Sri Aurobindo: What do you mean?

Disciple: Is peace included in silence or vice versa?

Sri Aurobindo: If you have silence you have peace, but the opposite is not true. That is to say, you may have peace but not silence.

Disciple: Is silence mere emptiness?

Sri Aurobindo: No. Not necessarily. It may be full of the positive presence of the Divine.

Disciple: Is it not a dull and dry state?

Sri Aurobindo: No. Not necessarily. As I said, it can be full of the presence of the Divine or it may be Mental peace—accompanied by a sense of emptiness which may be dull to the mind but it is the emptiness for something higher to come in and fill it.

Disciple: In that emptiness—Shunya—there is a great release. Is it not?

Sri Aurobindo: Oh yes. It is a very pleasant state. These people, like Russel, don’t understand what this emptiness means. They try to go in and immediately they find themselves empty. They do not like it. They think that all that comes into the consciousness comes from outside. They have no idea that there are inner things with which the being can be filled.

Disciple: But you said in one of your letters to “D” that one must be prepared to pass through the period of dryness.

Sri Aurobindo: There is an experience of neutral peace of mind which may be dry and dull to the ordinary man.
Disciple: Can one act when one has the silence?

Sri Aurobindo: Certainly: why not? When I talk of silence I mean inner silence. It is perfectly possible to hear and do all sorts of things and retain that inner silence.

Disciple: Is the silence static and dynamic both?

Sri Aurobindo: It is not silence that is dynamic—but you can become dynamic having that inner silence. You can also remain without doing anything. It depends.

People who are dynamic can't remain without doing something. They do not realise that if they have the inner silence the effectivity of their outer work is increased a hundred fold.

Some Maratha came when I came to Pondicherry, inquired what I was doing: when he heard I was doing "nothing", he said "it is a great thing if one can do it. It is a capacity to do nothing"!

Disciple: There is one gentleman who actually sealed up his lips with something so that he may not be able to speak.

Sri Aurobindo: That is what is called Asuric Tapasya: Titanic askasis.

Disciple: Can one gain something by Asuric Tapasya?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes; all Tapasya can give you something.

Physical and vital tapasya can also give you something. It can give you physical and vital control, though that is more a Nigraha—repressed control—rather than anything else.

Disciple: Is it not a part of Divine realization—? What is Divine realization?
Sri Aurobindo: Experience of peace and bliss is a spiritual realization. If one gains control of the vital being, by the influence of the Self—that is a divine realization.

Disciple: But one can have the necessary control by the mind—rather than try such physical and outward control.

Sri Aurobindo: These things may be steps to the Divine; for example Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga.

Disciple: Our friend “X”, finds that Yogis have defects.

Sri Aurobindo: It is not the defects that are important but whatever leads to the upward growth, to the Divine, adding something to his stature, is a gain to the human progress towards the Light. No upward progress is to be despised.

3rd January 1939

There was hearty laugh over the thesis of a Marathi writer with Socialist tendencies who tried to prove that Swami Ramdas was a socialist!

Disciple: Some of the Sadhaks seem to become too delicate,—a small cut or even smell of burning ghee upsets them. Sometimes other people who cannot understand this say this is mere fainting.

Sri Aurobindo: They used to brand the body with hot iron to see if the man was in trance or not! They thought perhaps that it might be only deep trance and not Nirvikalpa Samadhi! (Laughter)

Disciple: Can it be that the man would not feel anything?
Sri Aurobindo: There are cases of people who, when under hypnotic influence, are unaffected by pins being introduced into their bodies. And also there are cases where the man is made to stretch out his hand and even two or three strong people cannot bend it. There are also cases in which sugar tastes bitter under hypnotic influence. And the question is whether sweetness or any other property is in the subject—as is the sense of beauty—or in the object.

Disciple: What is that capacity due to?

Sri Aurobindo: There are no physical causes, these phenomena are due to supraphysical causes and there the laws of the physical do not apply.

Disciple: But then what is sweetness due to—in the case of sugar?

Sri Aurobindo: The question is whether experience of sweetness is a common reaction of all human beings, or has the object anything in it corresponding to the experience of sweetness.

Disciple: But something of the property of the object persists, like the effect of medicine in homeopathic doses,—the smallest quantity retains the quality.

Disciple: But what is your conclusion, Sir?

Sri Aurobindo: I don't know.

At this point the Mother came and the subject matter was reported to her.

Mother: I do not believe that the phenomena were due to hypnotism. In hypnotism you impose control on another man, the subject, i.e. your will replaces his will.
But I know what I have seen. In most cases I have seen that both the hypnotiser and the hypnotised lend themselves unconsciously to the influence of occult forces. Anything that takes place in that condition is due to the influence of those forces. I know one case,—an extraordinary case, of exteriorization in which almost the material,—the vital and the vital—material, form of the subject was separated from the body of the hypnotised person. If the hypnotiser controls the man and if he has good will it may do the “subject” no harm. But in most cases he keeps himself aloof to direct the person and cannot take charge of the body and in the interval it is some other forces that take possession of the body.

It is dangerous to do these things except under guidance, or in the presence of somebody who knows these things. You find people speaking languages in that unconscious condition which they do not know at all. It is because some of their being in the past, or subconsciously, knows the language and in that state, a contact is established between the part of the subconscious and the man speaks the language. It is not as if the hypnotist willed that: “the man shall speak a particular language” and the man begins to speak that language even though there may be no part in him that knew the language. Such a thing is impossible. Only, if there is a part that knows and if one can establish a contact then he can speak that language.

Disciple: Is this knowledge indispensable for yoga?

Sri Anrobindo: Not necessarily. It is useful for knowledge of the physical and also for mastery over death, it is essential.

There is an ancient prophesy in the Jewish Cabala
that the kingdom of God would be established in humanity when the man will come who would have the power to die and come back, i.e. take up his body again, after death. It is essential to know what is death if you want to conquer it. That shows that the ancients foresaw the need of the knowledge and also that of transformation of the physical.

It is curious how some people can easily separate their subtle bodies from the physical, say in three or four days even. They go out of the body and see their body lying in front of them, while in other cases they do not succeed.

This knowledge is also useful in curing diseases. For instance, it is perfectly easy to prevent diseases and to cure them if you have the knowledge of these planes. There is what is called “the nervous envelope”, which is an intermediary between the subtle and the gross body. It is that which acts as a sheath protecting you against all attacks of diseases. If the nervous envelope is intact no disease can come to you. In most people, with aging, this envelope wears out and then gradually the forces are able to penetrate and pierce it. That is one of the causes of death.

Disciple: Can this nervous envelope be seen in the patient?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes; and if you can see what is necessary you can put it in. In order to keep it intact you must have quiet, a balanced life, rest, etc. People generally spoil it by excitement and other irregularities.

In the case of exteriorization done by the Tibetans, a thin thread is maintained when one leaves the body
and if that is snapped the man may not be able to return to his body.

**Disciple**: There are cases of Tibetans who expose themselves to ice without any bad reactions and also there was report of the messenger who practically flies throughout Tibet carrying the tidings of the lama.

**Sri Aurobindo**: These are known phenomena.

**Disciple**: There are so many miracles reported about Sj. Bijoy Goswami. Do you think they are all true?

**Sri Aurobindo**: I have no personal knowledge of them. But I believe most of the miracles attributed to Bijoy Goswami are more possible with the subtle than with the physical body.

**Sri Aurobindo** then recounted the story of how Mother was once on the point of death in Algeria when she was practising the yoga with Theon and his wife both of them great occultists. Madame Theon particularly was a remarkable woman.

The Mother exteriorised herself and visited Paris and met her friends. The exteriorization was sufficiently material to enable her to write on a piece of paper with pencil. The Tibetans are more familiar with occultism than with spirituality.

The Europeans are more taken up with these occult things. They either believe everything or nothing. That explains their attraction for Tibet, Bhutan and other places of occult atmosphere. Now-a-days stories and novels are being written with these themes. Japanese Zen Buddhism, and also Chinese Laotze have also attracted their attention.
I also wrote some stories but they are lost; the white ants have finished them and with them has perished my future fame as a story-teller. It is a pity that the translation of Megh Duta which I did is lost. It was well done. Most of my stories were occult.

4th January 1939.

Disciple: X's expression showed the usual gesture which to the company present indicated the coming of a question.

Disciple: What is the effect of fasting on yoga.

Sri Aurobindo: On what?

Disciple: The effect of fasting on yoga.

Sri Aurobindo: Oh, on yoga? It gives a sort of excitement or an impetus to the vital being but the general effect does not seem to be sound or healthy.

I fasted twice: once in Alipore jail for ten days and another time in Pondicherry for twenty-three days. At Alipore I was in full yugic activities and I was not taking my food, and was throwing it away in the bucket. Of course, the Superintendent did not know it, only two warders knew about it and they informed others saying: "The gentleman must be ill; he will not live long". Though my physical strength was diminishing I was able to raise a pail of water above my head which I could not do ordinarily.

At Pondicherry while fasting I was in full mental and vital vigour. I was even walking eight hours a day and not feeling tired at all, and when I broke the fast I did not begin slowly but with the usual normal food.
Disciple: How is it possible to have such energy without food?

Sri Aurobindo: One draws the energy from the vital plane instead of depending upon physical substance. Once in Calcutta I lived for a long time on rice and banana. It is a very good food.

Disciple: The trouble is that one can't draw conclusion from your case.

Sri Aurobindo: At best one can draw the conclusion that it can be done. Once R. C. Dutt called me to dinner and was surprised to find that I was taking only vegetarian diet; while he said he could not live without meat. With the vegetarian diet I was feeling light and pure. It is only a belief that one can't do without meat; it is a question of habit.

Disciple: Can fasting be a cure for diseases also?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, if you know the process. The Europeans sometimes fast for that purpose but in their case it is the mental idea that works. You start with the idea of being well or ill, and it happens accordingly.

Disciple: Can neurasthenia be thrown off like that?

Sri Aurobindo: In the case of neurasthenic and hysterical persons the nervous envelope is damaged.

Disciple: Then it is the question of the nervous sheath.

Sri Aurobindo: All the diseases come from outside. The force of the disease pierces, what the Mother calls, "the nervous envelope" and then enters the physical body. If one is conscious of the nervous envelope,—the subtle
nervous sheath, then the disease can be thrown away before it enters the physical body, as one throws away the thoughts before they enter the mind.

Disciple: "X" told us once that she used to have the head-ache which was just above the head and it was very severe. We laughed at it because we could not believe that head-ache could be above the head.

Sri Aurobindo: How do you know there can’t be such a head-ache? If the consciousness can be lifted above the head and remain there why not the head-ache?

The body is a mere mass of responsive vibrations; everything comes from outside and finds a response in the body.

Disciple: If everything comes from outside then what are we? What belongs to us?

Sri Aurobindo: In one sense nothing belongs to you. The Physical is made up, one can say, of various predispositions, energies due to heredity, your past lives—i.e. sum of energies of the past, and what you have acquired in this life. These are there ready to act under favourable conditions, under the pressure of nature. It is Universal Nature that gives the sense of "I" or "I am doing everything". This "I" and 'mine' have no meaning except in another sense.

Disciple: The other day I could not understand what you said about fundamental personality. What is the truth behind personality?

Sri Aurobindo: There are two things: Personality and the Person, which are not the same. The true person is the eternal Divine Purusha assuming many personalities and
it is thrown in Time as the Cosmic and the Individual for a particular purpose, use or work. This true Person is all the time conscious of its identity with the Cosmic. That is why liberation is possible.

Disciple: Is Cosmic liberation static or dynamic?

Sri Aurobindo: It is either, or both. In the static aspect one realises the pure Self as the Infinite, One, without movement, action or quality.

