That was why when I sent away the boy and he went to another house, not a single stone hit him anymore. The magical formation was made specially for this house, and the stones materialised in the courtyard. And as it was something specially directed against Datta, she was hit on her arm.

There was yet something else. . . . Ah, yes! We came to know later to which magician Vatel had gone. He had gone to a magician who, it seems, is very well known here and he had said that he wanted definitely to make us leave that house — I don’t know why. He was furious. And so he asked the magician to make stones fall there. The magician told him, “But that’s the house Sri Aurobindo lives in!” He said, “Yes.” — “Ah! No, I am not going to meddle in this business; you manage it, I am not getting involved.” Then Vatel insisted very much; he even promised him a greater reward, a little more money. The magician said, “Well, look here; we are going to make a rule: in a circle of twenty-five metres around Sri Aurobindo” — I think he said twenty or twenty-five metres — “the stones will not fall. Always there will have to be twenty-five metres’ distance between the stones and Sri Aurobindo.” And he arranged his order of magic in this way. And that was why never did a single stone come anywhere near us, never. They fell at the other end of the courtyard.

They know how to do all that, it is written in their books. These are words and ceremonies having a certain power. Naturally, those who do that must have a vital force. A vital force is necessary — a little mental force also, not much, even very little — but quite a strong vital power to control these little entities, govern them. And these people rule them precisely through fear, for they have the power to dissolve them, so these entities fear this very much. But upon all these formations, all these entities, it is enough to put simply one drop of the true, pure light, the pure white light — the true, pure light which is the supreme light of construction — you put one drop upon them: they dissolve as though there had been nothing at all there. And yet this is not a force of destruction; it is a force of construction but it is so alien

to their nature that they disappear. It is this they feared, for I had called them by showing them this white light; I had told them, “Look, here is this! Come.” But their offer was touching: “Oh! We shall do everything you want.” I said, “Good, what can you do?” — “Throw stones!” (*Laughter*) (M6: 57-62)

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Materialisation and dematerialisation

If there is some reality in the phenomenon of materialisation and dematerialisation claimed to be possible by occultists and evidenced by occurrences many of us have witnessed, a method of this kind would not be out of the range of possibility. For in the theory of the occultists and in the gradation of the ranges and planes of our being which Yoga-knowledge outlines for us there is not only a subtle physical force but a subtle physical Matter intervening between life and gross Matter, and to create in this subtle physical substance and precipitate the forms thus made into our grosser materiality is feasible. It should be possible and it is believed to be possible for an object formed in this subtle physical substance to make a transit from its subtlety into the state of gross Matter directly by the intervention of an occult force and process, whether with or even without the assistance or intervention of some gross material procedure. (S13: 549)

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Ghost

What do you mean by a ghost? The word “ghost” as used in popular parlance covers an enormous number of distinct phenomena which have no necessary connection with each other. To name a few only —

(1) An actual contact with the soul of a departed human being housed in its subtle body and transcribed to our mind by the appearance of an image or the hearing of a voice.

(2) A mental formation stamped by the thoughts and feelings of a departed human being on the atmosphere of a place or locality, wandering about there or repeating itself — till that formation either exhausts itself or is dissolved by one means or another. This is the explanation of such phenomena as the haunted house in which the scenes attending or surrounding or preceding a murder are repeated over and over again and many similar phenomena.

(3) A being of the lower vital planes who has assumed the discarded vital

sheath of a departed human being or a fragment of his vital personality and appears and acts in the form and perhaps with the surface thoughts and memories of that person.

(4) A being of the lower vital plane who by the medium of a living human being or by some other means or agency is able to materialise itself sufficiently so as to appear and act in a visible form or speak with an audible voice or, without so appearing, to move about material things, e.g. furniture or to materialise objects or to shift them from place to place. This accounts for what are called *poltergeists*, phenomena of stone-throwing, tree-inhabiting *bhūtas* and other well-known phenomena.

(5) Apparitions which are the formations of one's own mind but take to the senses an objective appearance.

(6) Temporary possession of people by vital beings who sometimes pretend to be departed relatives etc.

(7) Thought-images of themselves projected, often by people at the moment of death, which appear at that time or a few hours afterwards to their friends or relatives.

You will see that in only one of these cases, the first, can a soul be posited and there no difficulty arises. (S28: 569-70)

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The stone-throwing incident

These stone-throwing or stone-producing incidents and similar extraordinary occurrences which go outside the ordinary course of physical Nature happen frequently in India and are not unknown elsewhere; they are akin to what are called poltergeist phenomena in Europe. Scientists don't say or think anything of such supernormal happenings except to pooh-pooh them or to prove that they are simply the tricks of children simulating supernatural manifestations. It was only three or four stones that fell inside a room, the others were thrown from outside and in the last period banged day after day against the closed door of Bijoy Nag who was sheltering inside the servant boy who became the centre of the phenomena. As the boy got wounded by two of the last stones, we sent him away to another house with the idea that then the phenomena would cease and it so happened. As a rule these things need certain conditions to happen — e.g. a house which becomes the field of the action of these supernormal forces and a person (usually psychologically ill-developed) who is very often their victim as well as their centre. If the person is removed elsewhere, the phenomena often stop but sometimes his aura is so strong

for these things that the house aura is not needed — they continue wherever he or she goes. As for the other necessary factor it is supposed to be elemental beings who are the agents. Sometimes they act on their own account, sometimes they are controlled and used by a person with occult powers. It was supposed here that some magic must have been used — such magic is common in the Tamil country and indeed in all South India. The stones were material enough, a huge heap of them were collected and remained at the staircase bottom for two or three days, so they were not thoughts taking a brick form. It was evidently a case of materialisation probably preceded by a previous dematerialisation and “transport” — the bricks became first visible in their flight at a few feet from the place where they fell.

Scientific laws only give a schematic account of material processes of Nature — as a valid scheme they can be used for reproducing or extending at will a material process, but obviously they cannot give an account of the thing itself. Water for instance is not merely so much oxygen and hydrogen put together — the combination is simply a process or device for enabling the materialisation of a new thing called water; what that new thing really is is quite another matter. In fact there are different planes of substance, gross, subtle and more subtle going back to what is called causal (*kāraṇa*) substance. What is more gross can be reduced to the subtle state and the subtle brought into the gross state; that accounts for dematerialisation and materialisation and re-materialisation. These are occult processes and are vulgarly regarded as magic. Ordinarily the magician knows nothing of the why and wherefore of what he is doing, he has simply learned the formula or process or else controls elemental beings of the subtler states (planes or worlds) who do the thing for him. The Tibetans indulge widely in occult processes; if you see the books of Madame David-Neel who has lived in Tibet you will get an idea of their expertness in these things. But also the Tibetan Lamas know something of the laws of occult (mental and vital) energy and how it can be made to act on physical things. That is something which goes beyond mere magic. The direct power of mind-force or life-force upon matter can be extended to an almost illimitable degree — but that has nothing to do with the stone-throwing affair which is of a lower and more external order. In your (2) and (3) different operations seem to be confused together, (1) the creation of mere (subtle) images which the one who sees may mistake for real things, (2) the temporary materialisation of subtle substance into forms capable of cognition not only by the sight but by material touch or other sense, (3) the handling of material objects by mind-energy or vital force, e.g. making a pencil move and write on paper. All these things are possible and have been done. It must be remembered that Energy is fundamentally one in all the planes, only taking more and more dense forms, so there is nothing *a priori* impossible in mind-energy or life-energy acting directly on material energy and substance; if they do they can make a material

object do things or rather can do things with a material object which would be to that object in its ordinary poise or “law” unhabitual and therefore apparently impossible.

I do not see how cosmic rays can explain the origination of matter; it is like Sir Oliver Lodge’s explanation of life on earth that it comes from another planet; it only pushes the problem one step farther back — for how do the cosmic rays come into existence? But it is a fact that Agni is the basis of forms as the Sankhya pointed out long ago, i.e. the fiery principle in its three powers radiant, electric and gaseous (the Vedic trinity of Agni) is the agent in producing liquid and solid forms of what is called matter.

Obviously a layman can’t do these things, unless he has a native “psychic” (that is, occult) faculty and even then he will have to learn the law of the thing before he can use it at will. It is always possible to use spiritual force or mind-power or will-power or a certain kind of vital energy to produce effects in men, things and happenings; but knowledge and much practice is needed before this possibility ceases to be occasional and haphazard and can be used quite consciously, at will or to perfection. Even then to have “a control over the whole material world” is too big a proposition; a local and partial control is more possible or, more widely, certain kinds of control over matter. (S35: 384-86)

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About the occult phenomenon of the house and the stones etc. What was it?

