HOW DESCENT HELPS EVOLUTION

Second Edition



A COMPILATION FROM THE WORKS OF

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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Sri Aurobindo Society
AUROPUBLICATIONS
POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

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Second Edition

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Vijaybhai's Note on Comprehensive Compilation

All over the world, there is a growing interest in spirituality and Yoga. There is a search for the true meaning and purpose of life, for deeper solutions to the problems that confront us all, and for ways in which we can contribute to evolutionary change and progress.

In this search, more and more people are turning to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for guidance and enlightenment. But in their voluminous writings, they do not know where to find the answers they are looking for.

In this regard the Mother has said,

> "*It is not by books that Sri Aurobindo ought to be studied but by subjects—what he has said on the Divine, on Unity, on religion, on evolution, on education, on self-perfection, on supermind, etc., etc.*"
>
> (CWM 12: 206)

On another occasion She said:

> "*If you want to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on a given subject, you must at least read all he has written on that subject. You will then see that he seems to have said the most contradictory things. But when one has read everything and understood a little, one sees that all the contradictions complement*

one another and are organised and unified in an integral synthesis."

(CWM 16: 309–310)

While several compilations are now available, many sincere spiritual seekers have felt the need for Comprehensive Compilations from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on specific subjects, in which the contents are further organised into sub-topics, so that one can find everything one is looking for in one place.

This compilation is an effort to fulfil this need and thus help spiritual seekers in their journey and sadhana. We hope that this compilation will help us gain greater mental clarity about a subject so that we can channel our efforts in the right direction. For Sri Aurobindo has written:

"*It is always better to make an effort in the right direction; even if one fails the effort bears some result and is never lost.*"

(CWSA 29: 87)

We will be glad to receive suggestions and feedback from the readers.

Vijay

Preface

As part of our series of comprehensive compilations, we now bring out a new series of compilations on the topic "Descent of Higher Consciousness in Sadhana." This book, *How Descent Helps Evolution* is the seventh volume in this series.

The quotations in this compilation are taken from the volumes of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA) and the *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM), Second Edition. Each quotation is followed by the title of the book, the volume number, and the page number from which it has been taken.

While the passages from Sri Aurobindo are in the original English, most of the passages from the Mother (selections from her talks and writings) are translations from the original French. We must also bear in mind that the excerpts have been taken out of their original context and that a compilation, by its very nature, is likely to have a personal and subjective approach. A sincere attempt, however, has been made to remain faithful to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Those who would like to read the fuller text are advised to consult *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA) and the *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM), Second Edition.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

Contents

I—Involution and Evolution 1

II—All Evolution Must Move by Stages 15

III—Higher Forces Come Down to Reveal New Truths and Prepare a New Age 17

IV—In the New Consciousness, the Wide Spiritual Consciousness Will Be Felt as Sure and Solid and Not Limited by the Body 19

V—Descent of Divine Consciousness to Change the Inner Life and Material Conditions 20

VI—Divine Force Works under Conditions 24

VII—Work That the Divine Mother Does After Descending into the Lesser Triple Universe 25

VIII—Descent and Manifestation 29

IX—The Descent of Overmind on 24th November 1926 Prepared the Possibility of Supermind's Descent 32

X—Only When the Supermind Can Be Brought Down Is the Divine Transformation Possible in the Earth Consciousness 35

XI—Bringing Down the Supramental Truth and Organising Its Action Has to Be Done through Sri Aurobindo and the Mother 43

XII—Supramental Descent on 29th February, 1956 46

XIII—The Inspiration, the Creative Power from Above Is at Work in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for the Descent of the New Realisation 48

XIV—Those Who Are Filled with Enthusiasm for the Idea of Terrestrial Transformation by the Descent Progress Magnificently 50

XV—Instead of Questioning the Supermind, Devote Time to the Preliminary Work of Psychicisation and Spiritualisation 52

XVI—When the Higher Light Descends into the Physical, the Hostile Forces Become Out of Place in Sadhana 53

XVII—Great Musicians Came into Touch with a Higher Consciousness When They Created 59

XVIII—One of the Functions of Hostile Forces Is to Make the Earth Ready for the Spiritual Descent 60

XIX—The Mother and the Supramental Descent 65

Other Comprehensive Compilations by Jamshed M. Mavalwalla 73

I—Involution and Evolution

1.

"In this manifestation the two terms are involution and evolution. The material universe starts from an involution of God in the movement of inconscient Force and the forms of inert Matter and it is impelled by the divine impulse within it to the evolution of God through the increasing manifestation of consciousness and conscious power which must culminate in a perfect and infinite self-knowledge, self-mastery and self-delight. By the involution we mean a self-concealing of the Divine in a descent of which the last rung is Matter, by the evolution a self-revealing of the Divine in an ascent of which the last rung is Spirit." (CWSA 12: 221–222)

2.

"The earth is a material field of evolution. Mind and life, supermind, Sachchidananda are in principle involved there in the earth consciousness, but only matter is at first organised; then life descends from the life plane and gives shape and organisation and activity to the life principle in matter, creates the plant and animal; then mind descends from the mind plane, creating man. Now supermind is to descend so as to create a supramental race." (CWSA 30: 416)

3.

'Opening from below' means this—that the supramental force descending awakes a response from below in the earth consciousness so that it is possible for a supramental activity to be formed in the material itself. All is involved as potentiality in the earth consciousness—life, mind, supermind—but it is only when Life Force descended from the life plane into the material that active and conscious organised life was possible—so it was only when mind descended that the latent mind in Matter awoke and could be organised. The supramental descent must create the same kind of opening from below so that a supramental consciousness can be organised in the material." (CWSA 35: 108)

4.

"This imperfect being with his hampered, confused, ill-ordered and mostly ineffective consciousness cannot be the end and highest height of the mysterious upward surge of Nature. There is something more that has yet to be brought down from above and is now seen only by broken glimpses through sudden rifts in the giant wall of our limitations. Or else there is something yet to be evolved from below, sleeping under the veil of man's mental consciousness or half visible by flashes, as life once slept in the stone and metal, mind in the plant and reason in the cave of animal memory underlying its imperfect apparatus

of emotion and sense-device and instinct. Something there is in us yet unexpressed that has to be delivered by an enveloping illumination from above. A godhead is imprisoned in our depths, one in its being with a greater godhead ready to descend from superhuman summits. In that descent and awakened joining is the secret of our future." (CWSA 12: 159–160)

5.

"They [planes between mind and Overmind] descended long ago. It does not mean that they are available to everybody or developed anywhere in their full power—only that they can be counted among the things to which one can reach by tapasya." (CWSA 35: 359)

6.

"What seems to me of more importance is to try to explain how things are worked out here. Indeed very few are the people who understand it and still fewer those who realise it.

There has never been, at any time, a mental plan, a fixed programme or an organisation decided beforehand. The whole thing has taken birth, grown and developed as a living being by a movement of consciousness (Chit-tapas) constantly maintained, increased and fortified. As the Conscious Force descends in matter and radiates, it seeks for fit instruments to express and manifest it. It goes

without saying that the more the instrument is open, receptive and plastic, the better are the results." (CWSA 35: 676–677)

7.

"Wherever the Divine is, everything is—it is only concealed, not non-existent. The Divine is there below in the inconscience itself—mind and life are concealed in Matter, so is Supermind and Sachchidananda. The below is not something outside the Divine Existence. But as mind manifested in Matter only after the descent of Mind opened it into creation, so it is with Supermind." (CWSA 28: 6)

8.

"Q: *I fail to understand what you mean by 'Carrying on the evolution.' Could you explain this more fully?*

A: That would mean writing the whole of human history. I can only say that as there are special descents to carry on the evolution to a farther stage, so also something of the Divine is always there to help through each stage itself in one direction or another." (CWSA 32: 88)

9.

"Sri Aurobindo teaches that a descent of the higher principle is possible which will not merely release the spiritual Self out of the world, but release it in the world,

replace the mind's ignorance or its very limited knowledge by a supramental truth-consciousness which will be a sufficient instrument of the inner Self and make it possible for the human being to find himself dynamically as well as inwardly and grow out of his still animal humanity into a diviner race. The psychological discipline of Yoga can be used to that end by opening all the parts of the being to a conversion or transformation through the descent and working of the higher still concealed supramental principle.