In the dynamic liberation, it depends upon where and how you experience the unity. If it is in the mind you feel your mind as one with the Cosmic Mind; in that case your own mind does not exist. If you feel the unity in the vital, then your vital being becomes a part of the cosmic vital, one with cosmic life. You can experience the Unity on the physical plane; then you feel your body as a speck of Universal Matter. Or, the identity can be above the Mind, by breaking open the lid that divides the Mind from the Infinite. Just as there is a wall that separates the psychic being from the outer nature, so also there is a wall above the head. You break the wall or, what is called the lid, and you feel yourself as the Infinite, and your individual self in the Infinite. That opening can be either vertical or horizontal. This realization makes dynamic liberation possible,—not merely a liberation of Laya.

Disciple: Is it true that illness comes from Sadhana?


Disciple: I think he means that illness may come in the course of Sadhana for purification.

Sri Aurobindo: That is a different thing. It can be a circumstance in the sadhana.
Disciple: When I was a new-comer here and used to have physical trouble, people said it was due to Sadhana and so I used to hide it from you lest you should stop the use of your Force.

Disciple: Some Sufis and Bhaktas, devotees, take illness and other troubles as gifts from the Beloved—the Divine. So, can one say that everything comes from the Divine?

Sri Aurobindo: They are right in a way. They take everything as coming from the Divine and it is a very good attitude if one can truly take it. Whatever happens is with the sanction of the Supreme. If you neglect the chain of intermediate causes there is a Superior Cause to everything.

Disciple: If a thing happens due to our negligence, can we say that it happened by the Divine's sanction?

Sri Aurobindo: I say, “neglecting the intermediate causes.”

Disciple: Would there not be some danger in that attitude? We may shirk our responsibilities and lay it on the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo: I said about the Bhakta—the Devotee, not about everybody. For the Bhakta what happens is the best and he takes it in that light.

For the Yogi who has to conquer these things they will come, otherwise there would be nothing to overcome. It would be no real conquest at all. One can always feel the difficulties as opportunities, and in one sense one can say that whatever happens is for the best. Hostile forces also are recognised as hostile, but from another standpoint they become the Divine power throwing out attacks for the work to be done. Ultimately all powers are from
the Divine, they assist in the work. They throw up difficulties to test the strength. It is the Divine that has created the opposition and it is the Divine who sends you the defeat so that you may conquer the difficulties hereafter. This is necessary also to counter the ego's sense of responsibility. At one time I experienced the hostile forces as the gods trying to test my strength. You have to act not for success but for the sake of the Divine, though it does not mean that you must not work for success. Arjuna complains to Sri Krishna in the Gita that he speaks in "double words": saying "do not be eager for the result" but at the same time he said "fight and conquer."

Disciple: There was a letter from our friend "X" in which he has tried to show that the Gita is a book on psycho-analysis and that Sri Krishna was a great psycho-analyst! He psycho-analysed Arjuna and worked out his complexes. He was very much perturbed at your denunciation of Freud's psycho-analysis in the 'Basis of Yoga.' You have run down the greatest discovery of the modern times.

Sri Aurobindo: Psycho-analysis means that the subconscious is there in man and it influences the consciousness. It means to say that if you suppress anything it goes down into your being and comes up in queer and abnormal forms.

Disciple: What, according to them, is this subconscious?

Sri Aurobindo: They say it is inconscient. Then how does it throw up everything and raise symbols in your consciousness? Modern psychology is only surface deep. Really speaking a new basis is needed for psychology. The only two important requisites for real knowledge of psychology are:
i. Going inwards, and,

ii. Identification.

Those two are not possible without yoga.

5th January 1939.

Disciple: How long does human bone continue to grow?

Sri Aurobindo: Crenium fifty-five years, Madulanta fifty years.

Disciple: What was your age when you entered politics (openly)?

Sri Aurobindo: 33 years.

Disciple: When did you begin yoga?

Sri Aurobindo: Somewhere in 1905.

Disciple: How did you begin?

Sri Aurobindo: God knows how! It began very early perhaps. When I landed on the Indian soil a great calm and quiet descended on me. There were also other characteristic experiences—at Poona on the Parvati hills and then in Kashmir on the Shankeracharya hill, a sense of a great infinite Reality was felt. It was very real.

Then at Baroda Deshpande tried to convert me to yoga; but I had the usual ideas about it—that one has to go to the forest and give up everything. I was interested in the freedom of the country. But I always thought that the great figures of the world could not have been after a chimera and if there was such a Power
why not use it for the freedom of the country?

Barin used to do automatic writing at Baroda. Once the spirit of my father appeared on being called. He gave some remarkable prophecies. When asked to give proof about his identity he mentioned the fact of having given a golden watch to Barin—which none in the company knew. And then he spoke of a picture in Devdhar's house. They tried to check up and found no picture there. The spirit when told about it repeated it and asked us to look again. On consulting the old mother of Devdhar she said: there was an old picture which had been now plastered over.

About Tilak, when questioned, the spirit said: "He will be the man who will remain with head unbeant when the work will be on trial and others will bow." Then we called Ramkrishna. He did not say anything. Only at the end he said: "Mandir gado"—"build a temple", which we at that time interpreted as starting Mandirs—temples—for political Sanyasis, but which I later interpreted correctly as, "make a temple in yourself." I began Pranayama—breathing exercises—in about 1905. Engineer Devdhar was a disciple of Brahma Nanda. I took instructions from him on Pranayama and started on my own. I practised Pranayama at Khasirao Jadhav's place in Baroda. The results were remarkable: I used to see many visions, sights and figures; (2) I felt a sort of electric power round my head. (3) My powers of writing were nearly dried up, after the practice of Pranayama, they revived with great vigour. I could write both prose and poetry with a flow. That flow never ceased since then. If I have not written afterwards it is because I had something else to do. But the moment I want to write, it is there. (4) My health
improved: I grew stout and strong and the skin became smooth and fair and there was a flow of sweetness in the saliva. I used to feel a certain aura round the head. There were plenty of mosquitoes there but they did not came to me.

I used to sit more and more in Pranayama but there were no more results. It was at this time that I gave up meat-diet and found a great feeling of lightness and purification in the system. Meat is a Rajasic food. Vivekananda recommends it to the Indians. It gives a certain force and energy in the physical. It was for that the Kshatriyas did not give up meat in India. From Tamas you pass to Rajas and Vivekananda was not quite wrong.

There came a Sanyasi who gave me a Stotra of Kali,—a very violent Stotra ending with “Jahi” “Jahi”—“kill”, for securing Indian freedom. I used to repeat it but it did not give any results.

Once I visited Ganganath (Chandod) after Brahma- nanda’s death when Keshwananda was there.

With my Europeanised mind I had no faith in image—worship and I hardly believed in the presence of God. I went to Kernali where there are several temples. There is one of Kali and when I looked at the image I saw the living presence there. For the first time, I believed in the presence of God.

At one time—in Sadhana—I used to try all sorts of experiments to see what happens and how far they are related to the truth. I took Bhang—Ganja—hemp—and other intoxicants as I wanted to know what happens
and why Sanyasis and Sadhus take these things. It made me go into trance, and sometimes sent me to a superior plane of consciousness. (But reliance on these outer stimulants was found to be the greatest drawback of this method).

I met Lele when I was searching for some guidance and practising meditation under his guidance. I had the Nirvana experience in Sardar Majumdar's house in the room on the top-floor. After that I had to rely on inner guidance for my Sadhana. In Alipore the Sadhana was very fast—it was extravagant and exhilarating. On the vital plane it can be dangerous and disastrous. I took to fasting at Alipore for ten or eleven days and lost ten pounds in weight. At Pondicherry the loss of weight was not so much, though the physical substance began to be reduced. It was in Shanker Chetty's house. I was walking eight hours a day during twenty-three day's fast. The miraculous or extraordinary powers acquired by Yogis on the vital plane are not all true in the physical. There are many pit-falls in the vital. These vital powers take up even a man like Hitler and make him do things by suggesting to him—"It shall happen". There are quite a number of cases of Sadhaks who have lost their Sadhana by listening to these voices from the vital-world. And the humour of it all is that they all say that they come either from the Mother or from me!

6th January, 1939

Disciple : What are the methods in Sadhana for removal of the ego?

Sri Aurobindo : There are two methods of effacement of the ego:

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1. By realisation of the spirit above and of its nature of purity, knowledge etc.

2. By humility in the heart.

Disciple: What is the difference?

Sri Aurobindo: The second method does not remove the ego but makes it harmless; it would therefore help one spiritually. Complete removal of the ego takes place when one identifies oneself with the Spirit and realises the same Spirit in all. Also when the mental, vital and physical nature is known to be derivative from the Universal Mind, universal vital and the universal physical then the same result ensues. The individual must realise his divinity i.e. his identity with the Transcendent or the Cosmic Divine.

Generally, when one realises the Spirit, it is the mental sense of the ego that goes, not the entire ego-sense. The dynamic nature retains the ego—especially the vital ego. So, the best thing would be to combine the two—for the psychic attitude of humility helps in getting rid of the vital-dynamic-ego.

The complete dissolution of the ego is not an easy thing. Specially important is the removal of mental and vital ego, the other ego of the physical and of the subconscious can be dealt with at leisure. That is to say, they are not so absorbing.

As I said, humility helps in the removal of the vital ego, but one must remember that it is not outward humility.

There are many people who profess and show the
utmost outward humility, but in their hearts think: “I am the man!”

Disciple: “X” when he came here for a short stay, he found that you lacked the virtue of humility or modesty.

Sri Aurobindo: How does he know? Perhaps I did not profess like some other people that I was nothing. I could not do that because I know I am not nothing.

Disciple: Were you modest when you had not taken to yoga?

Sri Aurobindo: There was a sort of voluntary self-effacement, I liked to keep myself behind. But I can’t say that I was more modest within than most people.

Disciple: Mahatmaji, when he finds somebody in disagreement with him on principle, would say: “He is superior to me, he is my elder, etc; but I differ from him”.

Sri Aurobindo: Does he really consider the other one superior, that is the question. When I differed from some one I simply said ‘No’ or “I don’t agree” and kept to my view. The answer given to Suren Banerji when he approached me for a compromise at the convention of Moderates and Nationalists, was “No” and I kept stiff. Perhaps one may not call me modest.

At the Hugli Conference we, the Nationalists, had the majority. But in order to keep up unity the Nationalists were asked by me not to oppose the compromise resolution. The Nationalists all went out. The Moderate leaders were very angry that the people did not follow their tried and veteran old leaders and so completely obeyed young leaders. Suren Banerji could not realise the
difference between old, upper middle class leadership, due to their influence and money and the new leadership of those who stood for a principle and commanded a following.

It was at that time that people began to get the sense of discipline and of obeying the leader's orders. They were violent, but at the word of the command they used to obey. That paved the way for the Mahatma. Ashwini Kumar Dutt used to jump and say: "This is life".

Suren Banerji had a personal magnetism and he was sweet-spoken, he could get round anybody. His idea was to become the undisputed leader of Bengal by using the nationalists for the sword and the moderates for the public face. In private he would go up to and accept the revolutionary movement. He even wanted to set up a provincial board of control of the revolutionaries! Barin once took a bomb to him and he was full of enthusiasm. He even had a letter from Suren Banerji, when he was arrested at Manik Tola. But in the court they hushed up the matter as soon as Norton pronounced S. N. Banerji.

The constitution of Aundh was brought in by a disciple.

*Disciple:* Aundh State has given a very fine constitution to the people. It has conferred wide powers on the Panchayats. Such constructive work among the villagers would prevent communism. They are thinking of introducing co-operative farming.

*Sri Aurobindo:* Co-operative farming is an excellent thing; it would develop agriculture. But dictatorship of the
proletariat is a different thing. It may have a very fine constitution on paper, but it is quite different in practice. In such a system all men are made to think alike.

Religion is a different affair, it is voluntary; but country is quite different from the church. You can't choose your country. If you make all people think alike there can't be any human progress. If you were to differ from Stalin or Lenin you would be liquidated.

