



Notes on Spiritual Discourses of Shrī Ātmānanda

TAKEN BY NITYA TRIPTA

Proposed second edition

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Note on the proposed second edition

In this proposed second edition of *Notes on Spiritual Discourses of Shrī Ātmānanda*, there has been some minor editing (particularly of punctuation), to make the text more readable.

The notes are now numbered in a continuous sequence throughout the book, instead of the year by year numbering in the first edition. (The original numbers are still given in brackets at the end of each note title, however, to help with further proofing against the original.)

The original ‘subject war grouping’ before the main body of notes has been replaced by an index at the end. The reader should note, however, that the index refers to note numbers, not page numbers.

Some added notes, explanations and translations are given in square brackets. Wherever square brackets occur, the contents are added by the second edition editor.

The editing work is not yet complete. In particular, some proofing remains to be done; and some scholarly checking is further needed, of textual references and of Sanskrit and Malayalam transliterations.

Where further information or checking seems needed, this is indicated by ‘(?)’.

Transliteration scheme

For ordinary readers, a simplified transliteration has been used for Sanskrit and Malayalam names and even for the titles of cited texts. But, for detailed quotations, a more exact transliteration has been used, for the sake of textual accuracy.

For Sanskrit, the exact transliteration is the standard one, using the usual diacritical marks, except that ‘e’ is written as ‘ē’ and ‘o’ as ‘ō’. This slight modification is needed to have a common transliteration scheme which applies to both Sanskrit and Malayalam.

For the simplified transliteration of Sanskrit characters, there are the following departures from standard academic practice: ‘ṛ’ is written as ‘ri’, ‘ṛ’ as ‘rī’, ‘ḷ’ as ‘li’, ‘ḷ’ as ‘lī’, ‘ñ’ as ‘n’ or ‘ng’, ‘ñ’ as ‘n’ or ‘ny’, ‘ś’ as ‘sh’, ‘ṣ’ as ‘sh’.

For Malayalam characters that don’t occur in Sanskrit, the following transliterations are used:

‘ഉ’ is written as ‘l’. Thus, ‘ഉള്ളിൽ’ is written as ‘ullil’.

‘ഋ’ is written as ‘r’. Thus, ‘എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ’ is written as ‘Eruttacchan’.

‘ഠ’ is written as ‘f’. Thus, ‘അറിവ്’ is written as ‘arivū’.

‘റ്റ’ is written as ‘ff’. Thus, ‘പറ്റി’ is written as ‘paṭfi’.

I apologize to Malayalam speakers for whom some of these usages will be unfamiliar. But I think that they are needed for the sake of those who do not know Malayalam.

For the ordinary reader, this scheme of transliteration is meant to indicate an approximate pronunciation, even if the diacritical marks are ignored. However, it may help to note that unmarked ‘c’, ‘t’ and ‘d’ are soft. In particular, ‘c’ is pronounced like ‘ch’ in ‘chat’; and ‘t’ and ‘d’ are pronounced as in the Italian ‘pasta’ and ‘dolce’. By contrast, ‘ṭ’ and ‘ḍ’ are pronounced more like the hard ‘t’ in ‘table’, and ‘ḍ’ like the hard ‘d’ in ‘donkey’. Where ‘h’ occurs after a preceding consonant, it does not indicate a softening of the consonant (as it may in English). Instead, it indicates an aspirated sound that occurs immediately after the consonant.

Editor of proposed second edition, May 2006

Preface

Though I have been closely attached to Shrī Ātmānanda Guru ever since 1927 (when I was accepted as his disciple and initiated), it was only in November 1950 that I made bold one day – at the instance of a distinguished friend of mine – to make an attempt to take some notes on that day’s talk, which had been particularly compelling. The friend left the same night. I wrote down the notes the next day and most hesitatingly submitted them at Gurunāthan’s feet, to see if they could be sent to the friend.

He gladly ordered me to read them and I obeyed rather nervously. He listened to them patiently, and suggested some small deletions to avoid controversy. At the end, he asked me with a luminous smile on his face: ‘How did you do this?’ I humbly replied, ‘I do not know’, and told him the circumstances. He laughed, and said: ‘I am pleased with them. You may send them to her and also continue the practice.’

I realized immediately how I was a simple tool at the merciful hands of the Absolute, and prostrated at his feet. He blessed me with both hands, and I stood up in tears. Thus encouraged and enriched, I continued the practice till the middle of April 1959.

That was how these notes came to be. Subsequently, they were twice read out to Gurunāthan [Shrī Ātmānanda] himself, and finally approved by him – as true to his exposition, both in idea and in rendering.

Though intended originally for the benefit of the disciples alone, who already had received directly from him the fundamentals of his exposition, they are now printed and published for the benefit of the general public as well. They have been found to be helpful to all those who have acquired at least a modest acquaintance with his method of direct approach to the ultimate Truth.

A preliminary knowledge of his book *Ātmānandōpaniṣhad* – in two parts, separately called *Ātma-darshan* and *Ātma-nirvṛiti* – is almost indispensable for understanding these notes, not only for those who have had no direct contact with Shrī Ātmānanda Guru, but also for those who are already his disciples.

A word too has to be said about the English language used here. Born in a different climate and designed to describe experiences somewhat different from those obtaining in spiritual India, the English language (now almost an international language) has perforce to undergo certain local modifications of idiom and punctuation. Sometimes, a bold departure from the accepted usage of a word or a phrase could alone yield the right meaning of Vēdānta. Such departures are inevitable, and they give force to the ideas and enrich the language.

He was insisting upon me ever since 1956 to print and publish these notes. It required a lot of time to compile and edit them. I was proudly privileged to utilize all my available time for direct services to his person. I was reluctant to divert any part of my time to other work which could well afford to wait. Therefore I could not take up this work of publication till he passed away. If any mistakes of expression or of any other kind have slipped into these notes without his knowledge, I am solely responsible. All the rest belongs to my Guru, the Truth.*

(Nitya Tṛipta)

*A word of caution in this context has become necessary. There are other persons and sannyāsins of different orders known by the identical name Ātmānanda. Let not the views or writings of any of them be mistaken for those of Shrī Ātmānanda of Trivandrum.

Foreword

A NOTE TO THE READERS

The subject matter of this book being notes of discourses, certain conversational mannerisms, peculiar usages, repetitions etc. – though not strictly literary – have necessarily been retained. Their force, freshness and naturalness appeal particularly to those who have listened to the discourses direct.

I had to fight against odds in this maiden enterprise of mine in the field of publication, and I am conscious of the innumerable imperfections and oversights that have crept into these pages. Therefore, as an immediate remedy, I have added just a modest errata at the close of every year, for such mistakes alone that affect the sense directly. Minor imperfections can be rectified only in the next impression.

A subject war grouping and tabulation of the titles by numbers added after the contents would enable the reader to have an exhaustive idea of any particular topic whenever necessary. [In this second edition, the subject war grouping is replaced by an index, at the end of the volume.]

A glossary is added towards the end of the volume, in alphabetic order, giving simple Advaitic explanations of the important technical and philosophical terms and expressions occurring in the course of the book.

A list of about five hundred of Shrī Ātmānanda's spiritual statements (collected from these talks and from elsewhere, and added towards the end of the volume) will be particularly useful to those who had any direct contact with him, and will feed the spiritual inquisitiveness of many a thinking person.

A list of the original Sanskrit quotations referred to in the course of the talks is added in Sanskrit script at the end of the volume and the particular number is given for reference at the places where it is mentioned. [In this second edition, the list of quotations is omitted. Instead, available references are given where the quotations occur.]

An astrological chart of the planetary position at the moment of his birth is attached at the beginning of the life sketch. I believe the few readers who have an astrological insight will have much to read from it regarding the journey of his body and mind. The predictions of Indian astrologers upon this chart had been more or less correct regarding his life's experiences. [The astrological chart is omitted, in this second edition.]

(Nitya Tripta)

My indebtedness

I may be permitted to avail of this opportunity to record my deep indebtedness to Mrs. Kamal Wood, M.A. (Nagpur), B.Lit. (Oxon.), Professor of English, Elphinstone College, Bombay, who had so graciously scrutinised most of these pages, patiently correcting the language mistakes, punctuation, syntax etc.

Mahōpaddhyāya Shrī Ravivarma Tampan, Professor of Sanskrit College, Trivandrum (long retired) has kindly verified and approved the Sanskrit quotations and the technical and shāstraic portions of the glossary.

Messrs. P.K. Sreedhar and M.P.B. Nair at Bombay have been of invaluable help and service to me in this work, particularly in their undertaking all responsibility regarding the photographs and photostats in the volume and executing them beautifully and in time.

I wish to express my sincere gratefulness to the many other co-disciples of mine who have helped me in editing and verifying the texts at different stages, and also to the proof readers, the printing staff of the Reddiar Press and many others for their hearty co-operation in bringing out this volume within reasonable time and so nicely. More than all, my heart goes to the handful of my dear co-disciples – both foreign and Indian – whose unstinted and voluntary financial help has enabled me to preserve in form for posterity this invaluable spiritual heritage from our revered Guru Shrī Ātmanānda.

(Nitya Tripta)

Introduction

It will be helpful to define beforehand the subject, the approach, the field of enquiry and the stand taken in these notes. The subject discussed is the ultimate Truth or Peace. The approach is the direct perception method of Advaita (the strict Vicāra-mārga). The field of enquiry is the totality of human experience, comprised of the experiences of the three states and the awareness still beyond. The stand taken is strictly in the absolute Truth, and reference made only to the being inside. All this is discussed in detail in the ensuing pages. The readers also would do well to adopt the same standard and perspective, at least hypothetically, for the time being. The large majority of friends who cannot cease to think in relative terms, even for a short while, are earnestly requested not to dabble with spiritual pursuits. That will spoil even their enjoyment in the phenomenal world.

Great advancement has been made in all human walks of life. Methods of transport in space have progressed from walking to flying. The achievements of science and technology have almost annihilated space. Vēdānta, which is a deep and relentless enquiry into the nature of Truth, has also not lagged behind in improving its methods. Thus, what real aspirants experienced after a whole life's intense effort in the vēdic age, is made attainable in the present age in a comparatively short period of time by a more direct application of the higher reason in man. Such was the method adopted by Shrī Ātmānanda.

He had a two-fold mission in life. The first part of it – in his own words – was to expound the highest Truth, the ultimate Reality, in a manner and language understandable even to the kitchen maid. It is the belief of most men and pundits that a high proficiency in Sanskrit is the first prerequisite of knowing the Truth. They believe also that Truth can be expounded only in high-sounding and abstruse philosophical terms, technicalities and terminologies. The numerous vēdāntic shāstras of a cosmological type (of course with rare exceptions) have contributed much to the growth of this pernicious superstition.

Shrī Ātmānanda, who was not a Sanskrit scholar himself, has successfully dispelled this wrong notion, both by his writings and by his discourses. His two books, *Ātma-darshan* and *Ātma-nirvṛiti* – written originally in Malayalam verse and which expound the ultimate Truth from various standpoints – are limpidly clear and simple. Most of the verses are written in the briefest and the simplest rhythm. They are so natural that they read like poetic prose. The English rendering of the two books by the author himself, though not in verse form, is equally simple and clear. Abstruse Sanskrit terminology has been avoided. He expounded the ultimate Truth even to illiterate women and children in simple Malayalam language, and to great lawyers, scientists and philosophers from home and abroad in simple and elegant English.

Some of the disciples who came from distant continents did not possess even a working knowledge of the English language, and even then they were able to grasp the Truth quite well. Therefore it is evident that no language is the language of Truth. All language is the language of untruth alone. Language is made use of to reach the very brink of untruth, beyond which the Guru – representing the languageless Truth – stands revealed in all his glory. The Truth is also revealed as the real nature of the aspirant himself.

The second part of his mission was to re-establish the dignity of the householder and his birthright to strive and to be liberated, while still remaining a householder. Since the time of Shrī Shankara, the fold of sannyāsa began to be looked upon with particular respect and regard by the people. Inflated by this undeserved title for reverence, some of these sannyāsins began to assert and proclaim that liberation is the monopoly of sannyāsins alone and that the householder is not even eligible for it. In their wild fury they even forgot the undeniable fact that the founders of the spiritual heritage of India were most of them householders (Shrī Janaka, Shrī Vasiṣṭha, Shrī Vyāsa, Shrī Rāma, Shrī Kṛiṣṇa, and the authors of many of the Upaniṣhads). The aphorism ‘Tat tvam asi’, which is meditated upon by every sannyāsin, was first composed and expounded by the householder sage, Uddālaka, to his son and disciple, Shvētakētu. There is no data for any argument in favour of the sannyāsin’s stand; but their capacity for mischief cannot be gainsaid. Therefore a solitary yet glowing example in the course of several centuries often becomes necessary to blot out such superstitions. Such was the life of Shrī Ātmānanda, the Sage. He was an ideal householder, an ideal police officer (upright and fearless, who ruled his subordinates as well as the criminals under his charge by love and love alone) and an ideal Guru to his disciples in all the continents of the world.

He used to meet a general gathering of the disciples and visitors usually at 5.30 p.m. at his residence. After preliminary enquiries and introductions, he would call for questions, to ‘set the ball rolling’ as he would often say. Then somebody would ask a question – whether pertinent or not was immaterial. That would be enough for the day. He would immediately take up that question, analyse it exhaustively and answer it from different standpoints one after the other, never stopping half way but pursuing the problem relentlessly to its very foundation, the ultimate background.

He would never approach a problem from a perspective short of the ultimate Truth, and would always make the listening disciple contact his own real nature many times in the course of each talk. The visitor, besides, would experience an uncaused Peace and solace several times in the course of the talk, and this naturally increased his earnestness to know the Truth more intimately.

Shrī Ātmānanda’s approach to every problem was direct and logical. He did not quote texts to establish his position. After establishing his own position by using deep discrimination and direct reason alone, he would sometimes, for the mere pleasure of it, cite parallels from texts of undisputed authority by great Sages. He never discouraged or discredited any particular path or religion; so much so that he had disciples from all castes and creeds: Christians, Muslims, Jews, Parsis and Hindus – brahmin as well as non-brahmin. They all continued quite smoothly in their superficial allegiance to their old religion, society and customs, even after visualizing the Truth through Vēdānta.

Shrī Ātmānanda held emphatically that the basic error in man was his wrong identification with body, senses and mind. When this was replaced by the right identification with Ātmā, the real ‘I’-principle, everything would be found to be perfectly in order and no change or correction in any walk of life whatsoever would be called for.

He asserted that one’s own perspective alone had to be set right. He always stressed the point that the answer to any question of an objective nature was never complete until it was ultimately applied to the subject; and the question had to be disposed of in the light of the ultimate Reality – the Self.

The evening discourse was a formal one, when all his disciples and strangers who had obtained previous permission were welcome. But he used to talk on spiritual problems for several more hours every day to the few disciples around him, who always waited upon him – eager to render any personal service needed. He expounded the Truth more unreservedly and informally during these unprovoked talks.

Questions were asked from different levels by different persons, and answers were always given in tune with the level and standard of the questioner himself. Therefore answers to the same question at different times might often seem varied, even contradictory, but they ultimately converge upon the same centre. Thus even repetitions have been really enriching and also entertaining.

(Nitya Tripta)

Why such open talk?

Shrī Ātmānanda expounded the ultimate Truth in the most direct and uncompromising manner, and he gives his reasons here below for adopting this drastic method.

13th January 1951

A disciple asked: Why was secrecy so strictly observed in expounding the Truth in the old shāstras?

Gurunāthan: Evidently, for fear of jeopardizing established religion and society. Religion had no place except in duality and social life. It was the prime moving force of social life in ancient times. But the concept of religion could not stand the strict logic of vēdāntic Truth.

The sages of old, who recognized the great need of religion in phenomenal life, expounded the ultimate Truth under a strict cover of secrecy, thus enabling religion to play its role in lower human society. But religion in the present day world has been dethroned in many ways, and ungodly cults have come into existence in large numbers.

Therefore it is high time now to throw off the veil of secrecy, and broadcast the whole Truth in the face of the world which has already advanced much, intellectually.

[This is the text of note 51, which may also be found in the main body of notes below.]

On the life sketch of the Sage, Shrī Ātmānanda

Its meaning, purpose and scope:

The life story of a Sage is a paradox. This is because life is only an appearance and therefore an untruth, while the Sage is the ultimate Truth itself – the impersonal. Shrī Kṛishṇa Mēnōn (Shrī Ātmānanda) held that one should be known only for the principle one stands for. Therefore he would not agree to the writing of his life story, while he lived.

Nevertheless, modern practice obliges the author to write a brief life sketch of the person who shines through this book. A record of the phenomenal facts and aspects of his life is needed, in order to avoid wrong and exaggerated versions of his life gaining currency when genuine facts are no longer available. I make no attempt to point out anything extraordinary or miraculous in his life. My object is quite the contrary. Of course there was one thing quite extraordinary in him. He visualized the ultimate Truth and stood established in it. Therefore the so-called ‘life story’ of his, so far as he is concerned, is a misrepresentation of himself.

It is the transcendental essence, which the Sage is and knows he is, that makes him great in the spiritual realm. Therefore the so called ‘life story’ of a Sage cannot make anyone understand anything about the Sage. The Sage is impersonal. He has outgrown the shell of his own life, the shell called personality. The personality and the Sage are in two distinct and separate planes. Therefore it is quite futile to scan the life story of a Sage to measure his real worth.

This might seem quite an unusual warning. His life-sketch has very little direct bearing upon the body and theme of this book. Therefore I have incorporated at the end of this book [just before the glossary and index] a short life sketch of Shrī Kṛishṇa Mēnōn, the ‘man’.

(Nitya Tripta)

On devotion to a living Guru

ācāryavān puruṣō vēda

Chāndogya Upaniṣhad, 6.14.2

This means: ‘He who is blessed with a Kāraṇa-guru alone knows the Truth.’

The following Malayalam verse is the instruction of Shrī Ātmānanda to the few earnest aspirants of Truth, as to how and when they should direct and express their sense of deep devotion.

bōdham yātorupādhimūlam udayam ceytō, bhajikkēṇṭatum
pūjikkēṇṭatum ullaliññatineyām śrīdēśikōpādhiyāỵ,
ellām satguruvām upādhi maṛayunnērattatallāte
kaṇṭānyōpādhiyil āvidham bhramam udiccīḍāt irunnīṭaṇam .

Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātmārāmam, 1.34

‘That particular person through whom one had the proud privilege of being enlightened, that is the *only* form which one may adore and do pūja to, to one’s heart’s content, as the person of one’s Guru. It is true that all is the Sat-guru, but *only* when the name and form disappear and not otherwise. Therefore, the true aspirant should beware of being deluded into any similar devotional advances towards any other form, be it of God or of man.’

This is confirmed by Shrī Ātmānanda’s letter on the subject, as translated on page 474.

And it is further confirmed by Shrī Shankara’s bold proclamation, often quoted in this volume.

jīvō nā ’ham dēśikō ’ktyā śivō ’ham ..

Shrī Shankara, Advaita-pancaratnam, 1.2

‘By the word of my Guru, I am not jīva (the personal life principle). But I am Peace-ultimate.’ (God being comprehended as ‘samaṣṭi-jīva’ – the aggregate of all jīvas – and as the highest concept of the human mind.)

(Nitya Tripta)

Notes on discourses

20th November 1950

1. HOW IS DEEP SLEEP A KEY TO THE ULTIMATE? (1)

Deep mental activity generates heat, which keeps off deep sleep. Cold in its intensity wakes you up. Deep sleep brings on a sense of happiness and peace with it. This experience we get only in the absence of all mental activity. When we direct our mind to this happiness aspect of deep sleep, we feel a sensation of gentle coolness, which wards off all sense of negation in sleep. So we get to our real nature by relaxing our mind from all forms of activity, and at the same time not losing sight of the happiness and peace experienced in deep sleep.

This positive aspect saves us from the probable shroud of negation and slumber. We should not allow the mind to be active and at the same time we should see that it does not become inactive. In other words: '*Sleep knowingly.*'

Thus, deep sleep can be utilized directly for establishing oneself in the real centre.

2. HOW CAN REMEMBRANCE BE FORGETTING? (2)

Every thought merges into Consciousness and remains not as thought, but as Consciousness, pure. So your searching in that Consciousness for the resurrection of any thought, merged therein, is in vain. It can only result in your first forgetting your real nature of pure Consciousness, and in the subsequent creation of an entirely new thought, as though experienced some time earlier.

3. WHERE, WHEN AND HOW DO I SEE ME? (3)

1. I see Me where the 'where' is not.
2. I see Me when the 'when' is not.
3. I see Me when 'I see me not.'

Explanation:

1. I shall see Me only when I transcend the gross body idea, which is governed by space as well as by time.
2. I shall see Me only when I transcend the subtle body or the mind, which is governed by time alone.
3. I shall see Me only on leaving both the gross and the subtle bodies – when I stop my objective search and turn inward to find myself as one with that which I was searching for; in other words only when the subject-object relationship vanishes.

23rd November 1950

4. WHAT IS THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF PERCEPTION? (4)

A Jnyānin perceives the Absolute, diversified as objects. Ignorant men, identifying themselves with the gross body, perceive gross objects. Others, standing as mind, perceive only subtle objects.

Jnyānins, standing as Consciousness, perceive only Consciousness.

5. WHAT IS THE CONTENT OF THE INTERVAL BETWEEN MENTATIONS? (5)

Let us examine our own casual statements regarding our daily experiences. For example, we say: 'He comes', 'He sits', 'He goes', and so on. In these statements, 'coming', 'sitting' and 'going' are somehow extraneous to 'him'. As such, they do not at all go into the make of 'him'.

'He' alone stands unqualified through all time, continuing without a break. So it is this pure 'he' or 'I' (or Consciousness) which shines through and in between all thoughts, feelings, perceptions and states. During this interval (between mentations), one has no thought of the state in which one happens to be. So here, one is *Peace* itself; and that is the 'I', in its pure state.

Suppose you see a beautiful picture, painted on white paper. On closely examining the picture, you will be able to discover some parts of it where the original colour of the paper appears, unaffected by the shades of the picture. This proves to you the existence of the paper behind the picture, as its background. On further examination, you will see that the picture is nothing but the paper.

So also, if you succeed in discovering yourself *between* two mentations, you easily come to the conclusion that you are *in* the mentations as well.

6. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF 'I'? (6)

The same word, used in similar contexts, cannot carry different meanings with different persons. When I say 'I' meaning 'my body', another understands it in the same sense, meaning 'my body'. But when the other person uses the same word 'I', he means 'his body', which is entirely different from 'my body'.

Thus, in the case of everyone, the bodies meant are different; but the word used is the same 'I', always. So the 'I' must mean: *either* the individual bodies of all men – which is ludicrous – *or* it must evidently mean no body at all.

The latter being the only possible alternative, the 'I' must necessarily mean that changeless principle in which every body appears and disappears. This is the real meaning of 'I', even in our daily traffic with the world.

7. WHAT IS IT THAT APPEARS AS WORLD? (7)

As soon as we wake up from deep sleep, the existence of a ready-made world – including our own bodies – confronts us. To examine it closely, we utilize our sense organs straightaway – one by one, relying on their superficial evidence without a thought.

The organ of sight asserts that the world is only form and nothing else; the organ of hearing that the world is only sound and nothing else; and so on. Each organ thus asserts the world as *its* sole and particular object. In effect, each sense organ contradicts the evidence of the other four organs, with equal force. This hopeless mess of contradictory evidence, and the stubborn denial by each of the sense organs of the others' evidence, form positive proof of the falsity of this world – as it appears.

But all the while, the existence of a positive something is experienced without a break, beyond the shadow of a doubt. This, on closer analysis, is found to be that changeless, subjective ‘I’-principle or Consciousness itself.

8. IS THERE AJNYĀNA [IGNORANCE] IN DEEP SLEEP? (8)

No. The absence of any objective perception, thought or feeling – which is wrongly called ‘nothingness’ – is the svarūpa [true nature] of real, unconditioned happiness. Here, happiness alone is the positive experience in deep sleep, and the sense of nothingness is a relative inference when out of it..

Thus, there is in fact no ajnyāna in deep sleep. The ajnyāna of Truth is the jnyāna [knowledge] of objects, gross or subtle. To know any object means not to know the Truth. From the knowledge of an object, if the object part is discarded, what remains is pure knowledge alone, which is the essence and the background of all objects as well as of myself.

The jnyāna of any one object may also be said to be the ajnyāna of all other objects. In that sense, the jnyāna of Truth and Happiness in deep sleep can also be said to be the ajnyāna of all objects. Thus happiness alone is the experience in deep sleep.

9th December 1950

9. HOW IS DEEP SLEEP THE TOUCHSTONE OF ONE’S REAL NATURE? (9)

The knowledge of one object implies the ignorance of all objects other than that particular object. The ignorance of all objects in deep sleep means really the positive knowledge of the self, which shines as happiness there. Consequently, the ignorance of the ordinary man in deep sleep is really the knowledge of his own self, which is happiness and Consciousness.

Our deep sleep experience, according to the lower śāstras, is ignorance coupled with the sense of subjective happiness. We have already proved that the so called ignorance of the world in deep sleep is nothing but the knowledge of the self, which is happiness itself. Thus the experience in deep sleep, if properly understood, is only *one*; and that is our own self, which is *Happiness* and *Peace*. The rest of the statement is but a commentary upon this.

There is only *one* there; and hence the ignorance of the many is no experience at all.

**10. ‘MIND AS MIND KNOWS NO PEACE, AND MIND AT PEACE IS NO MIND AT ALL.’
(10)**

The most universal of all desires in man is unequivocally expressed in the spontaneous statement made by all alike: ‘I want peace of mind’. It means that the activity of the mind is never our ultimate goal. Examining this statement closely and impartially, we find that *Peace* is the real goal of man’s desire. But in his utter inability to extricate himself from the clutches of the mind, he links the mind also to that desire for absolute Peace, and claims himself to be the enjoyer. But alas, when the mind, freed from all its activities, comes into contact with the Peace it desired, it finds itself merged and lost in that peace, thus returning to its real nature.

Therefore, it is one's own real nature that everybody seeks, knowingly or unknowingly.

11. HOW TO ESTABLISH ADVAITA IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF AN OBJECT? (11)

When I say 'I know an object', the knower and the object known both disappear; and the knowledge alone remains. Thus separated from the knower and the known, the knowledge can no longer be called limited. It is pure. It is absolute. So, during every perception, I remain in my real centre, as pure Consciousness.

It has already been proved that just before and after every perception, I am in my own real nature. The knower, knowledge and the known are themselves three distinct and separate perceptions, each appearing in a particular sequence corresponding to that in the expression 'I know it.'

Thus, it stands established that nobody is ever shaken from his own centre of consciousness and peace.

12. HOW CAN THE PHENOMENAL LEAD ONE TO THE ABSOLUTE? (12)

Conceding that God created this universe, you have to admit that God existed even before creation. Man, with his created sense organs and mind, is capable of visualizing only the objects of creation, gross or subtle. So, in order to visualize God as he existed all alone, even before creation, we have to utilize some faculty which is present in us all and which transcends creation. This can be nothing other than the changeless 'I'-principle or Consciousness.

Reaching that, one is divested of all sense of duality. Even the conception of God does not arise there; and everything appears – if it ever does – as Consciousness alone. It follows therefore that the God that was there before creation was nothing other than the real 'I'-principle.

24th December 1950

13. HOW AM I THE WITNESS? (13)

Every perception, thought or feeling is known by you. You are the knower of the world through the sense organs; of the sense organs through the generic mind; and of the mind – with its activity or passivity – by your self alone.

In all these different activities, you stand out as the one knower. Actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings all come and go. But knowingness does not part with you, even for a moment. You are therefore always the knower. How then can you ever be the doer or the enjoyer?

After understanding the 'I'-principle as pure Consciousness and happiness, always use the word 'I' or 'knower' to denote the goal of your retreat. The 'I' always brings subjectivity with it. It is this ultimate, subjective principle 'I' – divested of even that subjectivity – that is the goal.

Consciousness and happiness may possibly have a taint of objectivity in their conception, since they always express themselves in the realm of the mind. When one is deeply convinced that one's self is consciousness and happiness, one finds it as the nameless. Whereupon, even this namelessness seems a limitation. Giving up that as well, one remains as the 'I'-principle, the 'Absolute'.

When you try to visualize the Absolute in you, nothing can possibly disturb you, because every thought or perception points to yourself and only helps you to stand established as the Absolute.

To become a Jnyānin [Sage] means to become aware of *what you are already*. In this connection, it has to be proved that ‘knowing’ is not a function. In all your life, you feel you have not changed; and of all your manifold activities, from your birth onwards, the only activity that has never changed is ‘knowing’. So both these must necessarily be one and the same; and therefore knowingness is your real nature.

Thus, knowing is never an activity in the worldly sense, since this knowing has neither a beginning nor an end. And because it is never separated from you, it is your *svarūpa* (real nature) – just as ‘shining’ is the *svarūpa* of the sun and not its function. Understanding it in this way, and realizing it as one’s *svarūpa*, brings about liberation from all bondage.

When you reach consciousness or happiness, you lose all sense of objectivity or duality and stand identified with the ultimate, subjective ‘I’-principle, or the Absolute. Then the subjectivity also vanishes. When the word ‘*pure*’ is added on to consciousness, happiness or ‘I’, even the least taint of relativity is removed. There, all opposites are reconciled, all paradoxes stand self-explained; and everything, or nothing, can be said about it.

14. HOW TO BE ALIVE AND AT HOME ALWAYS? (14)

While thus talking of the Absolute at a high level, Gurunāthan noticed a disciple withdrawing himself into *samādhi* and asked him suddenly how many months his wife had advanced in her pregnancy. It took the disciple a few minutes to come down even to understand the question. The object of this question was just to show that one should be equally alive in *samādhi* as well as in worldly activity. To be thus ‘at home’ always, shows one’s stand in the natural state.

15. IS ANY EFFORT NEEDED AFTER REALIZATION? (15)

Yes. You realize the moment you hear the Truth direct from the Guru. All subsequent effort is only to remove every obstacle that might come in the way of establishing oneself in the Truth.

25th December 1950

16. WHAT IS THE ‘THING IN ITSELF’? (16)

The fundamental worldly experience of man is that something which was unknown subsequently becomes known. This statement clearly shows that the ‘thing in itself’ was the background of both the unknown and the known, and as such could not exactly be either the one or the other. Looking at the background closely, you find that some sort of a limitation was put upon the ‘thing in itself’ by the mind, to which it therefore appeared as the ‘known’ or the ‘unknown’. Take away that mental limitation from the experience, and immediately it becomes the Reality itself; because it goes beyond the known and the unknown.

That which was called unknown is in the known as well, and is still unknown. It is the Reality itself. Take for example the ‘I’ in I think and I feel. The ‘I’-principle can

never be the thinking or the feeling principle, but is beyond both, and is present equally in the thinking as well as in the feeling.

Examining this from another angle, the ‘unknown’ means that which is not grasped by the sense organs or the mind. That which is not comprehended by these two, but which transcends them both, cannot be anything but the Reality. Therefore, what is called the ‘unknown’ is the Reality. And now coming to the ‘known’, when correctly examined, a sense object merges into Consciousness. Therefore, what is known is also nothing but Consciousness.

When an ordinary man – who believes himself to be the body – sees an object, he sees and emphasizes the object part of it and ignores completely the most important factor – consciousness. But when a Jnyānin sees the same object, he sees it not as object but as consciousness itself. He emphasizes only the consciousness part of it, and feels that it is the Self. Thus to him, every perception doubly reaffirms his knowledge that he is Consciousness. It is experience of the Truth itself, repeated as often as there are thoughts or perceptions.

17. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE WORLDLY ACTIVITY OF A SAGE? (17)

A subjective transformation alone is needed for ‘realization’. When one who has realized the Truth looks at the world, conceding the existence of the world, he finds that every object asserts one’s own self or consciousness, without which the object could never appear.

Perceptions are liable to mistakes regarding the object perceived; for example the stump of a tree is mistaken for a man. But regarding yourself, the ‘I’, there can never be any mistaking whatsoever.

18. THE ENJOYMENT OF PLEASURE BY AN ORDINARY MAN AND THE SAGE? (18)

To the ordinary man, pleasure is an end in itself and he attributes it all to objects. But to the Sage, who apparently enjoys the same pleasure, it is all the expression of the happiness aspect of the Absolute or the Self, *purely uncaused*.

During the sādhanā period of a disciple, experiences of pleasure sometimes occur, as a result of particular states of mind attained through discipline and practice. Because of their great similarity to the experiences of intense pleasure he may have had in worldly life, the disciple is likely to desire a repetition of these, as an end in itself. This worldly interpretation of spiritual experiences is likely to entangle him there, impeding his spiritual progress.

But, under the guidance of a Kāraṇa-guru, the disciple understands such experiences to be expressions of the Absolute in him; and he is enabled to proceed further in order to reach ‘what is expressed’, regardless of the pleasure experienced on the way.

To the Sage, every experience of happiness is only an expression – in the realm of the mind – of the happiness aspect of the absolute ‘Self’; and as such he never attributes it to external objects. To the Sage, all the activities of the mind and body are but expressions of the Absolute, and as such *purposeless* in themselves.