This however cannot be done at once or in a short time or by any rapid or miraculous transformation. Many steps have to be taken by the seeker before the supramental descent is possible. Man lives mostly in his surface mind, life and body but there is an inner being within him with greater possibilities to which he has to awake—for it is only a very restricted influence from it that he receives now and that pushes him to a constant pursuit of a greater beauty, harmony, power and knowledge. The first process of Yoga is therefore to open the ranges of this inner being and to live from there outward, governing his outward life by an inner light and force. In doing so he discovers in himself his true soul which is not this outer mixture of mental, vital and physical elements but something of the Reality behind them, a spark from the one Divine Fire. He has to learn to live in his soul and purify and orientate by its drive towards the Truth the rest of the nature. There can follow afterwards an opening upward

and descent of a higher principle of the Being. But even then it is not at once the full supramental Light and Force. For there are several ranges of consciousness between the ordinary human mind and the supramental Truth consciousness. These intervening ranges have to be opened up and their power brought down into the mind, life and body. Only afterwards can the full power of the Truth-consciousness work in the nature. The process of this self-discipline or sadhana is therefore long and difficult, but even a little of it is so much gained because it makes the ultimate release and perfection more possible." (CWSA 36: 548–549)

10.

"The supermind is a different order of consciousness far removed from the mental — there are in fact several grades of higher consciousness between the human mind and the supramental. If the earth were not evolutionary but a typal world, then indeed one could predict that the descent of a higher type of consciousness would swallow up or abolish the existing type. Ignorance would end and the creation in the ignorance disappear either by transmutation or by annihilation and replacement. The human mental kingdom would be transformed into the supramental; the vital and subhuman, if it existed in the typal world, would also be changed and become supramental. But, earth being an evolutionary world, the

supramental descent is not likely to have such a devastating completeness. It would be only the establishment of a new principle of consciousness and a new order of conscious beings and this new principle would evolve its own forms and powers in the terrestrial order. Even the whole human kingdom need not and would not be transformed at once or to the whole supramental extent." (CWSA 28: 282)

11.

"A principle of greater unity, harmony and light would emerge everywhere. It is not that the creation in the Ignorance would be altogether abolished, but it would begin to lose much of its elements of pain and falsehood and would be more a progression from lesser to higher Truth, from a lesser to a higher harmony, from a lesser to a higher Light, than the reign of chaos and struggle, of darkness and error that we now perceive. For according to all occult teaching the evolutionary creation could have been such but for the intervention of the Powers of Darkness — all traditions including that of the Veda and Upanishads point under different figures to the same thing. In the Upanishads it is the Daityas that smite with evil all that the gods create, in the Zoroastrian tradition it is Ahriman coming across the work of Ahura Mazda, the Chaldean tradition uses a different figure. But the significance is the same; it is the perception of something

that has struck across the harmonious development of creation and brought in the principle of darkness and disorder. The occult tradition also foresees the elimination of this disturbing element by the descent of a divine Principle or Power on earth, but gives to it usually a sudden and dramatic form. I conceive that the supramental descent would effect the same event by a progressive elimination of the darkness and evolution of the Light, but with what rate of rapidity it would be rash to try to forecast or prefigure." (CWSA 28: 283)

12.

"The ascent of the human soul to the supreme Spirit is that soul's highest aim and necessity, for that is the supreme reality; but there can be too the descent of the Spirit and its powers into the world and that would justify the existence of the material world also, give a meaning, a divine purpose to the creation and solve its riddle. East and West could be reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit." (CWSA 36: 553)

13.

"Man so long as he is in the ignorance is subject to the lower Prakriti, but by spiritual evolution he becomes aware of the higher Nature and seeks to come into contact with

it. He can ascend into it and it can descend into him—such an ascent and descent can transform the lower nature of mind, life and matter." (CWSA 28: 44)

14.

"This evolution, this spiritual progression—does it stop short here in the imperfect mental being called Man? Or is the secret of it simply a succession of rebirths whose only purpose or issue is to labour towards the point at which it can learn its own futility, renounce itself and take its leap into some original unborn Existence or Non-Existence? There is at least the possibility, there comes at a certain point the certitude that there is a far greater consciousness than what we call Mind, and that by ascending the ladder still farther we can find a point at which the hold of the material Inconscience, the vital and mental Ignorance ceases; a principle of consciousness becomes capable of manifestation which liberates not partially, not imperfectly, but radically and wholly this imprisoned Divine. In this vision each stage of evolution appears as due to the descent of a higher and higher Power of consciousness, raising the terrestrial level, creating a new stratum, but the highest yet remain to descend and it is by their descent that the riddle of terrestrial existence will receive its solution and not only the soul but Nature herself find her deliverance. This is the Truth which has been seen in flashes, in more and more entirety of its terms by the line

of seers whom the Tantra would call the hero-seekers and the divine seekers and which may now be nearing the point of readiness for its full revelation and experience. Then whatever be the heavy weight of strife and suffering and darkness in the world, yet if there is this as its high result awaiting us, all that has gone before may not be counted too great a price by the strong and adventurous for the glory that is to come. At any rate the shadow lifts; there is a Divine Light that leans over the world and is not only a far-off incommunicable Lustre." (CWSA 28: 255)

15.

"When the mind descended upon earth, between the time the mind manifested in the earth-atmosphere and the time the first man appeared, nearly a million years elapsed. Now it will go faster because man expects it, he has a vague idea; he is expecting in some sense the advent of the superman, while, certainly, the apes did not expect the birth of man, they had never thought of it—for the good reason that they probably don't think much. But man has thought of it and awaits it, so it will go faster. But faster means still thousands of years probably. We shall speak about it again after a few thousand years!" (CWM 8: 126–127)

16.

"Now MAN CAN COLLABORATE. That is to say, he can lend himself to the process, with goodwill, with aspiration, and

help as best he can. And that is why I said it would go faster. I hope it will go *much* faster.

But even so, much faster is still going to take a little time!" (CWM 8: 130)

17.

"What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, conscious of their selves, aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with the Divinity or the Reality which is concealed by her appearances: a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. …

This is because the principle of spirituality has yet to affirm itself in its own complete right and sovereignty; … it has besides to cease to be a purely individual self-creation in an original Ignorance, something supernormal to earth-life that must always be acquired as an individual achievement by a difficult endeavour. It must become the normal nature of a new type of being; as mind is established here on a basis of Ignorance seeking for Knowledge and growing into Knowledge, so supermind must be established here on a basis of Knowledge growing into its own greater Light. … For the gulf between mind

and supermind has to be bridged, the closed passages opened and roads of ascent and descent created where there is now a void and a silence. This can be done only by the triple transformation … there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconscience; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation, — there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature." (CWSA 22: 923–924)

18.

"The transition to Supermind through overmind is a passage from Nature as we know it into Super-Nature. It is by that very fact impossible for any effort of the mere Mind to achieve; our unaided personal aspiration and endeavour cannot reach it: our effort belongs to the inferior power of Nature; a power of the Ignorance cannot achieve by its own strength or characteristic or available methods what is beyond its own domain of Nature. All the previous ascensions have been effectuated by a secret Consciousness-Force operating first in Inconscience and

then in the Ignorance: it has worked by an emergence of its involved powers to the surface, powers concealed behind the veil and superior to the past formulations of Nature, but even so there is needed a pressure of the same superior powers
already formulated in their full natural force on their own planes; these superior planes create their own foundation in our subliminal parts and from there are able to influence the evolutionary process on the surface. Overmind and Supermind are also involved and occult in earth-Nature, but they have no formations on the accessible levels of our subliminal inner consciousness; there is as yet no overmind being or organised overmind nature, no supramental being or organised supermind nature acting either on our surface or in our normal subliminal parts: for these greater powers of consciousness are superconscient to the level of our ignorance. In order that the involved principles of Overmind and Supermind should emerge from their veiled secrecy, the being and powers of the superconscience must descend into us and uplift us and formulate themselves in our being and powers; this descent is a *sine qua non* of the transition and transformation." (CWSA 22: 955–956)

19.