These dictators have remarkably few ideas: Take for example Hitler. He believes that:

I. The Germans are the best people in the world.

II. Hitler should be the leader.

III. All the Jews are wicked persons.

IV. All the people in the world must be Nazis.

I do not understand how humanity can progress under such conditions.

**Disciple**: The tendency of all governments is to increase taxes.

**Sri Aurobindo**: All governments are robbing, some with legislation, some without. You can well imagine the condition in which you have to give 50% of your income as taxes and have to manage with the rest as best you can.

**Disciple**: The Customs also charge too heavily.

**Sri Aurobindo**: It is another form of robbery and yet in spite of it all, I don't understand how France produces only 250 aeroplanes as compared to 1000 of Germany!
I don’t know what these governments do with huge sums they get. There is a sufficiently honest administration in England. The public are uneasy about the war.

Smuggling there almost seems a virtue, because it is robbing the robber! (Laughter)

Even some of the princes are caught smuggling.
Disciple: There is now a movement for separating the C.P. Marathi-speaking and Hindi-speaking. It has weakened the Congress.

Sri Aurobindo: Nagpur was a very good centre of the Nationalists. The two portions—Marathi and Hindi—should have been separated to begin with.

7th January, 1939

Disciple: Can the ego be removed by the psychic attitude and by the realisation of Self?

Sri Aurobindo: Psychic humility takes away the egoism but not the ego; removing of the ego of the natural individuality is not the work of the psychic. The psychic depends upon and maintains the natural individuality. The psychic is there, so that the natural individuality would turn to and progress towards the Divine.

Disciple: How is the ego removed?

Sri Aurobindo: Ego is removed by the realisation of the Spirit; that is, by attaining to the spiritual consciousness Above, which is independent of Nature, which is self-existent. That Spirit is One in all. Realisation of that
removes the ego, because then one identifies himself with the Spirit.

Disciple: What then replaces the "I" in the divine individual? What is the nature of the psychic individuality?

Sri Aurobindo: In the case of psychic individuality the man may feel the ego of the Sadhu—the Saint—the Bhakta—the devotee, or the virtuous man. He may also get rid of egoism by imposing on the nature one Spirit and a feeling of sympathy for all humanity. But that is not the same as getting rid entirely of the ego. The psychic clears the way for the removal of the ego.

Disciple: What happens when one realises the Spirit?

Sri Aurobindo: Generally, when one realises the Spirit, it is the mental sense of the ego that is abolished; but the vital and the physical still retain their egoistic movements. That is what most Yogi's mean when they say "It is nature". They mostly allow it to run its course and when the body drops, it also drops; but, it is not transformation. That is what Vivekananda meant when he said that "human nature cannot be changed, that it was like a dog's tail, you can straighten it if you like, but as soon as you leave it, it is curved again.”.

Disciple: What is really meant by this "nature"?

Sri Aurobindo: It means that the subconsciousness has in it certain gathered powers which impose themselves on the human being.

Disciple: How to transform or change this human nature?

Sri Aurobindo: In order to change human nature you have to work from level to level; you reject a thing from
the mind, it comes to the vital. When you reject it from the vital, then it comes to the physical and then you find it in the subconscious.

There is a central point in the subconscious that has to be changed. If that is done, then everything is done. It is from there that resistance rises from Nature—that is what Vivekananda meant. To effect complete transformation you have to bring down everything to the subconscious, and it is very difficult.

**Disciple** : How can one replenish the exhausted nervous being? Can it be done by drawing energy from the Universal Vital or by the help of the Higher Power?

**Sri Aurobindo** : Both ways can be combined: One can draw from the Universal Vital and the Higher Power can also work. But there should be no Tamas, inertia, and other excuses.

**Disciple** : Was there a time when these things were experienced?

**Sri Aurobindo** : When we were living in the Guest-house, we passed through a brilliant period of Sadhana in the vital. Many people had dazzling experiences and great currents of energy were going round. If we had stopped there—like other Yogis—we would have given rise to a brilliant creation, or, would have established some kind of religion; but that would not have been the real work.

**Disciple** : Could a great progress in the conquest of the physical being have been made at that time?

**Sri Aurobindo** : If the Sadhaks had taken the right attitude, then with the gain in the vital it would have been easy in the physical, inspite of difficulties. But that was not
done. Then we came down to the physical. Those brilliant experiences disappeared and the slow difficult work of physical transformation remained. There—in the physical—you find the truth of the Vedik rik—"censurers are always ready telling—"you can't do the thing, you are bound to fail".

Disciple : Would it then mean that the new people who would come to the yoga would have no experience of the mental and the vital planes?

Sri Aurobindo : They can have, if they hold aloof. Only, they can't help the pressure on the physical nature as it is in the atmosphere.

There are cases that differ: there is some one X who made very good progress in the mind. In another case the Sadhak became aloof and progressed; but the moment he came to the vital, the whole thing seemed to have stopped.

Disciple : Did he lose the contact with the Brahmic consciousness entirely?

Sri Aurobindo : No, it is only apparently lost. But if he cannot go further, then his yoga stops there, that is all.

Disciple : Can the new comers make rapid progress?

Sri Aurobindo : Certainly they can. I know cases, where they go on very well making good progress.

Disciple : Will the yoga be more easy for the lucky new comers?

Sri Aurobindo : Yes, in a sense; but the conditions may be more exacting, and the demands made on them may be
high. You had an easy time. You were left to do, more or less, as you liked in your mind, and the vital and other parts. But when the change in the subconscious has to come about, many will find it difficult; there will be some who will progress and others who will not and will drop out. Already some like X have dropped out, when the Mother took a decision about his vital being—"you will have to change". Before that he was swimming in his art and other things, but as soon as this came he dropped out. All these things—attachments, sex-impulse etc.—finally find refuge in the subconscient. One has to throw it out from there—destruction of the seed in the subconscient is necessary, otherwise it would sprout again, as we see in the case of some Yogis.

**Disciple**: Can one have these things in him when there is complete union with the Divine?

**Sri Aurobindo**: What is the "complete union"? For instance, Ramakrishna asked the Divine Mother not to send him "Kama"—sex-impulse—and he succeeded, but all cases are not like that. It is quite possible to reject something centrally and totally—that is to say, completely—but one can't make general rule about these things.

Our yoga is like a new path made out in the jungle and there is no previous road in the region. I had myself great difficulties; the suggestion that it was not possible was always there. A vision which the Mother has sustained me: the vision of a carriage moving towards the highest peak on a steep hill. The highest summit is the transformation of Nature by the attainment of the Higher consciousness.

**Disciple**: Is there nothing that can be taken as established informally in all the yogas?
Sri Aurobindo: In this yoga you have to go on working out again and again the same thing. Thus it becomes a long drawn out struggle, one falls and rises, again falls. Take for instance, Nirvana, quietude and samata. I had to go on establishing them again and again till when I had done it in the subconscient this accident came. It can be a test.

Disciple: What made the attack possible?

Sri Aurobindo: There were gaps in the physical.

Disciple: Can one take this as a part of Lila or game?

Sri Aurobindo: Well, it is the ignorance and the Divine is working out from there. If that was not so, what is the meaning of the life?

Everything looked all right and it appeared as if I was going on well with the work, then the accident came. It indicated that it is when the subconscient is changed that the power of Truth can be embodied; then it can be spread in wave after wave in humanity.

8th January, 1939.

Disciple: Can one say that snoring is the protest of the subconscient against somebody's presence? (Laughter)

Sri Aurobindo: Against whom? against whose presence when one snores alone! (Laughter)

Disciple: We read in the papers about the conversion of John Middleton Murry to theism. It was Hitler's statement after the purage that he "embodies justice and law", 
that, he dispenses with "trials"—which made Murry consider him as the Anti-Christ. It seems Gandhian non-violence has also appealed to Hitler. He wants to become a village pastor and stop the flow of villagers to the cities. Gandhi has written about Hitler’s regime that the sufferings of Bishop Nicmuller are not in vain. He has covered himself with glory. Hitler’s heart may be harder than stone, but non-violence has power to generate heat that can melt the stoniest heart. What do you think of that?

_Sri Aurobindo:_ I am afraid, it would require quite a furnace! (Laughter) Gandhi had mainly to deal with Englishmen and the English want to have their conscience at ease. Besides, the Englishman wants to satisfy his self-esteem and wants world-esteem. But if Gandhi had to deal with the Russian Nihilists—not the Bolshevites—or the German Nazis then they would have long ago put him out of their way.

_Disciple:_ Gandhi is hopeful about the conversion of Hitler’s heart or about the German people throwing him over.

_Sri Aurobindo:_ Hitler would not have been where he is if he had a soft heart. It is curious how some of the most sentimental people are most cruel. Hitler, for instance, is quite sentimental. He weeps over his mother’s tomb and paints sentimental pictures.

_Disciple:_ It is “the London cabman’s psychic” as you said the other day.

_Sri Aurobindo:_ Yes. Men like Hitler can’t change, they have to be bumped out of existence: There is no chance of their changing in this life. He can’t get rid of his cruelty—it is his blood.
Not that the British can’t be brutal and sentimental too. But they can’t persist as the Germans and the Russians in their brutality. The Englishman may be sentimental, but he likes to show off that he is practical, prosaic and brave. In the Russian, you find a mixture of cruelty and sentimentalism. He can break your neck and in the next moment embrace you. The Englishman behaves quite well, if you give him blows on his face when he treats you badly.

Disciple: In Fiji islands there was the case of a Punjabi from a good family, who went there as an indentured labourer. An Englishman was his supervisor and used to beat him every day, inspite of his doing the hard allotted work.

One day the Punjabi got fed up and caught hold of him and threw him on the ground and went on giving him blows. Then the Englishman said “that will do!” He got up and shook hands with him and the two became great friends!! (Laughter).

Disciple: There was the case of Shamakant, the tiger-tamer, an athlete of Bengal. While he was travelling some Tommis came and tried to show their strength. He knocked them so well that they were extremely glad to get out of the compartment at the next station. They did not expect a Bengali to be so strong.

Another time the train at Howrah was stopped, as there was a fight between an Englishman and a Bengali. There was a cry of “Bande Mataram” and the whole train came out.

Sri Aurobindo: That was the sudden transformation during the Swadeshi days. Before that the people used to
tremble before an Englishman in Bengal. The position was even reversed.

I remember when I wanted to do political work I visited Bengal and toured the districts of Jessors, Khulna etc. We found that the people steeped in pessimism, a black weight of darkness weighing over the whole country. It is difficult now a days to imagine those days. I was travelling with Deva Vrata Bose; he was living on plantains and speaking to people. He had a very persuasive way of talking. It was at Khulna, we had a right royal reception, not so much because I was a politician, but because I was a son of my father. They served me with seven rows of dishes and I could hardly reach out to them, and even from others I could eat very little.

My father was very popular at Khulna; wherever he went he became all powerful. When he was at Rangpur he was very friendly with the magistrate—there. We went to his cousin’s place in England afterwards, the Drewettes. It was always the doctor (i.e. K.D. Ghose) who got things done at Rangpur. When the new magistrate came he found that nothing could be done without Dr. K.D. Ghose. So he asked the Government to remove him and he was transferred to Khulna. It was since that time that he became a politician. That is to say, he did not like the English domination. Before that every thing Western was good! He wanted, for example, all his sons to be great; at that time to join the I.C.S. was to become great. He was extremely generous. Hardly anyone who went to him for help came back empty handed.

Disciple: Did you see him after coming from England?

Sri Aurobindo: I could not. In fact, I was the cause of his
death. He was having heart-trouble and the Grindleys sent a wire to him that I had started by a certain steamer. In fact I had not; and that steamer was sunk near Portugal and so when he heard the news he thought that I was drowned and he died of that shock.

Disciple: But when you were in England was he sending you money regularly?