But the worldly man takes to activities with a definite purpose, as a means of enjoyment.

26th December 1950

19. WHAT CONSTITUTES A SAGE? AND HOW DOES HE CONDUCT HIMSELF? (19)

Mere realization, as is usually understood, does not make one a Sage in the full sense of the term.

A Sage should be a yōgin to a yōgin, a bhakta to a bhakta, and a householder in every detail to his own family and to the other householders. In all his relations – with society, state etc. – he behaves exactly as any ordinary citizen. But, in reality, he is always a Jnyānin [knower] and is none of these.

You cannot express the Truth by word of mouth, by thought, or by feeling. But the Truth expresses itself, in all these varied activities.

20. HOW ARE OBJECTS RELATED TO ME? (20)

All this world is my object, and I am the changeless subject. Each one of my objects serves only to point to me and to prove me. I need only make my stand there firmer and establish myself at the real centre, as the ultimate subject 'I'.

27th December 1950

21. HOW TO RETREAT INTO THE REAL 'I'-PRINCIPLE? (21)

What do you mean when you say 'I'? It does not at all mean the body, senses or mind. It is pure experience itself – in other words, the end of all knowledge or feeling.

First of all, see that the body, senses and mind are your objects and that you are always the changeless subject, distinct and separate from the objects. The objects are present only when they are perceived. But I exist, always changeless, whether perceptions occur or not, extending through and beyond all states. Thus you see that you are never the body, senses or mind. Make this thought as deep and intense as possible, until you are doubly sure that the wrong identification will never recur.

Next, examine if there is anything else that does not part with the 'I'-principle, even for a moment. *Yes*. There is Consciousness. It never parts with the 'I'-principle, and can never be an object either. So both must mean one and the same thing. Or, in other words, 'I' is Consciousness itself. Similarly, wherever there is the 'I'-principle left alone, there is also the idea of deep peace or happiness, existing along with it.

It is universally admitted that one loves only that which gives one happiness, or that a thing is loved only for its happiness value. Evidently, happiness itself is loved more than that which is supposed to give happiness. It is also admitted that one loves one's self more than anything else. So it is clear that you must be one with happiness or that you are happiness itself. All your activities are only attempts to experience that happiness or self in every experience

The ordinary man fixes a certain standard for all his worldly activities and tries to attain it to his satisfaction. Thereby, he is only trying to experience the self in the form of happiness, as a result of the satisfaction obtained on reaching the standard already accepted by him.

For every perception, thought or feeling, you require the services of an instrument suited to each activity. But to love your own self, you require no instrument at all. Since you experience happiness by retreating into that 'I'-principle, that 'I' must be either an object to give you happiness, which is impossible; or it must be happiness

itself. So the 'I'-principle, Peace and Consciousness are all one and the same. It is in Peace that thoughts and feelings rise and set. This peace is very clearly expressed in deep sleep, when the mind is not there and you are one with Consciousness and Peace.

Pure consciousness and deep peace are your real nature. Having understood this in the right manner, you can well give up the use of the words 'Consciousness' and 'Happiness' and invariably use 'I' to denote the Reality.

Don't be satisfied with only reducing objects into Consciousness. Don't stop there. Reduce them further into the 'I'-principle. So also, reduce all feelings into pure Happiness and then reduce them into the 'I'-principle. When you are sure that you will not return to identification with the body any longer, you can very well leave off the intermediaries of Consciousness and Happiness, and directly take the thought 'I, I, I', subjectively.

Diversity is only in objects. Consciousness, which perceives them all, is one and the same.

22. WHAT IS MY REAL GOAL? THE 'I'-PRINCIPLE. (22)

The word 'I' has the advantage of taking you direct to the core of your self. But you must be doubly sure that you will no longer return to identification with the body.

By reducing objects into Consciousness or happiness, you come only to the brink of experience. Reduce them further into the 'I'-principle; and then 'it', the object, and 'you', the subject, both merge into experience itself. Thus, when you find that what you see is only yourself, the 'seeing' and 'objects' become mere empty words.

When you say the object cannot be the subject, you should take your stand not in any of the lower planes, but in the ultimate subject 'I' itself.

In making the gross world mental, the advaitin is an idealist. But he does not stop there. He goes further, examining the 'idea' also and proves it to be nothing but Consciousness. Thus he goes beyond even the idealist's stand.

The realist holds that matter is real and mind is unreal, but the idealist says that mind is real and matter is unreal. Of the two, the idealist's position is better; for when the mind is taken away from the world, the world is not. Therefore, it can easily be seen that the world is a thought form. It is difficult to prove the truth of the realist's stand; for dead matter cannot decide anything.

The advaitin goes even further. Though he takes up the stand of the idealist when examining the world, he goes beyond the idealist's position and proves that the world and the mind, as such, are nothing but appearances and the Reality is Consciousness.

Perception proves only the existence of knowledge and not the existence of the object. Thus the gross object is proved to be non-existent. Therefore, it is meaningless to explain subtle perceptions as a reflection of gross perceptions. Thus all perceptions are reduced to the ultimate 'I'-principle, through knowledge.

When a Jnyānin takes to activities of life, he 'comes out' with body, sense organs or mind whenever he needs them; and he acts, to all appearances, like an ordinary man, but knowing full well, all the while, that he is the Reality itself. This is not said from the level of the Absolute.

23. WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘NATURAL STATE’? (23)

Without a thought or a feeling, the ordinary man knows himself to be the body and claims all its activities. In the same way, a Jnyānin, without a thought or a feeling, knows that he is the Reality – expressing itself in all perceptions, thoughts and feelings, without a change.

What you call *experience* is the real ‘I’-principle, shining in its own glory, beyond the realm of the mind. The use of the word ‘realization’ as an action is wrong, since it brings with it a sense of limitation by time.

You can never become conscious of an object unless you are ‘self-conscious’, beyond the realm of the mind. So even when you say you are conscious of an object, you mean you are conscious of the knowledge of the object, further reduced into knowledge alone, and again reduced into the subjective ‘I’-principle or Experience itself.

This means that you are always in your real centre.

28th December 1950

24. WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘SVABHĀVA’? (24)

‘Svabhāva’ means one’s own real nature. All activities, like perceiving, doing etc., are ‘asvabhāva’ – the opposite of one’s real nature.

Svabhāva is knowledge without object, or happiness without object. For you are knowledge itself, or happiness itself, and cannot know anything else.

25. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SAY ‘I KNOW’ A THING? (25)

You actually transform the thing into knowledge. At the moment of knowing, you realize yourself in fact. Knowing a thing means you absorb it into you.

Similarly, loving a thing also means you absorb it into yourself. Hence, knowing and loving actually destroy all illusion, all separateness.

26. WHAT IS THE END OF AN IGNORANT MAN’S ACTIVITY OF KNOWING? (26)

The end of all knowing is pure knowing itself, or ‘vēdānta’ (the end of knowledge), or the ‘I’-principle. Knowing proves only knowledge, and not the object as is ordinarily understood.

In every perception, you are there as that and that alone. All the mischief of wrong identification is done only after the event.

27. I CANNOT BE LIBERATED BY KNOWING MY EXISTENCE ASPECT ALONE. WHY? (27)

Both the *cit* [consciousness] and *ānanda* [happiness] aspects have also to be known. You must also know that all these three are one and the same, and that it is your real self. Thus transcending the three aspects, you reach the Reality beyond.

According to Vēdānta, the Reality can be expressed only by negative imports; because it is nameless and attributeless. But it expresses itself in all names and forms.

29th December 1950

28. HOW TO RECONCILE THE SPIRITUAL AND WORLDLY ASPECTS OF ONE'S LIFE?
(28)

The world is examined and proved to be non-existent, through your own experiences:

1. By comparing impartially the dream and waking state experiences, and finding them to be exactly similar.
2. By proving that the objective world has no existence, independently of the subject 'I' or Consciousness.

You understand this fact, and accept it completely and unreservedly. Think about it more intensely, until it descends into your heart, becoming experience itself. Then you become what you mean by 'jīvan-mukta', and all your problems automatically cease.

To an ordinary man, life constitutes actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings – one of these alone being experienced at any given time. In other words, you stand detached from all activities, excepting the one in which you seem engaged at the given time.

To this list of four categories (actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings), the spiritual man adds just one more, which indeed is the most important one: 'Consciousness'. This last one is doubly important; because, over and above its importance as a separate entity, it shines in and through the four categories already mentioned. You are simply asked to direct to the consciousness aspect the attention legitimately due to it. This is all.

When you are engaged in thought, you are not engaged in action, perception or feeling. When engaged in action, you are not engaged in thought, feeling or perception. So also, when you are engaged in knowing, you cannot be engaged in any other kind of activity.

The presence and recognition of subjective Consciousness, your real centre, is the one thing needed to make your life possible and connected. Make it so, by knowing that knowing principle to be your real centre. You never go outside it, and you can never leave it, even if you will. This does not deny or negate your worldly life, as is ordinarily supposed, but makes it richer, firmer, truer and more successful.

To have deep peace and not to be disturbed from it, even for a moment, is the ardent desire of everyone. For this, you have necessarily to be at a centre which does not change. That is the real 'I'-principle or Consciousness. To *be* it and to establish oneself there is the end and aim of life. This alone makes real life possible.

30th December 1950

29. HOW CAN AN ORDINARY MAN ATTAIN RENUNCIATION? (29)

When you are engaged in any action, thought or other activity, all the world except for that one activity is dead, so far as you are concerned. This can really be called vairāgya or detachment. Therefore, you are always in perfect dispassion, and that again in the most natural and effortless manner.

30. HOW TO ATTAIN ĀTMA-TATTVA? (30)

Ātma-tattva [the truth of self] is not something to be imported or acquired; but it already *is*, as the real 'I'-principle. If you once recognize it and turn to it earnestly, it begins to enlighten you and does not stop till you are led on to the very core of your being and are established there.

31. HOW IS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF A LIBERATED SOUL RECONCILED WITH HIS PHENOMENAL LIFE? (31)

The spiritual life of a liberated soul is part and parcel of his life here, and not something separate from it. That oneness alone makes his life meaningful and an integral whole.

In the Rāmāyaṇa epic, the monkey king Bāli possessed a boon by whose power he took over to himself half the strength of every adversary he met. So also when *Ātma-tattva* [the truth of self] is once recognized and accepted, it begins to gain additional strength from every experience, worldly or unworldly, viewed and analysed in the light of the Truth. It comes into every thought and takes possession of it unnoticed (without a thought).

32. HOW TO BECOME DISPASSIONATE? (32)

Dispassion is not only possible, but is present in all your states. You can see it, if you direct your attention that way.

You say you are attached to objects in the waking state. But what happens to that attachment, when you go into the dream state? Likewise, what happens to the objects of the dream state, when you come back to the waking state? Leaving these two states, you go into the deep sleep state, where there are no objects at all.

So there is dispassion throughout; and there is no necessity to cultivate it. Even in the waking state, when you are thinking of one object, are you not dispassionate as far as the rest of the world is concerned?

33. HOW CAN OUR EVERYDAY CONDUCT ITSELF BE OUR TEACHER? (33)

We have only to get our everyday conduct properly examined and explained, in the light of the Truth. For this we need a Guru. By hearing our own daily experiences correctly, logically and clearly explained by the Guru himself, we immediately visualize our real centre, the 'I'-principle.

This is found to be present in feelings, thoughts, perceptions and actions. So the 'I' can certainly be none of these, 'as they are'. *Ātma-tattva* is neither attached nor detached, because there can be nothing beside it.

Any object, once known, remains only as Knowledge. It gets immediately transformed into pure Knowledge. If afterwards you begin to think of it as an object again, with some kind of interest in it, and come down and explain it in its own plane, you certainly go out of your real centre and require immediate correction.

34. IS THERE CONSCIOUSNESS IN DEAD MATTER? (34)

The question is absurd. Dead matter or body does not exist in its own right, but exists only as the object of the perceiver. It is the perceiver who lights up the object with his consciousness. In other words, his consciousness appears limited in the form of the body, or the body is his consciousness itself. But Consciousness cannot be divided. So it is the whole Consciousness itself. Therefore the question is absurd, on the face of it.

Yōgins, while reading the thoughts of others, read only the gross part of the mind concerned. They give their own interpretations of what they perceive, since the knowledge part of the thoughts can never be objectified or read.

When you know any object, you stand as Consciousness; and the object also cannot help appearing as Consciousness, since Consciousness cannot perceive anything but Consciousness. Or, in other words, when you rise to the level of Consciousness to examine the object, it is also transformed into Consciousness and its objectivity disappears.

So objects cannot exist as such, when you stand as Consciousness. While everything shines by the light of Consciousness, Consciousness does not require any other light, because it is self-luminous.

The term ‘ghaṭākāsha’ [the limited space in a pot] is wrong; since ghaṭākāsha can never be separated from ‘mahākāsha’ [the unlimited totality of space and time], excepting by words. But at a lower level, it can be said that bodies abide in mind and mind in Consciousness.

Nothing can limit Consciousness. A beginner in the spiritual path can, as a preliminary course, conceive that Consciousness is in him first. But when he becomes centred in Consciousness, the inside and outside vanish, so far as he is concerned; and he is lifted up to Consciousness pure.

Look at your image in a mirror. What is inside or outside your image, and all through it? Nothing but the mirror. So also, there is nothing but Consciousness in the object.

It is in *me* that thoughts arise, and in thoughts that bodies arise. So, compared to the ‘I’-principle, the gross world is evidently very, very small; and can never exist as such, along with the ‘I’.

It is wrong to say that the world exists in thoughts, or that thoughts exist in the ‘I’; because gross forms as such vanish when thoughts appear, and thoughts become Consciousness when they touch it. Nothing is inert or jaḍa; but all is Consciousness appearing as limited, and even that apparent limitation is Consciousness itself.

Thus Reality is seen existing here and now – in you, in and beyond all states. It only *appears* as if it is tagged on to something else like body, senses or mind. Eliminate that ‘tagged-on’ part and you remain in your self, the real centre. But when you try to eliminate the apparently unreal parts from Consciousness, you find that each of them is mysteriously transformed into that Consciousness itself, leaving nothing to be eliminated. This method takes you direct to the natural state.

35. ONE OF THE SHĀSTRIC METHODS TO REACH THE REALITY. (35)

Certain shāstras hold that everything – from intellect down to the gross body – is dead, inert matter, as it is. They ask you to get away from all that matter and get to Ātmā in its pure form, in a state called the *nirvikalpa* state (samādhi).

In that state, there is no sense of bondage, it is true. But, coming out of that state, you find the same world. To find a solution to this, you have to examine the world again, in the light of the experiences you had in samādhi. Then you find that the same Reality that was discovered in samādhi is found expressed in the objects also, as name and form. And that name and form, which the shāstras also call māyā, are nothing but the Reality itself. Thus you find yourself to be one with the world, and all doubts cease.

Before beginning to examine this world, you must necessarily take your stand on some changeless ground which is best known to you. The best known of all things to you is Consciousness, which is also self-luminous. It is your real self, and never something possessed by you. Things known by the mind are liable to be mistaken. But as regards the fact of your being conscious, there can never be any mistake.

What we ordinarily call the ‘consciousness of an object’ is only mind-consciousness. This, when further examined, gives up that limitation also and becomes pure Consciousness. The Consciousness of an object is itself part of the object experienced. Try to reject all but Consciousness from that experience. Then you find that whatever you turn to is immediately transformed into Consciousness, leaving nothing at all to be rejected.

36. REALIZATION IS ONLY HERE AND NOW. (36)

Only know it and hold on to it, till it becomes your natural state.

37. HOW CAN SOUND BE UTILIZED AS A MEDIUM OF ENQUIRY TO REACH THE ABSOLUTE? (37)

It has four distinct stages:

1. *Vaikhari* or gross sound. Here consciousness appears limited by the audible word. It is practised by repetition of a mantra by word of mouth, audible to one’s own ears.
2. *Madhyamā*: Here consciousness appears limited by the inaudible word. It is practised by mental repetition of a mantra, inaudibly, in contemplation of an idea.
3. *Pashyantī* represents that pure idea which is capable of being expressed in different languages, but which remains languageless all along. This limitation is binding only when viewed from the mental plane; and it really takes one to the very brink of the Absolute, or to the Absolute itself when correctly understood.
4. *Parā* is pure Consciousness itself, or myself. Every sound or word, when traced in the above sequence, leads to the Reality, or the ‘I’-principle.

An elephant is the best object for concentration for those who find it difficult to fix their mind on the form of their iṣṭa-dēva. This is why meditation on Gaṇapati (the elephant god) brings one to siddhi easily.

5th January 1951

38. WHO EXISTS? I ALONE. (1)

Actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings cannot be independent. The 'I'-principle alone stands independent of everything else; and present in all these, unattached.

It is the mind that is said to be the knower or witness of gross objects. But the mind cannot come down to the gross to bear witness to it or to know it.. The gross has to be transformed into the subtle, if it has to be witnessed by the mind. Or in other words, the mind can never witness the gross, but only the subtle. That is, the gross exists only in mere words, because the mind's knowledge is the only evidence of its existence as gross. Therefore the gross, as gross, has no existence at all.

Similarly, the 'I'-principle is said to be the witness of thoughts. The 'I' cannot come down to the mind's plane to witness the thoughts. But thoughts get transformed into pure Consciousness in order to be witnessed by the 'I'-principle; and Consciousness is the real nature of the 'I'-principle. Therefore it means: 'I know myself.' If one applies the same argument here also, it is evident that thought is nothing but Consciousness or the 'I'.

Therefore, all that appears – gross or subtle – is nothing but myself alone. Or in other words, in all activity or inactivity, it is 'I' alone that shine.

6th January 1951

39. POET TENNYSON ON KNOWLEDGE (2)

The poet Tennyson says: Pursue 'knowledge, like a sinking star, beyond the utmost bound of human thought'. It will take you a long way if you think deeply about what Tennyson meant by this statement.

'Sinking star' may mean this. Sinking implies relaxation. You have only to retreat and retreat into the 'I'-principle, and rest there. Allow yourself therefore to be led on. Sink, sink, sink... Sink from the body, sink from the senses, and sink from the mind...

Aṣṭāvakra says, in a similar context:

yadi dēhaṁ pr̥thak-kṛtya citi viśrāmya tiṣṭhasi .
adhunai 'va sukhī śāntō bandha-muktō bhaviṣyasi ..

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 1.4

This means: 'Separating body from you, if you take rest in Consciousness, you stand liberated here and now.'

7th January 1951

40. WHAT IS THE TEST OF EXPERIENCE? (3)

Examine your experience always, and ask yourself whether it changes in time or space. If it is found to change, advance further till you come to that experience from which you can never change, even for a moment, even if you try. That is then no experience either, but your real nature itself.

8th January 1951

41. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MYSELF? (4)

God, you say, is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and so on. This clearly means he cannot be confined to a body. Because he has these attributes, he has to possess a cosmic mind; and there must be a cosmic world also, for the cosmic mind to function in.

But the real 'I'-principle goes beyond body and mind, and therefore beyond everything objective; and so beyond God also. Nothing else exists beside it. It is therefore attributeless brahman.

For God to become brahman, he has to give up all the attributes mentioned above; and then he stands as one with the 'I'-principle.

9th January 1951

42. WHAT IS AN EXPERIENCE? (5)

An experience is composed of two parts:

1. the background, which is the Reality itself; and
2. the expression, which is only a superimposition of the mind and senses upon the background Reality.

In examining any experience to see what it is, we must give up the expression part of it as belonging entirely to the mind and senses, and take only the background which alone is permanent and real. Thus examined, every experience reduces itself to the ultimate Reality.

In any experience, the expression is the objective part and the background is the subjective part or the Reality behind it.

The test of every experience is to see whether it is strictly *subjective* or *objective*. The subjective alone is real and the objective all illusion.

Ākāsha, though not perceptible to the senses, is certainly conceivable by the mind. So it is really objective in nature. If we take out of ākāsha this last taint of objectivity, it ceases to be dead and inert, becomes self-luminous, and it immediately shines as its background – the Reality.

43. WHO LIVES REALLY? (6)

We generally say that every man lives. If the term 'man' refers to the changeless 'I'-principle (and it cannot refer to anything else), we are guilty of a contradiction in terms. The changeless 'I'-principle can never undergo such changes as birth and death.

Don't we speak of 'my past life' and 'my future life'? It is clear from these that the 'I'-principle is beyond birth and death. For in these statements, we imply that the 'I'-principle is present before birth and after death. How then can birth and death pertain to the 'I'-principle?

Therefore, the real 'I'-principle alone lives. The ignorant man believes that either the body or the mind lives, while in fact each of them dies at the end of every perception or thought. But the 'I'-principle continues unchanged through all thoughts and perceptions, lighting them up as well.

Therefore, the ignorant man who identifies himself with body and mind is dying every moment, along with every perception or thought. And the Jnyānin, who identifies himself with the changeless 'I'-principle, alone really lives and knows no death.

The body idea or the ego has to die, in order that *you* may really live. In this sense, it is the Jnyānin alone that really lives, and knows he lives. His advice to every man is: 'Die, in order to live.' In other words, annihilate the personal element, or ego, in order that the impersonal element may not appear shrouded. This is realization – establishing oneself in the Reality.

44. WHY DID THE SHĀSTRAS PREFER METRICAL FORM AS THE MEDIUM FOR DISCUSSION OF THE TRUTH? (7)

Truth is not expressible in words; it can only be hinted at. Prose is generally suited for precise and definite expositions within the realm of the intellect.

In the shāstras which deal with the Truth, the reader is only to be helped to separate himself from all that is not the Reality; and his attention is drawn to the inconceivable Reality by mere suggestions, leaving much of the Truth unsaid.

In this process of drawing attention to the Reality, the Ācārya is in a plane beyond the reach of the intellect; and the expositions also come as spontaneous inspiration from the Absolute, against a background of simple harmony far beyond intellectual grasp.

Under these conditions, the verse form is naturally preferred for exposition of the Truth in the shāstras; because the metrical harmony gradually leads the way to the divine harmony, to which attention is being drawn. And that is the Reality itself.

10th January 1951

45. HOW IS THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT ONE AND THE SAME REALITY? (8)

I act, I perceive, I think, I feel; and I also remain all alone in my own glory. It is this unattached 'I'-principle itself that appears in the acting, perceiving, thinking and feeling – while still remaining unattached and unchanged.

But the ignorant man wrongly attributes all these activities to this 'I'-principle, and at the same time admits without hesitation that the 'I' is never-changing.

I am unaffected by any of these apparent activities. So I appear in my own glory, without a change, even in all apparent activities. This shows that all these activities are unreal. And this unreality can be seen if we look at these apparent activities from a subjective standpoint.

Now looking at objects, we find that the ordinary man's experience is that the unknown subsequently becomes known. Examining this statement more closely, we find that the 'unknown as unknown' is certainly not the 'known as known'. Because, in what we call the 'known', there is so much of our own superimposition – such as name, form, dimensions and numerous other attributes – heaped upon the 'unknown'. But the 'unknown', on the other hand, has only one general superimposition – namely the characteristic of being unknown – made upon the 'thing in itself'.

So the 'thing in itself', or the Reality, was called unknown when viewed from the sphere of the known object. Or in other words, it was the Reality itself that appeared as the unknown and as the known, without undergoing any change in itself. That is, the Reality is neither the unknown nor the known, but is the background of both.

Thus, the subjective ‘I’-principle and the ‘objective Reality’ are one and the same. In other words, the ultimate subject devoid of its sense of subjectivity and the object devoid of its objectivity are one and the same Reality itself.

46. WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘WATER DOES NOT FLOW’? (9)

Water as water, or as the element water, is both in the flowing water as well as in the stagnant water. So the flowing-ness or the stagnancy does not go into the make of water. Therefore, water does not flow, nor does it stagnate.

Similarly, the ‘I’-principle is both in activity and in inactivity. Therefore it is neither active nor inactive. The ‘I’-principle shines unchanged: before, during and after every activity or inactivity.

This method, of understanding the objective world and the ‘I’, not only establishes one’s self in the right centre, but also destroys the samskāras relating to them.

11th January 1951

47. THE ‘THING IN ITSELF’ IS BEYOND THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN. (10)

When the unknown is sensed, something objective comes in. When you try to objectify the Reality, you first superimpose form upon it; and upon this most general form, innumerable other details are superimposed, by one or more of the sense organs. This is how an object is visualized.

The form never exists independently of the sense organ, and so it can never exist outside the sense organ which perceives it. What we know in a perception is only our own superimposition, including our own samskāras; and it is not the Reality at all, which of course is not perceivable. The thing in itself – the Reality – transcends both the known and the unknown.

All objects, thoughts and feelings are known through the senses or the mind. But I always know that ‘I am’. This knowledge is not obtained through any sensory organ or agent, and so it is called *direct knowledge*.

Looking more closely, we find that even in sensory perception, it is only direct knowledge that is experienced. When I say I know an object, the object is reduced in terms of knowledge to knowledge itself, and can no longer be called an object. As knowledge, it can have no limitation either, there being nothing other than knowledge existing beside it.

So, what actually happens, even in sensory perceptions, is that the self (Consciousness) knows the self (Consciousness). Every sensory perception is in fact direct knowledge. Thus, when you come to knowledge, no object can exist as such. The object is only an object of the sense organs, and never the object of knowing. *Knowledge can know only knowledge*.

When a disciple retreats consciously from his body, senses and mind to his innermost self – pure Consciousness – knowledge dawns; and he is said to have realized. When knowledge dawns, objects and senses vanish. The same process also repeats itself during every sensory perception; and you always know nothing but the Reality.

viṣayaṇṇaḷkḳṛ aṛiyappetūṇṇpōruṇṇ sattayilla .

[Objects have no existence, even when known.]

jñāta sattayam illa .

[Even what is known does not as such exist.]

Objects have no existence even when known; since every perception brings only direct knowledge of the self, proving only the Reality behind all. So you stand self-realized.

48. BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ, 2.16 (11)

nā 'satō vidyatē bhāvō nā 'bhāvō vidyatē sataḥ ...

The existent can never go out of existence, and the non-existent can never come into existence. This is the meaning of the verse. The test of the Reality is whether it disappears or not. According to this test, the only thing that never disappears is the 'I'-principle or 'Consciousness'.

Perceptions can exist only if there are external objects. But it has been proved already that objects as such have no existence. The Reality can never be an object. So it follows that even perceptions are not perceptions at all.

Similarly examining the subject, we find that the body, senses and mind are also mere empty words, having no independent existence. Each in turn gets reduced into the ultimate 'I'-principle or 'Consciousness', which alone is real.

Therefore, I alone am shining in my own glory at all times, without change.

13th January 1951

49. THE REALITY IS BEYOND THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN. (12)

The unknown is nowhere in existence. At a higher level, it has to be said that nothing is known either. So everything is beyond the known and the unknown and therefore is the Reality.

50. WHY SUCH OPEN TALK? (13)

A disciple asked: Why was secrecy so strictly observed in expounding the Truth in the old śāstras?

Gurunāthan: Evidently, for fear of jeopardizing established religion and society. Religion had no place except in duality and social life. It was the prime moving force of social life in ancient times. But the concept of religion could not stand the strict logic of vēdāntic Truth.

The sages of old, who recognized the great need of religion in phenomenal life, expounded the ultimate Truth under a strict cover of secrecy, thus enabling religion to play its role in lower human society. But religion in the present day world has been dethroned in many ways, and ungodly cults have come into existence in large numbers.

Therefore it is high time now to throw off the veil of secrecy, and broadcast the whole Truth in the face of the world which has already advanced much, intellectually.

51. WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE? (14)

Nothing. Because, when the so called object comes into the plane of knowledge, it loses its objectivity and becomes knowledge itself, or one with the knower. Just as, in the plane of the senses, the form which is supposed to have been perceived loses its form and becomes seeing itself. Form is nothing but seeing.

Knowing is always directed to the Reality. The object of knowledge is always the Reality – if the Reality can ever be an object. Therefore, it is only the Reality that is known, in every case.

52. WHAT ARE NAME AND FORM? AND HOW TO TRANSCEND THEM? (15)

Being attracted by the existence aspect of the Absolute everywhere, we start to examine what it is and immediately utilize our senses to do the job. The senses at once project their own respective objects, and superimpose their own particular form upon the existence ‘sensed’, attributing the permanence of the Absolute to the forms thus superimposed. In this way, we are deluded into the thought that the forms thus created are permanent, and we lose sight of the Absolute.

In order to get beyond this delusion, we must go beyond these forms, as well as the mind. Then we will see the Reality as one with our Consciousness.

On the subjective side, there is Consciousness; and on the objective side, there is existence alone. Existence and Consciousness being two aspects of the same Reality, the subject-object relationship vanishes. Existence may be said to be objective, but really is not. Because that which exists is really neither inside nor outside.

Names can be given only to objects. Objects have been proved to be nothing but Consciousness. Therefore the name also vanishes completely, or all names are the names of Consciousness.

53. WHAT IS THE RIGHT APPROACH TO THE SOLUTION OF ANY SPIRITUAL QUESTION? (16)

The answer can never be found in the same plane as the question itself. When you look from the next higher plane, the question as such disappears altogether.

The mind is incapable of explaining itself in its own plane. So in order to explain it, you must rise to the background – the plane of Consciousness. Looking from there, you see the mind with all its doubts and difficulties transformed into Consciousness; and nothing ever remains over which needs to be explained.

The mind is fitful or changing. Nothing but a permanent something can venture to examine anything changing. The same rule applies to the relative plane also. Relatively speaking, seeing is more permanent than form, and knowledge is more permanent than the senses. So the senses can well be utilized for a preliminary examination of the variety in objects. Similarly, knowledge can be utilized to examine the various perceptions, thoughts and feelings.

A Jnyānin’s apparent talking is no talking and his apparent silence is no silence, from his own permanent stand. He is always at the changeless, beyond all sense of relativity.

54. WHO IS A JĪVAN-MUKTA? (17)

Every man is a jīvan-mukta [free within, while living as a person in the world]; but he has only to know it.

The spontaneous and unaffected conduct of every man proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that he is always a jīvan-mukta. He has only to know it. And that is called realization. His conduct and words show that the 'I'-principle is not at all affected by actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings – all of which he is called upon to witness and apparently participate in, from time to time.

Yōga does not destroy the false identification with the body. It takes into account only the waking state experiences for its consideration. So its conclusions can never be complete or unassailable.

15th January 1951

55. HOW SHALL ONE ACT AFTER REALIZATION? (18)

The correct answer to the question is that there is no action after realization. Therefore the question does not arise.

But the question can be taken up at a lower level and answered differently. The world and its activities – including that of the body which you call yours – may continue in the usual manner, apparently as though nothing has happened.

By being established in the Truth, you are not going to get any definite advice about your future activities. But the light from the centre will so react on your mind that eventually it will run only in the proper groove. The world of your perceptions will henceforward be illuminated by an entirely new light and significance. Your way of life will definitely improve and will shine on a clear and new basis – being absolutely purposeless and goalless – because you have become impersonal, and your activities can be assigned to no criterion whatsoever.

The world and Ātmā are only apparent contradictions. Whatever you assume yourself to be, so you will see outside you.

If you stand as the body, you see only gross objects.

If you stand as the mind, you see only subtle objects.

If you stand as the self, you see only Consciousness.

A bhakta sees all as bhaktas, everywhere outside.

A yōgin sees all as yōgins, everywhere outside.

A jnyānin sees all as jnyānins, everywhere.

56. IS THERE ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WEALTH AND LIBERATION? (19)

Shāstras and teachers of old say, with one voice: 'If anyone, at the height of worldly happiness or at the depth of desperation, is able to direct his mind with one pointed attention to the right Absolute, he may very well be said to have gone a long way towards the establishment of his own right centre.'

Wealth, unless one possesses discrimination, is often supposed to be an obstacle to spiritual progress. But if a wealthy man has the good fortune to take to the spiritual quest earnestly, he is blessed indeed. He easily rises to the very top and becomes a beacon light of spirituality. Such are the great seers like *Shrī Janaka*, *Shrī Rāma*, *Shrī*

Kṛiṣṇa etc., who were all jīvan-muktas as well as virtual rulers of great kingdoms. Innumerable sannyāsins were instructed and initiated by them into the Truth.

When a wealthy man gets to the Truth, he has transcended much of what may possibly tie him down. Though still in possession of all the worldly objects of pleasure, he has found them to be non-existent and meaningless, in the light of the absolute Truth.

Thus, anything that inflates the ego can also be used to attenuate it as well. When a wealthy man finds that what is sought by wealth, namely happiness, is not to be gained by wealth, he turns his attention away from wealth, though he may still continue to possess it. So, in order to gain that happiness, he seeks other means; and having gained it, he finds that it is not 'wealth' that is an obstacle to spiritual progress but our sense of possession of it.

For a spiritual aspirant, there can never be an obstacle.

57. WHAT IS THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN SPIRITUALITY? (20)

It is said that women cannot rise to the Absolute as easily as men. But we find that in ancient times many men reached the highest by following the instructions given by women like Cūḍālā (in the *Yōga-vāsiṣṭha*) or Gārgī (in the Upaniṣhads). And there are many other such examples.