"For a real transformation there must be a direct and unveiled intervention from above; there would be

necessary too a total submission and surrender of the lower consciousness, a cessation of its insistence, a will in it for its separate law of action to be completely annulled by transformation and lose all rights over our being. If these two conditions can be achieved even now by a conscious call and will in the spirit and a participation of our whole manifested and inner being in its change and elevation, the evolution, the transformation can take place by a comparatively swift conscious change; the supramental Consciousness-Force from above and the evolving Consciousness-Force from behind the veil acting on the awakened awareness and will of the mental human being would accomplish by their united power the momentous transition. There would be no farther need of a slow evolution counting many millenniums for each step, the halting and difficult evolution operated by Nature in the past in the unconscious creatures of the Ignorance." (CWSA 22: 956–957)

II—All Evolution Must Move by Stages

1.

"One must first acquire an inner Yogic consciousness and replace by it our ordinary view of things, natural movements, motives of life; one must revolutionise the whole present build of our being. Next, we have to go still deeper, discover our veiled psychic entity and in its light and under its government psychicise our inner and outer parts, turn mind-nature, life-nature, body-nature and all our mental, vital, physical action and states and movements into a conscious instrumentation of the soul. Afterwards or concurrently we have to spiritualise the being in its entirety by a descent of a divine Light, Force, Purity, Knowledge, freedom and wideness. It is necessary to break down the limits of the personal mind, life and physicality, dissolve the ego, enter into the cosmic consciousness, realise the self, acquire a spiritualised and universalised mind and heart, life-force, physical consciousness. Then only the passage into supramental consciousness begins to become possible, and even then there is a difficult ascent to make each stage of which is a separate arduous achievement. Yoga is a rapid and concentrated conscious evolution of the being, but however rapid, even though it may effect in a single life what in an unassisted Nature might take centuries and millenniums or many hundreds of lives, still all evolution

must move by stages; even the greatest rapidity and concentration of the movement cannot swallow up all the stages or reverse natural process and bring the end near to the beginning. A hasty and ignorant mind, a too eager force easily forget this necessity; they rush forward to make the supermind an immediate aim and expect to pull it down with a pitchfork from its highest heights in the Infinite. This is not only an absurd expectation but full of danger. For the vital desire may very well bring in an action of dark or vehement vital powers which hold out before it a promise of immediate fulfilment of its impossible longing; the consequence is likely to be a plunge into many kinds of self-deception, a yielding to the falsehoods and temptations of the forces of darkness, a hunt for supernormal powers, a turning away from the Divine to the Asuric nature, a fatal self-inflation into an unnatural unhuman and undivine bigness of magnified ego. If the being is small, the nature weak and incapable, there is not this large-scale disaster; but a loss of balance, a mental unhinging and fall into unreason or a vital unhinging and consequent moral aberration or a deviation into some kind of morbid abnormality of the nature may be the untoward consequence." (CWSA 23: 281–282)

III—Higher Forces Come Down to Reveal New Truths and Prepare a New Age

1.

"It can be the capacity for seeing and recording, noting the forms in some mental or other domain. There are artistic, literary, poetic domains, domains of action, scientific domains, all belonging to the mind—not a very high and abstract mind, a mind above the physical mind which, without our knowing it, pours out constantly through the individual and collective mind to manifest in action.

Some people, through a special faculty, are in contact with these domains, take up one formation or other that is there, draw them to themselves and give them an expression. This power of expression is different in different people, but those who can open themselves to these domains, to *see* things there, to draw these forms towards themselves and express them—either in literature or in painting or music or in action or science—are, according to the degree of their power of expression either very highly talented beings or else geniuses.

There are higher geniuses still. They are people who can open to a higher region, a higher force which, passing through the mental layers, comes and takes a form in a human mind and reveals itself in the world as new truths, new philosophical systems, new spiritual teachings, which are the works and at the same time the actions of the great

beings who come to take birth on earth. That is an imagination which can be called 'Truth imagination'. These higher forces, when they come down into the earth-atmosphere, take living, active, powerful forms, spread throughout the world and prepare a new age." (CWM 9: 385–386)

IV—In the New Consciousness, the Wide Spiritual Consciousness Will Be Felt as Sure and Solid and Not Limited by the Body

1.

"The body becoming unreal and all of one seeming to disappear are very usual results of the higher consciousness taking hold of the mind and they are very good signs—so too the sensation spreading from the head to the body is probably only the Power coming in. There should be no apprehension, for these things are quite normal in the transforming process. Probably the sense of unsureness is due to the part of the nature which founds itself on the body consciousness and feels nothing sure or solid except the body. In the new consciousness on the contrary what will be felt as sure and solid is the wide spiritual consciousness not limited by the body, in which the body is only a small circumstance hardly felt, an instrument only. The losing all consciousness must also be due to the consciousness going entirely inside as soon as the restlessness is forgotten or is no longer active." (CWSA 30: 488–489)

V—Descent of Divine Consciousness to Change the Inner Life and Material Conditions

1.

"Now if there is awakened somewhere upon earth a receptivity and openness sufficient to bring down in its purity something of the Divine Consciousness, this descent and manifestation in matter can change not only the inner life, but the material conditions also, the physical expression in man and Nature. This descent does not depend for its possibility upon the condition of humanity as a whole. If we had to wait for the mass of humanity to reach a state of harmony, unity and aspiration, strong enough to bring down the Light and change the material conditions and the movement of Nature, there would be little hope. But there is a possibility that an individual or a small group or limited number may achieve the descent. It is not quantity or extension that matters. One drop of the Divine Consciousness entering into the consciousness of the earth could change everything here.

It is the mystery of the contact and fusion of the higher and the lower planes of consciousness that is the great secret, the hidden key. Always it has a transforming force; only here it would be on a larger scale and reach a higher degree. If there is someone on earth who is capable of coming consciously into contact with a plane that has not yet been manifested here and if by rising into it in his

consciousness he can make that plane and the material meet and harmonise, then the great decisive movement of Nature's yet unrealised transformation can take place. A new power will descend and change the conditions of life upon earth.

Even as it is, every time that a great soul has come and revealed some light of truth or brought down upon earth a new force, the conditions on earth have changed, though not exactly in the way that had been hoped and expected. For example, one who has attained to a certain plane of knowledge and consciousness and spiritual experience, has come and said, 'I am bringing to you liberation' or 'I am bringing to you peace.' Those who were around him believed, perhaps, that he was bringing it in a material way; when they found it was not as they thought, they could not understand what he had done. What he brought was a change in the consciousness, a peace of a kind unknown till then or a capacity for liberation that was not there before. But these movements belonged to the inner life and brought no tangible external change in the world. Perhaps the intention to change the world externally was not there; perhaps there was not the necessary knowledge; but still something was effected by these pioneers.

In spite of all adverse appearances, it may well be that earth has been preparing for a certain realisation by steps and stages. There has been a change in civilisation

and a change in nature. If it is not apparent, it is because we see from an external point of view and because matter and its difficulties have never been seriously or thoroughly dealt with up till now. Still internally there has been a progress; in the inner consciousness there have been descents of the Light. But as to any realisation in matter, it is difficult to say anything, because we do not exactly know what might have happened there.

There have been in the long past great and beautiful civilisations, perhaps as advanced materially as ours. Looked at from a certain standpoint the most modern might seem to be only a repetition of the most ancient cultures, and yet one cannot say that there has been no progress anywhere. An inner progress at least has been achieved and a greater readiness to respond to the higher consciousness has been born into the material parts. It has been necessary to do over and over again the same things, because what was attempted was never sufficiently done; but each time it has come nearer to being adequately done. When we practise an exercise over and over again we seem to be only repeating the same thing always, but still the accumulative result is some effective change.

The mistake is to look at these things through the dimensions of the human consciousness, for so seen these deep and vast movements seem inexplicable. It is dangerous to try to explain or understand them with the limited mental intelligence. That is the reason why

philosophy has always failed to unveil the secret of things; it is because it has tried to fit the universe into the size of the human mind." (CWM 3: 38–40)

2.