Sri Aurobindo: In the beginning. But afterwards he sent less and less and ultimately he stopped altogether. I had my scholarship at Cambridge but that was not enough to cover the fees and other expenses. So once the tutor wrote to him about money. Then he sent the exact sum for the fees and wrote a letter lecturing to me about extravagance! (laughter)

But it was not true; I and my eldest brother, at any rate, were living quite Spartan life. My brother worked with Henry Cotton's brother in the Liberal association (Kensington) and used to get 50 shillings a week. On that and little more we two managed to live. We had bread and a piece of bacon in the morning; at night some kind of pastry. For the winter we had no overcoat. After one year like that to talk of extravagance was absurd. But Mono Mohan could not stand it; he went out and lived in boarding house and ate nicely without money.

There was a tailor at Cambridge who used to tempt me with all sorts of clothes for suits and make me buy them; of course, he gave credit. Then I went to London. He somehow traced me there and found Mono Mohan and canvassed orders from him (!) Mono Mohan went in for velvet suits, not staring red but aesthetic and used to visit Oscar Wilde in that suit.
Then we came away to India but the tailor was not to be deprived of his dues! He wrote to the Government of Bengal and to the Baroda State for recovering sum from me and Mono Mohan.

I had paid up all my dues and kept £4/- or so. I did not believe that I was bound to pay it, since he always charged me double. But as the Maharajah said, I had better pay it, I paid.

Disciple: Did Mono Mohan follow your political career?

Sri Aurobindo: He was very proud of our political career. He used to say: "There are two and a half men in India—my brother Aurobindo and Barin—two and half is Tilak!" (laughter)

Disciple: How was Mono Mohan in England?

Sri Aurobindo: He used to play the poet: he had poetical illness and used to moan out his verses in deep tones. Once we were passing through Cumberland and it was getting dark. We shouted to him but he paid no heed, and came afterwards leisurely at his own pace. His poet-playing dropped after he came to India.

Disciple: How was the eldest brother?

Sri Aurobindo: He was not at all poetic or imaginative. He took after my father. He was very practical but very easy to get on with. He had fits of miserliness.

The question of Barin when he came to Baroda and stayed for sometime was: How can I stay with Khaserao or Madhav Rao for months and years without quarreling?
10th January 1939.

Disciple: My friend "X" has begun to give medicine to some of my patients.

Sri Aurobindo: So, you have your "Homeo-Allo" alliance or axis!

Talk on Homeopathy was going when the Mother came.

Mother: Do you know about a school of Homeopathy in Switzerland which is very famous in Europe? It prepares medicines also. They have books in which symptoms are grouped together and remedies are indicated for a group of symptoms. It is a very convenient method; only, you have to have the book; or good memory. But are you allowed to practise Homeopathy without licence?

Disciple: Oh, yes. No licence is required in India.

Disciple: But Dr. S was telling that using great potencies might harm, or even kill the patient. It is dangerous if everybody begins to practice it, they say.

Disciple: In Bengal it is practised everywhere.

Sri Aurobindo: Is Yunani medicine practised in India?

Disciple: Yes, in cities where there is Mohomedan population, and in Muslim states. In Delhi there is the Tibbi college founded by Hakim Ajmal Khan. It seems, it is the only school of Unani medicine in the whole of Asia. Students from Turkey, Egypt and Afghanistan used to come there to learn. Ajmal Khan was the direct descendant of the court Hakim to the Mogul Emperors. Where from is it derived?
Sri Aurobindo: It is from the Greek school. They use animal products and salts. Besides curing which is common to all the systems the Unani lays claim to rejuvenate the human system. Many diseases which require operation for their cure in Allopathy are cured by Unani and Ayurvedic medicines without operation.

There were many specific cures known in India but I am afraid they are getting lost. I remember the case of Jyotindra Nath Banerji who had a remedy for sterility from a Sannyasi and he used it with success. Many cases of barrenness for ten or fifteen years were cured within a short time. The direction for taking the medicine were very scrupulously to be observed. He knew a remedy for hydrocele.

Mother: Do you know about the Chinese medicine? Once they had a rule that you paid the doctor so long as you were well. All payment stopped when one became ill, and if the patient died they used to put a mark on the doctor's door to show that his patient had died.

But the Chinese method of pricking the nerve and curing the disease is very remarkable. The idea is that there is a point of nerve where the attack of the disease is concentrated and if you prick the point, or the Devil, on the head, the disease is cured. They find out this nervous point from the indications that the patient gives, or sometimes they find out by themselves also.

Disciple: I do not think that any system of medicine can succeed in curing all diseases. I believe that only yogic power can cure all diseases.

Disciple: Even that is not unconditional; otherwise, it might be very nice. There are conditions to be fulfilled for the yogic power to succeed.
Sri Aurobindo: Do you expect that the yogic power, or consciousness will simply say “Let there be no disease and there will be no disease”?

Disciple: Not that way. But cases of miraculous cures are known, that is, cures effected without any conditions.

Sri Aurobindo: That is another matter. Otherwise, the Yogi has to get up every morning and say “Let everybody in the world be all right” and there would be no disease in the world! (Laughter)

12th January 1939.

There was a controversy about a child who was underage and had an intense aspiration to remain in the Ashram, i.e. to be under Mother’s protection and guidance. But being under the guardianship of her parents the child could not carry out her inner wish. Ultimately the parents, particularly the mother, took the child away.

Some Evening-Talks refer to this incident.

Sri Aurobindo: She—the child—has developed character and intelligence quite beyond her age. When she wrote to us she used to cast reflections on the world and on people that was even beyond a grown up woman. She is remarkable for her age.

The mother has found it difficult to bend her. It is true, the mother does not love her. It is an accident that she is born in that family; she is quite unlike her parents. Besides, she has found out that the mother used to manage her by lying.

Disciple: They say that the child is very happy outside.
Sri Aurobindo: But she wrote to us that she is never happy outside!

Disciple: In the papers we find that Stalin has made allegations against Trotsky; can there be any truth in them?

Sri Aurobindo: Not creditable.

Disciple: But the confessions of the generals were dramatic.

Sri Aurobindo: That they did to save their relatives.

Disciple: A Japanese general predicts a hundred year war to civilize the world!

Sri Aurobindo: The idea is first to drive out the European from Asia, but the Japanese will go about it silently without bragging.

Disciple: Will Indian freedom come long time after?

Sri Aurobindo: Not necessarily; it will not come by arms but without arms.

Disciple: How?

Sri Aurobindo: There is a prophesy among the Sannyasis and also Lele used to tell us that there is no chance of freedom by fighting.

Disciple: Italy or Japan can come to help India.

Sri Aurobindo: That is not so easy. Naval equipment is not enough; without a strong army it is very difficult to conquer India.

Disciple: Congress ministers are trying to introduce military training in U. P., C.P., and Bombay. But Sir Sikander
Hayat in the Panjab is counting the distinction between martial and non-martial races.

Sri Aurobindo: That was introduced by the British to keep down India by depriving her of military races except the Pathans, Gurkhas, Panjabees etc. But every part of India had its empire in the past. The whole of India can have military equipment and training in a short time.

Disciple: The problem is of the Muslims.

Sri Aurobindo: They also want independence; only they want: "Mohomedan independence".

Disciple: Spain in Europe seems to be like India. But if France gets Spain it would be difficult for England.

Sri Aurobindo: It will be worse for France; by the spring the intentions of the Axis powers will be known.

Disciple: But why France depends so much upon England?

Sri Aurobindo: Because she has no other ally.

Disciple: It is the short-sighted policy of the Allies, that has given chance to Hitler.

Sri Aurobindo: No, it is England that got afraid of France ascendency on the continent and encouraged and pressed Germany into power. She wants to maintain the balance of power. Hitler aims at France.

France always wants to placate Italy; but England came in the way with "sanctions". They could not save Abyssinia and made an enemy of Mussolini.

Disciple: The cry of Tunis was to divert the attention from Spain.
Sri Aurobindo: I don't think Blum's Socialist government is for non-intervention. The Socialist in France did nothing when they were in power.

Disciple: Perhaps Russia can render some help.

Sri Aurobindo: Russia is too far and I don't know if it is trustworthy.

Disciple: But the newspapers report that America is preparing armaments.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, perhaps Roosevelt has secret news about the intentions of Nazis. It is not a question of meddling in European politics, but of being eaten last! (Laughter) There are at least some people in America who understand this thing.

13th January 1939.

The Mother was present when X put the following question to her.

Disciple: Mother, is it a sin to kill bugs, mosquitoes, scorpions etc?

"Ask Sri Aurobindo"; The Mother replied smiling. "When I came here I used to drive them away by yogic force. Sri Aurobindo did not approve of it."

Sri Aurobindo: Because one is making friendship with them in that way. What is the sin? If you don't kill them they will go and bite some other people and won't it be a sin to you?

Disciple: But they have life, Sir?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, they have.
Disciple: And, if one kills them?

Sri Aurobindo: Well, what happens?

Disciple: He will be liable to sin of course. I don’t mean we don’t kill at all, for instance, we are breathing microbes.

Mother: The doctors don’t kill?

Disciple: Yes Mother. But I mean their killing is not intentional.

Disciple: It is said that the Jains hire people to feed bugs!

Disciple: No. That is only a story.

Sri Aurobindo: At any rate, I know of a story in history. When Mahmed of Gazni invaded (West) India he defeated a Jain king through the help of his brother. The dethroned king was left in charge of his brother, who was now the king. He did not know what to do with his brother; so, he dug a pit below his throne and threw him in it and closed it up. As a result he died: so that his brother did not kill him! (laughter)

Mother: Then, in order to be true Jain, one must be a yogi and then with yogic power he can deal with these animals and insects?

Disciple: Is one justified in killing snakes and scorpions?

Sri Aurobindo: Why not? One must kill in self-defence. I don’t mean that you must hunt out the snakes and kill them. But when you see that they are endangering your or other lives, then you have every right to kill them.

Mother: The plants have also life. So, you mean to say
that mosquito is more precious then rose? You don’t know perhaps how the plants feel.

Disciple: There are people who say that killing a dog or a cat is not so sinful as killing a man.

Sri Aurobindo: Life is life—whether in a cat, or dog or man. There is no difference in that between cat or man. The idea of difference is a human conception for man’s own advantage perhaps.

14th January 1939

The topic of Homeopathy came up. It was said that it has cures for religious depression and anger also.

Disciple: Anger, the scientists say, is due to the reaction of glands. But can “egoism” be cured like that?

Disciple: If it can be cured, I would be the first to apply for it.

Disciple: “The fact you are conscious about the “ego” makes half the cure—is it not?” he said turning to Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo: Not necessarily. But it is the first step.

Disciple: And what is the second?

Sri Aurobindo: To detach oneself from all these things; to think as if all these things belong to the other being, or some one else. As one goes on doing this the Purusha gradually withdraws its sanction from the Prakriti and
the Prakriti looses its hold over nature till a spiritual control takes place. But if one associates oneself with Nature, Prakriti, then the Purusha becomes slave to it. Rejection, of course, is the stronger way. One has to reject these things before they enter, as I did the thoughts. It is more powerful and the result also is quick.

There is also a mental control; but there too it is the nature of Mind trying to control the nature of the Vital. It has only a temporary and partial control. The thing is rather suppressed within and can come out at any opportunity.

I heard of a Yogi in Benares bathing in one of the Ghats. In the neighbouring ghat a Kashmiri woman came to bathe. As soon as he saw her he fell upon her and tried to outrage her. That is evidently a case of mental control. But by Sadhana—yogic effort—sometimes things which have not been there come up. I have heard about it from many persons.

In my case, I saw anger coming up and possessing me. It was absolutely uncontrollable when it came. I was very much surprised as to my nature. Anger has always been foreign to me.