I gave this as one instance of actual occult experience and action in accordance with occult law and practice, showing that these things are not imaginations or delusions or humbug, but can be true phenomena. The stone-throwing began unobtrusively with a few stones thrown at the Guest House kitchen — apparently from the terrace opposite, but there was no one there. The phenomenon began before the fall of dusk and continued at first for half an hour, but daily it increased in frequency, violence and the size of the stones and the duration of the attack till it lasted for several hours until it towards the end became in the hour or half hour before midnight a regular bombardment. It was no longer at the kitchen only, but thrown too in other places, e.g. the outer verandah. At first we took it for a human-made affair and sent for the police, but the investigation lasted only for a very short time; when one of the constables in the verandah got a stone whizzing unaccountably between his legs, the police abandoned the case in a panic. We made our own investigations, but the places whence the stones seemed to be or might be coming were void of human stone-throwers. Finally, as if to put us kindly out of doubt, the

stones began falling in closed rooms; one huge one (I saw it immediately after it fell) reposed flat and comfortable on a cane table as if that was its proper place. To wind up, they became murderous. The stones had hitherto been harmless in result except for a daily battering of Bijoy's door which (in the last days) I had watched for half an hour the night before the end. They appeared in mid-air a few feet above the ground, not coming from a distance but suddenly manifesting, and from the direction from which they flew, should have been thrown close in from the compound of the Guest House or the verandah itself, but the whole place was in a clear light and I saw that there was no human being there and could not have been. At last the semi-idiot boy-servant who seemed to be the centre of the attack and was sheltered in Bijoy's room under Bijoy's protection began to be severely hit and was bleeding from a wound by stones thrown from inside the closed room. I went in at Bijoy's call and saw the last stone fall on the boy; Bijoy and he were sitting side by side and the stone was thrown at them from in front, but there was no one visible to throw it — the two were alone in the room. So unless it was Wells's invisible man — ! We had been only watching or sometimes scouting around till then, but this was a little too much, it was becoming dangerous, and something had to be done. The Mother from her knowledge of the process of these things decided that the process here must depend on a nexus between the boy-servant and the house and if the nexus were broken, the servant and the house separated, the stone-throwing would cease. We sent him away to Hrishikesh's place and immediately the whole phenomenon ceased; not a single stone was thrown after that, peace reigned. That shows that these occult phenomena are real, have a law or process, as definite as that of any scientific operation and a knowledge of these processes can not only bring them about but put an end to or annul or dissolve them. (S35: 386-88)

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Religious atmosphere and the faith of the devotees

In all religious monuments, in monuments considered the most . . . well, as belonging to the highest religion, whether in France or any other country or Japan — it was never the same temples or churches nor the same gods, and yet my experience was everywhere almost the same, with very small differences — I saw that whatever concentrated force there was in the church depended exclusively upon the faithful, the faith of the devotees. And there was still a difference between the force as it really was and the force as they felt it. For instance, I saw in one of the most beautiful cathedrals of France, which, from the artistic point of view, is one of the most magnificent monuments imaginable — in the most sacred spot I saw an

enormous black, vital spider which had made its web and spread it over the whole place, and was catching in it and then absorbing all the forces emanating from people's devotion, their prayers and all that. It was not a very cheering sight; the people who were there and were praying, felt a divine touch, they received all kinds of boons from their prayers, and yet what was there was this, this thing. But they had their faith which could change that evil thing into something good in them; they had their faith. So, truly, if I had gone and told them, "Do you think you are praying to God? It is an enormous vital spider that's feeding upon all your forces!", that would really not have been very charitable. And that's how it is most of the time, almost everywhere; it is a vital force which is there, for these vital entities feed upon the vibration of human emotions, and very few people, very few, an insignificant number, go to church or temple with a true religious feeling, that is, not to pray and beg for something from God but to offer themselves, give thanks, aspire, give themselves. There is hardly one in a million who does that. So they do not have the power of changing the atmosphere. Perhaps when they are there, they manage to get across, break through and go somewhere and touch something divine. But the large majority of people who go only because of superstition, egoism and self-interest, create an atmosphere of this kind, and that is what you breathe in when you go to a church or temple. Only, as you go there with a very good feeling, you tell yourself, "Oh, what a quiet place for meditation!"

I am sorry, but that's how it is. I tell you I have deliberately tried this experiment a little everywhere. Maybe I found some very tiny places, like a tiny village church at times, where there was a very quiet little spot for meditation, very still, very silent, where there was some aspiration; but this was so rare! I have seen the beautiful churches of Italy, magnificent places; they were full of these vital beings and full of terror. (M6: 194-95)

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To understand the workings of universal life, and even those of terrestrial life, one must know that in their own realms these are all living beings, each with his own independent reality. They would exist even if men did not exist! Most of these gods existed before man.

They are beings who belong to the progressive creation of the universe and who have themselves presided over its formation from the most etheric or subtle regions to the most material regions. They are a descent of the divine creative Spirit that came to repair the *mischief*. . . in short, to repair what the Asuras had done. The first makers created disorder and darkness, an unconsciousness, and then it is said that there was a second 'lineage' of makers to repair that evil, and the gods

gradually descended through realities that were ever more — one can't say dense because it isn't really dense, nor can one even say material, since matter as we know it does not exist on these planes — through more and more concrete substances.

All these zones, these planes of reality, received different names and were classified in different ways according to the occult schools, according to the different traditions, but there is an essential similarity, and if we go back far enough into the various traditions, hardly anything but words differ, depending upon the country and the language. The descriptions are quite similar. Moreover, those who climb back up the ladder — or in other words, a human being who, through his occult knowledge, goes out of one of his 'bodies' (they are called *sheaths* in English) and enters into a more subtle body — in order to *act* in a more subtle body — and so forth, twelve times (you make each body come out from a more material body, leaving the more material body in its corresponding zone, and then go off through successive exteriorisations), what they have seen, what they have discovered and seen through their ascension — whether they are occultists from the Occident or occultists from the Orient — is for the most part analogous in description. They have put different words on it, but the experience is very analogous.

There is the whole Chaldean tradition, and there is also the Vedic tradition, and there was very certainly a tradition anterior to both that split into two branches. Well, all these occult experiences have been the same. Only the description differs depending upon the country and the language. The story of creation is not told from a metaphysical or psychological point of view, but from an objective point of view, and this story is as real as our stories of historical periods. Of course, it's not the only way of seeing, but it is just as legitimate a way as the others, and in any event, it recognises the concrete reality of all these divine beings. Even now, the experiences of Western occultists and those of Eastern occultists exhibit great similarities. The only difference is in the way they are expressed, but the manipulation of the forces is the same.

I learned all this through Théon.

He had an English wife.

He said he had received initiation in India (he knew a little Sanskrit and the Rig-Veda thoroughly), and then he formulated a tradition which he called the 'cosmic tradition' and which he claimed to have received — I don't know how — from a tradition anterior to that of the Cabala and the Vedas. But there were many things (Madame Théon was the clairvoyant one, and she received visions; oh, she was wonderful!), many things that I myself had seen and known before knowing them which were then substantiated.

So personally, I am convinced that there was indeed a tradition anterior to

both these traditions containing a knowledge very close to an integral knowledge. Certainly, there is a similarity in the experiences. When I came here and told Sri Aurobindo certain things I knew from the occult standpoint, he always said that it conformed to the Vedic tradition. And as for certain occult practices, he told me that they were entirely tantric — and I knew nothing at that time, absolutely nothing, neither the Vedas nor the Tantras.

So very probably there was a tradition anterior to both. I have recollections (for me, these are always things I have *lived*), very clear, very distinct recollections of a time that was certainly *very* anterior to the Vedic times and to the Cabala, to the Chaldean tradition.

But now, there is only a very small number of people in the West who know that it isn't merely subjective or imaginative (the result of a more or less unbridled imagination), and that it corresponds to a universal truth.

All these regions, all these realms are filled with beings who exist separately in their own realms, and if you are awake and conscious on a given plane — for example, if while going out of a more material body you awaken on some higher plane — you can have the same relationship with the things and people of that plane as with the things and people of the material world. In other words, there exists an entirely objective relationship that has nothing to do with your own idea of things. Naturally, the resemblance becomes greater and greater as you draw nearer the physical world, the material world, and there is even a moment when one region can act directly upon the other. In any case, in what Sri Aurobindo calls the 'kingdoms of the overmind', you find a concrete reality entirely independent of your personal experience; whenever you come back to it, you again find the same things, with some differences that may have occurred *during your absence*. And your relationships with the beings there are identical to those you have with physical beings, except that they are more flexible, more supple and more direct (for example, there is a capacity to change the outer form, the visible form, according to your inner state), but you can make an appointment with someone, come to the meeting and again find the same being, with only certain differences that may have occurred during your absence — but it is absolutely concrete, with absolutely concrete results.

However, you must have at least a little experience of these things to understand them. Otherwise, if you are convinced that all this is just human fancy or mental formations, if you believe that these gods have such and such a form because men have imagined them to be like that, or that they have such and such defects or qualities because men have envisioned it that way — as with all those who say God is created in the image of man and exists only in human thought — all such people won't understand, it will seem absolutely ridiculous to them, a kind of madness. You must live a little, touch the subject a little to know how concrete it is.

Naturally, children know a great deal — if they have not been spoiled. There are many children who return to the same place night after night and continue living a life they have begun there. When these faculties are not spoiled with age, they can be preserved within one. There was a time when I was especially interested in dreams, and I could return exactly to the same place and continue some work I had begun there, visit something, for example, or see to something, some work of organisation or some discovery or exploration; you go to a certain place, just as you go somewhere in life, then you rest a while, then you go back and begin again — you take up your work just where you left it, and you continue. You also notice that there are things entirely independent of you, certain variations which were not at all created by you and which occurred automatically during your absence.

But then, you must *live* these experiences yourself; you yourself must see, you must live them with enough sincerity to see (by being sincere and spontaneous) that they are independent of any mental formations. Because one can take the opposite line and make an intensive study of the way mental formations act upon events — which is very interesting. But that's another field. And this study makes you very careful, very prudent, because you start noticing to what extent you can delude yourself. Therefore, both one and the other, the mental formation and the occult reality, must be studied to see what the *essential* difference is between them. The one exists in itself, entirely independent of what we think about it, and the other . . .

That was a grace. I was given every experience without knowing *anything* of what it was all about — my mind was absolutely . . . blank. There was no active correspondence in the formative mind. I only knew about what had happened or the laws governing these happenings *afterwards*, when I was curious and inquired to find out what it related to. Then I found out. But otherwise, I didn't know. So that was the clear proof that these things existed entirely outside of my imagination or thought.