"*Does 'liberty' mean freedom from all attachment?*

It is not only a freedom from all attachment, but a liberation from all bondage to the law of consequences. In the material field there is a determinism which comes from the law of consequences, from the law of cause and effect; hence inner liberation does not free you only from all attachment but from all consequences. As I have told you many a time, by your inner liberation your consciousness rises to a level far above the level which governs the material world and, from this high level, the Force can descend and cancel all the material consequences." (CWM 4: 177)

VI—Divine Force Works under Conditions

1.

"But the Divine Force works here under conditions imposed by the Divine Will and Law; it has to take up an immense mass of conflicting forces, conditions, habits and movements of Nature and out of it arrive at the result of a higher consciousness on earth and a higher state. If it were to act otherwise, then all would be done by a miracle or magic, no sadhana would be needed, no way beaten out for the process of spiritual evolution to follow; there would be no real transformation of consciousness, but only a temporary feat of force which having no basis in the substance of creation here would vanish as it came. Therefore conditions have to be satisfied, the work to be done has to be wrought out step by step. The powers that held the field up to now have to be given their chance to oppose, so that the problem may be solved and not evaded or turned into a sham fight or unreal game without significance. Therefore there is a sadhana to be done, there is a resistance to be overcome, a choice made between the higher and the lower state. The Divine Power does the work, gives a protection and a guidance; but it is not here to use an absolute force—except when that is sanctioned by the Divine Wisdom and in the light of that Wisdom justifiable. Then the decisive Power acts of itself and does what it has to do." (CWSA 29: 185–186)

VII—Work That the Divine Mother Does After Descending into the Lesser Triple Universe

1.

"The Mother not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe. Impersonally, all things here, even the movements of the Ignorance, are herself in veiled power and her creations in diminished substance, her Nature body and Nature-force, and they exist because, moved by the mysterious fiat of the Supreme to work out something that was there in the possibilities of the Infinite, she has consented to the great sacrifice and has put on like a mask the soul and forms of the Ignorance. But personally too she has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to godlike Life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy of her sublime Ananda. In her deep and great love for her children she has consented to put on herself the cloak of this obscurity, condescended to bear the attacks and torturing influences of the powers of the Darkness and the Falsehood, borne to pass through the portals of the birth that is a death, taken upon herself the pangs and sorrows and sufferings of the creation, since it seemed that thus alone could it be lifted to the Light and Joy and Truth and

eternal Life. This is the great sacrifice called sometimes the sacrifice of the Purusha, but much more deeply the holocaust of Prakriti, the sacrifice of the Divine Mother." (CWSA 32: 17)

2.

"Avoid also the error of the ignorant mind's demand on the Divine Power to act always according to our crude surface notions of omniscience and omnipotence. For our mind clamours to be impressed at every turn by miraculous power and easy success and dazzling splendour; otherwise it cannot believe that here is the Divine. The Mother is dealing with the Ignorance in the fields of the Ignorance; she has descended there and is not all above. Partly she veils and partly she unveils her knowledge and her power, often holds them back from her instruments and personalities and follows that she may transform them the way of the seeking mind, the way of the aspiring psychic, the way of the battling vital, the way of the imprisoned and suffering physical nature. There are conditions that have been laid down by a Supreme Will, there are many tangled knots that have to be loosened and cannot be cut abruptly asunder." (CWSA 32: 25–26)

3.

"*Yesterday night I saw Maheshwari above my head, Mahakali in my vital being and Mahalakshmi seated in my*

mind and heart. Each one radiated a different light from her body. Then I saw a few subtle powers ***desce****nding into my being.*

Maheshwari's natural place is in the higher consciousness above mind, for she is the wideness and largeness and wisdom of the Divine. Mahakali acts most naturally through the higher vital which is the instrument of force and power. Mahalakshmi acts through the heart—in your case at present she is acting through the mind also, though that is less usual—ordinarily it is Mahasaraswati." (CWSA 32: 66)

4.

"*Today, immersed in deep meditation, I saw a beautiful chakra opening above my head, and on that chakra two lotuses were blooming and on those lotuses you and the Mother were sitting. After that, I invoked the Mother in my entire being and then I saw Mahasaraswati descending. Why did Mahasaraswati descend at my call and why did the chakra open above my head?*

It is Mahasaraswati's work to use the power and light and experiences that come in from above so as to change in detail the whole outer nature." (CWSA 32: 71)

5.

"*Mother, suffering comes from ignorance and pain, but what is the nature of the suffering and pain the Divine Mother feels for her children—the Divine Mother in Savitri?*

It is because she participates in their nature. She has descended upon earth to participate in their nature. Because if she did not participate in their nature, she could not lead them farther. If she remained in her supreme consciousness where there is no suffering, in her supreme knowledge and consciousness, she could not have any contact with human beings. And it is for this that she is obliged to take on the human consciousness and form, it is to be able to enter into contact with them. Only, she does not forget: she has adopted their consciousness but she remains in relation with her own real, supreme consciousness." (CWM 5: 387)

VIII—Descent and Manifestation

1.

"What I call a 'descent' is this: first the consciousness rises in an ascent, you catch the Thing up there, and come down with it. That is an *individual* event.

When this individual event has happened in a way that proves sufficient to create a possibility of a general kind, it is no longer a 'descent', it is a 'manifestation'.

What I call a descent is the individual movement, in an individual consciousness. And when it is a new world manifesting in an old world—just as, for a comparison, when mind spread upon the earth—I call that a manifestation.

You may call it whatever you like, it's all the same to me, but we should understand each other.

What I call a descent is in the individual consciousness. Just as one speaks of ascent—there is no ascent, you see: there is neither above nor below nor any direction, it is a way of speaking—you speak of ascent when you have the feeling of rising up towards something; and you call it a descent when, after having caught that thing, you bring it down into yourself.

But when the gates are open and the flood comes in, you can't call it a descent. It is a Force which is spreading out. Understood?... Ah!

It's all one to me, the words you use. I am not particularly attached to words, but I explain them to you, and it is better to understand each other, for otherwise there is no end to explanations.

Now, to people who ask you these insidious questions, you may reply that the best way of receiving anything whatever is not to pull, but to give. If they want to give themselves to the new life, well, the new life will enter into them.

But if they want to pull the new life down into themselves, they will close their door with their own egoism. That's all." (CWM 8: 133–134)

2.

"*In the case of man, did the animal man bring down the mind or was it the descent of mind...*

Oh! You mean: Is it something in the intermediary being or in the higher ape which by its aspiration called down the mind? But the aspiration itself is the result of a previous descent.

It is quite obvious that nothing can be manifested which is not previously contained in what exists. One can't bring something out of nothing. One can make what is there emerge, manifest, express itself, develop; but if nothing had been there, nothing would ever have come out. All progress, all perfection is the result of an inner

effort of 'something' that is present and seeks to manifest. That is to say, absolutely, the principle comes first and the expression afterwards. As we go on reading *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo will prove this to you in every possible way. If there were not an eternal principle, if there were not—we give it all the names we like, can't we?—a Supreme Reality, there would never have been a universe, because nothing comes out of nothing." (CWM 9: 221–222)

IX—The Descent of Overmind on 24th November 1926 Prepared the Possibility of Supermind's Descent

1.

[*A disciple of Sri Aurobindo's wrote an article on the significance of the realisation of 24 November 1926, in which he quoted the following passage from* The Life Divine:]

> In order that the involved principles of Overmind and Supermind should emerge from their veiled secrecy, the being and powers of the superconscience must descend into us and uplift us and formulate themselves in our being and powers; this descent is a *sine qua non* of the transition and transformation.

[*The disciple concluded:*] This is referred to in the Vedas as the birth of the gods in men, *devānāṁ janimāni*; Sri Aurobindo regards it as indispensable for supramental realisation on earth. It was this that occurred on the 24th November, 1926, and it is only then that Sri Aurobindo started his Ashram, being sure that with the cooperation of the gods the supermind can descend upon earth.

What happened on the 24th November prepared the possibility of this descent and on that day he retired into

seclusion and entered into deep and powerful meditation." 20 November 1950 (CWSA 35: 273)

2.