At another time while I was a undertrial prisoner at Alipore jail, a terrible catastrophe was avoided. Prisoners had to wait outside for sometime before entering the cells. As we were waiting a Scotch Warder came and gave me a push. The youngmen around me became very excited, and I did nothing but gave him such a look that he immediately fled and called the jailer. It was a communicative anger and all the youngmen rallied round to attack him. When the jailer, who was rather a religious man, arrived, the Warder said, I had given him
a "subordinate look". The jailer asked me and I told him that I have never been used to such treatment. The jailer pacified the whole group and said while going, "we have all to bear our cross."

Disciple: Is Rudra Bhava something like Ramakrishna's story about the snake, where anger is to be shown without really feeling it.

Sri Aurobindo: Not at all. It is something genuine, a violent severity against something very wrong. e.g. the Rudra Bhava of Shiva. Anger one knows by its feeling of sensations, it rises from below, while Rudra Bhava rises from the heart. I will give you an instance. Once X became very violent against the Mother and was shouting and showing his fists. As I heard the shouting, a violent severity came down, that was absolutely uncontrollable. I went out and said: "Who is shouting at the Mother? Who is shouting here?" As soon as he heard it he became very quiet.

Disciple: I heard X had a very violent tamper.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, he was otherwise an earnest Sadhaka, became conscious of many things and made progress. But these fits used to come to him now and then. Some Asuric forces used to catch hold of him and he could not control himself. It is these forces that have failed him in the yoga, for I hear he does not have these attacks now outside. When under their grip he could not see that he was in the wrong. He blamed me and the Mother, though we had been very lenient and considerate to him. After sometime he was able to recognise his faults, admit it and promise that he would not do it again. But again he would be swept away by the forces. Sometimes his vanity and self-respect would come in
the way of his admitting the fault immediately. That is the mistake. One must not justify one's wrong. If one does that, it comes again and makes it more difficult to get rid of it.

**Disciple:** 'Y' after doing so much Tapasya is thinking of leaving the Ashram and that too after twelve years of stay.

**Sri Aurobindo:** What Tapasya? If complete control was given to him he would have stayed perhaps.

**Disciple:** He says, he is helping the Mother.

**Sri Aurobindo:** Helping only? I thought he was conducting the Ashram? *(Laughter)*

**Disciple:** But these kinds of people—will they ever realise the Divine?

**Sri Aurobindo:** Everyone will arrive at the Divine. 'A.' once asked the Mother if he will realise God. The Mother replied that he will, unless he did something idiotic and cut sort the life, and that is what he has done.

15th January, 1939

Sri Aurobindo opened the topic by referring to a letter from an American.

**Sri Aurobindo:** There is a job which perhaps 'X' would like to attend to. The letter is addressed to Sri Aurobindo Ashram under the belief that it is a person. The man wants sporting items, and "predictions". He says:
As you are a Yogi you "can go into trance" and we will share the profits!! Let me know your terms. Then he says: "If you don’t want to take the money, you can give it to the poor! (turning to X.). You can go into trance or send "Y" into it. I will be a hard nut.

I have no objection to sharing profits, only we share in profits not in loss!! Besides, we class ourselves among the poor, so we won’t have to find them! (pause)

All sorts of half-crazy people are writing to us from everywhere, from Germany, America etc. I wonder how they manage to get the address.

_Disciple_: It must be from the magazine in which A wrote an article giving his Ashram address from which he thought “Aurobindo Ashram” was a man! In that case, A must take up the matter and reply to this man.

_Disciple_: I am afraid, we won’t get anything inspite of the proposal to share profits. In Gujarat there was—I believe even now is—a small group of seekers under the guidance of late Narsimhacharyya who got an offer from America promising fabulous returns from small investments. The followers were all taken in, Lakhs of rupees were sent and nothing was heard afterwards.

_Disciple_: On the other hand some Indian Sannyasis are making good business in America. One of them has modernised yoga; his method is a combination of business and yoga, “sets of lectures and courses of meditation” etc.

_Sri Aurobindo_: "R" was telling "M" that if he went to America he would be a great success. I think "R" was right. Some of these people have the character of a charlatan.
Disciple: But coming to his question: is it possible to predict sport items and cotton prices and share-fluctuations?

Disciple: I knew an astrologer who impressed my cousin very much and when he acted under his guidance his predictions did not at all come true.

Sri Aurobindo: But I had a remarkable experience at Baroda, not of an astrologer but of one who knew thought-reading. His predictions as an astrologer were all wrong. The manager of my house, Chhotalal, took me to this man and asked me to have some questions in my mind.

As we entered his room he told me all the four questions that were in my mind; and the curious thing is that three questions were clearly formulated in my mind, but the fourth one had escaped me; but he caught that also; it was remarkable.

Disciple: Is anything being done to get some of your books published in America?

Sri Aurobindo: No. Besides, I don’t know if the Americans are interested in profound questions. Swami Nikhilananda, I heard, wrote an article about me which Miss Wilson Nishta says, was profound. The editor of the paper returned it saying, “it won’t interest the Americans,” and he had to change it and made it what it is.

Disciple: But the Americans are open to new ideas.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes. If they would not want sensation and change the openness to new ideas would be very great advantage. As it is all one can say is that there are more people in America interested in these things than in
Europe, though in Europe also the number of people who are interested in these things is increasing now a days.

Disciple: One Thompson, graduate from Oxford, according to his own statement, came to the gate and I had some humourous exchange of sentences with him. He was very queer.

Sri Aurobindo: It must be he, who recently sent me a long letter on philosophy. I don't think, he himself was clear about what he wrote. What was your exchange with him like?

Disciple: I was just going out when the Sadhak at the gate—duty asked me to help him to understand this new arrival, Thompson. I asked him: May I know your name, please? He: “Name! I have no name”. “Apart from philosophical considerations about the reality or unreality of it, a name is a necessity in this unphilosophical world” I said. He: “You can call me anything you like—it matters very little to me”. I: “It is not a question of my calling you anything. Unfortunately there is the Police Department which will demand a passport with a name, and that matters.”

Sri Aurobindo: Then what did he say?

Disciple: At last he said his name was Thompson.”

(laughter)

Disciple: I remember a difficult question: “Is it in keeping with yoga to get oneself insured?”

Sri Aurobindo: Thakur Dayananda would say “no”. He was always depending on God and did not believe in storing things. If you don't get anything, it means, God wants
you to starve. The whole group used to sing and dance, there was an excited expression of their Sadhana, some kind of vital demonstration.

Later on he complained that the disciples were drawing out his vital forces.

They had the faith that nothing could happen to them; when the police came to arrest them they were all singing and dancing. Seeing them in exaltation the police went away. They thought that they were invincible. The Government sent soldiers to arrest them. Then their faith was shaken. One of the prominent disciples, Mohindra De also lost his faith, though he was the victim of his own enthusiasm.

Disciple: How can the vital forces of oneself be drawn out when one is in contact with the Divine?

Sri Aurobindo: The force that supports the work, the vital force, is different from the Divine Consciousness.

Disciple: Do you remember one Kulkarni who came and was complaining that his vital force was being drawn out?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes. He was surrounded by forces of disintegration, chaos, disaster and death. And he was unconsciously throwing it out.

Disciple: One of us then told you that Kulkarni had strength and intensity. Then you had said something remarkable: “You call it strength? It is some wild intensity of weakness—not strength!”

Sri Aurobindo: Intensity with solidity pays; but without support below, it does not lead to anything. ‘B’ was like that and so was ‘J.’
Disciple: But B did brilliant work.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes. What he did was brilliant but slight, there was nothing below to support, the intensity had no body, so to say. He went because of his ambition, he wanted to be right-hand man. Mother put a divine entity into him; it left him when he left the place. He has failed all through.

Disciple: But he was a good lieutenant in the old days.

Sri Aurobindo: There are some people who are good as lieutenants, but by themselves they are nothing. 'B' is like that. I supported him but he used to leave one thing and go in for another. He spoiled his career through his own fault.

Disciple: Some people say that now he speaks unfavourably about the Ashram.

Sri Aurobindo: We know that. To 'M' who was coming here he said: "he has caught you by his philosophy" meaning me.

But the Mother knows these things even without any reports from outside.

Disciple: Our friend D who has the "eternal doubter" in him met Upen Banerjee at Calcutta and asked Upen whether he believes in God.

Sri Aurobindo: What did Upen say?

Disciple: He said: "How can I say I don't believe in God when I know Sri Aurobindo? I have a measuring rod for men and I can measure them all right; but in Sri Aurobindo's case I cannot measure him. In case of other
great people they reach a certain point in their growth and then they stop, whereas in his case he is always going on further and further.

Sri Aurobindo: (smiled) I see. Upen also had intensity; he had agnosticism and faith. It is that which makes his writing brilliant. But he could never understand the “Arya”. Why, Rishikesh (Kanjilal) also was one in whom doubt could never get the better of faith and faith could not of doubt! (Laughter) He always wanted to fix himself to some anchor, he could not give up seeking, nor pursue steadily and find an anchor. “The movement will not grow” he used to say. (after pause) The revolutionaries were quite an interesting lot and though not fit for yoga, one could not feel dull in their company.

Disciple: “K” was enthusiastic about Sadhana.

Sri Aurobindo: He was. But he was not able to stand the trial of yoga. I don’t think he had the capacity to do the yoga; he had too tall an idea about himself, and he is crude. And as to ‘Kh’ I wonder how he could ever have done the yoga.

16th January 1939.

There was a humourous sequel to a telegram requesting for “ashes”; It was a puzzle for some time, and after some effort the word “ashisha”, meaning “blessing” was rightly understood.

Disciple: I do not understand why he is asking for “ashes”.
Sri Aurobindo: I don't understand either. When I used to smoke I could have sent at least the cigar ashes. But now I do not smoke!

Disciple: But we are burning here the mosquito-coils. The ashes of the coils can be sent. (laughter)

Disciple: But I think he is asking for Blessings—the post office in receiving the Sanskrit word Ashisha seems to have turned it into “ashes”! (Laughter)

Disciple: I read a paper written by Prof. Somesh Bose, a mathematician, in which he mentions that Bholagiri, a Sadhu had meditation with his wife who was dead. He says that he saw them both, his dead wife present “in flesh and blood”. The question is: Is it possible? Also, whether Bholanath materialised his wife or she did it herself? Somesh says, she was everyday present at the prayer time. Can she remain like that in her materialised body almost all the time? Does she live with Bholagiri all the time, or does she come and go? What will materialists say?

Disciple: They will say, it is all humbug. (turning to Sri Aurobindo) But what does yoga say?

Sri Aurobindo: “Many possibilities”. This seems to be a case of temporary materialising, as Bholagiri is present everytime. I believe, there is always a difference between material body and a materialised body. This kind of materialising commonly takes place immediately after a man dies. You find that he visits either a relation or a friend. If the fact of his death is not known or if the man is not known to be living far away, people mistake it for an actual physical presence.
There are many authentic cases of this kind. My poetic brother Mono Mohan’s friend Stephen Philips said that his mother has visited him after her death. Mono Mohan told me the story, ascribing the experience to telepathic communication of the form. But I think it is not mere communication of form or cast by the mind only. There is the vital and the physical part which materialises.

Disciple: You have already cited the other day the case of Lord Strethmore. But is it possible to materialise completely?

Sri Aurobindo: Theoretically, it should be possible, though I have known no case of the same. After the experience we had of the stone-throwing in the Guest-house here, I believe, if the stones could be materialised, why not a human being?

Disciple: The Egyptians preserved the human body after death, with a belief that the soul would return to it after some years. Paul Brunton claims to have met some spirit hoary with age on the hill near the pyramids.

Sri Aurobindo: The Egyptians believed that at the time of death the Ka, the vital being, went out of the man and after a thousand years, if the body was preserved, it would return to it. Brunton, I suppose, materialised the belief.

Disciple: Is it possible to revitalise the dead?

Sri Aurobindo: I can’t say.