58. LORD KṚṢṢṆA’S WAYS OF RAISING HIS DEVOTEES TO THE HIGHEST TRUTH WERE PECULIAR AND EXCEPTIONAL. (21)

His method was aimed at capturing the hearts of his devotees by intelligent and skilful means; and thus purifying their hearts, as a result of the reaction from him as self-luminous Truth or *prēma* (objectless love). No other example of a teacher of Krishna's type is known in the past.

1. Lord Kṛiṣṇa's stealing butter and curds from the houses of the Gopīs was not done for greed or self-enjoyment. He was the son of the king of the cowherds and had plenty at home. His object was evidently to keep the Gopīs incessantly thinking of him in some form or other.

The reaction to those thoughts – since it came from him, the impersonal – was so pure and elevating that the Gopīs were lifted from level to level, gradually, without any effort on their own part.

2. There is the story of Kṛiṣṇa's pretended headache... the refusal of the devoted wives of Kṛiṣṇa to give him some dust from under their feet to be applied to Kṛiṣṇa's forehead, as prescribed by the disguised physician (Nārada)... the subsequent transportation of cartloads of earth trampled under the feet of the Gopīs of Vṛindāvana for their Lord Kṛiṣṇa, for the same purpose, without a remorseful thought... Kṛiṣṇa's recovery... the chiding of the Gopīs at first by the wives of Kṛiṣṇa... the subsequent humiliation and enlightenment of the wives... and their acceptance of the Gopīs as the real devotees of their Lord.

The refusal of the wives of Kṛiṣṇa was dictated by their ego, and the ready compliance of the Gopīs was due to the absence of the ego in them.

3. And then again there is the story of Arjuna... the story of Arjuna's Gāṇḍīva being snatched away by a small monkey when Arjuna's thoughts were inflated by the

ego, which amounted to an insult to Shrī Rāma and his army of monkeys... Arjuna's recovering the Gāṇḍīva when he was made to admit his egotistic thoughts and to make amends for them, by bowing and praying for pardon before the apparently insignificant monkey, who was but a representative of the invincible army of monkeys that went with Shrī Rāma to kill Rāvaṇa and conquer Lanka.

The appearance of the monkey, his snatching away the Gāṇḍīva from the hands of Arjuna and the latter's subsequent humiliation were all the tricks of Kṛiṣṇa meant for killing the egoism in Arjuna. Here also, Arjuna's ego was annihilated in a most ingenious manner.

Though the devotees' thoughts and actions would appear to have been tainted, the reaction from Kṛiṣṇa, the impersonal, was so pure and forceful that it had the instantaneous and most mysterious effect of lifting them from level to level to the right Absolute.

59. WHAT IS RENUNCIATION? (22)

'Renunciation' or 'sannyāsa' is not likely to annihilate one's samskāras, even after the attainment of nirvikalpa samādhi in the yōgic fashion.

The tendency for renunciation shows a diffidence, or unwillingness, or fear, to look straight at the apparent world and analyse it to its very source. So the sannyāsin sometimes chooses to get away from the apparently more dangerous parts of the world, relying upon his own mind and intellect which are themselves parts of the world and which he must ultimately renounce.

Thus, as the field of his enquiry is incomplete, his renunciation is also incomplete. The result of such an enquiry can never be satisfying. The enquiry can be complete only when he is able to visualize the Reality of his own self, even in the apparent variety.

To achieve this, the sannyāsin, even after attaining the nirvikalpa samādhi of the yōgin, has to labour afresh on the path of direct knowledge.

60. WHAT IS THE FITTEST OF ALL INSTRUMENTS? (23)

Consciousness is the fittest of all your instruments for examining the world – if it may be called an 'instrument'.

The sense organs sense the object and Consciousness knows it, immediately transforming it into Consciousness itself.

You are the perpetual knower; and the known can never tempt the knower, which is yourself. See yourself as such and the whole trouble disappears.

61. WHAT HAPPENS TO OBJECTS WHEN KNOWN? (24)

In order to perceive anything, we must use any one of the five senses. Each sense returns the verdict that the thing is its particular object. That is to say that after the sense organ has sensed it as its own object, Consciousness faces the object and knows it. At the end of every function, knowledge dawns.

Just as each sense organ is capable of sensing only its own particular object, Consciousness also can know only Consciousness. Thus, knowing the object means that

the object is transformed into knowledge; and the object is no longer the object as before.

The objective counterpart of knowledge can only be knowledge. After every activity, knowledge dawns. This means that knowledge is the background of activity as well as of inactivity, just as it is in the interval between two perceptions when you stand all alone in your own glory.

When looked at through the eyes, the object appears as form (the counterpart of that sense organ); and when looked at through knowledge, the object appears as knowledge itself, since knowledge can have no other counterpart.

I know it = I know myself = I know the Truth = I am the Truth.

The background of objects and sense organs is the same. Similarly, the background of senses is also the same Consciousness or 'I'. Knowledge has nothing for its object except knowledge. With the seeing, form appears. But when you know the seeing subsequently, it becomes knowledge itself. So everything is transformed in terms of the instrument used.

Thus using Consciousness, everything is reduced or transformed into Consciousness. Even the statement 'I know' is wrong, because 'I' and knowledge are one. In experience or knowledge, both subject and object merge.

62. PROGRESS ON THE PATH OF DEVOTION TO A PERSONAL GOD (25)

You approach God to get your desires fulfilled, one after another. This cuts at the root of your self-dependence and self-confidence, and makes you weaker and weaker day by day; till at last you become quite helpless and passive, without any power of initiative.

Seeing that most of your desires are not fulfilled, you are slowly disillusioned and finally dare even to dethrone the personal God. Then you begin to depend upon yourself and, looking back from that standpoint, continue to rise slowly and steadily.

When your earnestness is deep enough, you get a real teacher and you are gradually taken to the right Absolute.

20th January 1951

63. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE ACCEPTED PATHS (26)

In our search for Truth, beginning with an examination of the world before us, we use as our instrument the faculty of reason. This reason can well be divided into two. One is lower reason, which is exercised by the mind in examining the mutual relationship of objects, from intellect down to the gross world. The other is higher reason or transcendental reason, which is exercised in examining the mind and its objects – gross or subtle – with a view to discover their real content.

There are usually three accepted paths to the Truth. They are the paths of *devotion*, *yōga* and *jnyāna*. Of these three, devotion and yōga deal only with relative things falling within the sphere of the mind and sense organs, taking into consideration only experiences in the waking state. Their findings, therefore, can only be partial and incomplete.

The jnyāna path looks from a broader perspective and comprehends within its scope both yōga and devotion. It takes into consideration the whole of life's experiences –

comprised in the three states – viewed impartially. It demands a high degree of real devotion, in the sense that the aspirant has to have a high degree of earnestness and sincerity to get to the Truth. This is *real devotion, to Truth*; and it is infinitely superior to devotion to anything else, which can only be less than the Truth.

The yōgin controls, sharpens and expands the mind to its maximum possibilities, attaining samādhi and powers (or siddhis) on the way. But in the case of those who follow the jnyāna path, the mind is analysed impartially and minutely; and proved to be nothing other than pure Consciousness itself, beyond which there is no further power or possibility of development.

So it is through jnyāna alone that Truth can be visualized, while yōga and devotion only prepare the ground for it.

64. THE CONTENT OF DEEP SLEEP (27)

Are you not annoyed when you are suddenly woken up from deep sleep? That is because you love deep sleep more than you love activity. Deep sleep is complete rest.

Egoism is the wrong identification of one's self with the body, senses and mind. To get to the Truth, one has to get the body, senses and mind separated from the 'I'-principle. This elimination, coupled with your finding your real centre, and establishing yourself there, is called 'realization'.

Consciousness never parts with you, in any of the three states. In deep sleep, you are conscious of deep rest or peace. Inference is possible only of those things which have not been experienced. The fact that you had a deep sleep or profound rest is your direct experience, and you only remember it when you come to the waking state. It can never be an inference. Experience alone can be remembered. The fact that you were present throughout the deep sleep can also never be denied.

The only three factors thus found present in deep sleep are Consciousness, peace and yourself. All these are objectless and can never be objectified. In other words they are all subjective. But there can be only one subject; and that is the 'I'-principle. So none of these three can be the result of inference; since they are all experience itself.

Prakriti in the guise of an old woman says to an earnest aspirant: 'Poor fool, thou diest!' Immediately, the spiritual aspirant retorts: 'Hush hag. Thou liest!' And in he walks to peace. A real aspirant should be bold and firm as the aspirant mentioned above in facing the ego at every step, to be assured of a steady progress to the right Absolute.

65. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AN OIL LAMP BEING LIGHTED AT SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN HINDU HOMES (28)

It has been shown that the Reality shines by itself in between two thoughts, two feelings, actions, perceptions, states, etc. So, symbolically speaking, there is the Reality, shining between day and night. It is that Reality that is symbolized by the light. The oil lamp is lighted to symbolize that Reality, shining between the two states. This objective light is meant to put you in mind of the subjective light of the Reality in you.

66. SIGNIFICANCE OF FAMILY POLLUTIONS (PULAVĀLĀYMAKAḤ) (29)

The family pollutions of the Hindus have a similar significance. After the birth or death of an individual in a Hindu home, the inmates observe pollution rites for some days. This shows that these two occurrences are unwelcome, since they obscure the Reality. The 'I', which is beyond birth and death, is really degraded when supposed to be born or dead. It is for the atonement of this sin, and in order to remember the changeless Reality of the 'I'-principle, that one observes the pollution.

Going beyond the existence and non-existence of anātmā [objects], one reaches the Absolute. It is not enough if the world (both gross and subtle) is found to be unreal. The unreality or non-existence of the world, which remains as a saṃskāra, must also vanish, leaving you as absolute Truth alone.

But for a general shroud of ignorance, babies and children are very much akin to the Absolute, in their conduct and expressions. They speak of themselves in the third person; as if they are the subject, distinct and separate from their body. This is an apparent expression of the Absolute. To a child, everything is nameless as the Reality. But parents begin to bind them, by thrusting into their minds names, one after another, calling them knowledge.

The conduct of children is superficially almost similar to that of a jīvan-mukta; and is similar to wakefulness in deep sleep. For, though the jīvan-mukta appears to function just as an ignorant man does in the waking state, he does not get away from his centre of Consciousness, even for a moment, as in his deep sleep.

67. KARMA-SANNYĀSA AND KARMA-YŌGA (30)

Karma-sannyāsa is the perfection of the supposed passive principle in man; and *karma-yōga* (the path of the house-holder) is the perfection of the active principle in man.

But realization is beyond both passivity and activity.

68. THE THREE STATES OF MAN EACH INDEPENDENT OF ONE ANOTHER (31)

Deep sleep is usually said to be the cause of the dream and waking states. This is dependent upon the law of causality, which is misapplied here. A law obtains only in that particular state in which it operates, and it operates only between objects existing in that particular state. But if a law is to affect all three states, it must obtain in a common state, of which these three states are but parts.

The only thing common to these three states is the 'I'-principle, which permeates all of them and lights them up. This is no state at all and is beyond all laws and limitations. The 'I'-principle cannot be the cause of the three states; and much less can the deep sleep state be the cause of the other two states. Therefore, among the three states, there can never exist any causal relationship. Hence each state is independent in itself, and bears no relation whatsoever with the other two.

To examine the three states impartially, one has necessarily to take up a position not in any one of the three states, but as a witness to all the three, i.e. as the witnessing principle standing out of the three states. When you take your stand in the 'I'-principle and try to examine the three states, the states will not remain as such, but

will be transformed into Consciousness. This proves all three states to be only illusion.

24th January 1951

69. WHY IS NOT DEEP SLEEP A CAUSE OF THE OTHER TWO STATES? (32)

In the waking state, you can decide whether there is any connection between three objects A, B and C, *if* they are things perceived in the waking state itself. In the same state, these three objects are governed by the same order of time and the same law of causality.

Take the deep sleep state, dream state and waking state as three objects between which you want to know whether there is any connection or not. To do so, you have to see whether these three states are governed by the same order of time and by the same law of causality. But we find that it is not so. The time which exists in the waking state is different from the time which exists in the dream state. In deep sleep, there is no time. Therefore, there is no common order of time governing the three states. Time is the parent of the law of causality, and therefore there can never be a causal relationship existing between the three states.

Therefore, the deep sleep state can never be a cause of the other two states.

70. HOW DOES MEMORY FUNCTION? (33)

Memory is an undeniable experience to the ordinary man. Unless there is a permanent principle equally connected with the past, the present and the future, the functions of memory, recognition and hope are impossible. So memory helps us to prove the existence of such a permanent principle behind our mental activities. Therefore let us discuss memory here, conceding the existence of the world, gross as well as subtle.

Memory functions by way of remembering past thoughts, activities and events. It is clearly a function of the mind. To justify its reality, it must satisfy two conditions. It must first be proved to have been present at the time of the thought referred to and must have known or witnessed it. And secondly, it must also be present at the time of the act of remembrance.

That memory is present when it appears is admitted. Memory, which is itself a thought form, cannot exist along with another thought; since you can never have two thoughts simultaneously. Therefore, memory by itself cannot recall a past thought.

A thought can be recalled only by that principle which perceived it at the time of its occurrence. Therefore, the 'I'-principle alone can recall a thought at any point of time. That principle – because it always knows the mental activities – is the changeless witness. It can never cease to be a witness at any time.

Recalling a past thought is a function different from the act of witnessing. That activity can never be attributed to the 'I'-principle. Then the question arises: how is a past thought remembered?

Well, there is an usurper in the picture. Just as he usurps the existence aspect, consciousness aspect and happiness aspect of the real 'I'-principle, and claims them to himself in his own activities in the relative sphere, he also claims the witnessing function to be his. Does he not say 'I think', 'I feel', 'I perceive', 'I do', and along with these functions does he not also say 'I know'? The usurper is the ego.

Because of the identification of the real 'I'-principle with body, senses and mind, he can very well play the role of the real 'I'-principle in his daily activities. Further the ego itself is a compound of Consciousness and body – gross or subtle. That makes it possible for the ego to steal the characteristics of the real 'I'-principle to some extent. Thus the ego remembers a past thought. When he so remembers, the real 'I'-principle stands behind, witnessing that mentation of memory also.

One thing has to be particularly borne in mind in this context. Memory helps us to see the witnessing principle. But we have no right now to go into a discussion relating to memory, the thought recollected and other things relevant to that thought, because we concede the existence of all things in the relative world.

The point at issue is how is it possible for the memory to recall past thoughts. Leave other things out of consideration for the present. The point is only to prove that there is a certain permanent principle standing behind every mental activity, witnessing it.

Because there is the possibility of confusion arising out of the function of memory, its function was taken up and discussed at this length; so that he who wishes to get established as the witness may not have any difficulty.

71. THE DIRECT METHOD EXPLAINED (34)

1. By examination of the subjective element in man, from the body backwards to the 'I'-principle, it is proved to be pure Knowledge or Consciousness itself.
2. Similarly examining the gross objective world, it is found that since the gross object cannot exist even for a moment apart from the perception concerned, the object is clearly the perception itself.

Similarly, taking one's stand in the mind and examining perceptions, it is found that perceptions are nothing but thoughts.

Lastly, examining thoughts and feelings, by the use of *vidyā-vṛitti* or the 'functioning Consciousness', it is found that they are Consciousness itself, the ultimate subject.

Thus both subjective and objective worlds, when properly analysed, are reduced into the Ultimate – which is neither subject nor object. To know this beyond all doubt, and to establish oneself there, is the direct method.

72. WHAT IS A SAGE? (35)

A *Sage* is one who has experienced that the 'I'-principle, or Consciousness, is the only subjective and objective reality. In all apparent activities, he is concerned with Consciousness alone.

When one's attention is directed to Consciousness, the material part of perception drops away as unreal. It is *after* every perception that we are to emphasize the consciousness aspect of our activities. I know my actions, perceptions, thoughts, feelings; and I know myself also. So I am the ultimate knower always. But when I look from my own level of the 'I'-principle, the known disappears altogether and the knower-ship also ceases.

When the Sage takes to any activity, that activity is seldom preceded by a volition of the will, all his real interest being in Consciousness alone, which is involved in it.

His deep conviction that Consciousness has not undergone any change by all these apparent manifestations keeps him at his centre and never disturbs him, as it does a sādḥaka.

Just as the gold you purchase does not undergo any change in itself by being worked into a ring, so also Consciousness does not undergo any change by merely appearing as objects.

To a Sage, it might sometimes happen that from the first formless manifestation of Consciousness, he might go back to the unmanifested Consciousness itself, without coming to object perception at all.

Manifestation (or being known) implies Consciousness. When you say ‘Consciousness manifests itself’, immediately your attention is drawn to the Consciousness part of it. So also in the manifestation of objects. All manifestation proves the Consciousness aspect beyond doubt.

73. HOW IS THE UNKNOWN BEHIND EVERYTHING PROVED TO BE ONLY ONE? (36)

Whatever is perceived can be explained only in terms of the instruments used for the purpose of that perception. So their findings cannot be final. When, however, you withdraw to the ‘I’-principle, or Consciousness, and examine the thing through it, the thing is found to be Consciousness or the ‘I’-principle.

An instrument as such can never be the Absolute. The ‘I’-principle is taken as an instrument only conventionally but is really no instrument at all. It can neither be a functioning principle.

To a Sage, the manifestation of Consciousness with or without form has the same significance, and both are immaterial so far as he is concerned, since he is always at his real centre.

26th January 1951

I perceive objects through the senses.

I perceive the senses through the mind
(taking mind and buddhi as one generic mind).

I perceive the mind by myself.

I am therefore the ultimate perceiver in all cases. When I stand as that and look back, the perceived disappears and is transformed into myself or Consciousness. When the perceived disappears, my perceivership also ceases and I remain as pure Consciousness.

Witnesshood or knowership is only in the relative sphere. But when the objective world is explained as Consciousness itself, I also get to pure Consciousness and the witnesshood then vanishes.

74. WHAT IS ANUBHAVA OR EXPERIENCE? (37)

Experience is the Absolute. Everybody has anubhava every moment of his daily life. At the end of every action, perception, thought or feeling, there is experience. But as it is beyond even the mind, we do not usually note it or understand it as it really is.

We wrongly attribute experience to the lower field of expression, namely feeling, which is the highest standard of worldly experience in our traffic with relative things. One has only to understand it correctly, and see it as the only Reality in this world.

Experience is that state (which is no state at all) where even feeling expires. In all experiences, there is nothing other than yourself, the real 'I'-principle. The ignorant man takes his feeling alone to be his anubhava or highest experience; since it is the highest in the scale of his relative experiences, in which alone he moves.

75. WHAT IS JNYĀNIN? (38)

Jnyānin [the one who knows] is anubhava [experience], or Truth, or the 'I'-principle. Thought must have an object, but Consciousness has none. Feeling must have an object, but anubhava has none.

The 'I'-principle is experience itself, and is the end of all the so-called worldly experiences. It is beyond subject-object relationship. It can never be brought down to the level of the mind, where only relative things can appear. So to experience Truth by feeling is impossible.

If you want misery, be a worldly man; and if you want happiness, be a spiritual man understanding that Happiness is in misery as well. You are really helpless in Happiness, because there is none other than Happiness at that moment either to give or to take. You are helped in misery, because the objects help you to prolong the misery.

'I am Happiness' is my real nature, at the impersonal level. But viewed from the relative sphere, the same thing appears as 'I am happy'.

31st January 1951

76. WHAT ARE UNITY AND DIVERSITY? (39)

Unity is the cause of diversity and not the other way about. The 'thing in itself', the Reality, is beyond both diversity and unity.

1. Unity (of the subject) is the connecting link between everything in diversity.
2. It is only by standing in this unity that diversity is perceived. This means that it is the unity that lights up the diversity.
3. Unity is the deciding principle regarding the existence, qualities, properties etc. of any object in the diversity.
4. From a higher level, it is the background of all.

In this sense, the unity stands as the Reality. But when the unity is taken to be the opposite of diversity, as it is usually understood, the Reality must be said to be beyond both diversity and unity.

77. WHAT IS THE 'THING' IN THE UNKNOWN AND IN THE KNOWN? (40)

1. (a) Before seeing, the thing could not have had form, since seeing was not there.
(b) When seeing is completed, knowledge dawns and the form vanishes.

(c) It is admitted that the thing, which was without form both before and after the seeing, could not have undergone any change during the seeing. During the seeing, there was neither the see-er nor the seen.

So it was unknown during the seeing also. Thus the thing remains unknown in the past, present and future, when knowing is understood to mean sensory knowledge. Therefore it can never be the seen or known, as distinct from the unknown.

Thus the unknown alone existing always cannot be called the unknown, without reference to the known, which is proved to be non-existent as such. Therefore the thing is beyond even the unknown and is the Reality itself.

2. The doer, the doing and the deed cannot exist simultaneously. When you take up any one of these positions you become that at once. So it is evident that you were really none of these, but only the background of all and changeless.
3. The past and future are produced by and dependent upon the present. When we examine more closely what we call the present, it vanishes into the past or future, leaving only an imperceptible point of time, which also flits into the past before you even perceive it.

So it comes to mean that the present remains only as a mere word: representing an agreement – so to say – between the past and the future, to provide a common meeting ground for them. So the ‘now’ is nowhere to be seen, nor is the past nor the future.

Without the past, present and future, time cannot exist. If time is conceived as the background of the past, present and future, it is the Absolute itself.

78. HOW AM I TO ORDER MY LIFE AFTER REALIZATION? (41)

Answer: After realization, you may live exactly as before. The answer is only in terms of how another man sees your activities of life, in both cases.

Subjectively, you have undergone a definite change, from your identification with the unreal to the identification with Reality. So you can no longer lose your equanimity and become desperate; because you know you are perfect and changeless.

After establishing yourself at that centre firmly, you will be able to engage in the usual activities of life even with interest, as an ordinary man does; leaving all interest and activities to the mind, senses and body, but never losing your centre in the least.

1st February 1951

79. HOW CAN THE APPARENT ‘I’ PROGRESS TO PURE CONSCIOUSNESS? (42)

To the ordinary man, the apparent ‘I’ is a compound of Consciousness and body – gross or subtle. Conceding for the time being the existence of the lower self, let us proceed to examine its composition, to eliminate from the ‘I’-principle all the rest.

We see that the body acts, the senses perceive, and the mind thinks and feels. But the ‘I’ is found to be present in all these activities, knowing every one of them. So the first stage is that *I am the knower* of the body, senses and mind. I am standing separate from them: as the functioning witness or functioning Consciousness, in all activities.

Examining this witness, we find that occasionally we experience a state where all objects disappear, and Consciousness alone remains. That is to say, the functioning part vanishes and the second stage, *functionless Consciousness*, alone remains.

(For example, the sun shines. The ordinary man takes it to be a function. But so far as the sun is concerned, it is never a function but its very nature; because it can never remain even for a moment without shining. A function should necessarily have a beginning and an end.)

Thus taking our position in functionless Consciousness, the world as such disappears altogether, being transformed into Consciousness itself; proving thereby that even the manifested is Consciousness alone. Thus, the third stage is that knowing is not a function, but the nature of Consciousness.

Therefore, it is clear that the 'I'-principle has never been the perceiving Consciousness, but is pure Consciousness.

Through the path of devotion alone, it is possible to rise to the highest plane of objectless love, without adopting any separate jnyāna sādhanā. But as far as the devotee is concerned, the object world and problems relating to it still remain to be solved or explained, to make his experience complete. He only forgets it completely in the flush of his deep devotion. Formerly, he used to perceive the world with its usual sense of reality. Until it is proved to be what it really is, there is always the danger of the object world being an impediment to his ultimate perception and establishment in his real centre.

Even after reaching the stage of objectless love through devotion, corresponding to pure Consciousness through jnyāna, one has yet to understand that this objectless love is but the expression of that which can never be expressed.

This light can be obtained only from the real Jnyānin, and so even at this late stage the devotee has to take direct instruction from the Kāraṇa-guru and go beyond. In this new light, all doubts about the world stand automatically solved; and he sees the world as nothing other than his subjective self.

In this connection, it is said that Shrī Caitanya, after long years of experience of so-called objectless love, had to take instruction about the Truth from one of the sages of Shrī Shankara's order, in order to get to the Absolute.

tanne maṇannōraṇivu tōnnīṭilō
pinne maṇaviyōru kālavuṁ varā .

Eruttacchan, Bhāgavatam, Tīrtha-yātra

Means: Knowledge that dawns on the subsidence of the ego can never cease to be.

80. YOU ARE KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE. (43)

1. You do not know anything but yourself.
2. You do not love anything but yourself.

So both knowledge and love have yourself as their object. Therefore, you are pure Knowledge and Love.

81. I AS EXPERIENCE CAN HAVE NO OBJECT. (44)

You are the background of all your emotions and passions. Feeling is the one word to denote all these. It means that feeling is their general background; and so it must be the Absolute, called '*rasa*'. Likewise, knowing is the background of all thoughts.

A man's thirst to know and to be happy proceeds from his real nature. He is happiness and knowledge. Knowing and feeling in their secondary senses may have an object; but in their correct sense, they can have no object at all.

Because that which goes into the make of all feelings, and always remains as their background, is what is called '*rasa*'. We use the word 'feeling' to denote particular feelings such as anger, pride, etc. We use the one word 'feeling' to denote all feelings. So, feeling is the common background of all feelings. This pure feeling is called '*rasa*'. It is the right Absolute.

Likewise, thoughts and perceptions are one when viewed as knowing, because knowing has to be present in all thoughts and perceptions. That again is the 'I'-principle, and that is pure Consciousness.

Similarly, all objects are one when viewed as existence.

2nd February 1951

82. KNOWING IS KNOWLEDGE ITSELF. (45)

Take knowing as a function for the time being; and examine it along with the other four functions of doing, perceiving, thinking and feeling. We find that of all these, knowing is comparatively the most natural and effortless function. For the performance of the other four functions, different conditions and degrees of effort are essential.

The natural effortlessness of knowing, and the fact that it is always present, clearly prove it to be really the nature of the self; because this knowingness does not come and go like the other functions and does not part with the 'I'-principle, even for a moment. The 'I'-principle has always to be the knower; and since the same principle cannot be engaged in more than one function simultaneously, it stands as the Knower alone.

That thought which goes into the make of all thoughts is no thought. It transcends time. That which transcends space or time can be nothing other than the absolute Reality. Therefore all objects, thoughts and feelings are the Reality itself.

To think deeply means to bring in the higher reason.

3rd February 1951

83. IS THERE ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BODY AND CONSCIOUSNESS? (46)

Actually there is no such relation to be established between them; since the body, when examined in the right perspective, is found to be Consciousness itself. Knowing a thing means transforming it into knowledge. And then you will have to say you know knowledge. That is absurd. Therefore it means that you are yourself alone.

84. REALIZATION (47)

Realization consists in becoming deeply aware of the fact that you have never been in bondage. Because realization can never happen: it can never occur in time. To the question: ‘When shall one realize?’, the answer can only be: ‘When the “*when*” dies.’

In your perceptions, you only see form, hear sound, and so on. Form, sound etc. by themselves do not prove or belong to any object. Each only proves and belongs to the particular sense organ concerned.

You can never have more than one perception at a time. Therefore, the projection of an object as a result of one perception – together with the innumerable other concepts which are joined on to it – is indeed a real impossibility.

So every perception, concept etc. proves and belongs to only that thing in itself which is beyond the senses and mind. That is to say it is the only Reality, behind all manifestation.

4th February 1951

85. DUALITY AND ADVAITIC EXPERIENCE (48)

Question: Is it not in duality that the advaitic Truth is experienced? When the teacher expounds the advaitic Truth to the disciple, and when the disciple understands it, is there not duality? How then can it be said that the advaitic Truth transcends all duality?

Answer: When the teacher is talking with the intention of conveying an idea to you, if you direct attention to the language part – namely the pronunciation, intonation, words used, their arrangement, grammar, the structure of sentences etc. – the idea meant to be conveyed will certainly be missed. Therefore, in order to understand the idea, you have to direct attention to the idea and not to the language used.

Likewise with other ideas, also. If several ideas go conjointly to prove a central idea, you have to direct attention to the central idea. If you direct attention to the several ideas, the central idea is missed. Whenever the central idea is understood, you stand as the central idea.

When the Truth – which transcends the realm of ideas and mind – is expounded, you have to direct attention to the Truth, leaving aside also the central idea. When you understand the Truth, you stand as the Truth.

Here, you have been following in the footsteps of the teacher, who was rising from the language to ideas, from several ideas to the central idea, and from the central idea to the Truth. The Truth, as is shown above, transcends the realm of ideas and mind. The personal element ceases here, and does not exist in the beyond. So when the teacher was standing as the Truth and the disciple was also standing as the Truth, only the impersonal was there, as Truth is impersonal. There is no duality there.

But when you come out of it, you use the language of the ego and say you understood it. It was not a case of understanding at all, but of being one with it.

Here, possibly, you may raise a question. It was said that when the idea was understood by the disciple, the disciple was standing as idea and the teacher was also standing as idea. Then, is there not non-duality there? Why should you go beyond, to find the Truth?

This question can never be there. Ideas are many, and there is diversity in the conception of ideas. The word ‘idea’ brings in personalities also. Two personalities can

never become one. But beyond the realm of ideas, there is only the impersonal. The impersonal can never be many. Therefore, non-duality is only in the impersonal, and it is wrong to assume that the advaitic Truth was expounded in duality.

The ordinary man believes that he is the body, senses or mind. By a careful examination of the three states, you can know beyond doubt that the 'I' is a permanent, changeless principle. This is the *sat* or existence aspect of the 'I'.

But this knowledge by itself does not complete your liberation. Take for example the illusion of a serpent in a rope. Here, 'This is a serpent' is illusion, and 'This is a rope' is the Reality. If nothing of the rope is seen, no superimposition is possible. It is only on a partial knowledge of the rope that the superimposition takes place. It is the 'this'-ness or the existence aspect of the rope that is common to both the Reality and the illusion. It is upon this that the serpent is superimposed.

So, if by some process you understand that it is not a serpent, the serpent illusion vanishes and the 'this'-ness alone remains. But the likelihood of your superimposing other things upon this – like a stick or a crack or a shadow – still remains. If you want to avoid every possibility of any further superimposition you must necessarily bring in clear light and see the rope in its real nature.

Now, applying this analogy to your own subjective self, you see that the 'I' stands for the 'this' and the body, senses and mind for the serpent. Even if you understand that you are not the body, senses or mind and that you are the changeless principle 'I', any other illusion is liable to be superimposed again upon that same 'I', without prejudice to its existence aspect.

To avoid this possibility, you must also understand the other positive characteristics of the 'I', namely Consciousness and Happiness. The knowledge 'I am Consciousness and I am Happiness' stands parallel to the knowledge 'This is a rope' in the illustration.

12th February 1951

86. KNOWING THE *SAT* ASPECT ALONE DOES NOT MAKE LIBERATION COMPLETE.

(49)

Going subjectively beyond the body and mind, you know you are the unqualified 'I'. But this knowledge of the *sat* aspect alone does not make your experience complete. So long as you do not understand the other two positive characteristics, viz. Consciousness and Peace, there is every possibility of your superimposing something else upon this unknown.

For example, if you only know that what you mistook to be a serpent is not a serpent and you do not know what it is exactly, there is every likelihood of your mistaking it the next moment for a stick, or a shadow, or anything else. But if you definitely know – in clear light – that it is only a rope, there is no possibility of your mistaking it any further.

Therefore, to make your liberation complete and unmistakable, you must understand the 'I' to be pure Consciousness, the object being only its expression and both of them being absolute Peace.

13th February 1951

87. HOW CAN PRAYER TO A PERSONAL GOD LEAD TO FULFILMENT? (50)

Man ordinarily takes himself to be very, very insignificant, compared to the vast universe. He finds his mind, with all its limitations, is unable to explain many things in this vast universe. It is also unable to achieve many of its desires.

He conceives God as the Lord of all the universe, all-powerful. So naturally, he prays to God to get his desires fulfilled. Though ignorant of the immense powers and potentialities of his own mind, he unconsciously releases in this way all the powers that lie dormant in him, towards the creation of the Godhead he has conceived. Thus the very powers of the devotee himself, in the name and form of the God he has conceived, come back and take effect, in the fulfilment of his own prayers. But the devotee takes it all meekly, attributing it to the grace of the God, taking God as something entirely different from himself.

In getting his prayers thus fulfilled, he attaches more importance to the fulfilment of his desires than to knowing the nature of the Godhead called to his help. He relinquishes thereby all the spiritual values involved in that communion with God.

He who wants to get to the Truth does not crave for the fulfilment of individual desires, for he is concerned with spiritual values alone. Proceeding that way, he ultimately comes back to his own self and realizes God as his own Self.

14th February 1951

88. GOD IS ETERNAL. (51)

Some of the *śāstras* admit also of many eternals other than God. It is absurd, because plurality is possible only under the limitations of time, space and causality. Eternal means transcending time and space. There can never be other eternals, because there is no agency to distinguish them. Hence there can be only one eternal and that is God.

Conceding God as eternal, it has to be admitted that God created this universe, including time and space. How and from what? Taking God as the creator, there must be two causes for creation: (a) the *efficient cause* and (b) the *material cause*, distinct and separate from each other.