It doesn't happen very frequently in this world. And that's why these experiences, which otherwise seem quite natural, quite obvious, appear to be . . . extravagant fancies to people who know nothing.

But if you transposed this to France, to the West, unless you frequent occult circles, people would look at you with . . . And behind your back, they would say, "That person is cracked!"

(Later, the disciple asks Mother for some clarification on the "essential difference" between the occult reality and mental formations)

Once you have worked in this field, you realise that when you have studied a subject, when you have mentally understood something, it gives a special tonality

to the experience. The experience may be quite spontaneous and sincere, but the simple fact of having known this subject and of having studied it gives a particular tonality; on the other hand, if you have learned nothing of the subject, if you know nothing at all, well, when the experience comes, the notation of it is entirely spontaneous and sincere. It can be more or less adequate, but it is not the result of a former mental formation.

What happened in my life is that I never studied or knew things until *after* having the experience — only *because of* the experience and because I wanted to understand it would I study things related to it.

It was the same thing for visions of past lives. I knew *nothing* when I would have the experience, not even the possibility of past lives, and only after having had the experience would I study the question and, for example, even verify certain historical facts that had occurred in my vision but about which I had no prior knowledge.

(Then the disciple asks for details on going out of each successive body into the next, more subtle one)

There are subtle bodies and subtle worlds that correspond to these bodies; it is what the psychological method calls ‘states of consciousness’, but these states of consciousness really correspond to worlds. The occult process consists in becoming aware of these various inner states of being, or subtle bodies, and of mastering them sufficiently to be able to make one come out of the other, successively. For there is a whole hierarchy of increasing subtleties — or decreasing, depending upon the direction — and the occult process consists in making a more subtle body come out from a denser body, and so forth, right to the most ethereal regions. You go out through successive exteriorisations into more and more subtle bodies or worlds. Each time it is rather like passing into another dimension. In fact, the fourth dimension of the physicists is only the scientific transcription of an occult knowledge.

To give another comparison, it could be said that the physical body is at the center — it is the most material and the most condensed, as well as the smallest — and the more subtle inner bodies increasingly overlap the limits of this central physical body; they pass through it and extend further and further out, like water evaporating from a porous vase which creates a kind of steam all around it. And the more subtle it is, the more its extension tends to fuse with that of the universe: you finally become universal. It is an entirely concrete process that makes the invisible worlds an objective experience and even allows you to act in those worlds.

(Mother’s conversation with a disciple on November 4, 1958)

In the vital world

When you are exteriorised during sleep and conscious in the vital world, you can live a vital life as conscious as the physical life. I have known people who had this capacity and who were so intensely interested in their experiences in the vital world that they returned only with regret to their bodies. If you are conscious and master of yourself in the vital world and if you possess a certain power there, the circumstances are marvellous, infinitely more varied and more beautiful than in the physical world.

Suppose, for example, that you are very tired and need to rest. If you know how to exteriorise yourself and consciously enter into the vital world, you will find there a region like a miraculous virgin forest with all the splendours of a rich and harmonious vegetation, magnificent mirrors of water and an atmosphere so filled with this living, vibrant vitality of the plants!

There is such a life there, such a beauty, so much richness and plenitude that you awaken full of force and with an absolutely wonderful feeling of energy, even if you remain there but a minute.

And it is so objective, so concrete! I have taken people there, without telling them what it was all about, and they were able to describe the place exactly as I myself would.

There are regions like that — not very many, but some.

On the other hand, there are many unpleasant places in the vital world where it is better not to go. Those who can easily learn to go out of their bodies should do so with a great deal of caution. I could never teach this to many people, for were they to do it alone, it would mean abandoning them, sometimes without protection, to experiences that can be extremely harmful.

The vital world is a world of extremes. If, for example, you eat a bunch of grapes in the vital world, you feel so nourished that you can remain without hunger for thirty-six hours. But you can also run into things and enter places that will wrest all the energy from you in a minute and at times leave you ill or even disabled.

I knew an absolutely exceptional woman from the occult point of view who had just such an accident in the vital world. While trying to wrest someone she valued from the beings of the vital world, she received such a blow to one eye that she lost it.

Without going that far, it may happen that you meet with accidents in the vital world that leave their trace for hours after awakening.

(Mother's conversation with a disciple, undated, 1958)

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Once, long back, I was in a so-called cataleptic state, and after awhile, while still in this state, the body began 'living again'; that is, it was capable of speaking and even moving (it was Théon who gave me this training). The body managed to get up and move. And yet, everything had gone out of it!

Once everything had gone out, it naturally became cold, but the body consciousness manages to draw a little energy from the air, from this or that . . . And I spoke in that state. I spoke — I spoke very well, and besides, I recounted all I was seeing elsewhere. (Mother's conversation with a disciple on May 28, 1960)

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The tantrics recognise seven chakras, I believe. Théon said he knew of more, specifically two below the body and three above. That is my experience as well — I know of twelve chakras. And really, the contact with the Divine Consciousness is there (*Mother motions above the head*), not here (*at the top of the head*). One must surge up above. (Mother's conversation with a disciple on October 11, 1960)

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Madame Théon was an extraordinary occultist. That woman had incredible faculties, incredible.

She was a small woman, fat, almost flabby — she gave you the feeling that if you leaned against her, it would melt! Once, I remember . . . I was there in Tlemcen with André's father, who had come to join us — a painter, an artist. Théon was wearing a dark purple robe. Théon said to him, "This robe is purple." "No, it's not purple," the other answered, "it's violet." Théon went rigid: "When I say purple, it's purple!" And they started arguing over this foolishness. Suddenly there flashed from my head, "No, this is too ridiculous!" — I didn't say a word, but it went out from my head (I even saw the flash), and then Madame Théon got up and came over to me, stood behind me (neither of us uttered a word — the other two were staring at each other like two angry cocks), then she laid my head against her breast — absolutely the feeling of sinking into eiderdown!

And never in my life, never, had I felt such peace — it was absolutely luminous and soft. . . . a peace, such a soft, tender, luminous peace. After a moment, she bent down and whispered in my ear, "One must never question one's master!" It wasn't I who was questioning!

She was a wonderful woman, wonderful. But as for him . . . well . . .

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on October 22, 1960)

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Théon always told me that the true interpretation of the Biblical story of the serpent in the Garden of Eden is that humanity wanted to pass from a state of animal-like divinity to the state of conscious divinity by means of mental development, symbolised by eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. And this serpent, which Théon always said was iridescent, reflecting all the colours of the prism, was not at all the spirit of evil, but the power of evolution — the force, the power of evolution. And it was natural that this power of evolution would make them taste the fruit of knowledge.

Now, according to Théon, Jehovah was the chief of the *Asuras*, the supreme *Asura*, the egoistic God who wanted to dominate everything and keep everything under his control. And of course this act made him furious, for it enabled mankind to become gods through the power of an evolution of consciousness. And that's why he banished them from Paradise.

Although told in a childish manner, there's a great deal of truth in this story, a great deal.

(*silence*)

One could almost say that of all animals, the serpent is the most sensitive to hypnotic or magnetic power. If you have it (magnetic power comes from the most material vital), you can easily gain a mastery over snakes; all the people who like snakes have it and use it to make snakes obey them. . . . That's how I got out of my encounter with the cobra at Tlemcen — do you know the story? Théon had told me about this power and I was aware of it in myself, so I was able to make the cobra obey and he left. Afterwards (I've told this story, too), I was visited by the King of Serpents — I mean the spirit of the species. He came to me in Tlemcen after this and another incident when I helped a cat overpower a little asp (there are asps over there like Cleopatra's, very dangerous) — a big russet angora cat. At first it started to play with the asp, but then naturally grew furious. The asp struck at the cat, but the cat leapt aside with such swiftness that the asp missed it (I watched this going on for more than ten minutes, it was extraordinary). Just as the snake darted by, the cat would swat at it with all his claws out — and the asp got scratched each time, so that little by little it ran out of energy, and at the end. . . . I stopped the cat from eating it — that part was disgusting!

Then after these two incidents, I received a visit one night from the King of Serpents. He was wearing a superb crown on his head — symbolic, of course, but anyway, he was the spirit of the species. He had the appearance of a cobra, and he was wonderful! A formidable beast, and . . . wonderful! He said he had come to make a pact with me: I had demonstrated my power over his species, so he wanted

to come to an understanding. “All right,” I said, “what do you propose?” “I not only promise that serpents won’t harm you,” he replied, “but that they will obey you. But you must promise me something in return: never to kill one of them.” I thought it over and said, “No, I can’t make this promise, because if ever one of yours attacks one of mine (a being that depends upon me), my pact with you could not stop me from protecting him. I can assure you that I have no bad feelings and no intention of killing — killing is not on my programme! But I can’t commit myself, because it would restrict my freedom of decision.” He left without replying, so it remains status quo.

I have had several experiences demonstrating my power over snakes (not so much as over cats — with cats it’s extraordinary!). Long ago, I often used to take a drive and then stop somewhere for a walk. One day after my walk, as I was getting back into the car to drive away (the door was still open), a very large snake came out, right from the spot I had just left. He was furious and heading straight towards the open door, ready to strike (luckily I was alone, neither the driver nor Pavitra were there, otherwise . . .). When the snake had come quite near, I looked at him closely and said, “What do you want? Why have you come here?” There was a pause. Then he fell down flat and off he went. I hadn’t made a move, only asked him, “What do you want? Why have you come here?” You know, they have a way of suddenly falling back, going limp, and prrt! Gone!