"The Overmind has to be reached and brought down before the Supermind descent is at all possible—for the Overmind is the passage through which one passes from mind to Supermind." (CWSA 28: 155)

3.

"Certainly, it [the overmind descent] is necessary for those who want the supramental change. Unless the overmind opens, there can be no direct supramental opening of the consciousness. If one remains in mind, even illumined mind or the intuition, one can have indirect messages or an influence from the supramental, but not a direct supramental control of the consciousness or the supramental change." (CWSA 30: 408)

4.

"Krishna [as an Avatar Krishna] is not the supramental light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually bringing, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya, he supports the evolution through the Overmind leading it towards his Ananda." (CWSA 28: 499)

5.

"For example, it is said that for a certain period the terrestrial world was ruled by 'overmental' forces and that this rule is going to be transcended, that the world will be governed by supramental forces; well, each time new forces descend upon earth, a change is produced and a change of consciousness must have a corresponding change of movement. You say that the movement of expansion becomes more and more swift; this means that the world is filled with a consciousness which makes the movements of the world more and more rapid. This would be altogether the material transcription of the spiritual phenomenon. The earth is being charged more and more with forces coming from ever higher regions (for our consciousness), which means that they come faster and faster, giving more and more the sense of the instantaneous. What has been discovered is a kind of physical symbolism of this phenomenon which would tend to prove scientifically that the universe is in progress." (CWM 4: 220)

X—Only When the Supermind Can Be Brought Down Is the Divine Transformation Possible in the Earth Consciousness

1.

"Q: *In spite of his very deep respect for Sri Aurobindo, X holds the view that the earth did previously attain to the Supramental Consciousness. We reject any such suggestion.*

A: Write to them that it is better not to enter into sterile intellectual discussions. The intellectual mind cannot even realise what the supermind is; what use, then, can there be in allowing it to discuss what it does not know? It is not by reasoning, but by constant experience, growth of consciousness and widening into the Light that one can reach those higher levels of consciousness above the intellect from which one can begin to look up to the Divine Gnosis. These levels are not yet the supermind, but they can receive something of its knowledge.

As to *X*'s statement I do not catch what he means by *previously*, unless he means that the Vedic Rishis attained to the supermind for the Earth. But that is precisely what they failed to do or perhaps did not even attempt. They tried to rise individually to the supramental plane, but they did not bring it down and make it a permanent part of the earth consciousness. Even there are verses of the

Upanishad in which it is hinted that it is impossible to pass through the gates of the Sun (the symbol of Supermind) and yet retain an earthly body. It was because of this failure that the spiritual effort of India culminated in Mayavada. Our Yoga is a double movement of ascent and descent; one rises to higher and higher levels of consciousness, but at the same time one brings down their power not only into mind and life, but in the end even into the body. And the highest of these levels, the one at which it aims is the supermind. Only when that can be brought down is a divine transformation possible in the earth consciousness." (CWSA 35: 277–278)

2.

"*When I hear people talking about the supramental descent it makes me somewhat sceptical. They expect that when the descent happens everything will soon be spiritualised and even in the most outward political life all that is now wrong will immediately be set right. Such expectations create a great curiosity and flutter.*

All that is absurd. The descent of the supramental means only that the Power will be there in the earth consciousness as a living force just as the thinking mental and the higher mental are already there. But an animal cannot take advantage of the presence of the thinking mental Power or an undeveloped man of the presence of the higher mental

Power—so too everybody will not be able to take advantage of the presence of the supramental Power. I have also often enough said that it will be at first for the few, not for the whole earth,—only there will be a growing influence of it on the earth life." (CWSA 35: 280)

3.

"There is no connection between the Christian conception (of the Kingdom of Heaven) and the idea of the supramental descent. The Christian conception supposes a state of things brought about by religious emotion and moral purification; but these things are no more capable of changing the world, whatever value they may have for the individual, than mental idealism or any other power yet called upon for the purpose. The Christian proposes to substitute the sattwic religious ego for the rajasic and tamasic ego, but although this can be done as an individual achievement, it has never succeeded and will never succeed in accomplishing itself in the mass. It has no higher spiritual or psychological knowledge behind it and ignores the foundations of human character and the source of the difficulty—the duality of mind, life and body. Unless there is a descent of a new Power of Consciousness, not subject to the dualities but still dynamic which will provide a new foundation and a lifting of the centre of consciousness above the mind, the Kingdom of God on

earth can only be an ideal, not a fact realised in the general earth-consciousness or earth-life." (CWSA 29: 504–505)

4.

"It is in fact to ensure an easier path to others hereafter that we have borne that burden. It was with that object that the Mother once prayed to the Divine that whatever difficulties, dangers, sufferings were necessary for the path might be laid her rather than on others. It has been so far heard that as a result of daily and terrible struggles for years those who put an entire and sincere confidence in her *are* able to follow the sunlit path and even those who cannot, yet when they do put the trust find their path suddenly easy and, if it becomes difficult again, it is only when distrust, revolt, abhiman, or other darknesses come upon them. The sunlit path is not altogether a fable.

But you will ask what of those who cannot? Well, it is for them I am putting forth all my efforts to bring down the supramental Force within a measurable time. I know that it will descend but I am seeking its near descent and, with whatever dark obstruction of the earth-nature or furious inroads of the Asuric forces seeking to prevent it, it is approaching the terrestrial soil. The supramental is not, as you imagine, something cold, hard and rocklike. It bears within it the presence of the Divine Love as well as the Divine Truth and its reign here means for those who accept it the straight and thornless path on which there is no wall

or obstacle of which the ancient Rishis saw the far-off promise." (CWSA 29: 471–472)

5.

"*Why is the sex-force working so vehemently now? Does it mean that the supramental also is vehemently descending? Or at least some Divine Force, giving a last kick at the sex-force?*

The Divine Force has nothing to do with it. It is the sex and other lower forces that are attacking in order to make it impossible for the Divine Force to do its work or the Supramental to descend. They hope to prevent it altogether or, if by some miracle it still descends, to limit its extension and prevent anything more than an individual achievement." (CWSA 35: 638)

6.

"The supramental creation, since it is to be a creation upon earth, must be not only an inner change but a physical and external manifestation also. And it is precisely for this part of the work, the most difficult of all, that surrender is most needful; for this reason, that it is the actual descent of the supramental Divine into Matter and the working of the Divine Presence and Power there that can alone make the physical and external change possible. Even the most powerful self-assertion of human will and endeavour is

impotent to bring it about; as for egoistic insistence and vital revolt, they are, so long as they last, insuperable obstacles to the descent. Only a calm, pure and surrendered physical consciousness, full of the psychic aspiration, can be its field; this alone can make an effective opening of the material being to the Light and Power and the supramental change a thing actual and practicable. It is for this that we are here in the body, and it is for this that you and other sadhaks are in the Asram near us. But it is not by insistence on petty demands and satisfactions in the external field or on an outer nearness pleasing to the vital nature and its pride or desire that you can get the true relation with the Divine in this province. If you want the realisation there, it is the true nearness that you must seek, the descent and presence of the Mother in your physical consciousness, her constant inner touch in the physical being and its activities, her will and knowledge behind all its work and thought and movement and the ever present Ananda of that presence expelling all vital and physical separateness, craving and desire. If you have that, then you have all the nearness you can ask for and the rest you will gladly leave to the Mother's knowledge and will to decide. For with this in you there can be no feeling of being kept away, no sense of 'gulf' and 'distance', no complaint of a unity that is lacking or an empty dryness and denial of nearness." (CWSA 32: 86–87)

7.

"The universe is dynamism, movement—the essential experience of Sachchidananda apart from the dynamism and movement is static. The full dynamic truth of Sachchidananda and the universe and its consequence cannot be grasped by any other consciousness than the Supermind, because the instrumentation in all other (lower) planes is inferior and there is therefore a disparity between the fullness of the static experience and the incompleteness of the dynamic power, knowledge, result of the inferior light and power of other planes. This is the reason why the consciousness of the other spiritual planes even if it descends can make no radical change in the earth-consciousness, it can only modify or enrich it. The radical transformation needs the descent of a supramental power and nature." (CWSA 28: 135)

8.