But there is nothing other than God to afford material for these two causes. Still conceding that God created the world out of himself, it has to be admitted that he has further to divide himself into two distinct and separate parts to provide two causes for creation. Such a division makes him finite and he at once loses his Godhood and infinitude. Hence, God remaining as God, creation as ordinarily conceived is impossible. So the world has never been created, in fact.

18th February 1951

89. REPENTANCE IS NO ROAD TO PROGRESS. (52)

An evil deed is very often committed not because one does not know it to be evil, but because one is not able to resist the cravings of the heart. One's reason gives the right advice, but the heart is not able to follow it. Repentance is usually suggested as an atonement and as a means to prevent the repetition of the deed. But experience and logic are against this.

When we begin to repent a past evil deed, we are bringing in the past deed and that makes the heart crave for it again. So whenever you bring in the picture of the evil action, the heart welcomes it; because it gives the heart some pleasure, even to think of it. Thus repentance means the constant repetition of the evil.

So if you want to transcend the evil permanently, you have scrupulously to forget it for ever, until you are able to realize that you are neither the doer nor the enjoyer, but the eternal knower.

If it is a feeling-repentance and not a thinking-repentance, there is no objection to it. But that is very rare. In the majority of cases, it is the other way about; and it is that kind of repentance that is dangerous.

20th February 1951

90. ONLY HE REALIZES WHOM ĀTMĀ CHOOSES.

Nā 'yam ātmā pravacanēna labhyō
na mēdhayā na bahunā śrutēna .
yam ēvai 'ṣa vṛṇutē tēna labhyas
tasyai 'ṣa ātmā vivṛṇutē tanūṁ svām ..

Kaṭha Upaniṣhad, 2.23

This is a statement in the Upaniṣhads. It means: 'He who is chosen by the Ātmā itself is alone eligible for realization of the Truth.'

It is ordinarily said that a thing attracts one. It is not on account of anything done by that particular thing that it is said to attract, but one gets attracted to it of himself. It is in this way that Ātmā's 'choosing' has to be understood. It means that he who is earnest about getting to Ātmā – the ultimate Truth – gets attracted to it without anything being done by Ātmā itself. That is the 'choosing'.

Not only is the direct perception path the easiest and the shortest of all the paths to Truth, but it also gives the most satisfactory explanation of all the problems that arise for those who follow other paths.

21st February 1951

91. STANDARD OF MORALITY (54)

Current standards of morality are purely relative and differ vastly with time, place and various other factors. But man being essentially one all the world over, a common and absolute standard of morality is necessary. But this, however, is rarely thought of. Such an absolute standard becomes necessary only for those who are on the path to the absolute Reality. These are incredibly few, and hence the absence of any satisfactory definition of a single standard of morality in the śāstras.

The following can be such an absolute standard of morality.

Vice is that particular act or thought or feeling that tends to inflate the ego.

Virtue is that act, thought or feeling that tends to attenuate the ego.

All acts, thoughts and feelings directed towards the 'I'-principle or to its nature are virtuous. Virtue and vice have a place only in the relative sphere. In the relative sphere, that which tends towards selflessness is virtue and that which tends towards selfishness is vice.

Love itself can be both selfish and selfless, according to its goal or motive. Object-less love is virtue.

When you understand from your Guru 'who you are' and 'what you are', you transcend both virtue and vice.

92. HOW AND WHY DO I LIVE? (55)

'Do you live at all?' is my question. It has been proved that the thing that lives from birth till death is the same, changeless 'I'-principle. The 'I' is the centre of life. That alone lives.

The 'how' and the 'why' of life are sought in the manifestations outside. When you turn to the manifestation, you lose sight of your centre and cease to live really. So the best way, for the best living, is to cling on to the living alone, forgetting the 'how' and the 'why' of it completely.

93. WHAT IS AN OBJECT? (56)

One perception, as we generally call it, is really the resultant of ever so many distinct and separate perceptions. We see only one point at a time. It is only after this point has disappeared that the next point can be seen. It is only thousands of such points that seem to make up a so called object.

A point that has disappeared does not remain as such. It is foolish to try to collect and join them together, to make up the object or perception in question. Even the point itself, when examined, is reduced to a geometrical point – a mere idea.

So, looked at in the right perspective, an object and its perception are non-existent.

94. I AND OBJECT ARE ONE. (57)

1. Objects are nothing but form, sound, touch, taste or smell. It is evident that any one of these can never be separated from its respective sense organ, even in thought. So objects and sense perceptions are one.

Similarly, seeing, hearing etc. can never shine independently of Consciousness. So, by the same logic, they are Consciousness itself.

Thus objects are only Consciousness; and that is the 'I'-principle.

2. One directs attention to *something*. But is it that something that we perceive by the senses? No. We perceive only the superimpositions of the senses upon that something. This vague something remains as the substratum of form, sound etc.; and always remains unknown to the senses or the mind.

But it is that unknown something that we want to know, without any superimposition. So, no agent like the senses or the generic mind can be utilized, for they can only superimpose their own objects. The mind always functions conjointly with the sense organs. In the absence of these agents, neither forms nor thoughts appear. But using Consciousness to know it, we see it as Consciousness alone, that is to say as one with the 'I'-principle.

There is a fundamental difference between the functionings of the agents and of Consciousness. When the senses and mind function, they have separate objects and they superimpose these objects upon that something. In the case of Consciousness

strictly viewed, Consciousness has no object of its own. Therefore, when anything is viewed from the standpoint of Consciousness, superimposition is impossible.

25th February 1951

95. SEVERAL WAYS OF CONSOLING PEOPLE IN MISERY (58)

Examine what misery is and rise above it. That is the advice from the highest level.

But, from a lower level, one can say that real life is the result of the harmonious functioning of the head and the heart. Excessive misery or joy is caused by the intense working of the heart divorced from the head; and callousness is the result of the head working divorced from the heart. In both these cases, each should correct the excesses of the other and bring it to normality. In the case of the man groaning under misery, his faculty of reason should be aroused. He should be made to feel that his misery is beyond the control of human effort and that no amount of grief will mend matters; indeed it can only make him more miserable.

96. IN EVERY QUESTION, YOU FORGET YOUR REAL SELF. (59)

Every question arises only in the relative sphere and is concerned only with the manifestation. When you turn to manifestation, you forget or get away from the 'I'-principle.

So the correct method of solving every question is to turn to the centre and then look back at the question. Then the question will stand revealed as absurd. Sometimes, you get the correct answer at once.

It may also be said that every question brings its own answer with it.

97. HOW CAN I BE WORTHY OF MY GURU? (60)

Immediately came the answer: 'Only by your death' – meaning thereby the death of the ego.

As long as there is that sense of separateness of Guru and disciple in one's mind, one's worthiness is not complete. It can only become complete when that sense of separateness vanishes – either by the annihilation of the ego completely, or by the disciple merging in the Guru and becoming inseparably one for ever – that is when he is established in his natural state.

98. LOVE AND SACRIFICE (61)

You love your Guru for your true death.

Even ordinary, mundane love involves a certain amount of sacrifice of the lower self or the ego. When love becomes more and more sublime, the degree of sacrifice involved also increases proportionately. Ultimately, when you want to love the Truth, Guru or the Self – the Absolute – the sacrifice required is also not partial. It demands the whole of the lower self or the death of the ego itself. Thus, in all cases of pure love, there is no trace of the lower self to be found. So love is said to be *only giving and never taking*.

Love of objects is really love of the happiness supposed to be derived from objects. Happiness is your real nature. Therefore, you are loving your real nature. You cannot

split yourself into two – the subject ‘loving’ and the object ‘loved’. So it is yourself or Happiness that is loved. Therefore love and self are one. It is the Ultimate.

But to reach it, you must begin to cultivate that love even here, by sacrificing the interests of the lower self, little by little. Because the love of objects is limited, the sacrifice of the ego involved is only partial. But the love of Truth is unlimited and the sacrifice involved is also complete. It is the death of the ego.

99. WHY IS SHIVA CALLED THE DESTROYER? (62)

Shiva is absolute love or the ‘I’-principle in man. Directing one’s attention to him wholeheartedly brings about the total annihilation of both the ego and the world of its creation. This is a necessary corollary when Shiva is visualized as the Ultimate. This destructive aspect of establishing oneself in the Absolute is attributed by the ignorant man to the personal god Shiva; and thus he has come to be called the destroyer.

100. WHAT DO YOU SEE? (63)

I see the ‘seeing’ – or ‘form’, which is only a synonym for seeing. Likewise, sound is only a synonym for hearing. I hear the hearing or sound. But these – seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling – can never become the objects of seeing, hearing etc. Therefore, you do not see anything, you do not hear anything, you do not touch anything, you do not taste anything, you do not smell anything.

Form can never exist independently of seeing – even in thought, for thought is only subtle perception. Form is seeing itself and never outside it. This means not only not outside the body, but also not outside the seeing or not separate from seeing. When understood as such, perception ceases to have any meaning whatsoever.

The realist philosophy built upon the reality of gross objects and the idealist philosophy built upon the reality of mind (thoughts or ideas) both crumble before this argument. So there is only perception, without its corresponding object. But a perception, thought or feeling without the taint of any object is pure knowledge or the Reality itself. Therefore, even when you see an object, you really see only yourself.

Abstract thinking is impossible without bringing in some concrete object or other, in order to support it. But this rule has two exceptions, when abstract thinking is possible – i.e. when you take the thoughts:

1. ‘I am pure Consciousness.’
2. ‘I exist.’

If you try to concentrate upon either of these two, you will find that before long your thought itself expires, leaving you at your real centre in Consciousness pure. Even in the case of these two thoughts, you should never allow the thought to become concretized in any form. You should only transcend all limitations by allowing that thought-form to expire. This leads you on to the ‘I’, which is always *anubhava-sphurana*.

101. KNOWLEDGE AND HAPPINESS ARE ONE. (64)

Where knowledge is complete, happiness is also complete.

With the object of driving this truth home in the Gopīs, Lord Kṛiṣṇa once asked them each to narrate truthfully the uppermost desire in her heart at that moment, and asked them if their happiness was ever complete or permanent.

They said ‘no’ and began to narrate their desires, each Gopī differing in her desires from the other. This showed that their desires were so vast and varied; and out of these each one could choose only one object in fulfilment of her desire at a time; and again, this one object could satisfy her only for a short while. As long as there was such a vast number of desires always eluding their grasp, they could never be completely and permanently happy.

It was evidently the knowledge of the limitation of their chosen object of enjoyment that was the cause of the apparent limitation of their happiness as well. Thus the only means to make their happiness complete was to bring the whole field of their objects simultaneously under enjoyment. This was impossible. Therefore the only alternative was to make the knowledge of the object complete or infinite.

This proves that infinite Knowledge alone can give infinite Happiness. But two infinities cannot exist simultaneously, since there is nothing else to distinguish them. So knowledge and happiness must be one and devoid of objects. This infinite Happiness can also be attained by the reverse process, namely by knowing it to be objectless and independent of objects. It is only when the knowledge of the object gives up the limitation of the object, and becomes pure knowledge that you enjoy happiness. Thus again we see that happiness and knowledge are one, when devoid of objects.

By an examination of deep sleep, you see that there are consciousness and happiness alone there. And they are not objective, there being only the ‘I’-principle there. But the ‘I’-principle cannot be split into two. So Consciousness and Happiness are one, and are intrinsic in the ‘I’-principle.

26th March 1951

102. EVERY NAME POINTS TO THE ABSOLUTE. (65)

Soon after your birth, your parents give you a particular name. You continue to be known by that name alone till your death. So we see that the name is changeless. Changeless means beyond time and space. That which is changeless in you is the real ‘I’-principle. Therefore the name can pertain only to that ‘I’-principle, and the ‘I’-principle is the right Absolute. Therefore, every name is the name of the Absolute.

Now coming to such names as ‘man’, ‘chair’, ‘water’ etc., all these are generic names and we have already proved that there are no objects corresponding to these names. You may then think that they are mere ideas. But there can never be ideas conceiving gross objects, without the gross objects themselves being there. Therefore these names transcend both the physical and mental realms.

That which transcends the mental and physical is the right Absolute. Therefore, all these names denote the right Absolute.

103. HOW CAN ONENESS BE ESTABLISHED? (66)

Science wants to establish oneness outside, in objects perceived. But Vēdānta wants to establish oneness inside and outside and everywhere.

Science starts on the basic error that you are the body, senses and mind and that the object-world is real.

But the vĕdāntin starts from the Truth that the ‘I’-principle transcending body, senses and mind is the only Reality, and that it is indeed the Absolute.

Beyond the mind, there is something present. It is evident only in deep sleep, as Happiness and Consciousness.

104. WHAT ARE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS? (67)

In order to understand this, the mind must first be defined. The mind is not a substance in itself. It is nothing but the name of a function. So the mind is thought or feeling itself. When these are absent, the mind cannot be said to exist. Beyond the mind, there is only Consciousness or the ‘I’-principle.

If a thought occurs, to whom does it occur? Is it to the body? No. Because body is by itself dead and inert matter. Then is it to the mind? No. Because the mind is itself a thought, and one thought cannot occur to another thought. Therefore, it must certainly be to ‘Me’, who am beyond the mind as Consciousness, that every thought occurs.

The thought rises in Consciousness, exists in Consciousness and vanishes into Consciousness. So, of what stuff can the thought possibly be made? Of pure Consciousness alone, just as waves are made of water. When Consciousness is limited or objectified – so to say – it is called thought. So *the content of thought is only Consciousness*.

Similarly, examining all feelings – like the feeling of anger, feeling of fear, feeling of lust etc. – we find that they all manifest themselves on a common background or factor called feeling, which is divested of all difference. This feeling by itself is pure Peace or Happiness. Thus all these so-called different forms of feeling rise in Peace, exist in Peace and vanish into Peace – which is my real nature.

105. HOW DO YOU THINK ABOUT OR REMEMBER A PAST ENJOYMENT? (68)

You can only try to recapitulate, beginning with the time and place, the details of the setting and other attendant circumstances or things, including your own personality there. Thinking over them or perceiving them in the subtle, following the sequence of the incident, you come to the very climax, to the point where you had the previous experience of happiness. At that point your body becomes relaxed, mind refuses to function, you forget the long cherished object you had just acquired, and you forget even yourself. Here you are again thrown into that state of happiness you enjoyed before.

Thus, in remembering a past enjoyment, you are actually enjoying it afresh, once again. But some people stop short at the point where the body begins to relax, and they miss the enjoyment proper.

Similarly, when you begin to think about your experience of happiness in deep sleep, you begin with your bedroom, bed, cushions ... and pressing on to the very end you come to the Peace you enjoyed there. You enjoy the peace of deep sleep; that is to say you find that the peace of deep sleep is the background of the variety in wakefulness, and that it is your real nature.

2nd April 1951

106. WHEN ARE YOU FREE? (69)

When the thought that you are Ātmā, the Reality, becomes as strong as your present thought that you are the body, then alone are you free.

107. WORLDLY KNOWLEDGE (70)

Worldly knowledge is nothing but giving the unknown a name and dismissing it immediately from your mind.

3rd April 1951

108. SIGNIFICANCE OF YŌGA AND SOCIAL SERVICE (71)

All practices of haṭha-yōga or any other yōga – based upon the body idea in some form – were compared to the strivings of a man bitten by a mad dog, and acting under the effect of the toxin which makes him believe that he is a dog. He tries to straighten his tail which is non-existent and which he feels curling behind him, like a dog's. This seems foolish to all sober men.

Similarly, the yōgin is trying to perfect his body and mind by yōgic practices. This is laughed at by the Jnyānin, who sees clearly that the body and mind are mere illusions, like the tail of the man bitten by the mad dog.

It is just in this manner that persons try to improve the world, without carefully examining what the world is.

4th April 1951

When time is proved to be non-existent, one third of the world disappears. And the other two thirds also disappear when space and causality are similarly proved to be non-existent.

6th April 1951

109. WILL, EGO, SVARŪPA ETC. DEFINED (72)

A disciple asked: 'What is will?'

Answer: 'Will' is that volition appearing just before every activity. It is in essence desire itself. It is one of the manifested forms of the mind itself, forming the lowest link between the subtle and the gross spheres. It is thinking in terms of the needs of the lower self. The different manifestations of mind, according to the western system, are called mind, reason, will and egoism. But according to the eastern system, they are manas, buddhi, citta and ahankāra. (See note 152.)

Ego is a spurious entity apparently personating the 'I'-principle, always after the activity.

Svarūpa of anything is the highest generalization of that thing and is the Reality itself.

Svarūpa of a thing (looked at from a relatively high plane):

1. Svarūpa is that which maintains or keeps the identity of the thing.

2. It is that upon which the identity of a thing essentially depends.
3. It is the essence of a thing or the thing in itself, which underlies all phenomenal attributes.

That general background is one and indivisible, and so it cannot have parts. It is that which remains, even after the removal of all the attributes heaped upon it by your mind and senses. This is pure Consciousness.

Relatively, it can also be said that the svarūpa of a thing is the same as its immediate material cause. For example, the svarūpa of the table may be said to be wood, and that of wood may be said to be panca-bhūta: the five elements. Thus tracing it to its irreducible source, we reach the same ultimate svarūpa of man, viz. Consciousness pure.

So body does not go into the svarūpa of a man, senses do not go into the svarūpa of man. Therefore, when all that do not go into his svarūpa are taken away, what still remains is the svarūpa of man. Thus man is svarūpa, tree is svarūpa...; and that is pure Consciousness.

110. THE STAGES OF THE PROGRESS OF ONE'S LOVE (73)

<i>Lower stage</i>	<i>Second stage</i>	<i>Highest stage</i>
Love for objects (kāma).	Love for self (snēha).	Love pure or objectless (prēma).
Ego is pre-dominant	Ego much attenuated by equal consideration for the object also.	No ego, but selfless love alone.
Consideration only for yourself.	Consideration both for yourself and for the object of your love.	No consideration for yourself at all, but only for what is loved.
Activity of taking only.	Activity of both taking and giving.	Activity of giving only.

All these are expressions of the impersonal 'I', ranging from the gross to the Absolute.

Love has three distinct and separate stages in the course of its progress from the mundane to the Ultimate. They may be classified as follows:

1. In the lowest stage of love, you love another only for your own sake. That is only for something that the other does to make you happy and for nothing else. That other is discarded, if the desired pleasure is not forthcoming. This sort of love is called *kāma*, and the ego is most predominant in this. The only activity here on your part is taking and not giving.
2. The second stage is a little more elevated, less selfish, and demanding mutual consideration. Here you expect something from the other to make you happy, and at the same time you do not like the other to suffer on that account. But in return you are also prepared to do something to make the other happy. This sort of love is called *snēha*. It is not directed to the lower self alone, and therefore the ego by its operation gets much attenuated. Here, the activity is both that of taking and giving.

3. The third stage is the highest, and the ideal of love. Here you do not want any return from your partner in love and you do not love your partner any the less for this. You are prepared to do everything possible to make the other happy and your partner's happiness is your happiness. Here, the love is selfless. This is called *prēma*, and it is the Ultimate. Here, there is only giving and no taking. The ego is virtually dead.

Thus, it can be seen that it is the same love – which is the right Absolute – that expresses itself as these three and that it is your real nature. If you take away the limitations from the first and the second, the love stands as pure selfless love: as represented in the third stage – *prēma*.

111. THE CONTROLLING PRINCIPLE (74)

Every perception by itself is invariably governed and corrected by the relatively higher faculty called *buddhi* (lower reason). This *buddhi* is in its turn controlled and corrected by another faculty called higher reason (or *vidyā-vṛitti*), which is well beyond the mind. This is Consciousness itself, appearing to be functioning.

We are usually slow to accept the existence of this faculty, as it is usually confounded with the lower reason itself, their workings being apparently similar.

112. SELF-LUMINOSITY (75)

Self-luminosity is the particular prerogative of Consciousness alone. Consciousness is the light of lights, because it does not require any other light for its manifestation. Therefore Consciousness is self-luminous.

Examination of things nearest to you, like 'memory', can easily lead you to the real 'I'; since you have only to advance just a little from there. If memory leaves you, you become an idiot in ignorance. But become an idiot in the beyond, and you are blessed.

'Sleep away the whole world, clinging on to Consciousness,' said the Sage.

The use of the word 'sleep' in the transitive form, though peculiar, is specially meaningful. It means give up name and form, and rest in the background.

To be more exact

Senses perceive objects.

I perceive objects through the senses.

Mind perceives the senses.

I perceive the senses through the mind.

I perceive the mind.

I perceive the mind by myself.

113. YOU ALONE LIGHT UP OBJECTS. (76)

If objects are lit up, your real nature alone shines there. When the emphasis is on the objects lit up, Consciousness appears limited. But from the standpoint of Consciousness itself, it is never limited, there being nothing else beside it to limit it.

114. THE SAME WORLD VIEWED BY SCIENCE AND BY VĒDĀNTA (77)

Scientists, depending upon the *lower reason* alone, examined the world and came to the great objective generalization 'matter', and enunciated the law of the indestructibility of matter. There they were stranded, finding no means to transcend it; for the

instrument utilized was itself only part of the generic mind. Sometime later, science went a step further and admitted that matter was composed of atoms. The nucleus of this atom, scientists admit now, is energy which is the source of matter. But here again they are stuck in the mind's realm of relativity.

It is at this point that Vēdānta comes to their rescue and takes them higher still. Vēdānta first proves to them that the world and its objects – both gross and subtle, including the instrument they have so far been using, viz. the 'lower reason', for examining the world – are all objective, and that they have to be examined again exhaustively. For this they are shown a new organon or faculty in themselves, called *higher reason* or vidyā-vṛitti, which though beyond the mind has sway over the whole world of the mind and the senses.

From this new stand, they are shown that matter and energy cannot be manifested or exist even for a moment without the help of Consciousness, and that Consciousness is the background of both matter and energy. These are only two different states, so far as objects are concerned. They are the manifestations of the same reality: 'Consciousness'. Thus Vēdānta establishes the Truth that the whole objective world is nothing but Consciousness.

115. HOW TO BRIDGE THE GULF BETWEEN THE RELATIVE AND THE ABSOLUTE? (78)

There is absolutely no bridge which can take you from the relative to the Absolute. The only bridge existing is Consciousness. But here, there is only the bridge and no one to cross over. So a jump alone is possible, to take you across.

The Absolute ceases to be the Absolute if it stoops to give directions in worldly matters. But the disciple is corrected by his Guru, even in the relative sphere. Thus you are led on to the Absolute.

116. DEEP SLEEP (79)

There is proof to show that even the lower śāstras admit that you are in your real nature in deep sleep. The names given to the individual soul in deep sleep, even by the lower śāstras, are 'paramārthika' or 'prajnya' – meaning Truth or Consciousness. That proves that there was no ego present and that you were there as Consciousness and Peace.

It is only when you consider things just as they appear that any problem arises.

117. SELF-CLARIFICATION (80)

A disciple asked Gurunāthan: 'You have told me that I am not the body, senses or mind, that thought is pure Consciousness alone, and I am the witness always. How to reconcile all these?'

Answer: The difficulty arises out of your reluctance to accept that thought is made up of Consciousness alone. But instead, you take thought to refer directly to objects.

It has been proved to you that you are pure Consciousness, the ultimate witness to all your activities. This thought you are *not to take during any activity*, but only after it. A thought after the incident, that you had been the knower all along, relieves you of even the least taint of an attachment – as doer or enjoyer – that might have crept in

unawares during the incident. During the activity, if you take the thought of the witness, the mind engaged in the activity gets diverted, and the activity suffers to that extent. This is neither desired nor advised.

By a subjective transformation alone can realization be complete. Then you have only to make it natural. For that, you must outwardly allow the body, senses and mind to continue their activities as before; but inwardly, after every activity, emphasize the Consciousness or witness aspect, so as not to allow those activities to form new samskāras.

You must understand that these statements were made from different levels. When I say that the 'I' in you is the witness, there thoughts, feelings, perceptions and doings are conceded. But when I say that thought is Consciousness, I do not stand out as the witness of thought, but I go into the make of thought. Then the thought as such vanishes. Body, senses and mind also vanish likewise.

When they are conceded, I am the witness. But when they are severally examined and proved to be Consciousness, I cease to be the witness.

It is he who has the ego present in him that does or does not do. He who has destroyed the ego in him knows neither doing nor non-doing.

118. JĪVA (81)

A jīva [personal ego] comes into being as a result of the false identification of the Ātmā [Self] with body, senses and mind; or as a result of the superimpositions of doership or enjoyership upon the Ātmā (Ātmā + doership = jīva).

'Who superimposes doership upon Ātmā?' is the question usually asked at this stage. Is not he who superimposes himself a doer? The question is absurd on the face of it. The question arises upon the false presupposition that a doership exists even before doership comes into being.

119. 'WHO?' (82)

'Who' is the law obtaining only in the realm of the jīva or mind. From there, usually, it is bodily lifted and applied in the realm of Ātmā, where there is no duality or relativity. So that question, in the present context, becomes meaningless.

In every activity, the 'I'-principle is the witness. The activity is in the mind's plane, or lower still. But the witnessing, conceding that it is a function, is taking place in the plane of Consciousness, without an agent, instrument, or object.

You can never bring the Ātmā – as such – down to the realm of the mind, nor take the mind – as such – up to the realm of Ātmā, to effect a contact.

Though the 'I' is always present in thought to help it to function in my light or presence, higher up I am witnessing it in my own plane, where I am all alone and unattached.

120. 'TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE WITNESS' AND 'TO BE A WITNESS' (83)

These are entirely different things. But you should not try to know that you are the knower. Both together are impossible. Your knowership is objectless and can never be objectified.

You are always the witness. But you need not attempt deliberately to take the role of a witness. Only take note of the fact that you are always the witness.

You are asked to strengthen the conviction that you are the knower, in order to counteract the old samskāras that you are the doer, enjoyer etc. Though the substance of doership and enjoyership is effaced, the samskāras might still remain as shadows.

You are only to argue in your mind how you are always the real knower, and repeat the arguments over and over again. The time will come when the arguments will become unnecessary, and a mere thought will take you to the conclusion. Gradually, you will find that even when you do not think about the Truth, and whether you are engaged or not engaged in activities, you will feel without feeling that you are always the witness and that you are not affected by any activity or inactivity of the mind and senses in the relative sphere.

Witnessing is silent awareness. Do not try to make it active in any way. Consciousness never takes any responsibility for proving the existence or the non-existence of an object.

121. TIME AND SPACE (84)

Space begets objects and objects beget space. Space must come in to make objects and objects must come in to make space. Therefore, they are both non-existent as such. But it has been proved in other ways also that objects are non-existent. Thus space is an illusion.

Time is conceived as past, present and future. These, when closely examined, cease to exist. The past and future have existence only in relation to the present. The present, when analysed, splits up into the past and future, leaving only an imperceptible point of time as the 'present'. This is but a fancy. The present being a fancy, the past and the future are equally fanciful. Therefore time does not really exist. Here, it is proved objectively.

It can easily be proved subjectively also. Time is only a thought form. Thought arises, abides and subsides in consciousness. Therefore, time as such is non-existent and is in essence pure Consciousness.

122. SOME SAY VĒDĀNTA IS NOT PRACTICAL. WHY? (85)

To them 'practical' means subject to the senses or mind. They forget that even the senses and mind shine only in the presence of the 'I', and the 'I' shines all alone as in deep sleep. So the I is more practical than senses or mind. Here, Vēdānta whose subject matter is this 'I'-principle, is the most practical of all practical things. It is the most concrete of all things.

123. SOME SAY THEY ARE ABLE TO GRASP THE TRUTH INTELLECTUALLY, BUT ARE NOT ABLE TO FEEL IT. (86)

This only means they have been attempting the impossible and have naturally failed. Because Truth transcends the senses, mind and intellect. It can never be brought down to the level of the mind, to be thought, felt or grasped by the intellect. If it were grasped at all, it would never be by the intellect, but by the higher reason alone.

124. APPARENT ACTIVITIES THAT ARE REALLY EXPRESSIONS OF THE ABSOLUTE (87)

Sometimes when you see a sprightly baby, you feel an instantaneous pleasure. Immediately you take it in your hands, throw it into the air, catch it, embrace it, kiss it and fondle it, even to the extent of irritating it and making it cry by the pricks of your sharp beard. All this is not to enjoy pleasure. You had that pleasure even at the first sight of the baby. Then what was all this for?

The lower reason can never explain it. Here, the higher reason comes to your help and says that the gush of pleasure you first had was your real nature of happiness itself, and that the rest of the activities were only expressions of the same – sometimes not exactly in tune with the lower logic and reason.

This is an instance of action without any incentive behind it. These activities are activities of Happiness itself.

125. WHO REALLY ENJOYS THE PICTURE EXHIBITED FOR SALE? (88)

The witness alone enjoys it. Neither the vendor, nor the vendee enjoys it really. The shopkeeper always wants to exact the maximum price for it, and the purchaser wants to get it for the minimum. So both of them do not really enjoy the picture. But the stray onlooker or witness – who does not want either to buy it or sell it – really enjoys the picture, since he has no other motive.

So also, you would be able to enjoy the world disinterestedly, only if you stand as the witness of it all.

126. ‘WHO TAKES THE THOUGHT THAT HE IS CONSCIOUSNESS?’ (89)

It is the ego that takes this thought. The ego is a crude mixture of Consciousness and the material part. When this ego takes this particular thought that it is Consciousness, the material part drops away and Consciousness shines alone, in its own glory.

Thus the ego itself gets transformed into pure Consciousness, in course of time.

9th April 1951

127. CONSCIOUSNESS AND ACTIVITY (90)

Consciousness is always your centre, in all your activities.

This fact is only to be understood, and not to be thought of, during the activity itself. It will hamper your activity, and sometimes even stop it, if you think of Consciousness during the activity. So think about the Consciousness part therein, which is your own nature, only after the activity is over and when you are free.

But before the activity, you can take the vague thought, avoiding all details, that Consciousness is the general background of all activity.

128. ‘WORK FOR WORK’S SAKE’ (91)

This should be our real goal. Work will be more successful in the absence of the ego than when it is guided by it, because in the absence of the ego all your energy is

available for the work alone. When the ego is present, part of this energy is usurped by it, for its own maintenance.

129. WHY DID SHRĪ SHANKARA EXPOUND THE MĀYĀ THEORY? (92)

The world was first being examined by him only from the level of the generic mind, and brought into line with subtle experiences. He was attempting to prove only the unreality of the gross world. How? He first divided unreality into two classes:

1. Never existing at all, like the horns of a hare or the son of a barren woman.
2. Appearing and disappearing, subject to conditions and depending upon something else even for that apparent existence.

Shrī Shankara classes the world in the second group, since it exists not in its own right, but depending upon the mind and senses for its manifestation, and appearing only in one state and disappearing in the other states. Thus it is said to be not completely unreal like the horns of a hare, but unreal in the sense that it appears sometimes and then disappears. This is called *māyā*, which is said to be neither fully real nor fully unreal.

This view of Shrī Shankara has not been rightly understood by many. Except in this context, Shrī Shankara does not speak of *māyā* at all. His way of approach here is peculiar, being concerned only with the gross world which he tries to explain relatively in terms of the subtle, or the mind. This is not intended for the *uttamādhikāris*, who approach the Absolute directly. This was intended only for the lower *adhikāris*, who could not – even in idea – transcend the mind’s realm.

Examining the objective world from a purely subjective standpoint, one finds that the objective world as such is non-existent, like the horns of a hare. In that examination, one does not require any explanation of the world in the dualistic plane.

But when one comes a step down from the subjective standpoint, some sort of an explanation may be needed for the world that appears there. It is in this way that the *māyā* theory has come in.

In this approach through *māyā*, the gross world alone is taken up for examination. But it is never the gross that binds you down. It is only your thoughts and feelings that actually bind you. So you must examine the whole world exhaustively, or at least the vital part of it – namely the subtle, which is comprised of thoughts and feelings – in order to get to a satisfactory solution.

130. EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE (93)

Existence can never be destroyed, nor non-existence ever made to exist.

The usual way of expressing the relationship between pure existence, which is permanent, and the object, which is fitful or changing, is itself unnatural and misleading. This method of approach emphasizes the fitful part of the object more than the permanent part of it.

For example, we say: ‘This chair exists’; as if existence comes in and goes out of the chair. It would be more correct to say existence objectifies itself or manifests itself – meaning thereby that existence remains over, even when not objectified or manifested.

Existence is the possessor, ‘*dharmi*’; and objects are the possessed, ‘*dharma*’.

131. PAIN AND PLEASURE (94)

Pain and pleasure are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin, and they actually beget each other. The more you suffer, the more you enjoy afterwards; and vice versa. If your hunger or thirst has been very sharp, which is unmixed pain, your subsequent enjoyment of pleasure at a sumptuous meal will also be proportionately intense. You can never accept or reject any one phase of it alone.

But the moment you understand the source of it all to be your own self or real nature, every pleasure or pain you feel becomes yourself, losing the characteristic of pleasure or pain. And then eternal peace prevails.

11th April 1951

132. VIDYĀ-VṚITTI AND MIND (95)

Vidyā-vṛitti, functioning consciousness, higher reason, higher logic and shuddha-sattva all denote the same faculty (if faculty it may be called).