How many, many experiences there were during those days at Tlemcen! Surely you’ve heard them. . . . Were you there when I told the story about the big toad? A huge toad, covered with warts. No? . . . The sitting room was upstairs in Théon’s house (the house was built on a hillside) and it was connected by large open doors to a small terrace that sat almost on top of the hill. I played the piano in this room every day. And one day, what did I see hopping in through the open bay windows but an enormous black toad — enormous! He sat down on his backside right in the entrance and puffed up his throat: poff! poff! And for the whole time I played, he stayed there going “Poff! poff!”, as though in a state of delight! When I finished, I turned around and he gave me one last “Poff!” and hopped away. It was comical!

Théon also taught me how to turn aside lightning.

Is it possible?!

Ah, yes — he used to do it.

But it must take a formidable power!

Oh (*laughing*), he had a formidable power! Théon had a formidable power. . . .

One stormy day (there were terrible thunderstorms there), he climbed to the high terrace above the sitting room. "It's a strange time to be going up there," I said to him. He laughed, "Come along, don't be afraid!" So I joined him. He began some invocations and then I clearly saw a bolt of lightning that had been heading straight towards us suddenly swerve *in the midst of its course*. You will say it's impossible, but I saw it turn aside and strike a tree farther away. I asked Théon, "Did you do that?" He nodded.

Oh, that man was terrible — he had a terrible power. But quite a good external appearance!

Have you seen his photo? No? I'll have to show it to you. He was a handsome man, about sixty years old — between fifty and sixty.

And do you know how he received me when I arrived there? . . . It was the first time in my life I had travelled alone and the first time I had crossed the Mediterranean. Then there was a fairly long train ride between Oran and Tlemcen — anyway, I managed rather well: I got there. He met me at the station and we set off for his place by car (it was rather far away). Finally we reached his estate — a wonder! It spread across the hillside overlooking the whole valley of Tlemcen. We arrived from below and had to climb up some wide pathways. I said nothing — it was truly an experience from a material standpoint. When we came in sight of the house, he stopped: "That's my house." It was red! Painted red! And he added, "When Barley came here, he asked me, 'Why did you paint your house red?'" (Barley was a French occultist who put Théon in touch with France and was his first disciple.) There was a mischievous gleam in Théon's eyes and he smiled sardonically: "I told Barley, 'Because red goes well with green!'" With that, I began to understand the gentleman. . . . We continued on our way uphill when suddenly, without warning, he spun around, planted himself in front of me, and said, "Now you are at my mercy. Aren't you afraid?" Just like that. So I looked at him, smiled and replied, "I'm never afraid. I have the Divine here." (*Mother touches her heart.*)

Well, he really went pale.

There were all kinds of stories in the countryside, terrible stories. . . .

One day I will find his photo and show it to you; he is there with a big dog he called 'Little Boy', a dog that could exteriorise — he would dream and go out of his body! This dog had a kind of adoration for me. (I should mention that at a fixed time in the afternoons I used to meditate and go into trance. When it was finished I would go out walking with Théon, and the dog always came with us, usually coming to fetch me in my room.) One day I was lying on a divan in trance when I felt his cold muzzle nudging my hand to wake me. I opened my eyes . . . no dog. Yet I had positively, clearly felt his cold muzzle. So I got ready, went downstairs, and who did I find fast asleep on the landing but Little Boy — he was in trance as

well! He had come to wake me in his sleep. When I reached the landing he woke up, shook himself and trotted off.

It was an interesting life. . . .

We used to go for walks in the nearby countryside to see the tombs (it was a Muslim country). I no longer recall their Arabic name, but there is always a guardian at Muslim tombs — a sage, like the fakirs of India, a kind of priest responsible for the tomb. Pilgrims go there as well. Théon was friendly with one particular sage, and would speak with him and tell him things (at these times I would see the mischief in Théon's eyes). One day, Théon took me along. (According to Islamic tradition I should have been fully covered, but I always went out in a type of kimono!) Théon addressed the sage in Arabic; I didn't understand what he said, but the sage rose, bowed to me very ceremoniously and went off into another room, returning with three cups of sweetened mint tea (not teacups, they put it in special little glasses — extremely sweet tea, almost like mint syrup). The sage was watching me, I was obliged to take it . . . The pine tree story is also from Tlemcen.

Someone had wanted to plant pine trees — Scotch firs, I think — and by mistake Norway spruce were sent instead. And it began to snow! It had never snowed there before, as you can imagine — it was only a few kilometres from the Sahara and boiling hot: 113° in the shade and 130° in the sun in summer. Well, one night Madame Théon, asleep in her bed, was awakened by a little gnome-like being — a Norwegian gnome with a pointed cap and pointed slippers turned up at the toes! From head to foot he was covered with snow, and it began melting onto the floor of her room, so she glared at him and said:

“What are You doing here? You're dripping wet! You're making a mess of my floor!”

“I'm here to tell you that we were called to this mountain and so we have come.”

“Who are you?”

“The Lord of the Snow.”

“Very well,” replied Madame Théon, “I shall see about that when I get up. Now go away, you're spoiling my room!”

So the little gnome left.

But when she awoke, there was a puddle of water on the floor, so it couldn't have been a dream. And when she looked out the window, all the hills were snow-covered!

It was the first time. They had lived there for years but had never seen snow. And every winter after that, the hillsides would be covered with snow.

(silence)

You see, when people are in this occult consciousness, everything is possible — it creates an atmosphere where *all*, all is possible. What to our European common sense seems impossible . . . is all possible.

She was English and he . . . I don't know whether he was Polish or Russian (he was of Jewish origin and had to leave his country for that reason). But they were both European.

It was a very interesting world. Really, what I saw there. . . . Well, once you left, you would ask yourself, "Was I dreaming?!" It all seemed so fantastic!

But when I recounted these experiences to Sri Aurobindo, he told me it was quite natural: when you have the power, you live in and create around yourself an atmosphere where these things are possible.

Because it is all here, it just hasn't been brought to the surface.

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on 4 February 1961)

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It has always been like that for me — always. And I have never, never had the religious sense at all — you know, what people call this kind of . . . what they have in religions, especially in Europe. I see only the English word for it: *awe*, like a kind of terror. This always made me laugh! But I have always felt what's behind, the presences behind.

I remember once going into a church (which I won't name) and I found it a very beautiful place. It wasn't a feast or ceremony day, so it was empty. There were just one or two people at prayer. I went in and sat down in a little chapel off to the side. Someone was praying there, someone who must have been in distress — she was crying and praying. And there was a statue, I no longer know of whom: Christ or the Virgin or a Saint — I have no idea. And, oh! . . . Suddenly, in place of the statue, I saw an enormous spider . . . like a tarantula, you know, but (*gesture*) huge! It covered the entire wall of the chapel and was just waiting there to swallow all the vital force of the people who came. It was . . . heart-rending. I said to myself, "Oh, these people . . ." There was this miserable woman who had come seeking solace, who was praying there, weeping, hoping to find solace; and instead of reaching a consciousness that was at least compassionate, her supplications were feeding this monster!

. . . I remember going to [—], was taken inside and received there in quite an unusual way — a highly respected person introduced me as a 'great saint'! They led me up to the main altar where people are not usually allowed to go, and what did I see there! . . . An asura (oh, not a very high-ranking one, more like a *rakshasa*), but such a monster! Hideous. . . . So I went wham! (*gesture of giving a blow*) I

thought something was going to happen. . . . But this being left the altar and came over to try to intimidate me; of course, he saw it was useless, so he offered to make an alliance: “If you just keep quiet and don’t do anything, I will share all I get with you.” Well, I sent him packing! The head of this *Math*. . . . It was a *Math* with a monastery and temple, which means a substantial fortune; the head of the *Math* has it all at his disposal for as long as he holds the position — and he is appointed for life. But he has to name his successor . . . and as a rule, his own life is considerably shortened by the successor — this is how it works. Everyone knew that the present head had considerably shortened the life of his predecessor. And what a creature! As asuric as the god he worshipped! I saw some poor fellows throw themselves at his feet (he must have been squeezing them pitilessly), to beg forgiveness and mercy — an absolutely ruthless man. But he received me — you should have seen it! . . . I said nothing, not a word about their god; I gave no sign that I knew anything. But I thought to myself, “So that’s how it is! . . .”

Another thing happened to me in a fishing village near Ariankuppam, on the seashore, where there is a temple dedicated to Kali — a terrible Kali. I don’t know what happened to her, but she had been buried with only her head sticking out! A fantastic story — I knew nothing about it at all. I was going by car from A. to this temple and halfway there a black form, in great agitation, came rushing towards me, asking for my help: “I’ll give you everything I have — all my power, all the people’s worship — if you help me to become omnipotent!” Of course, I answered her as she deserved! I later asked who this was, and they told me that some sort of misfortune had befallen her and she had been buried with only her head above ground. And every year this fishing village has a festival and slaughters thousands of chickens — she likes chicken! Thousands of chickens. They pluck them on the spot (the whole place gets covered with feathers), and then, after offering the blood and making the sacrifice, the people, naturally, eat them all up. The day I came this had taken place that very morning — feathers littered everywhere! It was disgusting. And she was asking for my help!

But the curious thing is that these vital beings are aware of what is happening. I knew nothing about any of it, neither the story, nor the being, nor the head sticking out of the ground — and she wanted me to get her out of it. They ‘feel’ the atmosphere. They are aware — they may not be conscious on higher planes, but they are conscious on vital planes, aware of vital power and the vital force it represents. . . . It’s like this asura . . . when I came in he suddenly seemed to tremble on his pedestal; then he left his idol and came to seek my alliance.

But it’s strange. . . .