"The object of the Yoga is to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth, to fix it there, to create a new race with the principle of the supramental consciousness governing the inner and outer individual and collective life. Therefore the existence of the Asram, whatever difficulties it created for ourselves or for the individual, was inevitable. The method was the preparation of the earth consciousness in the human being as represented by the members of the Asram and others (with also a certain

working in the general earth consciousness) so as to make the descent of the supramental Force possible. That Force accepted by individual after individual according to their preparation would establish the supramental consciousness in the physical world and so create a nucleus for its own expansion." (CWSA 28: 296)

9.

"As far as I can see, once the supramental is established in Matter, the transformation will be possible under much less troublesome conditions than now are there. These bad conditions are due to the fact that the Ignorance is in possession and the hostile Powers an established authority, as it were, who do not care to give up their hold and there is no full force of Light established in the earth consciousness which would not only meet but outweigh their full force of darkness." (CWSA 28: 296)

10.

"But if a collectivity or group could be formed of those who had reached the supramental perfection, there indeed some divine creation could take shape; a new earth could descend that would be a new heaven, a world of supramental light could be created here amidst the receding darkness of this terrestrial ignorance." (CWSA 23: 207)

XI—Bringing Down the Supramental Truth and Organising Its Action Has to Be Done through Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

1.

"I can only say that the final aim of the Yoga here is to bring down the supramental Truth (all other aims and stages being preliminary and instrumental) and organise its action. The Asram proceeds on the assumption that this has to be done through myself and the Mother and in accepting this aim and the descent of this Truth the sadhaks accept myself and the Mother and must be guided by us and receive from us what is descending and cannot attain it otherwise. If they follow or want some other Truth, they are free to do so but they cannot do it here, because here they will not succeed, as it is not the end for which the Divine Force is working here. And it has been found that if they reject the Power that comes from us to follow something which is not that, it leads them out of this way and they cannot profit by our presence or by the Yoga or form a harmonious unit in the work that is to be done here. That is all I am prepared to say in this matter." (CWSA 32: 98)

2.

"Do you know what the flower which we have called 'Successful Future' signifies when given to you? It signifies

the hope — nay, even the promise — that you will participate in the descent of the supramental world. For that descent will be the successful consummation of our work, a descent of which the full glory has not yet been or else the whole face of life would have been different. By slow degrees the Supramental is exerting its influence; now one part of the being and now another feels the embrace or the touch of its divinity; but when it comes down in all its self-existent power, a supreme radical change will seize the whole nature. We are moving nearer and nearer the hour of its complete triumph. Once the world-conditions are ready the full descent will take place carrying everything before it. Its presence will be unmistakable, its force will brook no resistance, doubts and difficulties will not torture you any longer. For the Divine will stand manifest—unveiled in its total perfection. I do not, however, mean to say that the whole world will at once feel its presence or be transformed; but I do mean that a part of humanity will know and participate in its descent—say, this little world of ours here. From there the transfiguring grace will most effectively radiate. And, fortunately for the aspirants, that successful future will materialise for them in spite of all the obstacles set in its way by unregenerate human nature!" (CWM 3: 180)

"People do not know what a tremendous sacrifice Sri Aurobindo has made for the world. About a year ago, while I was discussing things, I remarked that I felt like leaving this body of mine. He spoke out in a very firm tone, 'No, this can never be. If necessary for this transformation, I might go, you will have to fulfil our Yoga of supramental descent and transformation'." 1950 (CWM 13: 8)

XII—Supramental Descent on 29th February, 1956

1.

THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION UPON EARTH
29 February 1956

"*During the common meditation on Wednesday*

This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that '*the time has come'*, and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow." (CWM 15: 94)

2.

[The Above Message] "Written in the leap year 1956, this statement was first publicly distributed as the message for 29 February 1960, the first 'anniversary' of the Supramental Manifestation upon earth." (CWM 15: 94)

3.

"The essential mark of the descent of the consciousness from its highest grade in the supreme spirit is the constant diminution of the power of Sachchidananda, the intensity of its force, force of being, force of consciousness, force of bliss. The intensity of all these three in the supreme status is ineffable; in the Supermind the intensity of consciousness is ever luminous and undiminished; in overmind it is already diminished and diffuse; the highest intensity of mind is a poor thing in comparison with the splendour of overmind, and so it goes diminishing till it reaches an apparent zero which we call inconscience." (CWSA 12: 206–207)

XIII—The Inspiration, the Creative Power from Above Is at Work in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for the Descent of the New Realisation

1.

"None of the present achievements of humanity, however great they are, can be for us an ideal to follow. The wide world is there as a field of experiment for human ideals.

Our purpose is quite different and if our chances of success are small just now, we are sure that we are working to prepare the future.

I know that from the external point of view we are below many of the present achievements in this world, but our aim is not a perfection in accordance with the human standards. We are endeavouring for something else which belongs to the future.

The Ashram has been founded and is meant to be the cradle of the new world.

The inspiration is from above, the guiding force is from above, the creative power is from above, at work for the descent of the new realisation.

It is only by its shortcomings, its deficiencies and its failures that the Ashram belongs to the present world.

None of the present achievements of humanity have the power to pull the Ashram out of its difficulties.

It is only a total conversion of all its members and an integral opening to the descending Light of Truth that can help it to realise itself.

The task, no doubt, is a formidable one, but we received the command to accomplish it and we are upon earth for that purpose alone.

We shall continue up to the end with an unfailing trust in the Will and the Help of the Supreme.

The door is open and will always remain open to all those who decide to give their life for that purpose." (CWM 13: 109–110)

XIV—Those Who Are Filled with Enthusiasm for the Idea of Terrestrial Transformation by the Descent Progress Magnificently

1.

"If while doing what you have to do—whatever it may be, whatever work it is—if you do it and while doing it are careful not to forget the Divine, to offer to Him what you do and try so to give yourself to Him that He may change all your reactions—instead of their being selfish, petty, stupid and ignorant, making them luminous, generous — then in that way you will make progress. Not only will you have made some progress but you will have helped in the general progress. I have never seen people who have left everything in order to go and sit down in a more or less empty contemplation (for it is more or less empty), I have never seen such people making any progress, or in any case their progress is very trifling. I have seen persons who had no pretensions of doing yoga, who were simply filled with enthusiasm by the idea of terrestrial transformation and of the descent of the Divine into the world and who did their little bit of work with that enthusiasm in the heart, giving themselves wholly, without reserve, without any selfish idea of a personal salvation; these I have seen making magnificent progress, truly magnificent. And sometimes they are wonderful. I have seen sannyasis, I have seen people who live in monasteries, I have seen

people who professed to be yogis, well, I would not exchange one of the others for a dozen such people (I mean, from the standpoint of terrestrial transformation and world progress, that is to say, from the standpoint of what we want to do, to try that this world may no longer be what it is and may become truly the instrument of the divine Will, with the divine Consciousness). It is not by running away from the world that you will change it. It is by working there, modestly, humbly but with a fire in the heart, something that burns like an offering." (CWM 5: 43–44)

2.

"Many means have been suggested [*the means by which the present chaos and obscurity can be transformed into light and harmony*]: political, social, ethical, even religious.... Indeed, none of these seem sufficient to face with any reliable success the magnitude of the task to be done. Only a new spiritual influx, creating in man a new consciousness, can overcome the enormous mass of difficulties barring the way of the workers. A new spiritual light, a manifestation upon earth of some divine force unknown until now, a Thought of God, new for us, descending into this world and taking a new form here." (CWM 2: 160)

XV—Instead of Questioning the Supermind, Devote Time to the Preliminary Work of Psychicisation and Spiritualisation

1.

"The questions about the supermind cannot be answered profitably now. Supermind cannot be described in terms that the mind will understand, because the terms will be mental and mind will understand them in a mental way and mental sense and miss their true import. It would therefore be a waste of time and energy which should be devoted to the preliminary work—psychicisation and spiritualisation of the being and nature without which no supramentalisation is possible. Let the whole dynamic nature led by the psychic make itself full of the dynamic spiritual light, peace, purity, knowledge, force; let it afterwards get experience of the intermediate spiritual planes and know, feel and act in their sense; then it will be possible to speak last of the supramental transformation." (CWSA 28: 289–290)

2.