Disciple: There is a reported case of a Bey whom Braunton met and who revived a sparrow after it was dead. Brunton says that he saw the same phenomenon perfor-
med by Vishuddhananda, "Gandhi Swamy" as he was called. Is it possible?

Sri Aurobindo: That is possible. Just as you can revive a drowned man by pulling his physical organs into function again, that is, by resorting to physical devices life can be restored. If you know how to reintroduce the power that sets the organs to action, after the body is wounded or dead, you can revive the man.

The real question is whether it is the being of the man that comes back to life, or it is some other spirit that wants to live and gets hold of the body. Both are possible, because revival is done in two ways: One, is to bring back the spirit of the man which is still not far away, the other is to get some other spirit that consents to come.

Disciple: Can the vital-being be called back to the body?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, if it has not gone away very far, it can be pulled back to the body.

(The subject was changed)

Disciple: There is chance of "C" coming.

Disciple: He has been coming for a long time.

Disciple: He is coming after organising his property.

Sri Aurobindo: Is he still organising his property? Has he much property left?

Disciple: I am afraid he has lost everything.

Sri Aurobindo: He is a phenomenon! Do you remember
the name of the person who apologised to us? I wonder whether he offered the apology because his public attack did not succeed.

Disciple: Yes. He seemed to have gathered all sorts of false facts from all kinds of people.

Disciple: Did you read his book?

Sri Aurobindo: I simply glanced at it! I don't think he sold more than half a dozen copies. (after a pause) It seems "M" has expressed sorrow for what she did here and explained that she acted under the influence of S and B.

Disciple: The attack by "R" was not of any allegations. His objection was that the Ashram was not doing what he calls public work.

Sri Aurobindo: What work?

Disciple: Say country's work, work for humanity.

Sri Aurobindo: It is quite a new objection. Nobody expects an Ashram, a spiritual institution, to do work!

Disciple: The Ramkrishna Mission, Gandhi's Ashram and some other institutions do some public work and so people expect an Ashram to work for humanity.

Sri Aurobindo: Perhaps, because I did political work they expect that I should continue doing it all my life.

Disciple: Not only that, the objection is that so many young men are being drawn away from the field of work.
Sri Aurobindo: Oh, I see.

Disciple: But Gandhi's Ashram is not a spiritual institution. It is a group of people gathered to be trained to do some work on Mahatma's principles and methods. One can say that service to the public is one of their aims.

But Subhas wrote against the Ashram recently on the ground that it was attracting away some of the best people from country's work.

Disciple: I don't remember if he wrote "best" or "good" for those who came here. He quoted the example of D.

Sri Aurobindo: But D was not doing political work.

Disciple: Subhas's idea was that D may not do political work now. But when the time came he must be prepared to give up everything and join the struggle.

Sri Aurobindo: I see, one can't give up everything for God!

Disciple: But suppose one gives up everything for country's freedom, then what is he to do afterwards, except perhaps going to jail.

Sri Aurobindo: D in jail! Perhaps he would write off some stories about his agony.

Disciple: That, perhaps, would be a gain to literature, not to politics.

Sri Aurobindo: At the time of the Gandhi movement someone asked Abanindranath Tagore, why he was not giving up his painting for the sake of the country and take to politics. He said: I believe, I serve the country through my painting in which I have some capacity, that, at
least, is something I know; whereas I would be only a bad politician.

Disciple: Tagore narrowly escaped the Charkha. But ti seems Nandlal Bose is turning at!

Sri Aurobindo: He is a man of ascetic temperament. There was an enthusiast who even wrote an article showing that the Chakra referred to in the Gita was the Charkha!

Disciple: It was Vinoba Bhave, a disciple of Mahatma.

The topic changed to Baroda. Dr. M. mentioned that now the old race course is covered by fine buildings constructed by co-operative Societies and that doctor Balabhai was still alive staying in one of the new buildings. He is nearly eightyfive.

Sri Aurobindo: (After a pause) The mention of Baroda brought to my mind the connection with the Gaekwad. It is strange how things arrange themselves at times. I had failed in the I. C. S. and was looking for a job. Exactly at the time the Gaekwad happened to be in London. I don’t remember whether he called us, or we met him, but an elderly gentleman, whom we consulted, was quite willing to propose Rs. 200/- per month as a good sum. It would be more than £10/- and it is surprising that he thought it was very good!

But I left the negotiations to my elder brother and James Cotton. I knew nothing about life at that time.

Disciple: What were the expenses in those days?

Sri Aurobindo: Before the war, it was quite decent living for £5/-. Our landlady was an angel. She came from
Somerset and had settled in London—perhaps after she was widowed. She was long suffering and never asked us for money even if we did not pay for months and months. I wonder how she managed. I paid her from my I. C. S. stipend.

It was father's fault that I failed in the riding test. He did not send money and the riding lessons at Cambridge then were rather costly. The teacher was also careless; so long as he got his money he simply left me with the horse and I was not particular.

I tried riding again at Baroda with Madhav Rao but it was not successful.

My failure was a great disappointment to my father because he had arranged everything for me through Sir Henry Cotton. A post was kept for me in the district of Arah which is considered a fine place. All that came down like a wall. (pause)

I wonder what would have happened to me if I had joined the civil service. I think, they would have chucked me for laziness and arrears of work! (laughter)

Disciple: Do you remember Nana Saheb Sinde of Baroda?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, Madhav Rao Jadhav, myself and Nana Saheb all of us held revolutionary ideas at that time.

Disciple: He has spoken to the youth conference emphasizing the need of military training for the defence of the country. His speech was against the current vogue of non-violence.

Sri Aurobindo: It is good that some one raises voice like
that when efforts are being made to make non-violence the method of solving all problems.

Disciple: But the insistence on non-violence has succeeded in disarming the Pathan of the Frontier. It seems, Gandhi objected to armed volunteers keeping guard over him while he was in the Frontier province.

Sri Aurobindo: And what were they expected to do in case there was an attack? Stand simply?

Disciple: No. They should die resisting.

Sri Aurobindo: This non-violent resistance I have never been able to fathom. I can understand an attitude of absolute non-resistance to Evil, as the Christians say “Resist not the Evil”. You may die without resisting and accept the consequences as sent by God. But to resist passively seems to me meaningless. And to change the opponent’s heart by such passive resistance is something I don’t understand.

Disciple: And the “Modern Review” put in another objection which is worth considering. The article accepts that non-violence may be a good gospel for a great Saint but for the ordinary man to allow evil to triumph so easily—by passive resistance—would not be good for the society. There is no reason to hope that the goonda will change his mind, or heart, if you allow him to kill you.

Sri Aurobindo: I am afraid, non-violence is being applied to other fields whereas its extreme application is meant for spiritual life. Non-violence or Ahinsa as a spiritual attitude and its practice is perfectly understandable and has a standing. You may not accept it in toto but it
has a basis in the Reality. You can live it in spiritual life but to try to apply to all life seems too much. Such an application ignores the great principle of Adhikar, qualification even as the Europeans do. Also it makes no provision for difference of situations.

Disciple: Mahatma's point is that in either case, whether with arms or without, you are prepared to die. Then, why not try to die without arms, since armaments are piling up in all nations and there is no end to where it will lead. In the other case you perpetuate passive resistance while in fighting you perpetuate killing.

Sri Aurobindo: If you bring in the question of expense then the reasons for non-violence, we must admit, are economic and not ethical. (after a pause)

It is a principle which can be applied with success if practised on a mass scale, specially by unarmed people like the Indians, because you are left with no other choice. But even when it succeeds it is not that you have changed the heart of the enemy, but that you have made it impossible for him to rule. That is what happened in Ireland. There was in Ireland armed resistance also but that would not have succeeded without the passive resistance side by side. Such tremendous generalisations like "passive resistance for all", "Charkha for all", "celibacy for all" hardly work.

17th January 1939.

Photographs of Harnath (Pagal) and Kusum Devi were shown to Sri Aurobindo. A declaration from Matu-
shri-Kusum Haranath—that she was the Supreme Power and that Harnath was one of her forms, was read.

Sri Aurobindo: That is the Tantric doctrine.

Disciple: But Harnath was a Vaishnava.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, but the doctrine she has proclaimed is not Vaishnava doctrine, it is Tantric.

Disciple: Is it true?

Sri Aurobindo: In principle it is true; for the Supreme Shakti is the Divine Consciousness and all the gods are from her. It is she who gives out the gods—Shiva and others. It is said that even Shiva cannot act unless she gives him power to act.

Disciple: Harnath had his decisive spiritual experience in Kashmir where, it is related, Gauranga came to him and gave him the “mission”. But his later disciples regard him equal to Gauranga.

Disciple: But where is the difficulty? If the consciousness is ultimately and essentially divine, why should not Gauranga and Harnath be one in consciousness?

Disciple: They want to prove him to be as great as Chaitanya.

Sri Aurobindo: Oh, there is competition between the two Avatars? Did Harnath proclaim himself as the Avatar?

Disciple: No, but he behaved like one. There are cases of very rapid conversions in case of people who have met him.
Sri Aurobindo: I have found that Vaishnava Bhakti-devotional path makes for very strong and rapid progress.

Disciple: There is a line of Sadhus in Gujarat, who practise the worship of the Impersonal God.

Sri Aurobindo: Worship of the Impersonal God?

Disciple: They do not have any personal God, but they worship One who is everywhere, beyond personality. Kabir and some other Saints believe in this. Even when they take a particular Name of God, they mean by it something more than the name. They will say "Rama" but they believe in various aspects of Rama.

Ek Rama Dashratha ghara Jaye, ek Rama, ghat ghat me
Ek Ramaka submen pasara–ek Rama subante nyara

Disciple: Does "Nyara" mean the Transcendent?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, the Absolute, the Supreme.

Disciple: The couplet says: one Rama is born in Dashratha's house and is therefore subject to change; perhaps Kshara, One Rama is present in every heart and one that is all-pervading and therefore universal and one Rama is beyond all.

Sri Aurobindo: That seems to be the same thing as Gita's idea of Vasudeva that is in all and Vasudeva that is the Supreme Absolute—both are the same. I have seen instances in intense gyana-knowledge and intense Bhakti (devotion). Devotion of the Impersonal Divine may not be powerful for change; it tends to be more etherealised and the knowledge that enters into it makes devotion less intense or rapid.
Disciple: We have heard that you received guidance from Sri Krishna in your Sadhana: was it from Sri Krishna of the Bindravan or of Kurukshtetra?

Sri Aurobindo: I should think, it was of Kurukshtetra Krishna.

Disciple: These distinctions between various personalities of Krishna, one of Bindravan and others are of later growth in Vaishnavism.

Sri Aurobindo: They regard Bala Gopal as the Delight aspect or the Delight-Consciousness; but there are older schools of Vaishnavism that regard Krishna as an Avatar of Vishnu.

Disciple: Krishna of Kurukshtetra is; I suppose, one who gave the Gita.

Sri Aurobindo: One who spoke the Gita is the Vishnu aspect.

Disciple: Arjuna could not bear his sight and had to ask him to resume his human form.

Sri Aurobindo: In the Vishnu Purana all the aspects of Vishnu are nicely described. It is one of the Puranas I have read through carefully. I wonder how it has escaped general notice because it is magnificent poetry.

There is a humourous passage in it, where a disciple asks the Guru whether the king is on the elephant or the elephant on the king (Laughter).

Disciple: The king must be Rammurti if the elephant was to be on him.
Sri Aurobindo: Then the Guru jumps over the shoulders of the disciple and asks him whether he is on the disciple’s back or the disciple on the Guru’s back (Laughter) Then there is a very fine description of Jada Bharata.

Disciple: Is it true? Did Jada Bharata exist?

Sri Aurobindo: I don’t know. But it sounds very real in the Purana, where it is placed.
   It is also the most anti-Buddhist Purana.

Disciple: Then it must have been written late.

Disciple: Buddha was born about 500 B. C.