(*silence*)

At the age of eighteen, I remember having such an intense need in me to *know*. . . . Because I was having experiences — I had all kinds of experiences — but my surroundings offered me no chance to receive an intellectual knowledge which would have given me the meaning of it all: I couldn't even speak of them. I was having experience after experience. . . . For years, I had experiences during the night (but I was very careful never to speak about them!) — memories from past lives, all sorts of things, but without any base of intellectual knowledge. (Of course, the advantage of this was that my experiences were not mentally contrived; they were entirely spontaneous.) But I had such a *need* in me to know! . . . I remember living in a house (one of these houses with a lot of apartments), and in the apartment next door were some young Catholics whose faith was very . . . they were very convinced. And seeing all that, I remember saying to myself one day while brushing my hair, "These people are lucky to be born into a religion and believe unquestioningly! It's so easy! You have nothing to do but believe — how simple that makes it." I was feeling like this, and then when I realised what I was thinking (*laughing*), well, I gave myself a good scolding: "Lazybones!"

To know, know, *know!* . . . You see, I knew nothing, really, nothing but the things of ordinary life: external knowledge. I had learned everything I had been given to learn. I not only learned what I was taught but also what my brother was taught — higher mathematics and all that! I learned and I learned and I learned — and it was *nothing*. None of it explained anything to me — nothing. I couldn't understand a thing!

To know! . . .

It was to happen to me two years later when I met someone who told me of Théon's teaching.

When I was told that the Divine was within — the teaching of the Gita, but in words understandable to a Westerner — that there was an inner Presence, that one carried the Divine within oneself, oh! . . . What a revelation! In a few minutes, I suddenly understood all, all, all. Understood everything. It brought the contact instantly.

(*silence*)

But all the same, can't it be said that whatever the appearances — these vital spiders or frightful Kalis — the Divine still acts and helps people through them? It's not all totally swallowed up and lost, is it?

No, but this is something else. Those who are capable of personal experiences pass through everything. But not the common herd.

(*silence*)

I have had discussions — not ‘discussions’, exchanges of views — with prelates. There was one cardinal in particular. . . . I told him my experience, what I *knew*. He replied, “Whether you want to or not, you belong to the Church; because those who know belong to the Church.” And he added, “You have the knowledge we are taught when we become cardinals.” “Nobody has taught me anything,” I said, “this is my experience.” Then he repeated, “Whether you like it or not, you belong to the Church.” I felt like telling him a thing or two, but I didn’t.

Otherwise, you just keep turning in circles, oh, caught by the form, locked in by the form! . . .

Well.

In short, I have known people from everywhere, I have been everywhere, I have seen and heard everything. . . . It was very strange, very strange. And I didn’t do it on purpose, but just . . . because the Lord willed it.

What experiences!

Well, mon petit, I have to go now. I’ve been talking in torrents!

(Mother’s conversation with a disciple on April 29, 1961)

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These things are very interesting. They must form part of the work I have come on earth to do. Because even before encountering Théon, before knowing anything, I had experiences at night, certain types of activities looking after people who were leaving their bodies — and with a knowledge of the process; I didn’t know what I was doing nor did I seek to know, yet I knew exactly what had to be done and I did it. I was around twenty.

As soon as I came upon Théon’s teaching (even before meeting him personally), and read and understood all kinds of things which I hadn’t known before, I began to work quite systematically. Every night, at the same hour, I was working to construct — between the purely terrestrial atmosphere and the psychic atmosphere — a path of protection across the vital, so that people wouldn’t have to pass through it (for those who are conscious but without knowledge it’s a very difficult passage — infernal). I was preparing this path, doing this work (it must have been around 1903 or 1904, I don’t remember exactly) for months and months and months. All sorts of extraordinary things happened during that time — extraordinary. I could tell long stories. . . .

Then, when I went to Tlemcen, I told Madame Théon about it. “Yes,” she told me, “it is part of the work you have come on earth to do. Everyone with even a slightly awakened psychic being who can see your Light will go to your Light at

the moment of dying, no matter where they die, and you will help them to pass through.” And this work is constant. Constant. It has given me a considerable number of experiences concerning what happens to people when they leave their bodies. I’ve had all sorts of experiences, all kinds of examples — it’s really very interesting.

(Mother’s conversation with a disciple on June 24, 1961)

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There is always what could almost be called a popular way of presenting things. Take the whole Story of the Creation, of how things have come about: it can be told as an unfolding story (this is what Théon did in a book he called *The Tradition* — he told the whole story in the Biblical manner, with psychological knowledge hidden in symbols and forms). There is a psychological manner of telling things and a metaphysical manner. The metaphysical, for me, is almost incomprehensible; it’s uninteresting (or interesting only to minds that are made that way). An almost childish, illustrative way of telling things seems more evocative to me than any metaphysical theory (but this is a personal opinion — and of no great moment!). The psychological approach is more dynamic for transformation, and Sri Aurobindo usually adopted it. He doesn’t tell us stories (I was the one who told him stories! Images are very evocative for me). But if one combines the two approaches. . . . Actually, to be philosophical, one would have to combine the three. But I have always found the metaphysical approach ineffective; it doesn’t lead to realisation but only gives people the *idea* that they know, when they really know nothing at all. From the standpoint of *push*, of a dynamic urge towards transformation, the psychological approach is obviously the most powerful. But the other [the symbolic approach] is lovelier!

In *The Hour of God*, there’s a whole diagram of the Manifestation made by Sri Aurobindo: first comes this, then comes that, then comes the other, and so forth — a whole sequence. They published this in the book in all seriousness, but I must say that Sri Aurobindo did it for fun (I saw him do it). Someone had spoken to him about different religions, different philosophical methods — Theosophy, Madame Blavatsky, all those people (there was Théon, too). Well, each one had made his diagram. So Sri Aurobindo said, “I can make a diagram, too, and mine will be much more complete!” When he finished it, he laughed and said, “But it’s only a diagram, it’s just for fun.” They published it very solemnly, as if he had made a very serious proclamation. Oh, it’s a very complicated diagram!

(Mother’s conversation with a disciple on July 28, 1961)

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In the Vedas, for example, it's plain that the 'forefathers' spoken of were men who had realised immortality upon earth. (Who knows, they may still be alive!) Their conception of things was similar to Sri Aurobindo's.

The other tradition — Théon said it was the origin of both the Kabbala and the Vedas — also held the same concept of divine life and a divine world as Sri Aurobindo: that the summit of evolution would be the divinisation of everything objectified, along with an unbroken progression from that moment on. (As things are now, one goes forward and then backwards, then forward and backwards again; but in this divine world, retrogression won't be necessary: there will be a continuous ascent.) This concept was held in that ancient tradition — Théon spoke to me very clearly of it, and Sri Aurobindo hadn't yet written anything when I met Théon. Théon had written all kinds of things — not philosophy, but stories, fantastic stories! Yet this same knowledge was behind them, and when asked about the source of this knowledge he used to say that it antedated both the Kabbala and the Vedas (he was well-versed in the Rig-veda).

But Théon had no idea of the path of *bhakti*, none whatsoever.

The idea of *surrender* to the Divine was absolutely alien to him. Yet he did have the idea of the Divine Presence here (*Mother indicates the heart center*), of the immanent Divine and of union with That. And he said that by uniting with That and letting That transform the being one could arrive at the divine creation and the transformation of the earth.

Théon was the first one to give me the idea that the earth is symbolic, representative — symbolic of concentrated universal action allowing divine forces to incarnate and work concretely. I learned all this from him.

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on August 2, 1961)

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You see, the subtle physical extends a long way beyond the body.

Then comes what Théon called the 'nervous sub-level', which lies between this subtle physical and the vital. And it acts as a protection: if it is stable, harmonious and strong, it protects you — it protects you even physically — from contagious diseases, for instance, and even from accidents. I experienced it when I was living at Val-de-Grâce. It was the year I resolved to attain union with the psychic being and I was concentrated on this from morning to night and night to morning. Every day I spent some time in the Luxembourg Gardens. They were right near the house, but to get there I had to go all the way down Rue du Val-de-Grâce and cross Boulevard Saint Michel, where there were streetcars, automobiles, buses — the whole circus. I would remain in my concentration the whole time, and once, while

crossing the boulevard, I felt a shock about this far from my body [slightly more than arm's length], so spontaneously I jumped back — just enough for the streetcar to pass by. I hadn't heard anything; I was totally absorbed, and without that warning I would surely have been run over; instead, I jumped back just in time, and the streetcar sped by. I understood then that this nervous sheath was something entirely concrete, because what I had felt was not an idea of danger but a shock — a material *shock*.

So it's true that as long as this envelope is strong and undamaged, you are protected. But for instance, if you are over-tired or worried or flustered — anything that brings disorder into the atmosphere seems to make holes in this envelope, and all kinds of things can enter.

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on August 5, 1961)

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Once when I was at Tlemcen with Théon (this happened twice, but I'm not sure about the second time because I was alone), my body was in a cataleptic state and I was in conscious trance. . . . It was a peculiar kind of catalepsy in the sense that my body could speak, though very slowly — Théon had taught me how to do it. But this is because the 'life of the form' always remains (this is what takes seven days to leave the body) and it can even be trained to make the body move — the being is no longer there, but the life of the form can make the body move (in any case, utter words). However, this state is not without danger, the proof being that while I was working in trance, for some reason or other (which I no longer remember, but obviously due to some negligence on the part of Théon who was there to watch over me), the cord — I don't know what to call it — went snap! The link was cut, malevolently, and when it was time and I wanted to return, I could no longer re-enter my body. But I was still able to warn him: "The cord is cut." Then he used his power and knowledge to help me come back — but it was no joke! It was very difficult. And this is when I had the experience of the two different states, because the part that had gone out was now without the body's support — the link was cut. Then I knew. Of course, I was in a special state; I was doing a fully conscious work with all the vital power, and I was in control not only of my surroundings but. . . . You see, what happens is a kind of reversal of consciousness: you begin to belong to another world; you feel this quite distinctly. Théon instantly told me to concentrate (I was finding it all interesting — *Mother laughs* — I was making experiments and getting ready to go wandering off, but he was terribly scared that I would die on him!). He begged me to concentrate, so I concentrated on my body.