Even in worldly enjoyment, it is your own real nature of peace that you experience as Happiness. For example, you enjoy Happiness listening to sweet music. Here music helps you only to empty your mind of all thoughts other than music, and finally it is emptied of the thought of music also. Thus the mind ceases to be and you come to Happiness, and that is your real nature.

It is wrong to believe that the happiness came from the hearing of music, because music was not there when the happiness was enjoyed.

133. MIND (96)

Some shāstras hold that the mind functions in the waking and dreaming states, and remains functionless in deep sleep. This position is quite untenable. If mind should remain functioning in one state and functionless in another, mind should be the background of both function and functionlessness, having nothing to do with either. In this sense, mind is Ātmā itself.

guṇakāmaññaḥ nīnīṇīṇīl mānasam tanneyātmā ...

[Where qualities and fancies are removed, mind is Ātmā itself ...]

Eruttacchan

Mind is not a substance in itself, nor a container of thoughts and feelings.

You cannot simultaneously have a thought and a feeling. So it shows that when you have a thought, no part of the mind remains over to take a feeling. Therefore mind is thought itself or feeling itself. So when there is no thought or feeling, one cannot say that mind as such exists.

If mind is taken to be the container of thoughts and feelings, it has to be changeless. If it is changeless, it transcends time. Then it must be Truth itself.

The word 'mind' ought to be correctly understood as the name of a function. Thought is a function – mind is thought. Feeling is a function – mind is feeling. So when there is neither thought nor feeling, there is no mind at all.

134. SPIRITUALITY REPLACES THE OBJECT BY THE SUBJECT. (97)

The worldly way of life is to emphasize the object alone in every activity, ignoring the subject altogether. Spirituality comes in when you begin to bring in and emphasize the subject also, alongside of the object. Ultimately, when spirituality leads you to realization, the object as such vanishes and the real subject, the 'I'-principle alone shines. Then all activity points to you, or all activities vanish.

Mind has usually three stages of expression.

1. *Instinct*: With the body as its instrument.
2. *Reason*: With the particular mind and senses as instruments.
3. *Intuition*: The word 'intuition' is used in different senses in different texts. What is taken up here is yōgic intuition. With intuition, time and space are curtailed to a very great extent. But still, they are there, to enable the intuition to function. The mind is much expanded in intuition. Still, it does not cease to be mind.

Complete annihilation of time and space can never be accomplished by the mind. The background is in an entirely different plane.

135. SPIRITUALITY REVERSES THE IGNORANT MAN'S OUTLOOK. (98)

To an ignorant man, the objective world is an obstacle to spiritual progress; because objects always draw him away from his real centre, which has not yet been shown to him.

But to one who has heard the Truth from his Guru, the same world serves as a help to his spiritual progress, since each one of its objects points to his real centre.

136. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF 'GRACE'? (99)

Really it is a meaningless word. But shāstras endorse it in a certain way, explaining this with the words:

durlabham trayam ēvai 'tad dēvānugraha-hētukam .
manuṣyatvaṁ mumukṣutvaṁ mahāpuruṣa-saṁśrayaḥ ..

Shrī Shankara, Vivēka-cūḍāmaṇi, 3

It means:

1. To be born as a human being,
2. To have a keen desire for liberation, and
3. To come into contact with a Sage

are the three rare possibilities attained by divine grace alone. Animals exist, and man also exists. But man exists and knows he exists. This differentiates man from animals, and it is this which is meant by the 'man-ness' (manuṣyatva) referred to above. (The word 'manhood' is weak and does not convey the sense implied, so a new word 'man-ness' is coined for the purpose.)

137. HOW TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF ‘MAN-NESS’ (MANUṢHYATVA) (100)

Some men make good use of this higher quality they possess, even from their birth. They begin to think what they are, and strive on. All this being within the mind’s realm, they begin to look beyond, for the ultimate Truth.

Finding this not attainable by self-effort alone, they search for long, far and wide, for a real Guru. At last, the fortunate one gets a Guru, under whose guidance he rises from level to level to the right Absolute.

Some others ignore this higher quality, and sink into samsāra (‘worldliness’) again.

12th April 1951

Consciousness alone is *alive*. Everything objective is dead and inert.

sakalam dr̥ṣyam jaḍam

Upaniṣhad

14th April 1951

138. PHILOSOPHY OF THE WEST AND THE EAST (Reply to some American journalists and philosophers) (101)

According to the West, philosophy is a string of assumptions, speculations and inferences. But Vēdānta philosophy is based on incontrovertible direct perceptions or experiences. Knowing the Truth thereby, and establishing your real centre there, you can take to your life’s activities with even more energy, ease and confidence.

139. WHAT AM I? (102)

I can perceive and know my body, sense-organs and mind. Therefore I am evidently the subject, distinct and separate from all of them.

140. WHY IS THE KNOWER NOT THE DOER OR THE ENJOYER? (103)

Because you never cease to be the knower. Doership and enjoyership come and go. Knowing takes place in a different plane.

The doing, perceiving and thinking take place either in the realm of the body or of the mind. When these activities are taking place, they are simultaneously perceived by the ‘I’-principle, from a higher plane.

The doer and the enjoyer always change. The knower is beyond all changes. It is evidently Knowledge or Consciousness itself. And it is no function, since it is changeless.

16th April 1951

141. MIND’S ROLE IN THE EXPERIENCE OF HAPPINESS (104)

A disciple asked: ‘You say I get happiness when the mind comes to rest, as soon as I get the object desired. But if the desire is for happiness itself, how can the mind come to rest before happiness is attained?’

Answer: The mind may be said to desire happiness, but not directly. The object of its desire is always that from which it supposes it can derive happiness. Happiness can never be the object of desire. For Happiness can never be objectified. Therefore it is only when the desired object is gained that the mind comes to rest and Happiness is experienced.

142. 'HOW TO EXPERIENCE THE TRUTH?' (105)

This is the question usually asked from the relative plane. Truth is uncaused, and can never be experienced by effort of any kind. All efforts to that end amount only to thinking and feeling. This is clearly within the mind's realm, and Truth is well beyond it. So no amount of effort can ever take you to the Truth.

Hence a Guru may probably bless you like this: 'May you never experience the Truth.' Because Truth is experience itself. So *be* the Truth and do not desire to experience it. *The Guru is always impersonal.*

143. FROM QUALITIES TO THE ABSOLUTE (106)

Qualities cannot subsist independent of a permanent background. In the subjective realm, there is such a changeless, deathless, permanent principle as the background; and that is the 'I'-principle.

It is the presence of this permanent subjective background that prompts you to search for a corresponding permanent background behind the objects as well. Examining the objective world from the standpoint of this 'I'-principle, you come to such a permanent background behind objects also.

These two backgrounds meet, and are one in Reality.

144. THE BASIC ERROR (107)

The basic error is the false identification of the 'I'-principle with the body, senses or mind – each at a different time. This is the pivot round which our worldly life revolves.

145. 'KNOWING', AND FUNCTIONS OF SENSE ORGANS AND MIND (108)

The functions of the sense organs and mind take place only one at a time, and have always a beginning and an end.

But there is always knowing, and it has neither a beginning nor an end. So knowing is no function at all. You can attribute beginning and end to it only when you look at it from the standpoint of the objects of knowledge which have a beginning and an end.

But knowledge exists without objects. Therefore, it has neither a beginning nor an end.

146. HOW TO GET OVER ATTACHMENT? (109)

Even when you say you are attached, you are really detached. From the height of happiness or misery in one state, you pass into its opposite in another state in the

course of a few moments; and vice versa. And soon after, you pass into deep sleep, divorced of all ideas of body, senses and mind.

This shows beyond doubt that you are really unattached to anything, in any state. If you are really attached to anything, that attachment should continue with you, in all the states in which you happen to be. But that is not the case. Therefore, that proves that in your real nature, you are not attached.

Know it and take note of it. That is all that is needed. Take that line of thinking, and you will find that this mistaken notion of attachment will leave you very soon.

147. TRUTH IS ALWAYS NEW. (110)

The method of direct approach to the Truth (vicāra-marga or the path of discrimination) is found only very rarely, even in the higher Indian scriptures; and that again as mere assertions only, and seldom elaborated upon. Hence, it has always its virgin novelty.

148. MAN'S HUNT AFTER HAPPINESS – AN ANALOGY (111)

Man hunting for happiness is just like a beetle with a drop of butter on its head. Getting scent of the butter, the beetle hovers around, knocking about everywhere for the source of the scent, but is ignorant of the fact that the butter is on its own head.

Likewise, man hunts for happiness because it is in himself and he is not able to see it there. But the urge which makes him hunt comes from that happiness itself.

18th April 1951

149. 'I AM' TO THE IGNORANT MAN AND THE SAGE (112)

We all say 'I am clever', 'I am happy', and so on. In this, the layman ignores the vital part 'I am', and emphasizes the rest. But the 'I am' alone is important for the Sage, and he ignores the rest.

150. ĀTMĀ IS BEYOND BOTH THE PRESENCE AND THE ABSENCE OF OBJECTS. (113)

Thoughts, feelings etc. are like pictures on the wall of Ātmā. Their presence and absence must both vanish, if you want to see the background Ātmā in its Reality..

There is no container in you to hold a series of past thoughts or subtle objects, in readiness for any future remembrance. Thought can have neither a gross object nor a subtle object. So it is objectless, and hence pure Consciousness itself.

Vēdānta wants to go into the heart of everything, and is never satisfied with mere names.

151. HOW YOU SHOULD EXAMINE YOURSELF (114)

Exactly in the way that the ego would examine other persons or activities outside you, standing separate from and unattached to the person or thing examined. Here, you should stand separate from the body, senses and mind; and dispassionately examine them.

Any attempt to adjust the object-world to suit your goal of enjoying permanent Happiness is doomed to failure, like the attempt to spread a sheet of leather all over the world to afford smooth walking. A pair of leather shoes applied to the soles of your feet is an infinitely easier, cheaper and more effective solution.

So also, in the quest after Truth, a subjective correction and establishment in your real centre as the ultimate 'I'-principle will remove all your doubts, difficulties and troubles. The other way is endless and impracticable.

20th April 1951

152. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MIND AND EGO? (115)

The inner organ loosely called 'mind' is divided into four categories, according to its different functions. The ego is one such.

1. *Mind* (particular) is that which gathers impressions from the outside world.
2. *Reason* (intellect) discriminates and selects from the impressions thus gathered.
3. *Will* is that which precedes and directs action. It may be loosely called 'desire' (svārthā-'nusandhāna-vaśēna cittam).
4. *Ego* is that which claims all activities of the mind.

[This note and its quotation seem to have come from Shrī Shankara's *Vivēka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 93-4:

nigadyatē 'ntaḥ-karaṇaṁ manō dhīr
aham-kṛtiś cittam iti sva-vṛttibhiḥ .
manas tu saṁkalpa-vikalpanādibhir
buddhiḥ padārthā-'dhyavasāya-dharmataḥ ..

atrā 'bhimānād aham ity ahamkṛtiḥ .
svārthā-'nusandhāna-vaśēna cittam ..

The inner faculty is spoken
of as 'mind' or 'reason' or
as doing 'ego' or as 'will'.
It gets these names according to
its various modes of functioning.

Mind is the function that conceives
of things together and apart.
Next, *reason* is the function that
determines what is meant thereby.

The *ego* is an acting 'I'
that claims to be this body here.
And *will* is that desire which seeks
out what it wishes for itself.]

153. WHAT IS IGNORANCE? (116)

It is said to be the source of the world. The usual example taken to illustrate this is the illusion of the serpent in the rope. Here the ignorance of the rope, coming just be-

tween the rope and the serpent, is said to be the cause of the serpent. So when the serpent disappears, it is the ignorance that should naturally remain over.

But when you bring in a light and examine the serpent, it disappears altogether; and in its place, instead of the ignorance supposed to be its cause, you see only the rope in its nakedness, beyond all doubt.

So this ignorance, which never had any existence independently of the serpent, is also non-existent. Hence the ignorance is the object perceived itself, or ignorance means only *wrong notion*. The world is only a distorted vision: 'of the Self, by the self'.

We should accept only that which agrees with our higher reason and reject all the rest. In the illustration, we do not first see the rope in its entirety, but only its existence. That is to say the 'this' alone of the rope is seen.. So in the two experiences – 'This is a rope' and 'This is a serpent' – it is upon the 'this' that the serpent is superimposed. So when the serpent disappears, naturally the 'this' alone, which is the real part of the perception, remains over.

Assuming that the 'this' remains, you must not leave the 'this' vague, as it is likely to give rise to other superimpositions. It should be made clear, beyond any possibility of a mistake, and seen as Consciousness itself.

The serpent of superimposition is not likely to be removed until you get a clear perception of the rope. When the serpent is removed, the rope alone shines.

154. VISION OF A PERSONAL GOD (117)

Vision of a personal God is quite possible. It would seem even more real than any experience in the waking state, because that vision takes place in an intenser light.

155. PŪJA DONE TO THE IDOL IS ALSO PŪJA DONE TO THE SELF. HOW? (118)

The first item of a shāstraic pūja is sitting erect before the idol, and transferring by thought the ātmic principle in you to the idol in front of you. This is called 'āvāhana'. Then, after going through all the different items of the pūja, again the final act is restoring it (or taking it back) by thought to its original centre. This is called 'udvāhana', and this finishes the pūja.

This shows most clearly that you had actually been doing pūja only to the Ātmā in you. Moreover, if you happen to forget often the last part, namely the udvāhana, you will find in course of time your energy being slowly reduced and your mind getting weaker.

156. HṚIDAYA-GRANTHI (119)

Hṛidaya-granthi is the knot of the ego or false identification, which apparently binds the Ātmā to the body.

29th April 1951

157. HOW DO I GET ENTANGLED? (120)

When I rest in myself alone, in my own glory, there is no manifestation and no question either. I am the only Reality, and this Reality is my own birthright.

Very often, I slip down to the mind and begin to perceive thoughts and feelings. Immediately, I begin to attribute my own Reality to the mind, and even to its objects namely, thoughts and feelings.

Sometimes, I slip further down to the body and perceive gross objects. Here again I attribute my own Reality to these, the body and objects. Thus I apparently entangle myself in the web of this universe.

It may further be explained as follows.

In the waking and dream experiences, all perceptions are understood only in relation to their opposites. For example, talk is understood in relation to silence, running in relation to stillness, and so on. This practice has created in man a very strong tendency to superimpose the imaginary opposite of any perception whenever that particular perception vanishes.

It is as a result of this tendency that he ordinarily superimposes ignorance in deep sleep when all activities cease. This vicious practice must be given up.

You must understand that all perceptions arise in Consciousness, abide in Consciousness and merge into consciousness. So, whenever a perception vanishes, it is Consciousness or Myself alone that remains over as the background of it all.

You must steadily cultivate this habit of perceiving the Reality as the background of all activity.

158. REALITY INDIVISIBLE? (121)

Reality is only one and cannot be affected by quality or degree in any way. Reality is purely subjective. I am the only subject, and all the rest are objects.

Diversity can be diversity only through me, the 'One'.

159. RELATIVE (SĀPEKṢHYA) (122)

'Relative' means in relation to Me; and not in relation to other objects, as is ordinarily understood. Everything is connected with Me first, and only through Me to something else.

7th June 1951

160. CREATION (123)

Creation is described in the śāstras in two ways: (1) Creation in a regular order (krama-sṛiṣṭi), and (2) Simultaneous creation (yugapat-sṛiṣṭi)

1. The *creation happening in a regular order* (krama-sṛiṣṭi) represents the cosmological view through ajnyāna, māyā, the five subtle elements (panca-mahābhūtas) etc., down to the gross world.

This is intended for all aspirants who are not uttamādhikāris (ripe souls).

2. By *simultaneous creation* (yugapat-sṛiṣṭi) is meant the creation of the perceiver, perception and perceived at the same instant the perception takes place. And they also cease simultaneously, all being transformed into pure Knowledge.

Therefore it is said that objects do not exist except when known (viśayaṇṇalkk~ ajñāta sattayilla). This method is intended for higher adhikāris alone. Here, no faith of any kind is called for, and you rely on your direct experiences alone.

The ‘form’ is disposed of as nothing different from ‘seeing’. Thus I transcend the form as seen by me, and my ‘seeing’ immediately becomes pure seeing without a personal see-er. Thus I become one with Consciousness or the Reality.

161. JNYĀNA (124)

Jnyāna [knowledge] is attained as a result of relaxation of the mind and the giving up of all that is foreign to the real Self, leaving you as the Absolute, in your own glory.

All sādhanas in the jnyāna path have no purpose other than the elimination of the anātmā elements from the Ātmā, and so they are nivṛttis in themselves. When the last trace of anātmā is also eliminated, the effort ceases and you rise to the Absolute.

But, to stand permanently established in the Absolute, the world gross as well as subtle – from which you eliminated yourself – has to be examined again and seen to be nothing but the Reality.

162. YŌGA AND DEVOTION (125)

These are both processes of intense activity, always upholding the doer and enjoyer – even at the highest state, though in a highly general form.

As long as this taint of duality lasts, you do not shine as the Absolute.

163. FORM AND SEEING –A CONTROVERSY (126)

It has been proved that form has no existence independent of seeing, and that form is therefore seeing itself. Then why can it not be said that the seeing is form alone and that form is more permanent than seeing itself?

Answer: In order to answer that question, you must understand the whole process. I said that form is one with seeing and merges into seeing. Next, I said that seeing is one with Consciousness and merges in Consciousness, which is the ‘I’-principle.

So in order to answer the question you put to me, you must direct your attention to this whole process. It then comes to this: Consciousness or the ‘I’-principle merges into seeing and seeing merges into form. Therefore form alone exists, dead inert matter.

But who can say this? Form cannot say it. Who can think this? Form cannot think it. Thus you have to go to knowledge, beyond seeing, thoughts, feelings, perceptions and form.

You have to stand in knowledge to examine anything, and not the other way round. Therefore, the form which is examined will merge into seeing, and seeing into Consciousness. Then the questioner dies and is no longer there to receive the answer. Who then is to judge when the questioner is no more? I believe that the absurdity of the question is now very clear to you.

Now coming back, who is to judge this controversy? ‘Form’, which is inert, or ‘seeing’ which is illumined by Consciousness? Certainly the latter. Seeing is more permanent and comprehends all forms. Further, in the order of proximity to the ultimate ‘I’-principle, seeing – which is much more subtle than form – stands much closer to the ‘I’-principle; and it is the ‘I’-principle that examines it.

So seeing is always much better known than form. This ‘I’-principle is the knower of all.

164. ‘HERE’ AND ‘THERE’ ARE ALSO MENTAL. (127)

Once a great pandit asked Gurunāthan: ‘If you say everything objective is mental, why does not the Shri Padmanābha Temple gōpura (steeple) *there* appear before you *here* now?’

Gurunāthan asked: ‘And what about the “here” and “there”, please! Are they not also mental?’

This silenced the questioner, and he did obtain some light from the answer.

17th June 1951

165. VICĀRA-MĀRGA (THE DIRECT PERCEPTION METHOD) (128)

Of the different Upaniṣhads, dealing with the different paths to attain the Absolute, the *Aitarēya Upaniṣhad* deals with the vicāra-mārga or direct perception method in detail.

This path takes you straight to the Truth. Looking from there, you see the world of mind and senses to be non-existent as such. One who has taken to this path and reached the goal does not stand in need of any independent explanation of ordinary worldly problems like desire, feelings, etc. They are all solved.

But for those who take to other paths, like yōga or devotion, the world of thoughts, feelings and perceptions – as also the gross world – have to be explained.

166. DESIRE (129)

Desire always shows want, and this again shows your imperfection. So, until you become perfect, desire is sure to torment you. Then examine more clearly what desire points to.

It always points to Happiness; and it has been proved to you that when a desired object is gained, there is desirelessness for the time being. The mind comes to rest and Happiness dawns.

So, strictly speaking, desire is directed to desirelessness; because it is that desirelessness that brings in Happiness.

167. SUBJECTIVE TRANSFORMATION AND ADJUSTMENT OF PERSPECTIVE ALONE NEEDED (130)

The worlds appearing in different states are different from one another. As you change, the worlds change also.

Standing limited by the body and mind, if you try to change the world so as to make it beautiful or enjoyable to your mental satisfaction, it will be all in vain. The world will remain only as it is.

But if you change your stand or perspective and identify yourself with the real ‘I’-principle, the world also changes; not as beautiful or enjoyable, but as Beauty and Happiness themselves being one with the ‘I’-principle.

So correct your inner perspective alone and you shall be free for ever and happy, in whatever world you are. This is possible only by realizing the Truth, in all its aspects.

168. RELATIVITY (131)

Relativity, according to science and in ordinary parlance as well, is only between objects themselves.

But according to Vēdānta, relativity is only between the subject and the object. Without the subject's perception, there can never be any object.

Happiness is something that transcends the mind. It expresses itself in pleasure. If the mind part is taken away from pleasure, it becomes Happiness itself.

Pleasure is something that pertains to the realm of the mind.

Personality rests with body, senses and mind. If you think you are impersonal, if you feel you are impersonal and if you act knowing that you are impersonal, you *are* impersonal.

18th June 1951

169. LIFE COMPARED TO A GAME OF CHESS (132)

You first make certain laws to guide your play, and then voluntarily submit yourself to the laws you have made. You are however, always confident that you can at any moment throw away the whole thing overboard and rise above all those laws, and then there ceases to be a game of chess. In the play, the pawns alone can be said to win or lose; and you, the player, go away as you came.

Live likewise in the world, knowing that you are the Absolute – the creator of all laws – and that you can transcend those laws whenever you want. Then you transcend the world.

170. WHY DID LORD KṚṢṢṢṢṢṢ ADVISE ARJUNA TO FIGHT AND KILL, WHICH IS CONSIDERED A SIN AND HIMSA? (133)

Seeing the invincible army of the Kauravas before him, Arjuna became diffident and he was seized by cowardice. But to save his face and vanity, he fell back upon the two common dicta of morality and justice, and thus tried to evade the battle. Lord Kṛṣṇa knew this quite well; and wanted to help Arjuna to transcend this momentary weakness of cowardice, which appeared to have all the characteristics of *śānti*. This could be achieved only by persuading him to fight and win.

Tamas [reluctance] may often assume the form of *sattva* [resolution]. There is no direct jump from *tamas* to *sattva*. You must go through *rajas* [action]. It was *tamas* that was overpowering Arjuna in the form of cowardice, and he was speaking to Kṛṣṇa as though his problem arose in the plane of *sattva*. Kṛṣṇa saw through it and Arjuna was made to act (fight).

Rajas comes in here. Kṛṣṇa's idea was that he could then take Arjuna to *sattva* through this *rajas*. This accounts for Kṛṣṇa's advice to Arjuna to fight. His advice was that he should fight without caring for the results. So there is something put in to take him to *sattva* also.

171. SAMĀDHIS (134)

According to some *śāstras*, a *samādhi*-minded person is asked to be incessantly in one or other of the following six kinds of *samādhis* throughout his life till death.

1. antar-dṛishyānuviddha [with sight inside]
2. antar-shabdānuviddha [with sound inside]
3. antar-nirvikalpa [with no diversity inside]
4. bahir-dṛishyānuviddha [with sight outside]
5. bahir-shabdānuviddha [with sound outside]
6. bahir-nirvikalpa [with no diversity outside]

According to certain shāstras, nirvikalpa samādhi is the ultimate goal. But according to still other shāstras there are three more other samādhis as yet to be experienced even beyond nirvikalpa samādhi. They are:

- nissankalpa samādhi [without intention]
- nirvṛttika samādhi [returned back]
- nirvāsana samādhi [without residual conditioning]

It must always be borne in mind that samādhi, of whatever nature it may be, is only for the mind and not for the real 'I'-principle. Even when the mind gets absorbed as in the nirvikalpa state, the real 'I'-principle stands out as its witness, showing thereby that it has no connection with samādhi.

- jāgratyudbhūtabāhyēndriyaviśayasamudbhāsaśākṣīśivōham .
- *svapnēdṛṣṭaprapañcapratiphalanamanōvṛttisākṣīśivōham .
- *svapnēsaṅkalpajātēndriyagataviśayābhāsaśākṣīśivōham .
- suptaucittēvilīnē prabalataramahāmōhasākṣīśivōham .
- nityānandēturiyē vigatamatigatissarvasākṣīśivōham .

Shrī Shankara(?)

(*The second line of the foregoing verse has two alternative texts, each marked with a preceding asterisk. The former speaks from the phenomenal level – vyavahāra-pakṣha – endorsing interdependence of states. But the latter is from a higher standpoint, denying the interdependence of states. The latter is preferable and more appropriate to the context.)

Here, turīya is also witnessed by the 'I'-principle. From this, it is clear that samādhi by itself cannot take you to the Reality.

Again, samādhi is a state, and being a state is limited by time. Reality is something transcending time. Therefore, until you come to the sahaja state (natural state), you cannot claim to be established in the ultimate Reality.

The samskāra that one goes into and comes out of samādhi has also to be clearly transcended, in order that you may reach the Absolute. Therefore, samādhis of any kind only pave the way for your establishing yourself in the ultimate Reality.

19th June 1951

172. HOW TO JUSTIFY THE MERGING OF ĪSHVARA IN BRAHMAN? (135)

A mango, even if called by the name of 'coconut', does not change its nature at all. Similarly brahman, even if called by the artificial name 'Īshvara', does not change its real nature in any way. Therefore Īshvara can very well be merged in brahman.

(Īshvara is merged in brahman only when the cosmological path is followed.)

173. WHAT IS DESTRUCTION? (136)

The word destruction can really have no meaning, because you cannot destroy anything in this world.

An ignorant man thinks that causing the disappearance of any particular thing is destruction. This is wrong. When you know things in the right perspective, you find that an object – even when it is perceived – is non-existent. Then what is the meaning of ‘destruction’, in reference to that object?

23rd June 1951

174. PLEASURE AND PAIN, THOUGH MY EXPERIENCES, DO NOT AFFECT ME. HOW? (137)

I feel pleasure at one moment and pain at another. But I am changeless all along. Thus my pleasure and pain do not go into my real nature. So how can they affect me?

24th June 1951

175. KNOWLEDGE IS NOT A FUNCTION. (138)

A function should necessarily have a beginning and an end. Knowledge has neither of these, and so it cannot be a function.

The mind works conjointly with the senses. So the workings of the senses and knowledge alone need be examined, to prove our position.

Taking the senses and their workings first, we find that each sense has a distinct object of its own to deal with. The sense of hearing has sound as its object, and so on. These objects are so exclusive that they never transgress into the sphere of any other sense or faculty.

Now, considering knowing to be also a function likewise, it has no separate and exclusive class of object to deal with. In place of the strict exclusiveness of the field and form of activity of the senses, knowledge penetrates into the spheres of all the sense perceptions, without claiming any as its exclusive object.

Therefore knowledge is not a function in itself. It serves as the background of all functions, lighting and co-ordinating all of them and their experiences.

25th June 1951

176. THE ‘THING’ AS SEEN BY AN IGNORANT MAN AND A SAGE (139)

The Sage sees the ‘thing in itself’. The ignorant man sees only the sense objects superimposed upon the thing in itself.

177. GURU AND SHĀSTRAS (140)

The Upaniṣhads and higher shāstras on Advaita have all without exception made many bold assertions regarding truth, based upon their authors’ experiences alone. Gurunāthan is only explaining and proving these very assertions clearly, to the limit of our understanding, in the light of the higher logic or higher reason, till they sink into our experience.

178. CONSCIOUSNESS INDISPENSABLE TO ANY FORM OF APPROACH TO THE REALITY (141)

The Absolute can be attained through the happiness aspect of Reality – or love. But in order to analyse love and to prove its identity with Peace, the service of consciousness is indispensable. Thus, by following the path of Consciousness alone can you be established in Peace.

179. WHAT IS THE RELATION OF OBJECTS TO THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS? (142)

The question arises on the assumption that objects exist independently of thoughts. That is never the case. Without thought, there is no object; and thought itself is nothing other than Consciousness.

180. VĒDĀNTA AND THE COSMOS (143)

Much talk is heard in the relative world about government, organizations, human suffering and the like. Our ancestors faced exactly the same problems; and in their search for a solution, they approached them through the objective sphere at first. After hard and strenuous search, they found that a complete and satisfactory solution of the problem was impossible from the outside.

So they immediately beat a hasty retreat and directed their search afresh, turning inwards. Thus transcending body, senses and mind, they were able to reach their centre, the ‘I’-principle, and to realize it to be nothing other than Consciousness and Happiness.

This subjective experience of the Ultimate Truth gave them immense strength. Thus reinforced, they came back and began to examine the world, which had puzzled and eluded them before. But now they easily found it to be nothing other than Consciousness, their own subjective self or ‘I’-principle; and all their problems were automatically solved.

This is immortalized in the Upaniṣhad in the verse:

parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayaṁ-bhūs
tasmāt parān paśyati nā ’ntarātman .
kaścīd dhīraḥ pratyag-ātmānam aikṣad
āvṛtta-cakṣur amṛtatvam icchan ..

Kaṭha Upaniṣhad, 4.1

Our senses are created as outward-going. Therefore we see things in the outside. But one dhīra (a bold man, or one who withdrew his senses from objects), longing for deathlessness, turned his eyes (sense perceptions) inward and perceived the real ‘I’-principle.

27th June 1951

181. IS A GURU NECESSARY? (144)

If, on birth, you are guided by tendencies to enjoy good or bad, you are bound and cannot help yourself to rise beyond. If, on the other hand, you had no such tendencies, you would never have been born.

If you are in the former group and have reached a sāttvic level, even then your iṣṭa-dēva remains only a thought form. As such, even your iṣṭa-dēva is not likely to help you to go beyond body and mind.

It is here that a living Guru becomes absolutely necessary to take you to the Truth beyond body and mind. Such a Guru stands quite independent of you; and is capable of moving freely between the gross and the Absolute, or between the body and the 'I'-principle.

You find that in your life in the present world, you have a guru for every little thing. Why then do you raise this question in respect of spirituality alone?

yasya sāksādbhagavati jñānadīpapradē gurau
martyāsaddhīḥ śrutam tasya sarvaṁ kuñjaraśaucavat

[The teacher who imparts true knowing
is that light of truth itself,
from which all help and guidance comes.
Where someone thinks of such a teacher
as a dying and unreal
personality, there all
that's heard is like the bathing of
an elephant – which then goes on
to dust its skin with dirt again.]

Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 7.15.26

182. CHARACTERISTIC OF ADVAITIC PHILOSOPHY (145)

Advaitic philosophy does not talk in terms of opposites. It always means only what it says. When it says 'It is not active', that does not mean 'It is inactive.'

183. HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT ALL IS ĀTMĀ? (146)

All śāstras of old have unanimously concluded that all is Ātmā. They did not explain it in detail, but left it to experience. Here let us prove it, without leaving it to experience alone.

The usual illustration of the wave and the ocean, to prove your identity with the Absolute, is not strictly correct; since the wave can never become the ocean by merging in the ocean and disappearing. The wave, when it loses its name and form, becomes water and not the ocean. The ocean is also similarly reduced to water. It is as this water alone that wave and ocean realize their common identity. So in Advaitic philosophy, the counterparts in the illustration should properly be wave and water.

The illustration of the wave and the ocean, however, is best suited to show the relationship between jīva and Īshvara, in the dualistic sphere.

For further elucidation of the illustration 'wave and water', refer to *Ātma-darshan*, chapter 14.

Gold and ornament, earth and pot, etc. are other usual illustrations. All these are apt illustrations to show the advaitin's position that all is Ātmā.

184. CAN A PERSONAL GOD BE A GURU? (147)

Answer: 'I say no.'

Because a personal God is nothing but a concept. Truth is beyond all concepts. Truth by itself can never be your Guru; because, looked at from the standpoint of Truth, there is nothing else existing by its side. Truth knows no duality.

Therefore, only one who has realized the Truth can be a Guru and take you from the relative sphere to the Absolute. Hence the necessity of a *living Guru*.

A personal God cannot help you in the matter.

10th July 1951

185. THE SAGE, AS HE IS, IS NEVER UNDERSTOOD IN THE PHENOMENAL LEVEL. (148)

There is an erroneous tendency, found in some yōgins who have not reached the highest, to assess the greatness of a Sage only from the extraordinary powers exhibited by him at some time before his death.

As a result of this vicious tendency, even Shri Shankara is misrepresented as having bodily ascended to Kailāsa and attained sāyujya (union) with Shiva. Any Sage would protest against such an atrocious scandal. A Jnyānin is one who has transcended both the body and mind. His stand is not merely that he is not the body, but that he was never one, and that he is the absolute Truth itself. As such, it is nothing short of sacrilege to think that a real Sage would choose to demonstrate such physical wonders with a body which never was his and which has never even existed. Much less would he choose to take refuge in Shiva, who was after all nothing but a concept.

Such unbaked stories of mere fancy might tickle the ignorant mind. But the learned will only un them. The bold assertions of Shri Shankara, Shri Vidyāraṇya, Shri Aṣṭāvakra and innumerable other Sages, in their higher works of experience, disprove all such statements.