Sri Aurobindo: It is not so early as that; all the puranas are posterior to Buddhism. They are a part of the Brahminical revival which came as a reaction against Buddhism in the Gupta period.

Disciple: The Puranas are even the earliest, supposed to have been written about the 3rd or the 4th century A. D.

Sri Aurobindo: Most probably. In the Vishnu Purana Buddha is regarded as one of the Avatara of Vishnu who came to deceive the Asuras. He is not referred to by name but is called “Maya-moha”. Reference to Budha is very clear; it repeats “Budyaswa! Budhyaswa.” It is a fine work.

Disciple: It is said that the Tantras are derived from the Vedas.

Disciple: There is nothing in the Veda to justify their claim except one solitary Suktta, called the Vak; Ambh-
rani—it is a Vakhilya. There Ambhrani speaks of herself as the creatrix of the Gods. Of course one can take Aditi, the Infinite divine consciousness as the root of Tantra if one likes.

_Sri Aurobindo_ : The principle of Tantra may be as old as the Veda but the known Tantras are later.

_Disciple_ : The Vedas are considered the highest authority in India, so everything in India wants to peg itself on to the Vedas—not only Tantra; but art, dancing etc.

_Sri Aurobindo_ : I don’t understand this passion for antiquity. What does it matter when a thing took place; Truth is truth whenever it may be found.

_Disciple_ : But the Vedas are considered eternal.

_Sri Aurobindo_ : They are eternal because the source of their inspiration is eternal.

_Disciple_ : Some one has said that the eternal Veda is in everybody’s heart.

_Disciple_ : It is Sri Aurobindo who has said that in his ‘Synthesis of Yoga.’ You are quoting him to himself! (laughter)

_Sri Aurobindo_ : The Upanishads came after the Vedas and they put in more plain language the same truth that was in the Veda. In the Veda the language is symbolic.

...But the Upanishads are equally great. Even in the Veda there are passages which clearly show that the Vedantic Truth is contained in the Veda. But it is surprising that the readers of the Veda miss those
passages. For instance, the Veda says—"Riten ritam apihitam", and then "it is That one" that is the source. It it clear that it refers to the Vedantic truth of the One. Similarly, the Upanishads speak of the Vedic symbols. The Ishpanishad speaks of the Vedic gods Sun—Surya and Agni, but you can see that the significance there is symbolic.

Veda, Upanishad, Gita all are equally great.

Disciple: The Europeans thought that it was not possible to believe that the Vedic Rishis were so advansed—specially in those primitive times.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, they are so satisfied when they found the historical interpretation that they did not care for many obvious indications. But you must admit that the interpretation turning the Vedic Gods to gases is magnificently ingenious.

Disciple: Was it not Paramashiva Aiyar, a Mysorian who showed that remarkable ingenuity?

Sri Aurobindo: I think that is the man.

Disciple: He is trying to prove in his book on the Veda that the Veda shows the condition of earth in the glacial period and then indicates its geological evolution. I gave him up when I came upon his explanation of "parame Vyoman" meaning "trough" and "crest" of the ocean waves.

Many riks of Dirghatamas are untranslated even to-day inspite of all ingenious theories and interpretations.

Sri Aurobindo: You can't translate them or understand them unless you have the key to the symbolism.
19th January 1939.

Dr. R’s visit: In course of his talk he remarked in connection with the swelling at the knee joint that all diseases are of the nature of inflamations.

After he departed, Sri Aurobindo asked:

“In what sense are all illnesses inflamations? There could be any satisfactory explanation of it.”

The topic of Aldous Huxley’s book “Ends & Means” was taken up by a disciple.

Disciple: Huxley suggests two ways of solving the problems of man. One by changing the existing institutions of education, industries, in fact by modifying social, political, economic and religious institutions. This would bring about a change in the individual. So far as industries are concerned he suggests the creation of small units federated to a Central Organisation. Thus it would eliminate large units which are the roots of all troubles. The second remedy he suggests is to change the individual and make him, what he calls “non-attached”, who would practise virtue with disinterestedness. I believe there is a French author who also advocates such new types of industrial institutions.

Sri Aurobindo: That was my idea when I proposed to Motilal to have a spiritual commune.—I don’t call it Commune but a Sangha—a Community based on spirituality and living its own economic life; it would have its own agriculture, and a net work of such communities spread all over the country would interchange its products among themselves.

Disciple: You gave him the idea of the paper also.
Sri Aurobindo: I now don't remember. But I asked him to start hand-loom and weaving.

Disciple: He has tried to take up Gandhian plan after he separated from us; we used to insist on Swadeshi; now they call it Khaddar.

Disciple: The financial condition there does not seem as sound as it made to appear.

Sri Aurobindo: Possibly. I do not know now what they are doing. I heard that some plots were bought in the Sunderbans to start agriculture. But as people were getting malaria, it had to be given up.

Disciple: Is it something like Dayal Bag? I don't know what spirituality they are having there. It seems as if all their energies are directed to external work and industries.

Sri Aurobindo: That may be due to their large-scale production. I heard that Anukul Thakur also has started work on the same idea.

Disciple: Does he not belong to Dayal Bag?

Sri Aurobindo: No. He may belong to what they call, the Radha Swami School. But he does not belong to Dayal Bag.

Disciple: But to start such a Sangha one must have spiritual realization and may take a long time to start.

Sri Aurobindo: Not necessarily. Ordinarily if one is to wait for spiritual realization it will take time. But all may not have the highest or supramental realization. Spiritual experience is enough for the people and that is not difficult to have. I told M that spirituality must be the basis of the Sangha. Otherwise, your success will be your failure. But he does not seem to have listened to it.
(After a pause) There were other religious communities of this sort before. The Dukhobar Community in Russia was very powerful and well organised, strong in its faith. They held together inspite of all persecution. At last they had to emigrate to Canada. One of their tenets was nudism, which the Canadian Government did not like and they got into trouble. (with a smile) They had atleast solved the weaving problem (laughter).

Then the Mormons were famous in the United States. The name of the founder was Joseph Smith, a prosaic name for a prophet. But Brigham Young was a very remarkable man, who really made the commune. Curiously enough one of their tenets, again, was polygamy. Their religion was based on the old testament. When they were made to give their religion they became quite like an ordinary man.

Mark Twain said that when the chief was interrogated in the presence of his members he replied that he knew his children by numbers, not by their names—it was inconvenient to remember their names.

There was another community in America which did not allow marriage among its members.

**Disciple** : Do you know if any communities are there in India?

**Sri Aurobindo** : The Sikhs are the only community organised on a religion. Thakur Dayananda established, or tried to establish an order of married Sannyasins.

**Disciple** : I heard that Anukul Thakur also adopted it for his disciples.

**Sri Aurobindo** : Disciples are another matter—they are allowed to marry.

**Disciple** : I think, he permitted the Sannyasins to marry.
Sri Aurobindo: The same principle is accepted by the Vaishnavas, who follow the Nityanand-school—they accept a Vaishnavi.

Disciple: All sorts of attempts at collective life seem to have been made and when one sees them all, one is driven to despair like the bald man—who was trying all kinds of remedies to cure baldness—who on looking at King Edward VII’s photo with his shining bald head, said, “I give it up”—(Laughter) Have you any idea how the supermind will proceed?

Sri Aurobindo: No idea. If you have an idea the result will be what has been in the past. We must leave the supermind to work it out.

Disciple: But that sort of work has to be based on love. One must have love for everyone.

Sri Aurobindo: Love is not enough. Something more than love is necessary. Unity of consciousness is more important than love.

Disciple: The trouble is, as soon as one begins something one tends to become ego-centric. Quarrel starts like aggravation of symptom in Homeopathy (Laughter).

Sri Aurobindo: But love also leads to quarrel. Nobody quarrels more than the lovers (laughter). (Looking at X) You know the Latin proverb that each quarrel is a renewal of love. Love is a fine flower but unity of consciousness is the root.

The difficulty is that those who are here receive something of the Higher power and they become ego-centric, then gather it in the vital and turn it to their lower nature. They think, it is their own power. When A came here from Chandranagore he said, “There at
Chandranagore—everybody is a sheep following the shepherd but here everybody is a Royal Bengal Tiger. (*Laughter*)

*Disciple*: Somebody also said that here is a zoo where each one is a lion roaring in his den.

*Sri Aurobindo*: When we were very few and the Ashram had not grown, B and S used to convert all sorts of people to spirituality, they were great. B once caught hold of a young Tamilian who was quite sheepish. B used to meet him. After three or four months of contact it was found, the young man had become quarrelsome, indolent and insolent—a great transformation had come over him—(*laughter*). It is S who made D a public leader. At any rate, the one thing he did was to make D get rid of all scruples. “Right and wrong do not matter, good and bad are nothing” he used to tell.

*Disciple*: And now D is trying to live up to it.

*Sri Aurobindo*: D used to say to Dr. Le Mongnac, “It is impossible for me to fail because I am a God-man.” He said to many people here that he is not afraid because he is Sri Aurobindo’s disciple. He got the power from the Mother and all agree that he is the one man who can do something if he wanted to. Mrs. R used to write: “What has N come to—at Pondicherry? He is writing to us “do this” and “do that”, and finds fault with our work”. Of course, they were quarrelling in Japan also when they were there. They had different views on their work.

B came straight from X. X was another great propagandist. He caught any one he could and made him do the Yoga—of course, it was his yoga. He did not think that any such thing as Adhikar was necessary.

*Disciple*: We had a hard tussel with Mahatmaji’s followers
over the question of transcending morality and immorality in a man of spiritual realism and resultant conduct. They always think that going beyond morality means sinking to immorality. All that does not conform to their moral code is immoral.

Sri Aurobindo: Of course, all can't go beyond morality. So their theory is true in their own field. It is a mental rule and so long as one cannot come in contact with the dynamic Divine source of action in himself, one has to be guided by some law of conduct—otherwise one might take up the attitude: "There is no virtue and no sin, so let us sin merrily."

What Sri Krishna says in the Gita: "Sarva Dharman parityajya" "abandoning all laws of conduct"—is said at the end of the Gita and not in the beginning: And then that is not alone; there is also "mamekam Sharanam Vraja," "take refuge in Me alone." But before one finds within oneself the guidance of the dynamic Divine, one has to have some rule to guide himself. Most of the people have to pass through the Sattwa stage. It is only very few that can start above it and the moral rule is true so far as most people are concerned.

Disciple: Can one say that the psychic being always wants transformation? There are people who believe that the psychic being in evolution would and must want transformation. Only the Atman—the spirit—can merge into laya in the infinite. Can not the developed psychic being turn to Laya—merging into the infinite?

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, it can; it depends on whether it is in front or not. If it is in front then, as I said, it takes charge of the nature and then its aspiration will be for transformation. But the developed psychic being can take any other spiritual direction. It depends on what direction the Divine within chooses. We cannot dictate to the soul.
what it shall choose; all are not compelled to transform their nature.

**Disciple**: What is the kind of transformation that takes place?

**Sri Aurobindo**: The psychic transformation is the first one. Many yogis achieve this psychic transformation: it is the pure Bhakta-nature. But all spiritual men are not saints, of course, both can go together, sometimes.

**Disciple**: Is there a distinction between saints and spiritual persons?

**Sri Aurobindo**: Of course, there is; saints are limited by their psychic nature, but spiritual men are not. The saint, generally, proceeds from and lives in the heart-centre. The spiritual man might live in other higher centres—say, above the head, in the spiritual consciousness.

**Disciple**: It is not quite clear to me—the distinction.

**Sri Aurobindo**: The saints live in the psychic being, that is, in the Purusha in the heart but the spiritual man might live above the head. I never felt like a saint myself—though Maurice Magre calls me ‘a philosopher and a saint.’ Krishna, for instance, was not a saint. A spiritual man may not always behave like a saint, he may have many other things in him like Rishi Durvasa.