When I re-entered, it hurt terribly, terribly — an excruciating pain, like plunging into a hell.

Into a . . . ?

Into a hell (*Mother laughs*).

It was frightful. It doesn't last long.

He made me drink half a glass of cognac (he always made me take some every day after the trance because I would work in trance for more than an hour, which is generally a forbidden practice). Still, I am quite sure that with anybody but me and him, this would have been the end. I would not have re-entered.

So I know a little bit, even in my outermost consciousness. A little bit, that's all.

No, sleep is something else. Yes, something else. It's more like a relapse into Inconscience — a sort of invasion of *tamas*.

We all know, of course, that the Divine Consciousness is there in the depths of the Inconscient; but even so, sleep appears to be a fall, and there are people who fall almost completely back into the Inconscient and come out of their sleep far duller than when they entered it. But for some reason, probably due to the necessities of the Work, I have never to my knowledge had a fully unconscious sleep.

There was another thing (*laughing*): even as a young child, I would all of a sudden, right in the middle of an action or a sentence or anything at all, go into trance — and nobody knew what it was! They would all think I had gone to sleep! But I remained conscious, with an arm raised or in the middle of a word — and poof! No one there (*Mother laughs*). No one there outwardly, but inwardly quite an intense, interesting experience. That used to happen to me even when I was very young.

I remember once (I must have been ten or twelve years old at the time), there was a luncheon at my parents' house for a dozen or so people, all decked out in their Sunday best — they were family but all the same it was a 'luncheon' and there was a certain protocol; in short, one had to behave properly. I was at one end of the table next to a first-cousin of mine who later became director of the Louvre for a while (he had an artistic intelligence, a rather capable young man). So there we were, and I remember I was observing something rather interesting in his atmosphere (mind you, although the faculties were already there, I knew nothing about occult things; if someone had spoken to me of 'auras' and all that. . . . I knew nothing). I was observing a kind of sensation I had felt in his atmosphere and then, just as I was putting the fork into my mouth, I took off! What a scolding I got! I was told that if I didn't know how to behave, I shouldn't come to the table! (*Mother goes*

into peals of laughter)

It was during this period that I used to go out of my body every night and do the work I've spoken of in *Prayers and Meditations* (I only mentioned it in passing). Every night at the same hour, when the whole house was very quiet, I would go out of my body and have all kinds of experiences. And then my body gradually became a sleepwalker (that is, the consciousness of the form became more and more conscious, while the link remained very solidly established). I got into the habit of getting up — but not like an ordinary sleepwalker: I would get up, open my desk, take out a piece of paper and write . . . poems. Yes, poems — I, who had nothing of the poet in me! I would jot things down, then very consciously put everything back into the drawer, lock everything up again very carefully and go back to bed. One night, for some reason or other, I forgot and left it open. My mother came in (in France the windows are covered with heavy curtains and in the morning my mother would come in and violently throw open the curtains, waking me up, brrm!, without any warning; but I was used to it and would already be prepared to wake up — otherwise it would have been most unpleasant!). Anyway, my mother came in, calling me with unquestionable authority, and then she found the open desk and the piece of paper: “What’s that?!” She grabbed it. “What have you been up to?” I don’t know what I replied, but she went to the doctor: “My daughter has become a sleepwalker! You have to give her a drug.”

It wasn’t easy.

I remember once. . . . She scolded me quite often (but it was very good, a very good lesson), she scolded me very, very often — for things I hadn’t even done! Once she came down on me for something I had done but which she hadn’t understood (I had done it with the best of intentions); I had given something to someone without her permission, and she reproached me for it as though it were a crime! At first I stiffened and said, “I didn’t do it.” She started to say I was lying. Then all at once, mutely, I looked at her and felt . . . I felt all this human misery and all this human falsehood, and soundlessly the tears began to fall. “What! Now you’re crying!” she said. At that, I became a bit *fed up*. “Oh, I’m not crying about myself,” I told her, “but about the world’s misery.”

“You’re going mad!” She really believed I was going mad.

It was quite funny.

It’s strange. . . . I say ‘strange’ because it’s due to her that I took birth in this body, that it was chosen. When she was very young she had a great aspiration. . . . she had a kind of *great* aspiration in her: her children had to be ‘the best in the world’. It wasn’t an ambition, I don’t know what it was. And what a will she had! My mother had a formidable will, like an iron bar, utterly impervious to all outside influence. Once she had made up her mind, it was made up; even if someone had been dying

before her eyes, she wouldn't have budged! And she decided: "My children will be the best in the world."

. . . one thing she did have was a sense of progress; she felt that the world was progressing and we had to be better than anything that had come before — and that was sufficient.

It's strange, but that was sufficient.

Did I tell you what happened to my brother? . . . one day when he was eighteen, just before the Polytechnique exams, as he was crossing the Seine (I think it was the *Pont des Arts*), suddenly in the middle of the bridge . . . he felt something descend into him with such force that he became immobilised, petrified; then, although he didn't exactly hear a voice, a very clear message came to him: "If you want, you can become a god" — it was translated like that in his consciousness. He told me that it took hold of him entirely, immobilised him — a formidable and extremely luminous power: "If you want, you can become a god." Then, in the thick of the experience itself, he replied, "No, I want to serve humanity." And it was gone. Of course, he took great care to say nothing to my mother, but we were intimate enough for him to tell me about it. I told him, "Well (*laughing*), what an idiot you are!"

That's the story.

At that moment he could have had a spiritual realisation: he had the right stuff.

Three years later I had that experience — I've told you about it — of the Light piercing through me; I physically saw it enter into me. It was obviously the descent of a Being — not a past incarnation, but a Being from another plane. It was a golden light — the incarnation of a divine consciousness. Which proves that she succeeded for both her children.

. . . But what's interesting, for instance, is that when her father died she knew it; she saw him. She thought it was a dream, 'a stupid dream'. But he came to let her know he was dead and she saw him. "It's nothing," she said, "a dream!" (*Mother laughs*)

When my grandmother died. . . . My grandmother had the occult sense. . . . she came to my mother (my mother was with her when she died; . . . I was in Paris. My mother arrived with the body and told me, "Just imagine, I'm constantly seeing her! And what's more, she gives me advice! "Don't waste your money!" she tells me." "Well, she's right, one must be careful," I replied. "But look here, she's dead! Dead! How can she talk to me! She's dead, I tell you, and quite dead at that!" I said to her, "What does it mean, to die?"

It was all very funny.

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on August 5, 1961)

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Curious, this impression — the feeling of the body and the atmosphere when I was propelled into the future. It's something more . . . more compact, denser than the physical: the New Creation. One always tends to think of it as something more ethereal, but it's not! Théon spoke of it, but he didn't express himself very well; his way of speaking didn't have the power of revelation (it was based on experience, but the experience wasn't his, it was Madame Théon's. She was a marvellous woman from the standpoint of experience — unique — but with no real intelligence . . . oh, she was intelligent and cultivated, but no more than that, and it didn't amount to much). But they really had come as *forerunners*, and Théon always insisted, "It will have a greater density." Scientifically, this seems like heresy, for 'density' is not used in that sense — but this was what he said, "A greater density." And the impression I get of this atmosphere is of something more compact — more compact and at the same time without heaviness or thickness. All this is evidently absurd scientifically — yet there is a feeling of compactness.

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on October 30, 1961)

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Anyway, it was because of Théon that I first found the 'Mantra of Life', the mantra that gives life, and he wanted me to give it to him, he wanted to possess it — it was something formidable! It was the mantra that gives life (it can make anyone at all come back into life, but that's only a small part of its power). And it was shut away in a particular place, sealed up, with my name in Sanskrit on it. I didn't know Sanskrit at that time, but he did, and when he led me to that place, I told him what I saw: "There's a sort of design, it must be Sanskrit." (I could recognise the characters as Sanskrit.) He told me to reproduce what I was seeing, and I did so. It was my name, Mirra, written in Sanskrit — the mantra was for me and I alone could open it. "Open it and tell me what's there," he said.

(All this was going on while I was in a cataleptic trance.) Then immediately something in Me *knew*, and I answered, "No," and did not read it.

I found it again when I was with Sri Aurobindo and I gave it to Sri Aurobindo.

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on November 5, 1961)

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*About the discovery of the Supermind in the Veda and by Sri Aurobindo.
There is something I don't quite grasp.*

Because in the Veda it's incomplete.

No, they had a *hint*, like a vision of the ‘thing’, but there is no proof that they realised it. What’s more, had they realised it, it seems to me that we would certainly have found some traces — but no traces remain.

Théon knew something about it, and he called it ‘the new world’ or ‘the new creation on earth and the glorified body’ (I don’t remember his exact terminology); but he knew of the Supermind’s existence — it had been revealed to him and he announced its coming. He said it would be reached *through* the discovery of the God within. And for him, as I told you the other day, this meant a greater density — which seems to be a correct experience. Well, on my side, I have made investigations and had innumerable visions concerning the earth’s history, and I spoke about it a good deal with Sri Aurobindo. . . .