The illusion of the body in you is just like the illusion of the snake in the rope. The Jnyānin has seen his reality to be the Truth, just as the snake is discovered in clear light to be the rope alone. After that, it would be foolish to expect him to kill that illusory snake and to tan its skin to make a beautiful purse. Much less can you think of a Sage stooping to do wonders with a body which he never possessed, which he does not possess even now, and which has never existed.

It is the illusion alone that has to leave you, and not its objects – the snake or the body. When that illusion is transcended, as in the case of the Jnyānin, no problem of the disposal of those objects arises; because, on your transcending the illusion, the objects are proved never to have existed.

Therefore, the body of Shri Shankara was only the creation of the onlookers' fancy, and they alone were responsible for its final disposal. They could very well plan to dispose of that body, which they called Shri Shankara's, in any manner they liked, to the height of their ingenuity. But all these stories could never affect the sage Shankara, since he was Truth itself and had no body at all.

Thus we see that any talk about the apparent activities of a Sage – from a purely worldly or relative angle of vision, even though it may command the greatest admiration – is often erroneous and even suicidal. So it is always wise to leave the Jnyānin alone, beyond comment, till one is able to know him as he is. And to know the Jnyā-

nin, one has to become a Jnyānin oneself; and thus both become one. Then all comments cease, and Truth alone shines in its own glory. In fact there are no two Jnyānins but only one; and, to be more precise, only Jnyāna or Truth itself.

From this level, we see that anyone who dares to view a Sage rather objectively stands only in the mind's realm, which is mere illusion so far as the Sage is concerned. So never ask questions about how a particular Sage lived or how he died. It is a matter for history alone, and does not belong to Vēdānta or to the Sage. A true life history of a Sage is impossible. Historians record the history of only the body they see. But the Sage is the changeless principle behind all bodies, and as such the Sage transcends all history.

186. THE MIND – ITS FIELD AND SCOPE (149)

The mind has generally three distinct stages, in the course of its development.

The first is *instinct*: which comes into existence at the very inception of the mind, its main field of operation being the animal kingdom.

The second is *reason* (of course 'lower reason' as we call it): functioning mainly in the man kingdom.

And lastly *intuition*: functioning in the God-man kingdom alone. This shows the course of progress of the yōgin's mind.

One has to transcend even this yōgin's intuition, in order to reach the Absolute. Though, generally, the faculty of reason predominates in man, he has also occasional experiences of instinct as well as of intuition.

12th July 1951

187. HOW TO TRANSCEND THE VOID OR NOTHINGNESS? (150)

In your attempt to reach the Absolute, you transcend the realm of objects and senses, and sometimes get stranded in a state of void or nothingness. This void or nothingness, though highly subtle, is still objective in character; and you remain as that positive principle which perceives that nothingness also.

The real nature of this 'I'-principle is Consciousness, or knowledge itself. Looking from this stand, as Consciousness, you see the void or nothingness transformed into Consciousness; and it becomes one with the 'I'-principle.

So whenever the concept of nothingness confronts you, take the thought that nothingness is also your object, and that you are its perceiver, the ultimate subject, whose nature is Consciousness itself. Immediately, the shroud of nothingness disappears in the light of Consciousness, and it becomes one with the 'I'-principle.

This void is the last link in the chain which binds you to the objective world. Its appearance in the course of your spiritual sādhana is encouraging, since it forebodes the death-knell of the world of objects, of course in the light of knowledge.

(Refer *Ātma-nirvṛiti*, chapter 20, *The Natural State – Svarūpāvasthiti*, verse 5).

Even when you take this last 'I'-thought, people ask you what you are thinking about. They cannot understand that you are not thinking of any object at all, but that you are only trying to stand as that principle which is the background of all thoughts. The thought that you are Consciousness removes all sense of space limitation.

Shrī Buddha first analysed the external objective world in the right yōgic fashion, utilizing mind and intellect as instruments, and at the end reached what may from the

phenomenal level be called void or nothingness. A negative can never subsist by itself. Much less can it be the source of positive things. That which was called void or nothingness has to be understood as Ātmā itself. Buddha must have gone beyond and reached that ātmic principle himself. But Shrī Buddha's followers seem to have stopped short and interpreted the Ultimate to be that void or nothingness.

The following verse, describing the last determination of Shrī Buddha, proves this:

ihāsanē śuśyatumē śarīraṁ
tvagasthi māṁsaṁ pralayañca yātu .
aprāpya bōdhaṁ bahu-kalpa durlabhaṁ
nai 'vāsanāt kāya mitaścaliṣyati ..

Ashvaghōṣha, Shrī Buddha's vow(?)

This means: 'Unless I know the ultimate Truth, I am not going to stir from my seat, even if it be for several kalpas (for many thousands and thousands of years).' This proves that Shrī Buddha must have reached the ātmic principle which is the absolute Truth.

188. CONCEPTION OF GOD AS IṢṬĀ-DĒVA [CHOSEN DEITY] (151)

To say that you conceive of God as infinite, all-powerful, all-pervading etc. is all empty words. To conceive anything, your mind must be capable, at least for the time being, of becoming that particular thing in subtle form. So, if your conception of the attributes of God is to be an actuality, you should be able to stand during that period as those particular attributes.

Or in other words, you should become God himself for the time being, if you are really to conceive him. Then there is no need of any conception, since you have already become what you set out to conceive.

Thus, to conceive of God as all-knowing, you have to become pure Knowledge. To know that he is all-pervading, you have to become pure Existence. And to know that he is all-kindness or love, you have to become feeling-absolute or Peace.

Before reaching such a state of yōgic perfection, to say that you conceive of God is meaningless; since your conception would be of exactly the same standard as your own mind. A man cannot conceive of God except as a man and an animal cannot conceive of God except as an animal (if it can conceive at all).

For example, a boy's iṣṭā-dēva would be a skilful player, a musician's iṣṭā-dēva would be a master musician, and a literary man's iṣṭā-dēva would be a high literary principle – all of them being conceptions of their own ego. The mind is the architect of all conceptions of iṣṭā-dēvas.

But when you become the disciple of a Sage, you go beyond all concepts, and the whole thing changes.

189. HOW DOES ONE REALIZE? (152)

One realizes neither as a direct result of renunciation, nor as a direct result of action; but only through the deepest conviction that one is not a doer even when engaged in incessant activity, and that one is not a renouncer or non-doer even when one takes the role of a sannyāsin or in deep sleep.

So realization depends upon the perspective alone, and not upon any external manifestation.

19th July 1951

190. HAPPINESS AND MISERY COMPARED (153)

Misery is caused and sustained only by the incessant remembrance of the objects connected with it. Happiness also may appear to have a sense object, at the beginning. But the sense object as well as the thought of it will both disappear entirely when happiness dawns; while the continuance of both these are necessary for misery.

Thus, when happiness dawns, you are drawn into your real nature, where sense objects and thoughts have no place. So, if you want misery, you must go out of your nature; and if you want happiness, come back to it.

191. SAT AND CIT ESSENTIAL FOR PERCEPTION (154)

Perception is possible only through *sat* [existence] and *cit* [consciousness]. Because you can perceive only something existing. This brings in *sat*. Perception has necessarily to be illumined by knowledge, to enable it to function. This brings in *cit* also.

Sat is no *sat* until it shines, and Consciousness has necessarily to be there for *sat* to shine. Therefore, both aspects of *sat* and *cit* are essential for perception. The *sat* aspect of the Self or the Reality is not generally taken by itself and elaborated upon, because the elaboration of the Consciousness aspect brings in the *sat* aspect also.

Shrī Vidyāranya defines the *sat* aspect thus in the *Pancadashī* [the quote below is a Malayalam translation]:

palatil cēnnu nilkunna sattu tān dharmmiyāyvarum .
onnīl tanneyirikkunna vyōmamō dharmmamātramām .

[Existence in itself is ‘dharmi’
(the ‘support’), which stands united
in the many things of world.
On that same unity sits all
extended space, which is just ‘dharma’
(the ‘supported’ world of change).]

Bhāṣha Pancadashī, Mahābhūta-vivēka, 79 (Malayalam translation)

The meaning is that *sat* – ‘dharmi’ or the ‘qualified’ – is the background of all objects. Dharmi exists in many ‘dharma’ or ‘qualities’. It is that which is limited to itself. Dharma can never exist in anything other than that dharmi. Dharmi is subject and dharma is object.

For example, man may be said to be dharmi in relation to body, senses and mind, which are dharmas. Separated from the dharmas, the dharmi is only one – impersonal and ultimate. Thus man, tree, animal etc. as dharmi are the same – Reality itself.

We generally say ‘*its existence*’. This is not correct. For, this would mean that the ‘it’ would remain over, even after existence has disappeared. This could never be. Really, even after the disappearance of the ‘it’, existence pure would still continue. Therefore, we should really say ‘*existence’s it*’. Here, existence would remain over, even after the ‘it’ has disappeared.

Existence never comes and goes. When all objects vanish, *sat* alone remains over. That which is incapable of being even thought of as non-existent can alone be existent. There is only one such thing that cannot be thought of as non-existent, and that is the real 'I'-principle.

If you make the attempt to think that you are non-existent, the principle that makes the attempt jumps over from the category of objects, and becomes the subject (principle) who attempts to think.

192. *SAT-CIT-ĀNANDA* – HOW TO EXPERIENCE IT? (155)

Sat is the greatest generalization of the objects of the world, that is to say it is the existence aspect of it.

The individual 'Rāma' sheds off his limitations one by one and develops into *sat* or pure existence, in the following manner. He first transcends his name and possessions, then his community, his nationality, his manhood, his being a living being, then his being one whose only attribute is that he exists; and finally he becomes one with that very existence or *sat*, common to all objects of this world. All this is admitted by Rāma implicitly, at every stage. This is how your inmost principle is traced out, beginning with your body.

To have this experience, you have to employ your own knowledge or Consciousness. But the method of tracing the real Self through the medium of Consciousness establishes simultaneously both your nature of Consciousness and Existence (*cit* and *sat*). Hence, usually the *sat* aspect of one's self is not sought to be established separately. Consciousness keeps company with existence till it is established.

Sat-cit-ānanda, though positive in form, is negative in meaning. Viewed objectively, the Reality beyond body and mind could be described only as nothingness. But viewed subjectively, from the position of the 'I'-principle, it could never be termed as nothingness. It is Peace. Nothingness in deep sleep is the *svarūpa* of Peace, or your-self; because you are there beyond all doubt. Nothingness in the objective world is Peace in the subjective world; and that is *ānanda*.

In order to experience *sat-cit-ānanda*, you must transcend body, senses and mind and the objective world. He who experiences *sat-cit-ānanda* must himself be *sat-cit-ānanda*. But this is not possible, since the subject and the object can never be one.

So *sat-cit-ānanda* is experience itself, or the 'I'-principle. The stand from which you called it nothingness was not itself nothingness, but your *svarūpa* of peace.

193. QUALIFICATION AND DEGREE OF RENUNCIATION REQUIRED FOR INITIATION INTO THE TRUTH (156)

Earnestness and sincerity to know the ultimate Truth is the only qualification required to receive initiation into the Truth. These bring in all that is needed.

194. SINCERITY AND EARNESTNESS (157)

Sincerity and earnestness in themselves represent an insatiable thirst for Truth. They never belie your self. They come from the deepest level, without any desire for conspicuousness or ostentation.

195. TRUTH ABOUT VISIONS (158)

All visions are only projections of your own mind. But you do not know or feel this to be so, during the vision itself. It is only when you rise to the higher plane that you realize the previous visions to be only projections of your mind.

196. ULTIMATE REALIZATION (159)

Nirvikalpa samādhi is not the ultimate state of realization. You have reached the highest only if you have established identity with the real 'I'-principle. The sahaja state alone may be said to be the highest.

We are trained in a wrong groove of thinking, from our very birth. We have only to give up this wrong groove and take to the right groove of thinking.

25th July 1951

197. NEGATIVES (160)

Negatives can never subsist independently, by themselves. They want a positive something, as their background.

Some people consider the mind as a container of thoughts and feelings. If so, it should be a permanent container. When permanency is attributed to mind, its material part – which can never be permanent – drops away, and the Consciousness part – which is permanent – continues as the Reality itself.

Changelessness, Awareness and Peace are the nature of the 'I'-principle. This is found by examining the three states impartially.

By the examination of the waking-state experiences, we find that I am in action, perception, thought and feeling. But I can never be any of these as such, but only the background of all these – upon which all these come and go.

Mind, as thought, can well be split up into its material and Consciousness parts. But the Consciousness part can never be further split up into the doer and the observer.

198. ASAMPRAJNYĀTA-SAMĀDHI (161)

Rāja-yōgins, after going through concentration of the mind in different planes, come at last to mind itself and make the mind react upon the mind itself. As a result thereof, the mind comes to a standstill. And that state is called 'asamprajnyāta-samādhi'. Duality is still there.

26th July 1951

199. REALITY TO THE SAGE AND THE IGNORANT MAN (162)

To the Sage, Reality exists at all times (transcending time). In other words, it exists in its own right.

If a thing does not exist in its own right, it is said to have only 'derived existence'. Relatively, between the pot and the earth, the existence of the pot can be said to be only derived from the earth, and that of the earth to be more real.

nā 'satō vidyatē bhāvō nā 'bhāvō vidyatē sataḥ .
ubhayōr api dr̥ṣṭō 'ntas tv anayōs tattva-darsibhiḥ ..

[That which is unreal cannot come to be.
That which is real cannot cease to be.
Those who know truth, see clearly between these.]

Bhagavad-gītā, 2.16

200. HOW TO TEST A QUESTION? (163)

After examining the question and the answer you expect to it, if you find that they are in the objective plane, then reject them. Because that question and its answer cannot take you beyond relativity.

But on the other hand, if the question and its answer lead you to the subject, the Absolute, accept them; because they take you to the source, beyond the relative.

27th July 1951

201. LIFE, THOUGHT AND FEELING DEFINED (164)

Existence conditioned is 'life'.
Consciousness limited is 'thought'.
Peace expressing itself is 'feeling'.

Happiness is something beyond mental pleasure. It means tracing the source of happiness you have enjoyed, to your real nature.

The incessant pursuit of objects of pleasure by man and the real source of all that pleasure are clearly illustrated by the simple story of a dog. The dog got a dry bone and began to munch it hard, for blood. This munching bruised its gum, and a few drops of blood came out. The dog immediately tasted this blood and thought it came from the bone. So it began to munch the bone harder, and more blood came out of its own mouth. This again the dog drank, until at last it was exhausted and left the bone.

Exactly the same is the condition of man, who hunts after objects of pleasure, encouraged by the glimpses of pleasure he occasionally seems to enjoy immediately on contact with them. Like the dog, man also takes the object to be the source of the pleasure enjoyed, and pursues it with still greater avidity.

But the moment he comes to understand aright, that it was his own real nature of Happiness that he was enjoying all along in the name of pleasure, the pursuit of objects stops altogether; and he becomes Self-centred and eternally happy.

The illustration of the beetle and butter also proves the same thing. (See note 148.)

202. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF ALL DESIRES? 'DESIRELESSNESS.' (165)

Though desire is a prelude to worldly pleasure, yet you enjoy pleasure only when that desire ceases – that is, when you reach the stage of desirelessness.

Your desire for the object causes your body and mind to be incessantly active in order to get the object, and the activity continues until you achieve your object. But when once the desired object is achieved, the activity – having no other object – naturally ceases. The body and senses get relaxed, and the mind refuses to function.

At this stage, you are absolutely desireless. It is then that your real nature of Happiness shines by itself. Soon after, when your mind begins to function again, you connect the happiness experienced with the preceding object.

Happiness dawned only when desire changed into desirelessness. The goal of all desire is Happiness. Since Happiness is achieved only by desirelessness, desirelessness is the goal of all desires.

203. BEWARE OF HAPPINESS IN SAMĀDHI. (166)

A jnyāna-sādhaka who has heard the Truth from his Guru, in the course of his attempt to establish himself in the Truth, may sometimes be casually thrown into a nirvikalpa state, with its sense of intense happiness. But he should be extremely careful not to get caught or fascinated by the enjoyment part of the experience. Otherwise it might enslave him, and thereby retard his progress.

204. HOW DOES VĒDĀNTA INFLUENCE ONE'S LIFE AND ACTIVITIES? (167)

The mind is responsible for all worldly activities. Therefore the question comes to this: 'How does Vēdānta influence the mind?'

The mind cannot exist by itself, but only on some stronger support. Formerly, the ego served to support and direct all the activities of the mind. But when the ego is no more, the mind has only the absolute 'I'-principle to depend upon, and on that background the mind can never go astray.

The Vēdāntin always lives in strict conformity with the laws of the state, society, community, etc. He finds nothing to be gained by going against them. On the other hand, by obeying these laws he at least sets an example to the ignorant people, to whom it would do immense good; because these laws tend to bring about human justice, and this in due course would lead one to divine justice, which is Peace itself.

Looking from another angle of vision, you see that when you stand as the witness in all your activities, you become disinterested and free. This disinterestedness is clearly and naturally reflected and expressed, in all your activities.

205. THE GOAL OF ETHICS (168)

Ethics has always unselfishness as its goal. But witnesshood takes you even further, and makes you selfless or egoless. So when you stand as the witness, you have actually transcended all ethics.

Ethics belongs to the realm of the mind alone and the witness stands beyond it. So one who has reached the witness does not stand to gain anything by following the laws of ethics. He, however, observes them mechanically, through habit, just to set an example to the ignorant.

206. AT THE SAME LEVEL IN WHICH YOU GET ATTACHED, YOU CAN NEVER GET DETACHED. (169)

Detachment is to be gained not by being detached from a few of the objects perceived, but from the whole world of objects which manifests itself in that level, as an integral whole.

In other words, you are to become detached from that level itself. This can never be achieved by confining yourself to that level alone. Nor is it possible to become detached from all objects separately, one by one.

Therefore, the only means to gain complete detachment is for the subject to take his stand in a higher plane or level, and from there view the world. Then you will see that the former world – with all its questions arising in its own level – altogether disappears.

This is how attachment in the dream world is transcended, by the subject changing over to the waking state.

207. THE HEART IN DIFFERENT PLANES (170)

The spiritual heart is of no gross material stuff and so cannot be located in space. Still, to satisfy the lower adhikāris in the gross plane, it is conventionally located in the right hand side of the chest.

But in the subtle plane, the heart is the integral ‘I’-thought, forming the centre of all thoughts. And beyond it, the heart is the right Absolute.

208. VISUALIZATION (171)

Visualization is there when the effect that is produced in seeing is produced by the depth of understanding.

30th July 1951

209. ASTROLOGY – ITS FIELD AND EFFICACY (172)

Asked about the relative efficacy of astrology, Gurunāthan said:

It is a process of calculation and application of mathematics, in establishing the relationship of cause and effect, reduced to the terms of their source: ‘time’. In these calculations, many other things have also to be taken into consideration. If all these are given due consideration, the predictions will be mostly correct.

Still, facts relating to the body alone can be thus predicted successfully – facts regarding the ‘sharīra-yātra’ (the ‘journey of the body’) as they technically call it. Even here, sometimes it goes wrong, whenever Consciousness from beyond the realm of the mind brings to bear its influence upon the activities of the body, either directly or indirectly.

For example, when a Sage’s thoughts in any way intervene from beyond the limitations of time, the predictions fail. Therefore, with regard to the life of yōgins or sādhakas progressing under a Sage, good astrologers usually refuse to predict anything. Here, something other than the body element, from beyond the body level, comes into operation.

balī puruṣa-kārō hi daivam apy ativartatē

Yōga-vāsiṣṭha(?)

This means: If your free will becomes predominant in your activities, you gradually transcend your prārabdha-karmas (conditioning influences from the past).

210. HOW DOES UNSELFISHNESS HELP YOU TO TRANSCEND THE MIND? (173)

Every time you do an act in strict conformity with ethical laws, you know on the surface that it takes you to the unselfish part. But if you examine the same act care-

fully, you will find that every such act takes you even further – to the real background, beyond the mind's plane.

This glimpse of your real nature expresses itself as pleasure, when you come back to the mind's level. But this you immediately attribute to the mind's activity just preceding it. Hence you miss the spiritual values of the communion with your real nature.

In every act called good or virtuous, there is a grain of self-sacrifice, however small.

211. CAN MIND LEAD ME TO REALIZATION? (174)

We speak of 'instinct', 'reason', 'intuition', 'over-mind', 'super-mind', etc. In all these, mind persists and you have not gone beyond it.

For realization, you have to reach the general background of all these: which is pure Consciousness or Peace. From any stage except the first, namely instinct, this background can be attained directly and with the same result.

But evolution by itself, continued to any extent, will never take you to this background – your real nature.

31st July 1951

212. SOME SAY THAT REALIZATION IS SELFISH. CAN IT BE SO? (175)

Some people, from their own relative plane, say that realization of Truth is selfish. Here, 'self' evidently means the lower self or the ego. This statement is made without understanding the true significance of realization.

Realization means the annihilation of the ego or the lower self. If any act is to be called selfish, the lower self should remain over, to claim the fruits of the action. But here, it is the death of the lower self that takes place. Nothing remains over to claim the fruit, nor are there any fruits capable of being enjoyed.

To call this 'selfish' is a contradiction in terms. It should really be called 'Real-ish' or 'Truth-ish', not 'selfish'.

213. HOW CAN I PROVE THAT I EXPERIENCE PERFECT PEACE IN DEEP SLEEP? (176)

Gurunāthan: However, you will admit that you do not experience anything of the opposite of peace by way of activity or unhappiness in deep sleep. Well, that is the characteristic of Peace.

Now we will take another approach. Would you not get annoyed if you are suddenly woken up from deep sleep?

Disciple: Not if anything pleasant is offered on waking up.

G: But, at the moment of being disturbed from sleep, would you not be annoyed?

D: Yes.

G: Then, on being given something pleasant on waking, you are really taken back to the essence of the deep sleep state again, though you appear to be in the waking state.

Further, you love deep sleep so much that if it evades you for a few days consecutively, you even take to drugs to induce deep sleep. This also shows that you get Happiness in deep sleep.

After a hard day's work, you feel quite exhausted (or unhappy). But after a night's deep sleep or deep rest, you feel much refreshed and rejuvenated. All this you could certainly have gained from nowhere else except the preceding deep sleep state. This also shows that deep sleep is the source of happiness or refreshment.

214. WHAT IS THE MINIMUM EXPERIENCE NEEDED FOR SELF-REALIZATION? (177)

If you experience the Truth at least once in the waking state, as it is experienced in the nirvikalpa state, that is enough to establish you in the Absolute.

Your conviction should be such that even a thought is not needed for you to stand in the Truth.

215. WHAT IS THE KIND OF EXPERIENCE THAT IS REALLY HELPFUL FOR REALIZATION? (178)

It is not helpful at all taking you to a sphere of which you know nothing.

But if, after you have been taken there, you feel that it was familiar to you all along, that alone is really helpful. There, you must feel that it was always your own sphere.

This is exactly what happens here. You are shown the thing best known to you, the 'I'-principle. Usually, it manifests itself in a medley of impediments. So your familiarity with it is not in the least affected, and your conviction always stands at the highest. It is exactly like embracing a long lost child of your own.

3rd August 1951

216. LOGIC HAS ITS OWN LIMITATIONS. WHAT ARE THEY? (179)

Lower logic is divided into *inductive* and *deductive*. Both of them concern themselves only with objects assumed to be existing, and deal with evidence and facts distinct and separate one from the other.

But when the very existence of the world – gross as well as subtle – is disputed and has to be proved, neither of these approaches helps us. Because here, the 'I'-principle or subjective Awareness is the only thing admitted to be existing. Here, it is the higher logic alone that can help us in the proper manner. Lower logic can never do it.

To the ordinary man, the only evidence available regarding the existence of the world is the evidence offered by the five sense organs. It is 'evidence' that is taken up here, and examined to show that it does not prove the world at all. But it proves only sense perceptions, or the senses themselves. In other words, the evidence proves nothing but the evidence. Therefore, it is no evidence at all, as far as the fact to be proved is concerned.

If you assert that the world exists, it is your burden to prove that it does. The opponent has only to deny it, until the existence is proved beyond doubt. Ultimately, even if you give up all argument and say 'I know the world and so it must exist', that also cannot hold good, because you cannot know any object except through one of the sense organs. When this is so, it proves again that it is that sense perception or sense alone that is known, and not the object nor the world.

217. YOU SAY RELATIVE KNOWLEDGE IS MEMORY ALONE, HOW IS IT? (180)

When do you really know? You say you know a thing only when you are able to remember it. If not, you say you do not know.

Knowing has no connection with the object. It is pure knowledge alone.

So memory plays a very important part in making you believe what you are not.

218. MENTAL KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE (181)

Mental knowledge is of the surface. But the heart is deep. When knowledge goes deep, it becomes one with the heart and is experience.

5th August 1951

219. A THING DOES NOT EXIST. HOW? (182)

Question: It is said the wall has no length, height or thickness. Similarly, body has no weight, height, etc. How is this proved?

Answer: When you stand as wall, no thoughts regarding its height, length and thickness occur to you. It occurs only to that one who objectifies or sees the wall. Or in other words, these qualities come into existence only when one thinks of them. The wall, standing as wall, can never objectify itself or think about itself. If it tries to do so, it ceases to be the wall for that period of time.

Similarly, when you stand as body, you have no conception of any height or weight of that body. They do not exist then, so far as you are concerned, and you do not feel that they exist either. Therefore you are pure, unqualified Existence – both when you stand as anything, and when you do not stand as anything.

The body has no right to speak of itself. It is only he who sees the body that can and has a right to speak about it. So anything standing by itself can have no quality distinct and separate from it.

Without seeing length, you cannot know it or speak about it; and to see it you have to stand separate from it. When you separate yourself from length, it ceases to exist. Therefore objects and their qualities cannot exist together; since they are but separate objects from the standpoint of yourself, the only subject. All qualities are but superimpositions on the subject. You are the only subject or perceiver, and all else are but objects.

No object can exist independently of the subject, and two objects cannot exist simultaneously. Life consists in your perceiving objects in quick succession, but you perceive them only one at a time. This incessant change alone makes life possible. And the change itself is made possible only by the illusion of memory, which makes the non-existent appear as existent.

The body does not exist, either when you stand separate from the body, or when you think about the body.

220. WHAT IS MEANT BY RELATIVE EXISTENCE? (183)

All questions relating to the Absolute can be explained only by illustrations from the world, where both parts are objective. The example of the pot and the earth is taken up here as an illustration, in order to answer this question.

The pot has no existence independent of the earth of which it is made; or in other words, the pot's existence is derived from the earth, which has a relatively more permanent existence. Similarly, objects have no existence independent of the self or the 'I'-principle. That is, the existence of the world is only relative to the subject 'I'.

Here, the 'I' is not gross like the earth in the illustration. Still, the 'I' is much better known than anything objective or gross. The existence of this 'I', though not apparent to the senses, is accepted by all persons alike.

Everything else has an existence only in relation to this 'I'. Things depend upon varying proofs to establish their existence. But the 'I' alone stands in need of no such proof at all. It is self-evident (svayam-prakāsha) – self-luminous.

221. WHAT IS REAL EXPERIENCE? (184)

Consciousness stands as pure experience, without an experiencer. When I come to know a chair, I realize the existence of a something called Consciousness, distinct and separate from the chair. The chair becomes only instrumental towards directing my attention to the Consciousness.

That is the 'I'-principle, pure Consciousness.

222. 'WHEN I SAY 'I AM THE BODY', IT MEANS 'I AM NOT THE BODY.' HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS PARADOX? (185)

After hearing the Truth from my Guru, even if I constantly take the thought that 'I am the body', it cannot harm me.

Because the thought 'I am the body' consists of two parts – 'I' and 'the body' – the one distinct and separate from the other, according to the Truth already grasped. So, constant repetition of the thought would only mean alternately taking the thoughts 'I' and 'the body', several times. Every time you think of the body, you are objectifying it and showing it as separate from the 'I'; while the 'I'-thought can never be objectified.

So, every time you repeat this thought, 'I am the body', you are actually only emphasizing the separateness of the body from the 'I'. This really means: 'I am not the body.'

223. CAN INSTITUTIONS HELP THE SPREAD OF VĒDĀNTA? (186)

A great philanthropist from America once came to Gurunāthan and had a talk with him. He told Gurunāthan that he had come ready to finance any institution Gurunāthan would like to start, to propagate Vēdānta. He offered a fabulous amount to start work immediately.

To this Gurunāthan replied at once: 'I do not want to start any institution; and if anybody were to ask my advice, I would only discourage him. Such institutions very soon miss their goal, and get involved only with the means. Thus they degenerate into mere worldly institutions, with many of their attendant evils. Look at the institutions supposed to have been started by Shrī Shankara himself, with great hopes and with his blessings. What was the position of Shrī Shankara himself, and where are those institutions now? Institutions are generally stumbling blocks to the attainment of real spirituality. They foster desire for leadership and unhealthy competition.

‘Vēdānta or Truth can be communicated only through personal contact with a Sage. This could be done only individually, and for this no institution is needed at all. If anybody wants spiritual instruction, I am here ready to give it. In that respect, you may take myself as an institution, if you so wish.’

224. SIGNIFICANCE OF WAVING THE LIGHT AND BURNING CAMPHOR DURING PŪJA BEFORE THE IMAGE (187)

Waving the light means: ‘Though I take Thee to be a form, Thou art really light and so am I.’ It is this thought that is intended to be inspired by the waving of the light during pūja.

The camphor, with its sweet fragrance, quickly burns out; and leaves no trace behind. This is intended to symbolize the burning of the ego before the Absolute; without leaving any trace behind, even as a samskāra.

225. CAN PŪJA HELP ONE TO THE ULTIMATE? (188)

No, not completely. But it can take you a long way towards the Ultimate. Pūja to the Absolute is done in four progressive stages.

1. *Gross pūja*: This is the ordinary pūja done by the organs of action to the Absolute.
2. *Oral pūja (japa)* is pūja done by word of mouth to the Absolute.
3. *Mental pūja (meditation)* is pūja done by mind to the Absolute.
4. *Self pūja (Ātma-pūja or samādhi)* is pūja done to the Absolute by one’s own self. Here pūja is done by the self to the self. You are still in mental realm and pūja can take you only so far.

Beyond even this, you are in your real nature, which you can visualize only with the help of a Kāraṇa-guru in person.

11th August 1951

226. WHAT IS THE FIELD OF SCIENCE? (189)

Science starts upon the basic error of giving independent existence to the world of objects, leaving the subject and the thing nearest to it – the mind – to themselves. Science examines only remoter things.

227. HOW ARE ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE SAGE? (190)

The Sage has both worldly and spiritual activities. To him both are recreations, each in relation to the other (on an equal footing).

228. ACTIONS (191)

According to the shāstras, actions are of two kinds, sinful and virtuous. You have to transcend both these before reaching liberation. The sins have to be washed away by virtue, and finally virtue has to be surrendered to the Absolute.

Then alone does one become eligible for liberation, according to the shāstras.

229. THERE IS HAPPINESS EVEN IN MISERY, OR ANY OTHER FEELING. HOW CAN THIS BE PROVED? (192)

We often pay our hard earned money to witness certain plays (like *Nalla-tangal*), pathetic from start to finish. So one is actually courting anguish. This clearly shows that there is something of real pleasure even behind that anguish.

Similarly there is a state called ‘viraha-mādhuri’ (sweetness of separation) which devotees usually long for. *Rādhā-mādhavam* is a typical instance of this. It is true that Rādhā was wailing at her separation from Kṛiṣṇa and was expressing her longing to get back to him. But really she did not want to get him back so soon, even if he was prepared to come. She was really enjoying a greater degree of happiness, in the longing itself, than she could expect from the fruition of the longing.

It is a sort of love which never wants actual union, but only wants to continue longing, without actual fruition. Fruition however ends the enjoyment. But happiness felt in the longing is purer, intenser, and of much longer duration than that felt in fruition. In such longing, one is really enjoying oneself, but without knowing it. This is clear from the fact that one does not like to be disturbed from or to forget that longing.

This shows that Happiness is the background of apparent misery, and similarly of all emotions and feelings.

You have necessarily to discard all objects before experiencing Happiness. But in the case of misery, you have steadfastly to cling on to the objects as long as the misery lasts. The objective world must disappear for Happiness to come into being, and it must appear for misery to do so. When misery is divested of all objects it gets transformed into Happiness itself.

Similarly, when seeing is divested of form, it gets reduced to pure Knowledge or Consciousness.

230. WHY DO MOST BHAKTAS DISLIKE ADVAITA? (193)

A bhakta generally does not like to become one with his iṣṭa-dēva. He is prompted only by the enjoyment aspect of his contact with the iṣṭa-dēva, himself standing always separate. He fears that by becoming one with the deity, the enjoyment would cease.

But he is mistaken. So far, he had been enjoying his iṣṭa-dēva only as an object, or was only getting reflected enjoyment. But when he becomes one with the iṣṭa-dēva, he ceases to be the enjoyer in the ordinary sense of the term, and becomes Happiness itself.

14th August 1951

231. WATCHING AND EXAMINING THE MIND (A YŌGIC EXERCISE). HOW IS IT POSSIBLE? (194)

Shāstras prescribe an exercise to watch and examine the mind. For this purpose, the subject needs the help of an instrument, and the only instrument available is the mind itself. It is not possible to watch and examine the mind by the mind itself. The real subject also cannot examine it, because then the mind ceases to be mind. Therefore the exercise, as such, is spiritually futile.