"One can aspire for the Divine to bring about the supramental transformation, but that also should not be done till the being has become psychic and spiritualised by the descent of the Mother's peace, force, light and purity." (29: 58)

XVI—When the Higher Light Descends into the Physical, the Hostile Forces Become Out of Place in Sadhana

1.

"I have something to ask about your letter [*of 8 November 1933*] about the hostile forces. You write that they are 'out of place here in this sadhana'. But you go on to say that attacks continue because 'the sadhaks open themselves to them, out of habit, . . . out of passive response and unresisting inertia'. Please explain all this more clearly. Do you mean that the forces that were obstructing the sadhaks have been destroyed?

There is no question of destruction. There is only the question of their exclusion from the Asram. The things enumerated are not causes of the attacks, but they are the occasion, the weakness in the sadhaks that allows them when they could very well be dismissed. The hostile forces are there in the world to maintain the Ignorance—they were there in the sadhana because they had the right to test the sincerity of the sadhaks and their power and will to cleave to the Divine and overcome all difficulties. But this is only so long as the higher Light has not descended into the physical—now it is descending, it is sufficiently there for anyone to receive it more and more fully, so that

the way becomes smooth and open, a progressive development and not a struggle." (CWSA 35: 640–641)

2.

"*Z's letter is enclosed regarding his wife. He hopes to receive a token of Thy Grace to take for her.*

Let her purify the outer being, and abolish the ego, by a complete and perfect consecration to the Supreme Divine, and the obstacle will be removed.

The adverse forces are allowed to act only in order to compel us to make ourselves pure and receptive enough for the descent and the union.

With love and blessings." (CWM 17: 400–401)

3.

"*You wrote, in the letter that was placed on the notice board, that there is not 'any longer' a justification for the hostile forces here. That suggests that there has been some change in the atmosphere, which makes possible their elimination. But can they really be eliminated?*

I wrote because now there is a sufficient descent of Light and Power, for one not to be subject to the ordeals and tests which the Hostile Powers are permitted to put when one has only the mental, or ordinary spiritual forces on the plane of mind, to support one's progress. If you look

closely, you will see that when these Forces work now it is in a perfectly irrational, instinctive way, repeating always the same movements without any intellectual or higher vital power behind them. Theirs is now an irrational mechanical method which obscures more in the lowest physical and subconscient than anything else. That means that their true justification for being there is gone." (CWSA 35: 640)

4.

"*Even if the hostile forces go back to their own region, they will certainly wage war against the transformed divine world. The only way for God to save us from this would be for him to put some pressure on them for self-transformation.*

It is supposed that the supramental Light and Force is to descend—if the descent is so complete that these forces are driven back to their own world, it is not likely that any efforts on their part would have any success. It is the darkness or the insufficient Light that gave them their chance to intervene. If there is the victory of the true light, they cannot any longer." (CWSA 35: 642)

5.

"*The Mother has said that the hostile forces are necessary in the life of the Asrama for testing the sincerity of the sadhakas.*

The work of this Yoga and therefore the principle of the Asram life is to take the world as it is and deal with it by a transformation of which the supramental descent is not the first but the final process. The presence of the hostile forces is a part of the world as it is and not to deal with them at all or to act as if they were not there would have been to leave the problem unsolved and the work undone. The sadhaks of the Asram are not spotless Saints or perfect born Yogis but men who carry in them their human nature and typify each in his own way what is in the world and what has to be changed." (CWSA 35: 642)

6.

"About the contact with the world and the hostile forces, that is of course always one of the sadhak's chief difficulties, but to transform the world and the hostile powers is too big a task and the personal transformation cannot wait for it. What has to be done is to come to live in the Power that these things, these disturbing elements cannot penetrate, or, if they penetrate, cannot disturb, and to be so purified and strengthened by it that there is in oneself no response to anything hostile. If there is a

protecting envelopment, an inner purifying descent and, as a result, a settling of the higher consciousness in the inner being and finally, its substitution even in the most external outwardly active parts in place of the old ignorant consciousness, then the world and the hostile forces will no longer matter — for one's own soul at least; for there is a larger work not personal in which of course they will have to be dealt with; but that need not be a main preoccupation at the present stage." (CWSA 31: 796)

7.

"A principle of greater unity, harmony and light would emerge everywhere. It is not that the creation in the Ignorance would be altogether abolished, but it would begin to lose much of its elements of pain and falsehood and would be more a progression from lesser to higher Truth, from a lesser to a higher harmony, from a lesser to a higher Light, than the reign of chaos and struggle, of darkness and error that we now perceive. For according to all occult teaching the evolutionary creation could have been such but for the intervention of the Powers of Darkness — all traditions including that of the Veda and Upanishads point under different figures to the same thing. In the Upanishads it is the Daityas that smite with evil all that the gods create, in the Zoroastrian tradition it is Ahriman coming across the work of Ahura Mazda, the Chaldean tradition uses a different figure. But the

significance is the same; it is the perception of something that has struck across the harmonious development of creation and brought in the principle of darkness and disorder. The occult tradition also foresees the elimination of this disturbing element by the descent of a divine Principle or Power on earth, but gives to it usually a sudden and dramatic form. I conceive that the supramental descent would effect the same event by a progressive elimination of the darkness and evolution of the Light, but with what rate of rapidity it would be rash to try to forecast or prefigure." (CWSA 28: 283)

XVII—Great Musicians Came into Touch with a Higher Consciousness When They Created

1.

"Among the great modern musicians there have been several whose consciousness, when they created, came into touch with a higher consciousness. Cesar 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." (CWM 3: 111)

XVIII—One of the Functions of Hostile Forces Is to Make the Earth Ready for the Spiritual Descent

1.

"The hostile forces have a certain self-chosen function: it is to test the condition of the individual, of the work, of the earth itself and their readiness for the spiritual descent and fulfilment. At every step of the journey, they are there attacking furiously, criticising, suggesting, imposing despondency or inciting to revolt, raising unbelief, amassing difficulties. No doubt, they put a very exaggerated interpretation on the rights given them by their function, making mountains even out of what seems to us a mole-hill. A little trifling false step or mistake and they appear on the road and clap a whole Himalaya as a barrier across it. But this opposition has been permitted from of old not merely as a test or ordeal, but as a compulsion on us to seek a greater strength, a more perfect self-knowledge, an intenser purity and force of aspiration, a faith that nothing can crush, a more powerful descent of the Divine Grace." (CWSA 31: 758)

2.

"He [*Krishnaprem*] is quite right in saying that the heaviness of these attacks was due to the fact that you had taken up the sadhana in earnest and were approaching, as one might say, the gates of the Kingdom of Light. That

always makes these forces rage and they strain every nerve and use or create every opportunity to turn the sadhak back or, if possible, drive him out of the path altogether by their suggestions, their violent influences and their exploitation of all kinds of incidents that always crop up more and more when these conditions prevail, so that he may not reach the gates." (CWSA 31: 772)

3.

"The opportunity for these forces [the hostile forces] is given when the sadhaka descends in the inevitable course of the sadhana from the mental or higher vital plane to the physical consciousness. Always this is accompanied by a fading of the first deep experiences and a descent to the neutral obscure inertia which is the bedrock of the unredeemed physical nature. It is there that the Light, the Power, the Ananda of the Divine has to descend and transform everything, driving away for ever all obscurity and all inertia and establishing the radiant Energy, the perfect Light and the unchanging Bliss. There and not in the mind or the higher vital is all the difficulty, but there too must be the victory and the foundation of the new world. I do not wish to disguise from you the difficulty of this great and tremendous change or the possibility that you may have a long and hard work before you; but are you really unwilling to face it and take your share in the great work? Will you reject the greatness of this endeavour

to follow a mad irrational impulse towards some more exciting work of the hour or the moment for which you have no true call in any part of your nature?" (CWSA 31: 785–786)

4.