(*silence*)

According to what Sri Aurobindo saw and what I saw as well, the Rishis had the contact, the experience — how to put it? . . . A kind of lived knowledge of the thing, coming like a promise, saying, “*That* is what will be.” But it’s not permanent. There’s a big difference between their experience and the *descent* — what Sri Aurobindo calls ‘the descent of the Supermind’: something that comes and establishes itself.

Even when I had that experience [the ‘first supramental manifestation’ of February 29, 1956], when the Lord said, “The time has come”, well, it was not a complete descent; it was the descent of the Consciousness, the Light, and a part, an aspect of the Power. It was immediately absorbed and swallowed up by the world of Inconscience, and from that moment on it began to work in the atmosphere. But it was not *the* thing that comes and gets permanently established; when that happens, we won’t need to speak of it — it will be obvious!

Although the experience of ’56 was one more forward step, it’s not. . . . It’s not final.

And what the Rishis had was a sort of promise — an *individual* experience.
(Mother’s conversation with a disciple on November 7, 1961)

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There is also what Théon and Madame Théon used to say. They never spoke of ‘Supermind’, but they said the same thing as the Vedas, that the world of Truth must incarnate on earth and create a new world. They even picked up the old phrase from the Gospels, ‘new heavens and a new earth’, which is the same thing the Vedas speak of. Madame Théon had this experience and she gave me the

indication (she didn't actually teach me) of how it was to be done. She would go out of her body and become conscious in the vital world (there were many intermediary states, too, if one cared to explore them). After the vital came the mental: you consciously went out of the vital body, you left it behind (you could see it) and you entered the mental world. Then you left the mental body and entered into. . . . They used different words, another classification (I don't remember it), but even so, the experience was identical. And like that, she successively left twelve different bodies, one after another. She was extremely 'developed', you see — individualised, organised. She could leave one body and enter the consciousness of the next plane, fully experience the surroundings and all that was there, describe it . . . and so on, twelve times.

I learned to do the same thing, and with great dexterity; I could halt on any plane, do what I had to do there, move around freely, see, observe, and then speak about what I had seen. And my last stage, which Théon called '*pathétisme*', a very barbaric but very expressive word, bordered on the Formless — he sometimes used the Jewish terminology, calling the Supreme 'The Formless'. (From this last stage one passed to the Formless — there was no further body to leave behind, one was beyond all possible forms, even all thoughtforms.) In this domain [the last stage before the Formless] one experienced total unity — unity in something that was the essence of Love; Love was a manifestation more . . . 'dense', he would always say (there were all sorts of different 'densities'); and Love was a denser expression of That, the sense of perfect Unity — perfect unity, identity — with no longer any forms corresponding to those of the lower worlds. It was a Light! . . . An almost immaculate white light, yet with something of a golden-rose in it (words are crude). This Light and this Experience were truly wonderful, inexpressible in words.

Well, one time I was there (Théon used to warn against going beyond this domain, because he said you wouldn't come back), but there I was, wanting to pass over to the other side, when — in a quite unexpected and astounding way — I found myself in the presence of the 'principle', a principle of the human form. It didn't resemble man as we are used to seeing him, but it was an upright form, standing just on the border between the world of forms and the Formless, like a kind of standard. At that time nobody had ever spoken to me about it and Madame Théon had never seen it — no one had ever seen or said anything. But I felt I was on the verge of discovering a secret.

Afterwards, when I met Sri Aurobindo and talked to him about it, he told me, "It is surely the prototype of the supramental form." I saw it several times again, later on, and this proved to be true.

But naturally, you understand, once the border has been crossed, there is no more 'ascent' and 'descent'; you have the feeling of rising up only at the very start,

while leaving the terrestrial consciousness and emerging into the higher mind. But once you have gone beyond that, there's no notion of rising; there's a sense, instead, of a sort of inner transformation.

And from there I would redescend, re-entering my bodies one after another — there is a real feeling of re-entry; it actually produces friction.

When one is on that highest height, the body is in a cataleptic state.

I think I made this experiment in 1904, so when I arrived here it was all a work accomplished and a well-known domain; and when the question of finding the Supermind came up, I had only to resume an experience I was used to — I had learned to repeat it at will, through successive exteriorisations. It was a voluntary process.

When I returned from Japan and we began to work together, Sri Aurobindo had already brought the supramental light into the mental world and was trying to transform the Mind. "It's strange," he said to me, "it's an endless work! Nothing seems to get done — everything is done and then constantly has to be done all over again." Then I gave him my personal impression, which went back to the old days with Théon: "It will be like that until we touch bottom." So instead of continuing to work in the Mind, both of us (I was the one who went through the experience . . . how to put it? . . . practically, objectively; he experienced it only in his consciousness, not in the body — but my body has always participated), both of us descended almost immediately (it was done in a day or two) from the Mind into the Vital, and so on quite rapidly, leaving the Mind as it was, fully in the light but not permanently transformed.

Then a strange thing happened. When we were in the Vital, my body suddenly became young again, as it had been when I was eighteen years old! . . . There was a young man named Pearson, a disciple of Tagore, who had lived with me in Japan for four years; he returned to India, and when he came to see me in Pondicherry, he was stupefied. "What has happened to you!" he exclaimed. He hardly recognised me. During that same period (it didn't last very long, only a few months), I received some old photographs from France and Sri Aurobindo saw one of me at the age of eighteen. "There!" he said, "That's how you are now!" I wore my hair differently, but otherwise I was eighteen all over again.

This lasted for a few months. Then we descended into the Physical — and all the trouble began. But we didn't stay in the Physical, we descended into the Subconscious and from the Subconscious to the Inconscious. That was how we worked. And it was only when I descended into the Inconscious that I found the Divine Presence — there, in the midst of Darkness.

It wasn't the first time; when I was working with Théon at Tlemcen (the second time I was there), I descended into the total, unindividualised — that is,

general — Inconscient (it was the time he wanted me to find the Mantra of Life). And there I suddenly found myself in front of something like a vault or a grotto (of course, it was only something ‘like’ that), and when it opened, I saw a Being of iridescent light reclining with his head on his hand, fast asleep. All the light around him was iridescent. When I told Théon what I was seeing, he said it was ‘the immanent God in the depths of the Inconscient’, who through his radiations was slowly waking the Inconscient to Consciousness.

But then a rather remarkable phenomenon occurred: when I looked at him, he woke up and opened his eyes, expressing the beginning of conscious, wakeful action.

I have experienced the descent into the Inconscient many times (you remember, once you were there the day it happened — it had to do with divine Love); this experience of descending to the very bottom of the Inconscient and finding there the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Presence, under one form or another. It has happened quite frequently.

But I can’t say that my process is to descend there first, as you write. Rather, this can be the process only when you are *already* conscious and identified; then *you draw down* the Force (as Sri Aurobindo says, ‘one makes it descend’) in order to transform. Then, with this action of transformation, one pushes [the Force into the depths, like a drill]. The Rishis’ description of what happens next is absolutely true: a formidable battle at each step. And it would seem impossible to wage that battle without having first experienced the junction above.

That is my experience — I don’t say there can’t be others. I don’t know.

(Mother’s conversation with a disciple on November 7, 1961)

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Trance is the sign of non-individualisation — the consciousness is not awake and so your body goes into trance. But if your consciousness is wide awake you can sit, keeping full contact with things, and have the total experience. I could go out of my body with no need of trance, except when Théon wanted me to do a particular work. That was a different business — the vital force (not the consciousness, the vital force) had to go out for that work, so the body had to go into trance. But even then. . . . For instance, very often when I am ‘called’ and go to do something in response, my body does become still, but it’s not in trance; I can be sitting and, even in the middle of a gesture, suddenly become immobile for a few seconds. But I was doing another type of work with Théon — dangerous work, at that — and it would last for an hour. Then all the body’s vital energy would go out, all of it, as it does when you die (in fact, that’s how I came to experience death).

But it isn't necessary to have all those experiences, not at all — Sri Aurobindo never did. (Théon didn't have experiences, either; he had only the knowledge — he made use of Madame Théon's experiences.) Sri Aurobindo told me he had never really entered the unconsciousness of samadhi — for him, these domains were conscious; he would sit on his bed or in his armchair and have all the experiences.

Naturally, it's preferable to be in a comfortable position (it's a question of security). If you venture to do these kinds of things standing up, for instance, as I have seen them done, it's dangerous. But if one is quietly stretched out, there is no need for trance.

Besides, according to what I've been told (not physically), I believe that the Rishis practised going into trance. But I suppose they wanted to achieve what Sri Aurobindo speaks of: a *physical* transformation of the physical body permitting one to *live* this consciousness instead of the ordinary consciousness. Did they ever do it? . . . I don't know. The Veda simply recounts what the *forefathers* have done. But who are these *forefathers*?

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on November 7, 1961)

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. . . when I first began to work (not with Théon personally but with an acquaintance of his in France, a boy who was a friend of my brother), well, I had a series of visions (I knew nothing about India, mind you, nothing, just as most Europeans know nothing about it: "a country full of people with certain customs and religions, a confused and hazy history, where a lot of 'extraordinary things' are said to have happened." I knew nothing.) Well, in several of these visions I saw Sri Aurobindo just as he looked physically, but glorified; that is, the same man I would see on my first visit, almost thin, with that golden-bronze hue and rather sharp profile, an unruly beard and long hair, dressed in a dhoti with one end of it thrown over his shoulder, arms and chest bare, and bare feet. At the time I thought it was 'vision attire'! I mean I really knew nothing about India; I had never seen Indians dressed in the Indian way.