**Disciple**: But saints are nearer to humanity; they are not like the Ishwar-Koti to whom no laws apply.

**Disciple**: In this yoga one has to fight like Arjuna, in the battle of Kurukshetra, because it is a yoga of fight and battle.

**Sri Aurobindo**: Not necessarily; it depends on the nature of the being. There are some people, for instance, who when they meet the hostile forces in the vital or in dream
begin to fight, while there are others who call for protection. If one has the psychic attitude one need not fight. Fighting is for the mental and the vital man; in the case of the mental type the fight is with ideas.

**Disciple**: Some people regard quarrelling with the Divine as the psychic way.

**Sri Aurobindo**: In that case, many people are psychic in the Ashram.

**Disciple**: I remember X’s letter referring to Ramprasad’s Song claiming that the Divine must satisfy his demand, because he had sacrificed everything for the Divine.

**Disciple**: “Claim” based on what? This argument seems to be “you must give me thing because I badly want it.” But what reply you gave to him?

**Sri Aurobindo**: It was not addressed to me; it was addressed to Krishna.

**Disciple**: Then, I will ask him to write to you.

**Sri Aurobindo**: No, No, don’t do that (laughter). Otherwise, I will have to be as hard as Krishna.

**Disciple**: They say that Shiva is a very kind and generous God.

**Sri Aurobindo**: I don’t know if he is very kind to the demons. He gives very inconvenient boons and finds it very difficult to wriggle out through them. He is a God who does not care for consequences. Generally Vishnu or somebody else has to come in afterwards to save the situation. Krishna is hard-hearted, they say.

(The topic underwent a change.)

**Disciple**: I am reminded of Sadhaka X whose Sadhana seemed to be going on very well...who is now attracted
to Buddhism. I do not know if he has been attracted to some woman – but there was some such indication.

Sri Aurobindo: It is sad if it is true. In one of his letters to Y he wrote that one need not be a eunuch in order to be a master of sex…..one should guard his realisation.

Realisation is something very precious and one should guard it and live in it like a fortress. One can go in adding whatever knowledge one wants or gets but always guarding his realisation. For instance, it is not at all necessary to give up Bhakti to get Jnana.

After all it is a pity that he should give up the love of Krishna for a mere human girl. I found it difficult to go through his Commentary on the Gita. It is more intellectual, it lacks the life and the heart. Otherwise, it was always a pleasure to read his writings. He seems to have lost the intensity of mental vision, the seeing mind which he had, but I thought that it was due to his turning towards Knowledge.

His attraction towards Buddhism is understandable, because to the European rational mind its rationalism has an appeal. It was first through Buddhism that Europe came to and began to know India. Blavatsky found Theosophy on Buddhism. Next they understand Shanker in Europe and for many years the Europeans thought there was nothing in India except Shanker’s Adwaita. But if X has taken to Buddhism his sex abhorration is not justifiable. Buddhism is the most exacting path. It is most unindulgent, severe and dry; it is a path of Tapasya.

Disciple: He had perhaps great mental pride.

Sri Aurobindo: May be also vital over-confidence.

Disciple: He said to Y that sex was not a problem for him.
Sri Aurobindo: That is over-confidence. Perhaps in course of Sadhana some opening has taken place in the vital.

Disciple: But can a Sadhaka fall like that after such fine realisations as he had?

Sri Aurobindo: What do you mean by realisations? There is always the possibility of being Yoga Bhramsha (fallen from yoga).

20th January 1939.

After discussion about local affairs, Sri Aurobindo: I find X’s letter to Y is written with his usual clear vision. He advises Y to guard against mixing up his own feeling of personal wrong with the legitimate decision not to shake hands with one who has wronged the Guru. About A he says, “these people like A, when they take to yoga it is more ornamental than anything else”. It is fine phrase “ornamental yoga”.

Disciple (giving a turn to the talk): Nothing seems to have come out of Chamberlain – Mussolini interview. Both parties say, they are satisfied with the results.

Sri Aurobindo: I can’t understand England’s policy. I do not know what she is after. France is being led by England; she is her tail. It is said that Mussolini is waiting for France’s victory, then he will present his terms to France. France’s victory in Spain will be dangerous for France. But it is very difficult to see how England profits by this. For as soon as Italy and Germany have crushed France the next victim will be England. England knows very well Mussolini’s ambition to create an Italian empire. And that means he will try to regain all that once belonged
to Italy. England is deliberately raising Hitler and Mussolini against France and letting her down. I do not know why unless the three want to share the empire of France and then England may try to put Hitler and Mussolini against each other. That may be her selfish, traditional policy, but it is a very risky game.

Disciple: But is it possible? Can England remain aloof when France breaks with the other powers?

Sri Aurobindo: Why not? Chamberlain has said that as long as England’s interest are not involved she is not obliged to fight. England will say that Italy’s demands have not been satisfied and so she has gone to war and Germany has joined her. There was no aggression on her part; so, England is not obliged to come to the aid of France; and number of excuses could be given. Blum told a friend who is also a friend of Daladier that he had to betray Czechoslovakia because Chamberlain told him that he will support him as it is diplomatically possible, but in case of war France should not count on England.

Disciple: I wonder why Flandin wants to support France when Blum is against him. You know Flandin even sent telegram to Mussolini conveying his congratulations. Hitler counts Flandin as a friend—he intends to join the Rome-Berlin axis and thus keep out England!

Sri Aurobindo: Italy shall demand after the Spanish question is settled. Italy is almost sure to claim Tunis, Nice, Jibouti. Is Flandin prepared to give them? Italy wants her empire in Africa. So, Tunis and Jibouti are essential for her to be the master in the Mediterranean. Blum is incapable; it was he who applied non-intervention in the Spanish question.

At present it seems two people are flourishing their arms against everybody and the rest are somehow trying
to save themselves. The one man who has seen through the whole thing is Roosevelt, but he is too far and he is not sure of the support of the American people.

*Disciple*: What about Russia?

*Sri Aurobindo*: Russia is unreliable. One does not know its military strength. At one time she was supposed to have the biggest air-force. But according to Hindenberg it does not seem to be so.

*Disciple*: Jawaharlal says that Hitler and his generals did not expect the non-resistance—which they met—from Austria. They were all very much surprised.

*Sri Aurobindo*: Yes, the generals were opposed to Hitler, for they were not prepared to fight. Now Hitler will say: “Have you seen that I am right? Things have happened as I told you.”

*Disciple*: Jawaharlal said that the threatened attack against Czechoslovakia was mainly bluff.

*Sri Aurobindo*: It can’t be a reliable news; the Germans are too disciplined for that.

*Disciple*: There is some trouble in Holland, and Germany is threatening to cut off all trade with her and establish trade-route through Antwerp and not Amsterdam.

*Sri Aurobindo*: If that takes place that will make Chamberlain fight inspite of himself;—England does not want any German navy in the North Sea. But Germany won’t do that unless she wants war with England.

The topic was changed now.

*Disciple*: When X was working here some new sadhaka met him and asked him: “Who are the advanced sadhaks
here?”—He replied: “I don’t know.” Then when he was repeatedly asked he said: I will tell you, but you must tell it to nobody. There are only two advanced sadhaks here,...you and I (laughter).

*Sri Aurobindo* : This instance of ‘two’ reminds me of a joke of Hugo. Balzac said to a friend that there are two men who know and write French: myself and Hugo. When that was reported to Hugo he said: “That is alright, but why Balzac?” (laughter)

There is another story of a lady who believed the doctrine of eternal hell or heaven – according to which people will either go to heaven or to hell. Some one asked her: Do you know where the people will go? She said: All will go to hell, except myself and the minister-meaning the clergyman, but I have doubts about the minister. (laughter)

*Disciple* : Very similar is the case of Dr. R. who is here; when he first came here I asked him about homoeopathy. He said: You see, there are four top-most men in the line. One Dr. so & so in Calcutta, other two are there and I came here. (laughter)

21st January 1939.

*Dr. R’s visit today.*

*Dr. R:* Do you feel the pain (in the knee-joint) still?

*Sri Aurobindo* : Yes.

*Dr. R:* That is because you are moving the leg after a long time; it will disappear when you are accustomed to it.
Sri Aurobindo: Accustomed to the pain! (laughter)

Talk then turned to the world-war and the Congress. Pattabhi was elected President Patel wanted to settle at Rajkot or go to East Africa.

Disciple: I am afraid if Patel goes to East or South Africa the Indians there would be shot.

Sri Aurobindo: Instead of Patel going there to Africa it is better that Gandhi should go to Hitler. Hitler will say to Mahatma: You follow your inner voice Mr. Gandhi, it is my own. There is no reason to say that he would be wrong, for my inner voice may be good and necessary for me, while it may not be so for another man. The very opposite may be good and necessary for another man. The Cosmic Spirit has one thing for Hitler and may lead him in the way he is going, while it may decide differently in another case.

Disciple: That may lead to a clash between the two and the breaking of the instruments.

Disciple: What of that? Something good may come out of it.

Disciple: That might lead to fatalism, belief in destiny.

Sri Aurobindo: It may. There have been people who have believed in fate or destiny or whatever you may call it. Napoleon III used to say: "So long as something is necessary to be done by me it will be done in any case; when that necessity will cease, I shall be thrown on the wayside like an outworn vessel." And that is what exactly happened to him.

Napoleon I also believed in fate.

Disciple: When somebody asked Napoleon I, why did he plan if he believed in fate, he said: "It is also fated that I should plan."
Sri Aurobindo: Yes. All men who have been great and strong believe in some higher Force, greater than themselves, moving them. Socrates used to call this Deamon-man's divine being. It is curious how sometimes even in small things one depends on this voice. Once Socrates was walking with a disciple. When they came to a place where they had to take a turn, the disciple said, "let us take this route." Socrates said: "my deamon asks me to take the other." The disciple did not agree and followed his own route. After he had gone a certain distance he was attacked by some pigs and thrown down by them.

There are some who do not follow the inner voice but an inner light. The Quakers believed in that.

Disciple: Do they see the Light?

Sri Aurobindo: I don't know; but some one has said: "see that your light is not darkness." The strange thing is that this inner voice does not give any reason; it only says: "do this; if you donot do that, bad results will follow." Sometimes, strangely enough bad results do follow if you don't listen to it. Lele used to say that whenever he did not follow the inner voice he had pain and suffering.

Disciple: But many kinds of voices are there according to the forces on different planes. I believe it is extremely difficult to distinguish between the right or the true inner voice and false one. There may be voices either from the mental or the subtle physical planes.

Moreover, in the same person the voices may differ.

Sri Aurobindo: Quite true. Hitler's friend said about him that what Hitler said today be contradicted tomorrow. I also heard a voice which asked me to come to Pondicherry; of course, it was the inner voice.

Disciple: Can not one be mistaken?
Sri Aurobindo: It was impossible to make a mistake about or disobey that voice. There are some voices about which there can be no possibility of any doubt or mistake. Charu Chandra Roy wanted me to go to France—so that we may have no further trouble. When I arrived at Chandranagar he refused to receive me and shoved on to Moti Roy.

Disciple: But why should he receive you?

Sri Aurobindo: Because as a revolutionary he was obliged to do so.

Disciple: Was he a revolutionary?

Sri Aurobindo: Good Lord, we were together in jail and perhaps his jail experience frightened him. At the beginning he was a very ardent revolutionary.

Disciple: Nolini says he was weeping again in the jail. The jail authorities thought that he could not be a revolutionary (laughter) and so let him off.

Sri Aurobindo: No, that was not the reason. It was by the intervention of the French Government, I think, that he got his release. Barin one day walked into his house, gave him a long lecture on revolution and converted him in one day.

Disciple: I heard that Nivedita also was a revolutionary, is it true?

Sri Aurobindo: What do you mean? She was one of the revolutionary leaders. She went about visiting places in India to come in contact with the people. She was open and frank and talked about her revolutionary plan to everybody. When she used to speak on revolution it was her very soul that spoke, her true personality used to come.