232. HOW CAN AN OBJECT BE THE CAUSE OF AN EMOTION? (195)

An object cannot become manifest by itself. How then can it stir up any emotion in you? If an object is known to be non-existent, even the idea cannot reasonably occur afterwards. Therefore no object can create an emotion in you. Understanding this in that manner establishes you in your real nature.

233. HOW CAN WORLDLY EXPERIENCE LEAD ONE TO ADVAITA? (196)

When you see a thing, your seeing and the form seen become one and stand as knowledge. Then only is the experience complete, and then you cannot even say that you saw.

You stand as seeing itself, or Knowledge. The object seen is also seeing. Thus the seen and the seeing become one in you, the Knowledge. Therefore, the experience of seeing a thing is pure *advaita*.

The seeing appears to be split up into the seeing and the seen. But this is impossible, and therefore *dvaita* is never experienced.

You depend upon your knowledge alone, to establish that you see a thing. When you know a thing, the thing is covered by Knowledge, or it is Knowledge expressing itself in the form of the thing; or, to be more accurate, Knowledge expresses itself. This is pure *advaita*, and is the experience of all.

When Knowledge dawns, the object disappears completely. You say you perceive a thing only when the perception is complete. Then the object loses its objectivity and becomes one with you. This is nothing but *advaita*.

‘When you say you perceived an object, the object is not there and you are not elsewhere.’

234. WHEN AM I FREE? (197)

‘When the thought that you are “That” becomes the flesh of your flesh, the blood of your blood, and when that thought courses through your veins quite naturally and effortlessly, you may be said to be free.’

16th August 1951

235. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VISHVA-RŪPA DARSHANA? (198)

‘Vishva-rūpa’, as seen by Arjuna, was not all-comprehensive as the name signifies. The vishva-rūpa was really composed of the sāt̥tvic, rājasic and tāmasic elements. The purpose of showing this to Arjuna was to convince him of the supremacy of the sāt̥tvic over the two other elements, and to help him to establish himself in the sāt̥tvic. The running away of the rākṣhasas in fright showed the rout of the rājasic element before the sāt̥tvic.

Vishva-rūpa is the all-comprehensive world picture. It is the picture of an eternal present; because the future is also seen there, as in the present. The background of all that vishva-rūpa is Lord Kṛiṣṇa himself.

We see only an infinitesimal part of it as the visible world. In the vishva-rūpa, the subject and objects are both perceived. It needs divine vision to see that as a whole.

236. STATEMENTS IN THE SHĀSTRAS (199)

These are of two kinds – absolute (*nirapēkṣha*) and relative (*sāpēkṣha*). The relative statements are to be interpreted only to the extent needed in order to reveal their intention; and they are not to be taken as absolute statements.

For example, the examination of gross objects from the relatively higher plane of the sense organs reveals that they are but senses themselves. This finding is true only in its own plane, and it has no application in any other.

237. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE SHĀSTRAIC APPROACH TO THE ABSOLUTE THROUGH THE GODHEAD? (200)

For example, take Lord Nārāyaṇa. The conception of Nārāyaṇa, according to the shāstras, is developed in four stages.

1. *Viṣṇu-nārāyaṇa*, the Lord of Vaikunṭha, is the first in the order. It corresponds to a man identifying himself with the gross body in the gross world.
2. *Pada-nārāyaṇa* is the one next above, with a subtle body in the world of ideas. It corresponds to a man in the dream state or in deep contemplation.
3. *Vibhūti-nārāyaṇa* is the one higher still, in the deep māyā upādhi, giving infinite strength to both the Nārāyaṇas below for their work. It corresponds to the man in the causal body in deep sleep or avidya, ever refreshing and strengthening him for the other two states of activity. All these three have their own separate names, upādhis and functions.
4. *Ādi-nārāyaṇa* is the highest of all, devoid of all upādhis and functions. It corresponds to the kūṭastha, in the turīya state of man. It is called by a name only when we look at it from down below. Reaching that state, it stands nameless, unmanifested, and Absolute. Then alone does the jīva, who proceeds along this path, reach the ultimate Truth.

Those who are satisfied by any of the first three Nārāyaṇa realms get stranded there, and perish along with those realms themselves; because they are mere manifestations and as such perishable. But the Ādi-nārāyaṇa, the last of the four, stands alone beyond all upādhis, shining in his own glory.

It is in this light that any Godhead should be accepted as a means to liberation; and the aspirant should proceed right through to the unmanifested, where alone he reaches the Absolute and attains liberation.

238. WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE HINDU SCRIPTURES AND HOW TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THEM ARIGHT? (201)

The Hindu scriptures are of four classes: *Śrūtis*, *Smṛitis*, *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*.

Śrūtis are the highest, consisting of the four Vēdas and the Upaniṣhads. They are dominated by ten of the Upaniṣhads, which are called the *Dashōpaniṣhads*. The Upaniṣhads expounded the ultimate Truth, mostly in the form of bold assertions of direct experiences of the authors themselves. The Vēdas describe different kinds of rituals for the attainment of varying degrees of worldly happiness. This is also in the form of assertions, unsupported by any reason or argument.

When these were first expounded, people were so docile and faithful that they took these assertions as gospel truths and lived according to them. But as centuries passed, people became more inquisitive and began to question these assertions in the Shrutis. This perceptible change in the general outlook demanded a closer and more reasonable interpretation of the Shrutis.

As demanded by the times, the new interpretations came forth in the name of *Smṛitis*: rationally explaining the practices and their aims, and establishing rigorous rules of conduct in the application of the rituals enjoined in the Shrutis. The authors of these *Smṛitis* were often great ruling kings and sages. These *Smṛitis* were in their turn accepted and obeyed implicitly for several centuries by the people. But when the general intelligence developed still further, the people began to question the *Smṛitis* also.

Then came the *Purāṇas* with innumerable stories and anecdotes, explaining how the fruits of actions were strictly awarded in conformity with the Shrutis and *Smṛitis*, in the form of experiences in heaven, hell or earth. This continued to appeal to the faith of the people and keep them at their duty for several centuries more. But the *Purāṇas* also in their turn began to be criticized.

Then the *Itihāsas* were written, as further explanations of the very same Truths discussed in the *śāstras* just mentioned. These were mostly in the form of attractive stories, telling of highly emotional incidents and sublime morals, like the epics of *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, etc.

In studying any of these works, it should never be forgotten that the primary object of all of them is only to explain the statements of absolute Truth expounded in the Shrutis. To attain this end, the lower works employed several means of illustration: such as stories, anecdotes, etc. These are not to be taken as true in themselves at all times, but to be accepted only for the purpose of establishing the Truth expounded in the Shrutis.

When that Truth is understood and assimilated, the means adopted have necessarily to be discarded or forgotten. Nobody dares to carry on his shoulders the canoe which helped him to cross the river. You know how foolish and embarrassing that would be.

The doubts or difficulties or conflicts arising in any one of these classes of writing are sought to be explained by resorting to the next higher class of work.

But, after systematically studying these works, including the *Dashōpaniṣhads*, an earnest disciple once quite legitimately asked his master how two different processes of creation, described in two of the important *Upaniṣhads* – the *Chāndōgya* and the *Taittirīya* – could be reconciled.

Answer: Strictly speaking there was no creation at all. But, at a lower level, it may be answered in a different way. The key to progress, in any form of spiritual enquiry, is to go from the particular to the general. Every aspirant is confronted with a world of infinite diversity. He has to reduce this diversity into some form of generality. Then alone can he reduce the whole world further, into its ultimate source.

The object of the order of creation described in the *Upaniṣhads* was only to help the aspirant to reduce or dissolve the world, in idea, to its very source in the order of the particular system of creation he was inclined to accept. The method was considered quite immaterial, so long as it helped one to reach the source. The enunciation of the order of creation was not intended to establish the reality of the world or of creation at any stage; hence the enunciation of more than one order of creation.

This method of dissolving the diversity of the world, by degrees into the most general, was followed literally by the yōgic sādhakas. Some of the usual practical methods adopted by them were panca-kōsha-prakṛiyā, panca-bhūta-prakṛiyā, stūla-sūkṣhma-prakṛiyā, etc.

When diversity is transcended in any manner, a spark of Truth from the lips of the Guru is sufficient to take the aspirant to the right Absolute. This shows that when any conflict arises at the highest level, only the Guru remains there to solve it and lead you on.

239. IS THERE ANY SPIRITUAL VALUE IN A PRAYER TO A PERSONAL GOD? (202)

Prayers are often made by devotees for the attainment of pleasure or its objects. Here, God is taken only as a means for attaining the object, which is considered much dearer than God himself. This position is deplorable indeed. You do not get any spiritual benefit out of such prayers or fulfilment of desires.

240. APPARENT IRRECONCILABILITY OF PURĀṆAS (203)

Each Purāṇa describes its own presiding deity to be supreme and all the rest to be subservient to it. How is it possible to reconcile this position?

‘Brahman’ or the ‘Absolute’ is considered to be the background of all Godhead. Each God is conceived in the Purāṇas from two different standpoints. One as the unmanifested (kāraṇa-brahman) and the other as the manifested (kārya-brahman), both being denoted by the same name. Between these two, the unmanifested alone is real and acceptable, while the manifested has only a relative existence.

In each Purāṇa, its particular presiding Godhead, though called by the same name as the manifested, is to be understood as the one unmanifested Absolute. As such, all other manifested Godheads have to pay obeisance to their background, the Absolute. This is what is described in all the Purāṇas.

Viewed in this perspective there is no difficulty in harmoniously reconciling all the Purāṇas.

Unqualified brahman	nirvishēṣha-brahman
Qualified brahman	savishēṣha-brahman
Unmanifested brahman	kāraṇa-brahman
Manifested brahman	kārya-brahman
Unconditioned brahman	aparichinna-brahman
Conditioned brahman	parichinna-brahman

241. HOW TO IMPART ENLIGHTENMENT? (204)

The ignorant man alone is to be enlightened through logic and argument. The ripe aspirant is to be enlightened only through tattvas.

yuktyā prabōdhyatē mūḍhaḥ prājñas tattvēna bōdhyatē

Yōga-vāsiṣṭha(?)

9th September 1951

242. HOW TO MEDITATE? (205)

If you want positively to meditate upon something, without losing sight of your real centre, meditate upon the ultimate perceiver. Then the perceived and the perception both disappear; and the perceiver stands alone without being a perceiver, shining as the Absolute.

This can be done in two ways:

1. Meditating as the witness of thoughts.
2. Meditating as the witness of feelings.

16th September 1951

243. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SAHAJA STATE? (206)

You are established in what is really meant or what really happens when you say that you know or that you love. By knowing or loving, an object is actually brought nearer and nearer to your own self, until at last it merges in you as Consciousness or Peace. Love and Consciousness pure always annihilate the ego.

In statements such as ‘He who sees...’, ‘He who hears...’, ‘He who thinks...’ etc., the unqualified ‘he’ is the absolute Reality itself. He who is able to realize this, is in the sahaja state.

Even after realizing that what you have seen is a rope, it is quite possible to see the snake in the rope with all its details. But you can never be frightened by that snake, because you know full well that it is your own creation. This is how a Jnyānin in the sahaja state sees the world in the Self, but is in no way affected by it.

Shrī Caṭṭampi-svāmi (a Sage contemporary of Shrī Ātmānanda) often used to say: ‘All this is the manyness of the One’.

Shrī Shankara: ‘Perception of an object is but oblation to the fire of knowledge.’

Gurunāthan: ‘One is the Truth. What you call two is not two but ‘one-one’, and three but ‘one-one-one’, and so on. The word ‘two’ makes you forget the one, which is the real background and substance of all numbers. But when you say ‘one-one’ it serves the same purpose as two, but does not make you forget the Reality. ‘Two’ does not really exist at any time.

So also, look at all objects without forgetting their common background, the ‘I’-principle or Consciousness. This is the sahaja state.

244. WHAT IS THE ROYAL ROAD TO TRUTH? (207)

And what is the purpose of *karma-yōga*, *karma-sannyāsa*, *rāja-yōga*, *bhakti-yōga*, etc.?

All these are usually supposed to be mārgas (means) to the attainment of the Truth. But in fact, no mārga or course of practice or exercise by itself is capable of leading one to the Truth. Hearing the Truth from the lips of the Guru alone is the means to realization or jnyāna. That is the royal road to Truth.

For one who has attained jnyāna this way only recently, any of the mārgas described in the śāstras, if practised in the light of jnyāna already attained, will be helpful in establishing oneself firmly in the sahaja state.

Without this preliminary attainment of jnyāna, no amount of effort by itself in any of the mārgas could be of any avail to establish one in the Truth. Shrī Kumaḷi-svāmi is himself a living example of this. (Shrī Kumaḷi-svāmi was a great yōgin disciple of Shrī Ātmānanda. Refer life sketch at the end.)

So these mārgas acquire meaning and are of practical usefulness only after one has gained jnyāna from one's Guru. But all of them prepare the ground beautifully well even before hand.

Karma-sannyāsa is concerned only with renouncing the actions of the body, the senses and mind – purely in the dualistic plane and that only as far as it is possible to do so. *Rāja-yōga* strives to discover the potentialities of the mind to the maximum – all from the dual plane alone. Both these methods take no thought of the Absolute. Similarly, the *bhakta* also moves only in the dualistic plane, and does not dare to think of the Absolute.

Of all these mārgas, *karma-yōga* alone has an advaitic goal called 'naiṣhkarmya-siddhi' – i.e. to be engaged in all the activities of body, senses and mind, and at the same time to be convinced beyond all doubt that you are neither the doer nor the enjoyer at any time, but only the ultimate witness or Truth itself.

This really constitutes the life and activities of a Sage. This way of living is natural and agreeable. It can well be said to be the highest, and it is devoid of any effort or artificiality.

The karma-yōgin is directed not even to entertain the thought that he should achieve 'naiṣhkarmya-siddhi'. Because even that thought makes him a doer and brings in so much of attachment.

To become established in the witness, the independent existence of objects has to be denied in full. This stand alone is complete. Looking from this stand, all attempts at doing good to humanity in this ephemeral world become quite meaningless.

16th September 1951

245. HOW TO SHOW THAT THE 'I'-PRINCIPLE IN ME AND IN ALL IS ONE AND THE SAME? (208)

You say the 'I'-principle in 'me'. What is this 'me'? Is it the body, senses, or mind? No. Because these are not there in deep sleep, and still the 'I'-principle is there all alone.

So the 'me' means the 'I'-principle itself; and it comes to this. The 'I'-principle is indivisible and is only one. Duality is only in manifestation – namely 'body, senses or mind. Beyond this, there cannot be any duality, since there is nothing there to be distinguished from another.

Therefore, the 'I'-principle is unique, and the objects alone are different

23rd September 1951

246. EXPERIENCE – WHAT IS ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND GOAL? (209)

The fact that *you experience* needs no proof. But the mistake is made only in specifying the objects of experience. What is it that you experience?

The progress from the illusion of the world to pure objectless experience is usually made in three distinct stages.

1. The first and the lowest is that you experience the world or objects. But this is easily disproved since no object can be experienced as such.
2. The next stage is that you experience the knowledge of the object. This also becomes impossible, since there cannot be any knowledge of an object whose existence cannot be proved by experience.
3. The last and the real stage is that you experience only pure, objectless knowledge, or the Ātmā itself, or experience itself.

So in every experience, objective or otherwise, it is only this pure knowledge or the 'I'-principle that is really experienced. This experience is my real nature. It expresses itself in all the activities of the mind, senses and body.

But the word 'experience' is indiscriminately and wrongly used in connection with all the activities of the *non-ātmā*, and called 'experiences' of the mind, senses and body. This makes one forget the real nature of experience or Self. And out of this forgetfulness of the Reality springs up world of objects.

If you forget the real nature of experience and then view the realm of the mind and body as such, everything there will appear independent and real. But if you look at everything without forgetting the real nature of your experience, everything will appear to be nothing other than Experience itself.

There is a saying that 'The damsel of māyā never dares to appear before anyone who knows her.' Likewise, objects will never appear as objects, to one who knows them to be real experience or Ātmā alone.

247. HOW TO DESTROY THE ILLUSION OF OBJECTS? (210)

Two different approaches:

1. Destroying the immediate object alone, allowing the samskāras to linger on. This is a partial solution prescribed only to the lower adhikāris.
2. But the uttamādhikāris are instructed to examine the objects now and here, and it is shown that they are nothing but the 'I'-principle. This leaves behind no samskāra whatsoever.

248. HOW TO THINK ABOUT THE ABSOLUTE? (211)

Answer: Strictly speaking, it is impossible to do so. Spiritual sādhakas are often asked to think of the Absolute. The Absolute is clearly beyond all thought, and therefore it is impossible to think of it directly. There is no need for that sort of thought either, because you are always that. In order to think of the Absolute in any manner, you have to objectify it.

You need only to eliminate yourself from all that is non-ātmā. When that is done, your real nature as Ātmā, which is self-luminous, shines all alone in its own glory.

Therefore, what the sādhaḥka is actually asked to do is only this. In the guise of thinking of the Ātmā, think of all that is non-ātmā, all that constitutes mind, senses and body, and eliminate them from yourself. When left alone, you stand as Ātmā.

Inert instruments can never think of the self-luminous 'I'-principle. So you should never attempt to speak or think of this 'I'. But if ever you happen to think of this 'I', then just eliminate the thinking part alone, which is inert, and you remain as you are.

Shrī Vidyāranya's exposition of this Truth takes you only to the tether end of witnesshood, and leaves you still as a witness. But you should go even a step beyond the witness, to the ultimate Reality itself – proving that there is nothing else to be witnessed and that you are all alone: the Absolute.

26th September 1951

249. REASON – LOWER AND HIGHER (212)

Lower reason: Silently makes reference only to your own [personal] experiences.

Higher reason: Makes a silent reference only to the very being in you, and the endorsement comes spontaneously from within.

250. HOW DO I KNOW THAT I HAVE STRAYED AWAY FROM MY REAL NATURE? (213)

Answer: You have not strayed away.

Question: Then who wants to know the Truth?

Answer: The mind or the ego.

All illustrations used in the course of spiritual talks have to be immediately applied to the subjective sphere and their significance realized.

The 'I'-thought is not the real 'I'.

Eliminate the thought aspect completely from the 'I'-thought, and what remains alone is the real 'I'-principle.

29th September 1951

251. WHAT DOES A GURU DO FOR A DISCIPLE? (214)

It is something which a disciple need never bother herself about, and which the intellect can never grasp.

You need only know that a Guru takes you from the phenomenal to the Absolute. You will be able to get a glimpse of it only when you rise higher and higher. From the level of the mind, you can never conceive how it takes place. Much less understand it.

Your question is purely from the mind's level. So give it up. Do not try to solve it, for the time being. Ultimately, you will come to the position that the question was not necessary at all.

How can a virgin understand the pangs of delivery until she becomes a mother herself? No amount of inference will be able to take you to the Reality.

252. SENSES COMPARED TO COLOURED SPECTACLES (215)

Your senses are a sort of coloured spectacles, before your Consciousness. They colour the vision completely and create a world.

So the only thing needed is for you to remove the coloured spectacles of your senses and mind; and then you will see the Reality, in its nakedness and full glory.

253. REASON AND HEART – THEIR RELATIONSHIP (216)

They are not watertight compartments at all. Both of them radiate from the common centre, the 'I'-principle, and you can reach that 'I'-principle through either.

If you reach it through the heart, you will find the reason also present there; and vice versa.

Reason includes the heart element also. The shāstras bear testimony to this. Reason or vidyā is represented in the shāstras as the spouse of the Absolute. This feminine aspect, attributed to the personification of reason, amply proves the prominence of the heart element present in it.

254. WHY THE TRADITIONAL INJUNCTION OF SECRECY IN TALKING ABOUT THE TRUTH? (217)

Spiritual sādhakas are strictly enjoined by the shāstras not to speak the naked Truth to purely worldly minded persons. Truth suffers thereby. Such listeners interpret it only in the customary, objective relativity in which alone they live. They find it impossible to reconcile the Truth this way. So they begin to ridicule Truth itself. This naturally drives them to perdition. You must try to avoid such a catastrophe at all cost.

255. WHY DO I FEEL THAT I DO NOT KNOW MY REAL NATURE? (218)

Answer: The 'I'-principle does not ever feel and does not make a complaint either. It is always the mind that feels. The mind is incapable of knowing my real nature. Even when the mind turns its attention to my real nature, the mind loses its own form and gets merged in Consciousness – my real nature.

Before you can say you feel, you must necessarily perceive that feeling. That perceiver then must certainly be beyond that feeling function. You are that, the 'I'-principle.

Love becomes divine when personality is not emphasized (Upaniṣhad).

256. (A visitor asked) HOW TO GIVE UP WRONG IDENTIFICATION DURING EATING? (219)

Answer: Though you think you are eating, when the body is eating, still you also know or perceive the eating.

Identification is usually made only after the function. During the function, you stand as the function.

So, after the eating, stand as the knower of the eating; and then you are saved.

257. HOW DOES REMEMBRANCE PROVE ME? (220)

Remembrance of any past incident consists in recollecting all that is connected with it, including also your own body and personality as part of the incident.

You cannot remember anything but your actual perceptions. So you must have definitely perceived your personality also, during the incident. This perceiver could be nothing other than your impersonal Self. So every act of remembrance proves you alone.

It was the mind that was in activity, and again it is the mind that remembers later. The mind silently gets the information from the witness, which alone was present during the incident.

Going deeper, you will find that memory itself is a misnomer. Because the mind can never bear witness to the mind itself.

Here is an incident (not a story) of a lunatic cured by the witness thought.

258. A LUNATIC CURED BY THE WITNESS-THOUGHT (221)

Once, in August 1950, when Shrī Ātmānanda stayed in Bombay for a couple of days on his way back from Europe, he gave audience to a good number of spiritual enthusiasts who flocked for short interviews with him. Among them was an educated young Parsi gentleman who was a lunatic for the past twenty years. But he had occasional sober moments, for an hour or two every day. Fortunately, it was during one of those sober moments that he came for the interview. As soon as he was led in and seated, Shrī Ātmānanda asked him: ‘Well, what is it that you want?’

Visitor: Well, Sir, I am not come for any spiritual instruction. They say I am a lunatic, and I too believe it, more or less.

Shrī Ātmānanda: Sorry, I am not a doctor myself. You must go to some doctor and take advice.

Visitor: No Sir, I have tried all that in vain. I heard that you are a great divine, and I am sure you can help me out of this malady.

Shrī Ā: No, you are mistaken. I am not a saint and I have no powers to help you in this. Please go and seek remedy elsewhere.

Visitor: No Sir, I am desperate. I shall not return without getting something from you.

Shrī Ātmānanda was in a fix. The gentleman’s face did not show any signs of disorder and he felt compassion for the man. So Shrī Ātmānanda asked him, rather abruptly: ‘Well! What is your ailment?’

Visitor: They say I am a lunatic.

Shrī Ā: Is it true?

Visitor: Yes, it is true, more or less.

Shrī Ā: How can you say so?

Visitor: Because I know it. I cannot think about anything consistently for some time.

Shrī Ā: How do you know that?

Visitor: Well, I know that. I can see my mind running from object to object, in quick succession.

Shrī Ā: But are you that changing mind, or are you that knowing principle which never changes?

Visitor: Of course, I am that knowing principle.

Shrī Ātmānanda retorted with some force: ‘Be that knowing principle always, and don’t worry about your mind.’

The gentleman opened his mouth wide and sat aghast for a minute, and said with luminous satisfaction: ‘Yes! Yes! I have got it. I want nothing more from you now. Allow me, Sir, to go, and I shall write to you from home.’

Shrī Ātmānanda: ‘Yes. You may go and be at peace.’

He went home straight and wrote to Shrī Ātmānanda regularly, after three days, one month, three months, six months, one year, and three years (the last being in August 1953) – all equally assuring that he was leading a steady, happy, contented and prosperous domestic life with his dear wife and children, of course with hearty endorsements from each of them regarding his normality.

This was indeed a miracle of the ultimate witness. Shrī Ātmānanda had only just helped him to direct his own attention to that talisman in himself and he was saved.

29th September 1951

259. HOW TO PROVE THAT THERE IS NO IGNORANCE IN DEEP SLEEP? (222)

After waking from deep sleep, we make two spontaneous assertions:

1. ‘I was at peace’; and
2. ‘I did not know anything.’

These two statements refer to the very same experience, one positively and the other negatively; and therefore they cannot be different. The second is, in fact, only a paraphrase of the first. The second statement means only that ‘I did not know anything other than the positive experience of deep peace in deep sleep.’ So, there was no causal body present there at all. [There was no body of unconscious potentiality, implying an unmanifest world.] This proves not the existence of ajnyāna [unconsciousness], but its non-existence, in deep sleep.

Another approach: That which precedes is said to be the cause, and that which succeeds the effect. Here, the time element is essential to make this distinction possible, and to establish causality. But standards of time differ fundamentally in the waking state and in the dream state; and in deep sleep, time does not exist at all. Where there is no conception of time, neither causality nor a causal body can exist. For this reason also, there is no ignorance in deep sleep but only deep peace, undisturbed by any other experience.

Understanding deep sleep correctly in this way, you find the ‘I’-principle there, in its real nature. This ‘I’-principle shines incessantly, through all states. So when you say you wake up from deep sleep, it is wrong; for your deep sleep, as your real nature, continues without a break. That is to say, you never come out of the ‘I’-principle.

All the worlds created by you in the waking and dream states are withdrawn into you in deep sleep. The world as such does not exist in deep sleep, but only as the pure ‘I’-principle.

260. HOW CAN I BE ONE WITH CONSCIOUSNESS? (223)

1. They cannot be separated, even for a moment, even in idea.
2. Both stand as the ultimate perceiver or subject; and can never be objectified, not even in idea.

The doer or enjoyer is consciousness, appearing limited by ‘buddhi’ or ‘generic mind’.

In the presence of Consciousness, the mind, senses and body – which are really dead matter – function as though they are not dead matter, just like iron filings getting enlivened in the proximity of a magnet.

When the mind is proved to be Consciousness itself, samskāras die out, and the mind no longer continues as mind.

261. WHAT IS MY RELATION WITH ACTION AND INACTION? (224)

Action depends upon inaction, and inaction upon action, for their very existence. This is impossible; and so both are non-existent, as such. Therefore, I stand transcending both.

Any particular feeling, pursued to its very source, suddenly disappears; and you will be thrown unawares into your real nature of Peace.

262. WHAT IS VĒDĀNTA? (225)

Vēdānta is not a system at all. ‘Vēdānta’ means the ‘end of knowledge’. It is Truth alone, pointing to Truth.

It has no quarrel with any religion. It only says to all religionists: ‘Dear friend, so far as you have gone, it is all right. But please come higher still’. Vēdānta does not belong to any particular religion, but transcends all; and is in fact the fulfilment of all religions. It is Vēdānta alone, remaining as the background, which gives life to all religions.

Even after realizing Vēdānta, one could very well continue his worldly life as before, being to all appearance a member of the old religion to which he formerly belonged. But to himself, he has transcended all its boundaries and he can no longer be claimed by it. So experience of Vēdānta really makes one a better Hindu, or a better Christian, or a better Muslim, as the case may be.

Thus the Sage is the fulfilment of all religions.

30th September 1951

263. WHAT IS MEMORY? (At the mind’s level) (226)

At the mind’s level, we have to take it that the witness silently witnesses the events and subsequently transmits the information to the mind. The mind in its turn identifies itself with the witness for the time being, and poses as if it were present during the past act referred to.

But when the mind is engaged in a thought, it is never possible for it to witness this very thought simultaneously.

264. WHAT IS THE COMPOSITION OF THE EGO? (227)

It is the ego, which is a crude mixture of body and Consciousness, that takes both the thoughts:

1. I am the body (objectively), and
2. I am Consciousness (subjectively).

In the first thought, the Consciousness part of the ego is ignored, and the body part alone emphasized. In the second thought, the body part is ignored, and the Consciousness part alone is emphasized.

1st October 1951

265. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF LOVE IN ITS APPLICATION? (228)

If you love another for his or her gross and external qualities alone, that love is of the lowest type.

But if you love the other knowing that it is the life principle alone in the other that you love, then that love becomes sublime.

And lastly, if you love the other knowing that it is that which transcends the attributes – body, senses and mind – that you love, there the otherness vanishes at once. That love is the most sublime, and is the Absolute itself.

The ordinary man believes the object he desires to be real, and to be the source of the pleasure he enjoys. But the Sage sees objects as mere pointers to the Self.

266. HOW IS TRUTH EXPERIENCED? (229)

According to the traditional path, it is believed that the Truth dawns upon the sādḥaka as a mark of divine grace, after a prolonged practice of manana and nididhyāsana, after first hearing the Truth from the Guru.

But under a Guru who has established himself in the natural state and adopts the direct path to the Truth, it is quite different. He is Truth itself and knows the Truth. He stands in need of no grace from elsewhere to lead his disciple to the Truth. He knows well how to tell the disciple what the Truth is and can safely take him direct to it, here and now.

But the disciple has of course to make some effort after that – to establish himself in the truth thus realized, and reach the natural state.

2nd October 1951

arthād arthāntaram yāti cittē madhyē tu yāsthiṭiḥ
nirastamananā cāsau svarūpa-sthiti rucyatē

Yōga-vāsiṣṭha(?)

Means: Between two thoughts I am in my real nature. To be deeply convinced of it is alone needed to establish you in the Absolute.

In thoughts, you allow yourself to be limited by yourself.

... prāṇann ēva prāṇō nāma bhavati, vadan vāk, paśyamś cakṣuḥ, śṛṇvan
śrōtram, manvānō manaḥ; tāny asyaitāni karma-nāmāny ēva ...

[Seen as living in itself, it gets to be called ‘life’;
as speaking, ‘speech’; as seeing, ‘sight’;
as hearing, ‘sound’; as thinking, ‘mind’.

These are only names of functions, attributed to it.]

Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣhad, 1.4.7

Means: Mind and senses are but names of functions. *Sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* – when manifested – become life, thought and feeling.

267. HOW IS THOUGHT NON-EXISTENT? (230)

Thought is non-existent whether looked at from the lower or the higher plane.

Looked at from the 'I'-principle, thought gets transformed into Consciousness and ceases to exist as thought.

Looked at from the lower plane, the gross objects being proved to be non-existent as such, thought – which is supposed to be their subtle form – becomes a misnomer. And thus also thoughts are non-existent.

268. UPON WHAT DOES THE WORLD DEPEND? (231)

The world depends upon the subject alone. The world appears exactly in terms of the stand taken up by the subject.

When you are subjectively transformed, after hearing the Truth from the Guru, the apparent world also undergoes a corresponding transformation; until, at the last stage, the subject and the object both stand as one in pure Consciousness, the 'I'-principle.

3rd October 1951

269. THE NATURE OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SAGE AND OF THE ORDINARY MAN (232)

If you say that you do a thing, the Truth is that you do not do it. It really means that you stand beyond both doing and not doing.

We first go beyond the three states to discover the 'I'-principle; and then looking from that stand, we see that the 'I'-principle expresses itself in all the three states and even beyond them. Thus the *jīvan-mukta* expresses himself in all the activities of the body, senses and mind.

But to the ordinary man, a *jīvan-mukta* appears only as another ordinary man, exactly as the Absolute appears to the layman as objects perceived by the senses.

270. IS THERE TIME IN DEEP SLEEP? (233)

In deep sleep there is no conception of time.

But on waking, you take your concept of time from the waking state and try to apply it to the deep sleep state, and hope thereby to bind deep sleep. This is impossible.

So deep sleep is in fact not bound by time at all.

271. WHY DOES A SAGE NOT SERVE HUMANITY? (234)

Answer: Why don't you serve the humanity you found existing in your dream? The Sage gives the waking world and its humanity only the same degree of reality as the dream world itself.

The question arises out of utter ignorance of what liberation is. Service, as you say, is motivated always by love (of course conditioned) for your brother. The Sage sees his brother not as an object to be loved as you do, but as one with himself in essence;

because the Sage stands always as the absolute Reality which is also the background of the whole world. Therefore, the Sage loves his brother as himself.

What greater service and sacrifice can you conceive of, than this one of becoming one with the entire world?

The Sage is already established at the centre which you aspire to reach by all your laborious service and sacrifice, but which you invariably fall short of, somewhere on the way.

4th October 1951

272. BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ, 4.18 (235)

karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyēd akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ .
sa buddhimān manuṣyēṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma kṛt ..

[One who sees actionlessness in action,
and action only in actionlessness,
is wise among men. Throughout all actions,
he remains impartial and complete.]

In the verse, ‘karma’ should be understood as ‘action’; and ‘akarma’ as ‘actionlessness’, not as the negative ‘inaction’. He who sees, in action as well as in actionlessness, a certain changeless principle – the ‘I’-principle standing behind both but not connected with either – is verily the wisest and the greatest of yōgins.