Well, I saw him. I experienced what were at once symbolic visions and spiritual *facts*: absolutely decisive spiritual experiences and facts of meeting and having a united perception of the Work to be accomplished. And in these visions I did something I had never done physically: I prostrated before him in the Hindu manner. All this without any comprehension in the little brain (I mean I really didn't know what I was doing or how I was doing it — nothing at all). I did it, and at the same time the outer being was asking, "What is all this?!"

I wrote the vision down (or perhaps that was later on) but I never spoke of it to

anyone (one doesn't talk about such things, naturally). But my impression was that it was premonitory, that one day something like it would happen. And it remained *in the background of the consciousness*, not active, but constantly present.

As for Théon, he was European and wore a long purple robe that wasn't at all like the one in my vision. (I'm not sure, but I think he was either Polish or Russian, but more probably Russian, of Jewish descent, and that he was forced to leave his country; he never said anything about this to anyone, it's only an impression.) When I saw him I recognised him as a being of great power. And he bore a certain likeness to Sri Aurobindo: Théon was about the same size (not a tall man, of medium height) and thin, slim, with quite a similar profile. But when I met Théon I saw (or rather I felt) that he was not the man I saw in my vision because . . . he didn't have that vibration. Yet it was he who first taught me things, and I went and worked at Tlemcen for two years in a row. But this other thing was always there in the background of the consciousness.

(Mother's conversation with a disciple on December 20, 1961)

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. . . I am going to tell you about Madame X.

Madame X was born on the Isle of Wight and she lived in Tlemcen with her husband who was a great occultist. Madame X herself was an occultist of great powers, a remarkable clairvoyant, and she had mediumistic qualities. Her powers were quite exceptional; she had received an extremely complete and rigorous training and she could exteriorise herself, that is, bring out of her material body a subtle body, in full consciousness, and do it twelve times in succession. That is, she could pass consciously from one state of being to another, live there as consciously as in her physical body, and then again put that subtler body into trance, exteriorise herself from it, and so on twelve times successively, to the extreme limit of the world of forms. . . . I shall speak to you about that later, when you can understand better what I am talking about. But I am going to tell you about some small incidents I saw when I was in Tlemcen myself, and a story she told me I shall also tell you.

The incidents are of a more external kind, but very funny.

She was almost always in trance and she had trained her body so well that even when she was in trance, that is, when one or more parts of her being were exteriorised, the body had a life of its own and she could walk about and even attend to some small material occupations. . . . She did a great deal of work, for in her trances she could talk freely and she used to narrate what she saw, which was noted down and later formed a teaching — which has even been published. And because of all that and the occult work she was doing, she was often tired, in the sense that her body was tired and

needed to recuperate its vitality in a very concrete way.

Now, one day when she was particularly tired, she told me, “You will see how I am going to recover my strength.” She had plucked from her garden — it was not a garden, it was a vast estate with ancient olive trees, and fig trees such as I have never seen anywhere else, it was a real marvel, on a mountainside, from the plain to almost half way up — and in this garden there were many lemon trees and orange trees . . . and grapefruit. Grapefruit has flowers which have an even better fragrance than orange blossoms — they are large flowers and she knew how to make an essence from them herself, she had given me a bottle — well, she had plucked a huge grapefruit like this (*gesture*), very large and ripe, and she lay down on her bed and put the grapefruit on her solar plexus, here (*gesture*), like this, holding it with both hands. She lay down and rested. She did not sleep, she rested. She told me, “Come back in an hour.” An hour later I returned . . . and the grapefruit was as flat as a pancake. That meant that she had such a power to absorb vitality that she had absorbed all the life from the fruit and it had become soft and completely flat. And I saw that myself! You may try, you won’t succeed! (*Laughter*)

Another time — and this is even more amusing . . . But first I shall tell you a little about Tlemcen, which you probably don’t know. Tlemcen is a small town in southern Algeria, almost on the borders of the Sahara. The town itself is built in the valley which is surrounded by a circle of mountains, not very high but nevertheless higher than hills. And the valley is very fertile, verdurous, magnificent. The population there is mainly Arabs and rich merchants; indeed, the city is very prosperous — it *was*, for I don’t know what it is like now; I am speaking to you about things that happened at the beginning of this century — there were very prosperous merchants there and from time to time these Arabs came to pay a visit to Monsieur X. They knew nothing, understood nothing, but they were very interested.

One day, towards evening, one of these people arrived and started asking questions, ludicrous ones besides. Then Madame X said to me, “You will see, we are going to have a little fun.” In the verandah of the house there was a big dining-table, a very large table, like that, quite wide, with eight legs, four on each side. It was really massive, and heavy. Chairs had been arranged to receive this man, at a little distance from the table. He was at one end, Madame X at the other; I was seated on one side, Monsieur X also. All four of us were there. Nobody was near the table, all of us were at a distance from it. And so, he was asking questions, as I said rather ludicrous ones, on the powers one could have and what could be done with what he called “magic”. . . . She looked at me and said nothing but sat very still. Suddenly I heard a cry, a cry of terror. The table started moving and with an almost heroic gesture went to attack the poor man seated at the other end! It went and bumped against him. . . . Madame X had not touched it, nobody had touched it.

She had only concentrated on the table and by her vital power had made it move. At first the table had wobbled a little, then had started moving slowly, then suddenly, as in one bound, it flung itself on that man, who went away and never came back!

She also had the power to dematerialise and rematerialise things. And she never said anything, she did not boast, she did not say, “I am going to do something”, she did not speak of anything; she just did it quietly. She did not attach much importance to these things, she knew they were just a proof that there are other forces than purely material ones.

When I used to go out in the evenings — towards the end of the afternoon I used to go for a walk with Monsieur X to see the countryside, go walking in the mountains, the neighbouring villages — I used to lock my door; it was a habit with me, I always locked my door. Madame X would rarely go out, for the reasons I have already mentioned, because she was in a trance most of the time and liked to stay at home. But when I returned from the walk and opened my door — which was locked, and therefore nobody could have entered — I would always find a kind of little garland of flowers on my pillow. They were flowers which grew in the garden, they are called *Belles de Nuit*; we have them here, they open in the evening and have a wonderful fragrance. There was a whole alley of them, with big bushes as high as this; they are remarkable flowers — I believe it’s the same here — on the same bush there are different coloured flowers: yellow, red, mixed, violet. They are tiny flowers like . . . bluebells; no, rather like the convolvulus, but these grow on bushes — convolvulus is a creeper, these are bushes — we have some here in the garden. She always used to put some behind her ears, for they have a lovely smell, oh! delightfully beautiful. And so, she used to take a walk in the alley between these big bushes which were quite high, and she gathered flowers, and — when I came back, these flowers were in my room! . . . She never told me how she did it, but she certainly did not go in there. Once she said to me, “Were there no flowers in your room?” — “Ah! yes, indeed,” I said. And that was all. Then I knew it was she who had put them there.

I could tell you many stories . . . (M9: 59-62)

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Théon’s role

I should like to know something about Théon: what role has he played in this new manifestation of yours?

Théon was merely the Mother’s guru in occultism — he had some idea of the aim

to be achieved, but got much of it wrong. Moreover what was true came from his wife and was not originally his. (S32: 37)

*

Coué

In your letter this morning you say, "There are some who get a complete control in sleep." This sentence evoked a doubt in me: "If ordinary people — Coué's patients, for example — could make their suggestions effective and cure themselves wonderfully, why is the will of people here so weak even when the Divine is here?" My answer was that those people had only a simple objective and not the aim of a complex change of consciousness; there was no pressure from above and no consequent resistance from below.

When I spoke of some, I was thinking not of people in the Asram but of occultists who make such things their main method. The Mother herself was taught to do it by a great occultist under whom she first practised these things. As to Coué, your answer was the right one. Coué's work was on the mental and vital level and to that there is only a very minor opposition from the vital world because it does not seriously endanger their rule. (S32: 37)

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From Algeria to Paris

X asked me whether Mother can materialise herself at a distance. Y seems to have said something like that.

Y probably referred to an experience in which the Mother being in Algeria appeared to a circle of friends sitting in Paris and took up a pencil and wrote a few words on a paper. Having satisfied herself that it was possible she did not develop it any farther. That was at a time when she was practising occultism with Théon in Algeria. Materialisation is possible but it does not happen easily — it demands a very rare and difficult concentration of forces or else an occult process with vital beings behind it such as materialises objects, like the stones that were daily thrown in the Guest House when we were there. In neither case it is a miracle. But to do as you suggest, make it a common or everyday phenomenon, would be hardly practicable and spiritually not useful, as it is not a spiritual force which gives the power but an

occult mental-vital force. It would turn the Yoga into a display of occultism, rather than a process of spiritual change. (S32: 37-38)

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Not a miracle

You have said that the Mother's materialising herself in Paris while she was living in Algeria was not a miracle. What could be called a miracle, then?

A miracle means something without a process or law which gets done by a sort of magical power or feat — at least that is the impression given by the use of the word. This kind of manifestation is not that, it is a thing well-known at least in theory and sometimes successfully accomplished. (S32: 38)

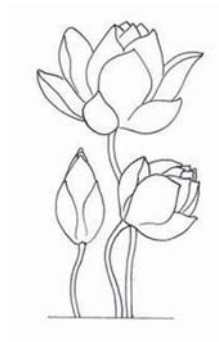
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Our attention must be fixed on the earth

I have been wondering whether the Mother has been able to establish a direct connection with Mars or any other far-off planet which is probably habitable and inhabited.

A long time ago Mother was going everywhere in the subtle body but she found it of a very secondary interest. Our attention must be fixed on the earth because our work is here. Besides, the earth is a concentration of all the other worlds and one can touch them by touching something corresponding in the earth-atmosphere.

(S32: 40)





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