"If the attacks of the hostile forces have been made less strong by concentrating in the heart (or if they have become less frequent) then you must continue that concentration until you are able to join the head and the heart, the psychic and the higher consciousness. It all depends on that. The psychic must be strong enough to compel the vital and physical to give themselves to the Divine—or the higher consciousness must so descend and occupy everything that the old movements can only at most move on the surface without being able to enter in or touch the inner calm—or the two together, psychic and higher consciousness, must occupy the whole being. These are the three ways in which the Yoga moves. If the concentration in the heart, which means the awakening of the psychic, is most effective against the attacks, then it is that you must follow." (CWSA 31: 795–796)

5.

"All these things, feelings, suggestions etc. [*depression, wanting to die*], are the workings of an adverse Force which wants to break up the Asram, upset or drive away

the workers and prevent the Truth and Light which are descending from having any fruition. There is no truth behind it, it is a Force of the Devil or Falsehood—there is no rational ground for the feelings of despair it suggests, but it throws itself with fury on the mind and vital and tries to possess them, ousting the Truth and the Divine Presence. Even the strongest have felt its attacks. You must understand what it is and, the moment it comes, oppose it with a resolute No. For the more the Truth descends, the more furious this adverse Force becomes. It is making desperate attacks and putting out all its force in the hope of snatching the victory before the full Truth can come down. Remain firm, understand what it is and give it no admission—to reject it, to drive it out of his atmosphere is the greatest help any sadhak can give to the Mother." (CWSA 31: 789)

6.

"It sometimes happens that by a carefully formed formation like this and through the instrumentality of a third person whose movements they control, the hostile forces get through the conscious guard and bring about an accident like this. It is through the subconscient that they manage to do it, for the subconscient has not yet either the mass of force descended from above which could have repelled the arriving cycle and turned its movement away or the instinctive sureness which would have felt

beforehand what the cyclist was going to do and done just the thing to avoid it. However when the protection is there such accidents even when grave in character are usually reduced to something minor in their results.” (CWSA 31: 800–801)

XIX—The Mother and the Supramental Descent

1.

"Q: Do you not refer to the Mother (our Mother) in your book *The Mother*?

A: Yes.

Q: Is she not the 'Individual' Divine Mother who has embodied 'the power of these two vaster ways of her existence'—Transcendent and Universal?

A: Yes.

Q: Has she not *descended* here (amongst us) into the Darkness and Falsehood and Error and Death in her deep and great love for us?

Yes." (CWSA 32: 31)

2.

"Q: Am I right in thinking that the Mother as an individual embodies all the Divine Powers and brings down the Grace more and more to the physical plane . . .

A:Yes.

Q: and that her embodiment is a chance for the entire physical to change and be transformed?

A: It is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible. Afterwards there will be a farther transformation by the supramental, but the whole earth consciousness will not be supramentalised—there will be first a new race representing the supermind, as man represents the mind.

Q: The more we open individually to the Mother's Light and Force, the more her power is established in the universal—is it not so?

A: It is the transforming power that is established—the universal Power is always there." (CWSA 32: 32)

3.

"Q: Is there any difference between the Mother's manifestation and the descent of the supramental?

A: The Mother comes in order to bring down the supramental and it is the descent which makes her full manifestation here possible." (CWSA 32: 33–34)

4.

"Q: What sort of *bhakti* in my past lives has brought me to the Mother's feet?

A: The aspiration for union with the Divine and perhaps also for the descent of the Divine on the earth." (CWSA 32: 88)

5.

1 January 1969

"About the descent of what Mother later identified as the superman consciousness (*la conscience du surhomme*).

In the night it came slowly and on waking up this morning, there was as though a golden dawn, and the atmosphere was so light. The body felt: 'Well, it is truly, truly new.' A golden light, transparent and... benevolent. 'Benevolent' in the sense of a certainty—a harmonious certainty. It was new.

There you are.

And when I say '*Bonne année* to people, it is this which I pass on to them. And this morning, I have passed my time like this, spontaneously, saying: '*Bonne année, Bonne année*." So.." (CWM 11: 148)

6.

"Yes, it is that. It is the descent of the superman consciousness. I had the assurance later on.

It was the first of January after midnight. I woke up at two in the morning, surrounded by a consciousness, so concrete, and *new* in the sense that I had never felt it before. And it lasted, absolutely concrete, present, for two or three hours, and afterwards it spread out and went about to find people who could receive it. And I knew that it was the consciousness of the superman, that is to say, the intermediary between man and the supramental being.

That has given to the body a kind of assurance and confidence. That experience has, as it were, stabilised the body and if it keeps the true attitude, every support is there to help it." (CWM 11: 153)

7.

"*Can one learn to control one's subconscient as one controls one's conscious thought?*

It is especially during the body's sleep that one is in contact with the subconscient. In becoming conscious of one's nights, control of the subconscient becomes much easier.

The control can become total when the cells become conscious of the Divine in them and when they open themselves voluntarily to His influence. This is what the consciousness that descended on the earth last year is

working for. Little by little the subconscient automatism of the body is being replaced by the consciousness of the Divine Presence governing the entire functioning of the body." 13 April 1970 (CWM 14: 365)

8.

"*To allow the free working of the New Consciousness that descended last year, what should a sadhak do?*

1) Be receptive
   and
2) Be plastic"

1970 (CWM 15: 107)

9.

"This talk begins with Mother's comments on the message to be distributed on February 29, the Golden Day, anniversary of the descent of the Supramental Manifestation upon earth in 1956.

"It is only when the Supramental manifests in the body-mind that its presence can be permanent."

This message is a saying of Sri Aurobindo's—they have made out as though it was my saying. It was Sri Aurobindo

who wrote it, I simply said: Sri Aurobindo has said 'permanently'.

But, Mother, it is your experience, therefore... (Mother laughs).

(Silence)

But it would be wiser to speak of it when it has been done! When it has been installed, then... For the moment... (*gesture of swinging from one side to another*)." (CWM 11: 293)

10.

"On August 15, Sri Aurobindo's birthday, Mother gave Darshan by standing for several minutes on the balcony of her upstairs room and looking upon those assembled on the streets below."

15 August 1967

"I took my seat, it was almost time, perhaps half a minute before, and all of a sudden, without preparation, like that, like a hammer blow: a descent so powerful—completely immobile—of something... It was as though Sri Aurobindo spoke to me at the same time (because the definition came at the same time as the experience: it was a vision that

was not a vision, it was wholly concrete) and the word was: *golden peace*. But so strong! And then it did not move. During the whole half-hour, it did not move. It is something new that I had never felt before. I cannot say... It was perceived, but not like an objective vision. And spontaneously, other persons told me that as soon as they were seated for meditation (*gesture of massive descent*), something came down with a tremendous power, completely immobile, and a feeling of peace that they had never felt in their life.

Golden peace. And it is true, it gave the impression of the golden supramental light. But it was... a peace! Concrete, you know, not the negation of disorder and activity, no: concrete, concrete peace. I did not want to stop. The time was over, still I remained two minutes, three minutes. When I stopped, it was gone. And it has made a great difference for the body—the body itself—such a difference that when it had gone, I felt quite uneasy, I needed half a minute to regain my equilibrium.

It came and it went away. It came for the meditation and then it went away. For more than half an hour, thirty-five minutes.

And in the evening, at the balcony, there was a crowd. I believe it was the biggest crowd that we have ever had: it spread out into all the streets; as far as I could see, the streets were full of people. Then I came out, and as I came out, there arose from this crowd like a... something

between an imploring, a prayer and a protest about the condition the world is in, particularly this country. And that rose up in waves. I looked at it, and then (it was extremely insistent) I said to myself: 'It is not my day, it is Sri Aurobindo's day.' I went like this (*gesture of withdrawal*) and I put Sri Aurobindo in front. And when he was put in front, standing in front he simply said, simply: 'The Lord knows best what he is doing.' (*Mother laughs*) Immediately, I began to smile (I did not laugh, but I began to smile) and there came the same peace as in the morning.

There you are.

'The Lord knows best what he is doing', with his most perfect sense of humour. And immediately everything became calm." (CWM 15: 403–404)

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