Now taking each part separately:

1. He who sees actionlessness in action – or the changeless background, the ‘I’-principle, behind every action – gets established in the ultimate Reality.
2. But when the body, senses and mind are apparently actionless, if you blindly superimpose that actionlessness on the ‘I’-principle, that amounts to action and that binds you. So you have to guard against that kind of superimposition. If you begin to claim action or actionlessness for yourself, you bind yourself.

A new approach: Action proceeds from inaction, and inaction proceeds from action. So both are non-existent as such.

‘All the world is relative. I am the only Absolute.’

273. WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF MEMORY? (236)

Suppose on seeing a chair, the thought arises in me that this is ‘the-chair-that-I-sat-on-yesterday’. This, as you see, is an integral thought. It cannot be split up into parts.

But the illusion of splitting it up into parts alone brings in memory to victimize you and make a fool of you. ‘That-I-sat-on...’ is only a qualification of the chair, which can never be separated from the chair in that integral thought. That qualification does not denote in fact any previous function.

274. HOW DOES THE WORLD COME INTO EXISTENCE? (237)

In the creation of the world, it is ideas that get solidified into the gross world. Immediately, it assumes independent reality and begins to react upon the mind itself.

275. PAST IS PAST ONLY IN THE PRESENT. (238)

Because the thought, ‘as though of the past’, occurs only in the present.

276. LONG PRACTICE MAKES EVEN WRONG APPEAR RIGHT. (A story) (239)

There was a palace cook who usually diluted the milk for the king, keeping a portion of the milk for himself. The king got accustomed to it and believed it was pure milk. Subsequently, a new cook came and gave the king pure milk instead. This upset the king’s stomach. At first, the king thought that the new cook was in the wrong and scolded him for negligence. But eventually the king understood that the old cook had regularly cheated him.

This is exactly the nature of our view of the Reality. We are so accustomed to its perverted form that we take the *form* alone as real and take no note of the substance. At last, when the Truth is revealed to us by the Guru, we look back and recognize our long-standing mistake.

277. WHAT IS SECOND CHILDHOOD? (240)

You are first born into this world as a child in ignorance. Subsequently, on reaching maturity, you hear the Truth from your Guru and are liberated. Then you become a *child in knowledge*, never to change.

So only a Sage can really be said to have a second childhood.

5th October 1951

278. YOU RENOUNCE ONLY FOR SUBSEQUENT ABSORPTION IN FULL. WHY? (241)

True renunciation is renunciation of ‘objects’ from your ‘Consciousness of objects’, leaving you as ‘Consciousness pure’. Looking from there, you see ‘form’ to be nothing other than yourself; and so you absorb all objects into yourself and rest in Peace, as you do in deep sleep.

So also, physical renunciation is intended only to take you to the Reality, in the first place. Looking back from there, you see the objects renounced as nothing other than the same Reality. And so you readily absorb them all back into your self. Then alone do you attain real Peace.

This shows that the renunciation begun in the manner of the ordinary sannyāsin has to be undone in the end. Then why begin this anomaly at all, if it could be avoided without prejudice to your realizing the Truth?

279. WHO CAN REALIZE THE TRUTH? (242)

Only he who has heard the Truth from a Kāraṇa-guru, with earnestness and sincerity. All the śāstras say: ‘Thus far alone can we say. The Guru alone can give the rest.’

Ācāryavān puruṣō veda

Chāndogya Upaniṣhad, 6.14.2

It means: He who has a Guru alone knows.

280. WHAT IS RHYTHM? (243)

Constant and continuous repetition of a word or a set of words amounting to a mantra creates a harmony both inside and outside the individual. The external harmony thus created expresses itself as happiness, sometimes in the form of 'rhythm' used in poetry. This, to be effective, should be spontaneous and untrained, and is found only in inspired poetry. It is the reflection of the perfect harmony experienced inside by the poet himself. This alone attracts the readers generally.

This is the mystery of the Sage's writings as well. Because they spring from the harmony of Truth, which is his natural element always. In the Sage's writings, very little is said and much is left unsaid. But what is left unsaid by the Sage is often more alive and forceful in creating the ultimate effect. What is left unsaid instructs the reader more effectively than what is actually expressed in words.

7th October 1951

281. WHAT IS PAURUṢHA? (The quality of being a puruṣha, the inmost core of oneself) (244)

All conscious and deliberate activities of mind and body are subject to *pauruṣha*. Pauruṣha has a tinge of independence about it. It is opposed to destiny. A man who has not the capacity of thinking deeply about his future meekly submits to destiny. Destiny governs only the bodily and mental activities of man. All the rest is governed by pauruṣha alone.

Pauruṣha is the 'being' beyond the mind, inclined to activity.

282. WHAT MAKES ONE A TRUE ASPIRANT? (245)

It is one's earnest desire to get to the Truth that prompts one to search for it. This desire is nothing but the direct function of the heart. All your conscious efforts, even though actuated by reason, follow only the course chalked out by this heart.

Therefore, every seeker of the Truth expresses his heart sufficiently well. At last, when the seeker following the path of reason reaches the citadel of Truth, he finds the heart also there in full and as one with reason and himself.

So Truth is visualized by the harmonious blending of the head and the heart, in Peace.

13th October 1951

283. WHAT IS REAL BONDAGE? (246)

When the mind is thinking or feeling, you always stand as the witness. But when you talk about these very thoughts or feelings sometime later, you apparently change your stand and pose as a doer. You do not make any distinction between these two functions, and you attribute both these activities to the 'I'-principle. This is real bondage.

284. WHY DOES CONSCIOUSNESS THINK IT IS SOMETHING OTHER THAN ITSELF?
(247)

This is a question very often asked. Now, examining the question itself, we find that it is asked from the position that such an identification exists. And this question has also conceded the existence of body, senses and mind, besides that of Consciousness transcending all these.

Consciousness and everything other than Consciousness exist in two different planes. When we look from the plane of Consciousness, we find there is nothing other than Consciousness, and there this question cannot arise.

When looked at from the mind's plane and conceding the existence of both world and Consciousness, it has been proved that Consciousness can be there only as witness. The witness witnesses only perceptions, and not objects. It has also been proved that perception is nothing other than Consciousness itself. For this reason also, the world is an illusion and the question cannot arise.

The question cannot arise in Consciousness, since the world is not there. Nor can it arise in the mind's plane, since you cannot drag down Consciousness to the mind's level and make it part of the apparent world.

15th October 1951

285. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS? (248)

Thought rises in Consciousness, rests in Consciousness and sets in Consciousness. Therefore, it is nothing other than Consciousness. It consists of the content and the boundary.

Now, examining thought with the mind itself, the mind perceives only the boundary, and calls it thought. Examining it closer, the mind crosses the boundary and enters the content of thought. But, to its amazement, the mind finds itself lost and merged in the content of thought, which is nothing but pure Consciousness.

Thus, the thought endeavouring to examine the content of thought is no thought at all, in the strict sense of the term. Because its object is Consciousness itself, which can never be objectified; and in the attempt the mind dies and gets transformed into Consciousness itself.

Similarly examining feelings, the mind gets merged in Peace itself. Thus thoughts and feelings are nothing other than my own real nature – Consciousness and Peace.

286. HOW TO RISE FROM THE GROSS TO THE ABSOLUTE THROUGH ANY SENSE ORGAN? (e.g. the hearing organ) (249)

An 'idea' is conveyed to us by one or more words in any language. The same 'idea' is also capable of being conveyed to another in another language. Thus, the idea is the same, though its upādhis or languages are different.

Therefore, this 'idea by itself' has no language of its own, and the language does not go into the make of the idea. It only expresses itself in the gross or the subtle, through any language. Unexpressed as it is, it is languageless.

All ideas are similarly reducible to the languageless idea. As languageless ideas, there is nothing to distinguish between each other, except the samskāra that you

started the enquiry each time from a particular idea. Therefore, languageless ideas cannot be many but only one.

Transcending the samskāra regarding the origin of this enquiry, the languageless idea stands as the ultimate Reality. The following are the definite stages (from left to right), in the progress from the gross to the Absolute.

<i>Vaikhari</i>	<i>Madhyamā</i>	<i>Pashyantī</i>	<i>Parā</i>
Gross	Subtle	Witness	Absolute
Gross idea	Subtle idea	Languageless idea	Absolute
Gross mantra	Subtle mantra	Essence of mantra	Absolute
Gross form	Subtle form	Form generic	Absolute
...

The third and the last stages are one and the same, but for the samskāra that the third has some distant relationship with the preceding two stages.

21st October 1951

287. WHAT IS INSTINCT? (250)

Long practice of any voluntary action naturally becomes mechanical; and degenerates into instinct, which is involuntary.

22nd October 1951

288. HOW TO KNOW CORRECTLY? (251)

Only if your knowledge of your own Self is correct, can you hope to know anything else correctly.

It is our experience that our physical activities do not stand in the way of our thoughts and feelings. Similarly, it is possible for me as witness to be always knowing – even when the body, senses and mind are functioning. Merely note this fact and become deeply convinced of it. Don't attempt to objectify the witness by thought.

Sat is that which is incapable of being even thought of as non-existent. I alone am the one such.

[asad brahmē 'ti cēd vēda svayam ēva bhavēd asat .
atō 'sya bhūd vēdyatvaṁ sva-sattvaṁ tv abhyupēyatām ..

If it were found that all there is
does not exist, then one's own self
could not exist to find this out.
The self cannot become what's found.
Just what one is in truth oneself
must be acknowledged at the start.]

Shrī Vidyāranya, Pancadashi, 3.25

289. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LOVE AN OBJECT? (252)

When you love an object, the object is outside and the love is inside you. They can never meet, as they are.

The contact is established inside, where the gross object is represented by its subtle form or thought. So the real contact is only between your own thought and your own feeling. Hence it comes to mean that you love only yourself, always.

290. HOW CAN I BE DISPASSIONATE? (253)

You *are* dispassionate, even now.

1. When you are desiring any one particular object, you have practically renounced everything else, except that one object.

Now, examining that particular desire more closely, we find that in the moment of the desire, you renounce even that particular gross object, in favour of its thought-form. Because the gross object has no access into the mind's realm, where alone the desire exists. Therefore, you desire only your own thought-form, which is nothing other than your own Self.

So you desire only yourself, and are always in perfect dispassion. Know this, and you shall be free.

2. It is a fact that you gladly renounce everything you profess to own or desire, with a whole world of objects including even your much loved body, and that, without even moment's notice, you go into another state. In that state, you readily accept a new body in a new world, to be later renounced likewise.

This shows beyond doubt that you are not attached in the least to the objects in both the states. Therefore, you are always in complete dispassion. Know this, and you shall be happy.

20th November 1951

291. WHAT IS IT THAT MANIFESTS? (254)

Every perception, quality or attribute wants a permanent background for its existence. This background is the Reality itself. To denote the Reality, we give it a name. But still this background remains as that which transcends senses and mind.

It cannot be called unknown. I say it is even more than known, not by the senses or mind but by Consciousness or the 'I'-principle. Thus the background of everything is the one Reality itself.

When you say that the unknown exists, it means that you have known it.

When the mind says that there is something transcending the mind, the mind itself transcends its realm and, standing as pure Consciousness, knows that something as Real.

292. KARMA-YŌGA ACCORDING TO THE *BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ* (255)

Action consists of doership and enjoyership. In karma-yōga, you are first asked to renounce by thought the fruits of your actions. This helps you only to annihilate the enjoyership. The more important aspect, namely doership, has next to be dealt with.

Both these could be transcended only by knowledge of the Truth.

29th November 1951

293. DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF MIND (256)

1. *Yōga-vāsiṣṭha*: The mind is that which oscillates between consciousness and inert matter.
2. *Upaniṣhad*: The mind is only the name of a function (vṛitti-nāma).
3. *Svāmi Vivēkānanda*: The mind is not a substance in itself, but only that standpoint viewed from which the Absolute appears diversified, as the manifested world.
4. *Gurunāthan*: Mind is Consciousness itself, appearing limited.

294. WHAT DOES SELF-LUMINOUS MEAN? (257)

Self-luminous means that which does not need the help of another light to manifest itself or prove its existence.

You know you exist. So the 'I'-principle alone is self-luminous. The world is all dead matter. You cannot say it exists until you lend the light of your own Self to manifest it. It can shine only by your light. In other words, the world has only a borrowed existence.

The 'I'-principle alone has an original or independent existence. Whatever is not self-luminous can have only a borrowed existence.

295. WHAT IS THE APPARENT VARIETY IN FORMS? (258)

There is no variety in forms. You say there are many forms and you use the word 'form' to denote all forms – this form, that form, etc. What is that 'form' which is common to all forms? It is changeless and therefore beyond the realm of the mind.

So you simply use the word 'form' and drag it down to the realm of the mind and make it stand for what it is not. Things extraneous to form are brought in, to create variety in forms. Form is one and the same. It is changeless, and hence beyond the realm of the mind.

Therefore form, when rightly examined, is the ultimate Reality itself. Hence there is no variety in forms. Likewise, there is no variety in other sense objects as well. Thus man is the ultimate Reality, tree is the ultimate Reality, flower is the ultimate Reality.

The sound which is common to all sounds knows no variety, just as form which is common to all forms knows no variety. So you can never speak of various forms or various sounds. Without going into the generic sound, you cannot invent a name. *The generic in all cases is the ultimate Reality.*

The generic in you naturally refuses to be limited in any way, and so you always bring in generic names. The generic subject sees the generic object, and the particular subject sees the particular object only. It is the generic that always manifests itself. But the mind has a peculiar self-deception, and it somehow chooses only the particular. That is how the world appears.

Suppose there are several forms impressed on a surface of clay. In order to perceive the different forms, the basic idea of clay has first to be forgotten. But we invariably ignore the fact that without the clay, none of the forms can exist. In other words, without a changeless background, diversity cannot exist.

The general rule by which the enquiry into the Truth of this world proceeds is ‘*from the particular to the general*’. So, in order to explain the variety in objects and perceptions, we have to get to the background and then look at the apparent variety. Then we see that the variety vanishes altogether.

Viewed from another angle of vision, we see that objects first sensed by the senses are immediately transformed into knowledge when known. Then all objectivity and variety vanish and Consciousness alone remains.

All our suffering is created by our being captivated by variety, and our forgetting the background on which the variety appears.

296. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN DEEP SLEEP AND THE WAKING STATE?
(259)

It is often stated that a man wakes up from deep sleep on hearing a sound, meaning thereby that hearing the sound was the cause of his waking up.

No one makes use of senses or mind in deep sleep, because they are not there. So the sound could not have been heard in deep sleep. And when it was heard, he must certainly have been in the waking state. An experience definitely belonging to the waking state can never be said to be the cause of the waking state. So the statement is wrong, and it is not the sound that woke him up.

Usually you wake up from the deep sleep state and you cannot find a cause for it. Why can you not assume that you likewise came to the waking state, and heard a sound? Why do you want a cause for the waking up?

297. THE KṢHAṆIKA-VIJNYĀNIN’S AND THE ADVAITIN’S POSITIONS (260)

According to the kṣhaṇika-vijnyānin, the conception of jnyāna is a mere idea. It is not self-luminous. The kṣhaṇika-vijnyānin believes that the conception of Ātmā is an illusion, like the ring of fire appearing by the rapid movement of a lighted torch.

The torch by its movement appears at different points in rapid succession. Evidently, in relation to the ring of fire, the torch is more real.

But the kṣhaṇika-vijnyānin admits that there are many such ideas (torches). Who can make a comparison between these several ideas? The perceiver alone and not any one of the several ideas. Therefore, the advaitin says that the holder or the perceiver of the several ideas alone can compare them and come to a conclusion. That perceiver must be self-luminous, in order to do so.

That is Ātmā. That is the real ‘I’-principle. Whose ideas are they? My ideas. So I am the holder.

298. REALIZATION AND ESTABLISHMENT (261)

You hear Truth from the lips of your Guru. Following the words, their sense and their goal – which is the Ultimate – you rise from level to level, from body to mind and from there to Consciousness. On thus hearing the Truth from one’s Guru, the understanding of the Truth is *immediate, instantaneous and complete*.

Soon after, you come back to the body-idea. The Truth that is heard from the lips of the Guru takes the disciple from level to level to the ultimate Reality. In order to get established there, the disciple has to remove innumerable obstacles. The knowledge of

the Truth that he has acquired from the Guru helps him to overcome all obstacles. When this is done, realization is complete.

299. BEING AND BECOMING (262)

Being and becoming cannot go together. When you are striving to become the Truth, you are admittedly away from Truth; and when you are in the being or Truth, there is no need for any striving at all to become the Truth.

When you are at the centre, manifestation is not perceived; and when you are at the manifestation, you are outside your centre.

So the 'I'-principle and the manifestation can never meet.

300. WHAT DO I LOVE? (263)

You say you love your wife. But suppose she passes away and you are left alone near her dead body, at the dead of night. It creates in you not the feeling of love as before, but a creeping sensation from head to foot. This shows that before her death you were not extending your love to that inert body part still lying before you, but only to the life principle in it which has already left the body.

This 'life principle' can easily be proved to be changeless consciousness, which knows no birth or death. Your real nature is changeless Consciousness. Therefore, it is clear that you love only yourself, even in the form of other objects or persons.

Hence the Upanishad says: 'A man does not love the wife for her sake, but only for the self in her; and the wife does not love the husband for his sake, but only for the Self in him.' When Happiness comes, the mind dies.

1. The Self is objectless love or Peace. Love for self is degraded, compared to pure love or the Self.
2. It gets more degraded when it becomes self-love.
3. This gets further degraded when it becomes love for objects. But still, love is there. Get back to it in its purity.

So, to reach your real centre, the 'I'-principle, you have to retrace the whole course from objects to the Self, in the reverse order. If, in your love of objects, you are able to emphasize love, you will easily get to the love aspect or the peace aspect of Reality. Just as, in your Consciousness of objects, when you emphasize Consciousness, you get to the Consciousness aspect of the Reality.

You love things for yourself. So you love the Self more than anything else.

301. THE ORDER AND EFFECT OF MANIFESTATION (264)

The Reality is manifest as Consciousness first, and Consciousness manifests the object next. If one thing is said to manifest another object, the first thing is really manifesting itself, as the background of the second. The rock manifests itself as the background of the image. Thus, Consciousness manifesting perceptions means that Consciousness remains as background and perceptions appear and disappear in it.

When you see a chair, it is admitted without saying that the space all round is lighted up by the gross light. But this light, by itself, is not perceptible to the naked eye except in relation to some object; and so it is not usually noted or emphasized.

Similarly, the presence of Consciousness is most essential to make any perception possible. Therefore, the manifestation of any perception first proves the existence of Consciousness, and only next proves the object lit up.

Unless you are self-conscious it is never possible for you to be conscious of objects. But the self-consciousness part is usually ignored. It is that Consciousness that has to be emphasized.

dēhābhimānē galitē vijñātē paramātmāni
yatra yatra manō yāti tatra tatra samādhayaḥ

[When bodily conceit has passed
and truth of Self is realized,
wherever states the mind may reach
are states where mind is found dissolved.]

Shrī Shankara tradition, Dṛig-dṛishya-viveka, 30

yadi dēham pṛthak-kṛtya citi viśrāmya tiṣṭhasi .
adhunai 'va sukhī śāntō bandha-muktō bhaviṣyasi ..

[If separating body out,
you stand at rest in consciousness,
then here and now you come to peace
and happiness, where you are free
from all restraining ties and bonds.]

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 1.4

Even after separating yourself from the body, the mind may still continue, but it is always found functioning towards the Reality (inward).

302. WHAT IS ADVAITA VĒDĀNTA? (265)

Examining the three states, we find that the 'I'-principle is changeless, and that changelessness, happiness and knowledge are its characteristics.

This, in short, is the whole of Vēdānta – which has not only to be understood, but also lived in right earnest.

303. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE GURU TALKS TO THE DISCIPLE? (266)

'It is the Truth that speaks the Truth to the Truth. That is the Truth about it.'

When the Guru talks to the disciple, it creates a deep conviction in him regarding the point at issue; and he becomes more and more attached to the Guru.

1st February 1952

304. APPEARANCE IS ALWAYS DECEPTIVE. (1)

It is our daily experience that we hear the thunder long after the lightning. But the fact is that both occurred simultaneously. Therefore, just at the moment when we hear a sound, there is no corresponding sound actually in existence. It has already undergone change and disappeared.

So even in the gross world, we see that no perception is true, as and when it appears.

305. IT IS OFTEN SAID: ‘THAT IS THIS.’ WHAT DOES IT MEAN? (2)

Concepts of time and space, ‘then’ and ‘there’, added to a thing = ‘that’

Concepts of time and space, ‘now’ and ‘here’, added to a thing = ‘this’

Take away space and time from both, and what remains over is neither ‘that’ nor ‘this’. It is Ātmā which transcends time and space.

2nd February 1952

306. CONCENTRATION (3)

Concentration is relevant only when it is assumed that the mind is by nature distracted. But the fact is otherwise. The mind is always concentrated. But, for argument’s sake, let us say that the mind is distracted. Two ways of approach can be adopted to achieve concentration.

1. Applying the mind continuously to any particular object or ideal and thereby trying to rise above distraction. The concentration achieved by this means is only temporary.
2. Examining the mind itself and discovering that it is never distracted, since it can never take two thoughts simultaneously. To know this deeply takes you even beyond concentration, a long way towards Reality.

307. FALSE IDENTIFICATION – HOW DOES IT WORK? (4)

The activities of body, senses and mind are not self-dependent. The ‘I’ alone knows thoughts. But the ‘I’ does not express itself. Therefore, to correlate two thoughts, the mind is utilized. The mind identifies itself with the ‘I’ and works in the name of ‘memory’.

It may be said, from the sphere of duality, that the individual jīva imbibes experiences from the witness of the states. But it may be asked: ‘Is this possible?’ It is. If the jīva can claim the *sat-cit-ānanda* aspect of the Reality, why not this?

On listening to the Guru you realize the Truth, *now* and *here*. You have only to cling on to it, in order to take it to *then* and *there*.

308. THE WAKING SUBJECT CANNOT DISCUSS DREAMS. (5)

All questions about dreams are easily disposed of. The waking subject who audaciously puts forth the problem is most incompetent to do so, as he himself is entirely absent in the dream state. Moreover, the dream state is no dream state when actually experienced. It is then a clear waking state to the dream subject.

The three states are considered by the śāstras as *upādhis* to the witness, and as *qualities* to the jīva.

sthūlavuṁ sūkṣmavuṁ kāraṇaṁ ennataṁ
mūlamāṁ cittinuḷḷōrupādhi trayam

[The ‘gross’, the ‘subtle’ and the ‘causal’:
at root, all three of these are just
expressions of consciousness.]

Eruttacchan

5th February 1952

309. ‘WHO IDENTIFIES?’ (6)

‘Who identifies?’ is a question sometimes asked. Identification is the parent of doership. The question presupposes a parent even to identification, and puts a doer before it.

In the question, Ātmā and anātmā are both considered to be real and on a par with one another. That should not be. Anātmā is only an illusion, and all questions come out of that illusion alone.

8th February 1952

310. THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE WITNESS ASPECT (7)

When the mind’s attention is directed to the silent witness, the mind has to get into tune with the nature of the witness and become silent also, or be dissolved in the witness. (Mechanical acting is mind becoming solidified, so to say.)

The advantage of the witness aspect is that it removes the basic error. So that aspect of the Reality is the best suited for contemplation.

10th February 1952

311. WHAT IS THE TAIN OF THE NIRVIKALPA STATE? (8)

Something inevitably draws you out of that state. That must evidently be the feeling that you went into it by your own effort. Therefore it is transient.

Moreover when you come out of it, you again see a world unexplained; because something of the world remains in you still.

312. BHAKTI AND JNYĀNA PATHS (9)

Bhakti cripples your ego and makes you feel equal to the most insignificant blade of grass; and you conceive your God as the conceivable Absolute. Thus, when your ego is at last lost, you automatically reach the position of the Godhead.

But *jnyāna* takes you up, step by step, by the use of discrimination or higher reason; attenuating the ego little by little each time, until the ego is dead at last. By this process, you transcend mind and duality, and reach the ultimate Reality.

11th February 1952

The ignorant bhakta always chooses to remain as the ego in the dvaitic level; and to do homage to the personal God, as distinct and separate from him.

But the bhakta whose devotion has received an advaitic touch from a Kāraṇa-guru conceives his personal God as Ātma-mūrti, establishing thereby a direct and perma-

nent relationship with Him. Thus Rādhā's Kṛṣṇa was the witness, and Rādhā was the ego. This approach, by itself, takes one right to the ultimate Truth.

313. THOUGHTS (10)

Thoughts may be viewed with equal advantage in three different ways, in relation to yourself. You may choose any one or more of these ways.

1. As pure Consciousness, and so yourself in essence.
2. As shining in your own light, and so pointing to your real nature.
3. As the witnessed, yourself being the disinterested witness.

314. HOW TO FACE EMOTIONS? (11)

You may face your emotions successfully in two ways:

1. By trying to see that you are the silent witness of the emotion, without doing any violence to the system.
2. By trying to see that emotion rises in you, abides in you and vanishes into you; and so is made of your real nature itself.

In either case, emotion fails to do you any harm.

12th February 1952

315. CAN A SAGE WHO HAS LEFT HIS MORTAL COIL BE A GURU TO A NEW ASPIRANT? (12)

No. Never. When a Sage leaves his mortal coil, nothing remains over except pure Ātmā. But if the relationship has been directly established when the Sage was alive, it is enough to lead the aspirant to the ultimate Truth.

The fact whether such a Guru-disciple relationship has been directly established is known only to the Guru. The fact of the regular tattvōpadēsha having been imparted is also not the criterion.

If the disciple has deep love and devotion for the person of the Guru who is a Sage, it is enough. Nothing more is needed for the disciple, by way of sādhana or instruction from the Guru, to reach the Ultimate and stand established there. Shrī Vaṭivīshvarattamma (?) was a living example of this fact.

Even if the disciple is incapable of such deep love and devotion for the Guru at the outset, there is no cause for discouragement. Because the Guru is love incarnate. Even if the aspirant is mentally prepared to make a surrender to the Guru on the body level, and if he has the readiness to listen and act up to the instructions of the Guru at least for the time being, he is provisionally accepted as a disciple. Later on, when the Truth is imparted to him in the regular order, the whole of the Guru goes into the disciple and takes his abode there. It is only then that the aspirant becomes a regular disciple and the relationship is established for ever.

316. WHAT IS SURRENDER? (13)

Surrender, so far as the ignorant man is concerned, is only of upādhi to upādhi, on the body level. But spiritual surrender means surrender of the ego to the Ātmā in one, Ātmā being represented by the Guru.

This is possible only at an advanced stage, when the disciple is capable of cognizing the impersonal. Therefore, real surrender is possible only after visualization of the Truth; and it can never be insisted upon as a qualification for realization, much less for initiation.

It is said: ‘The Guru is immanent in all, as pure Ātmā. But he is immanent particularly in the disciple – to a much greater degree, on account of the relationship.’

317. HOW DOES A THOUGHT ABOUT THE GURU, JUST BEFORE EVERY ACTIVITY, HELP ONE? (14)

Question: We usually take just a thought of the Guru before taking to any activity, spiritual or worldly. What is the significance of this?

Answer: It brings the living presence of the Guru to preside over all our activities or to illuminate the whole experience.

318. HOW CAN I PREVENT ANYTHING FROM BEING SUPERIMPOSED UPON ME? (15)

Thinking that you are *sat-cit-ānanda* takes you beyond the mere ‘this’ aspect.

Sat [existence] comprehends all life. Therefore no particular aspect of life can be superimposed upon you.

Cit [consciousness] comprehends all thought. Therefore no thought can be superimposed upon you.

Ānanda [happiness] comprehends all feeling. Therefore no feeling can be superimposed upon you.

Therefore you stand beyond the possibility of any superimposition – in the form of life, thought or feeling.

319. ACTIVITY AS A SĀDHANA TO GET ESTABLISHED IN TRUTH (16)

After visualizing the Truth beyond all doubt, throw yourself heart and soul into any activity and lose yourself in it. It is a sādhanā in itself which takes you right to the Reality each time. Thus, when you are engrossed in work, you have at the same time renounced the work.

If you can see the entire world – including your own body – as only *drishya* (the see-able), you are free; and you have accomplished what has to be accomplished.

For the ignorant man, ‘ignorance of Consciousness’ covers up the object; but, for the Sage, ‘Knowledge’ covers it up. When you know the chair, you do not think of seeing. It is only when you are questioned that you say ‘I saw’. But Consciousness stands behind the perception of a *Jnyānin*, always Knowing without knowing.

It is said: ‘The world or the mind carries on its head the instrument for its own destruction.’ So also, if properly examined, it can be found that every question carries with it its own answer.

On listening to the Truth from the lips of the Guru for the first time, you unknowingly rise to the highest level in understanding, and visualize the Truth. All that you have to do after that is to go knowingly to the same height and visualize the Truth, as often as possible; until that Truth becomes your natural state.

15th February 1952

320. REALITY OF STATES COMPARED (17)

At the lowest level, there are the three states: waking, dream and deep sleep states. Examining them closely, one finds that there are only two states – the deep sleep and dream states. Examining them still further, one finds that there is only the deep sleep state. Examining deep sleep more closely, it is found to be no state at all. The dream and waking states are only appearances on deep sleep.

It is in and through Me that all activities take place. But the mistake is made in the attempt to objectify that non-doer self and its experiences, exactly as in other activities.

16th February 1952

321. ‘WHY SHOULD I LIVE?’ OR ‘WHY SHOULD I DIE?’ (18)

These are questions very often asked. Each question itself clearly implies the answer that I do not want to live, or that I do not want to die. Reducing the question to its fundamentals, in the most general form, it appears as: ‘Why should I?’ To this question, nobody is willing to add the implied negative answer as above. Therefore, these questions are irrelevant. Hence, in its particular form also, the question cannot arise.

Mind in its functions moves either forwards to something-ness, or backwards to apparent nothingness. When you are thinking of the ultimate Reality, you can discover that your mind is functioning backwards to a state where all thoughts vanish. It is a retreat into the inmost core of your own being (Consciousness).

19th February 1952

322. HAPPINESS IS PEACE. (19)

Happiness exists only in relation to previous suffering. When that state of happiness continues without being disturbed by unhappiness, it is called deep Peace.

323. SOME DEFINITIONS: (20)

Space is the generic form of objects; and

Time is the generic form of thoughts.

What is ‘beauty’? ‘Beauty’ is personalized when you perceive it. But in itself, ‘beauty’ is an expression of the Absolute. It is harmony itself and is not perceivable. Knowing ‘beauty’ as purely impersonal, it can never tempt you, even when personalized. Truth and beauty are one.

When the ego tries to see beauty in the beautiful, both get transformed into the beyond and become beauty itself. By seeing that something is beautiful, you see really that you are beauty itself. For example, you say ‘The boat is beautiful.’ But do you

see anything other than wood? *No*. Then where is the beauty? Certainly in the seeing, which is illumined by Consciousness. Consciousness is beauty itself.

You say that you *know* and that you *love* another.

Knowledge (in the relative sphere) is becoming one with another with one's intellect.

Love is becoming one with another with one's whole being. So love is relatively deeper. Deeper Knowledge is love.

Direct perception is silent knowing.

22nd February 1952

324. THE DIFFERENT SAMĀDHIS (21)

Yōgins classify samādhis into five classes:

1. *Savikalpa* is visualizing a sense object (usually the form of the iṣṭa-dēva or an ideal) in the dualistic sphere.
2. *Nirvikalpa* is beyond all doubts, name and form.
3. *Nissankalpa*: Here, desires in embryo cease coming up in the form of sankalpa.
4. *Nirvṛittika*: Here, even involuntary vṛittis (mentations) cease coming up from the source of thoughts, which have been stilled.
5. *Nirvāsana*: Here, even the instinctive upsurge of vāsanās in embryo is stilled.

These are but states of the mind, in the course of the mind getting more and more sātṭvic. A yōgin who has just come out of nirvāsana samādhi continues like a dead body, with the mechanical functioning of a gentle prāṇa alone.

Realization of one's own real nature is still beyond, and has to be fulfilled by listening to the Truth from the lips of a Kāraṇa-guru. The sahaja state has to be attained even after that, by being established in the Truth so visualized.

23rd February 1952

325. WHAT IS REAL EXPERIENCE? (22)

Every so-called experience ends or merges in the ultimate 'I'-principle. Or in other words, the 'I'-principle is the only experience.

Feeling is nothing but intense thought. Some say that feeling is beyond knowledge. Yes, beyond superficial knowledge it might be. But who is it that decides? Certainly not feeling, but a knowledge which knows the feeling. Therefore, there is a deeper knowledge beyond the feeling.

But the Truth is different still. You are, beyond head and heart, true Knowledge. Your real nature is the background of both thoughts and feelings. The head and the heart are only different functions of the mind. You know both. In the statement, 'I know I am', it is absolute experience – beyond the head and the heart – that speaks. So real experience may be said to be a harmonious blending of the head and the heart.

25th February 1952

326. WHY DOES ONE LOVE FLATTERY? (23)

Because it is the Self or Ātmā that is flattered, and it really deserves all that and even more. But let not the ego claim it. That is all.

When a work written by a Sage is read by some one, while the Sage is still living, it opens up a direct contact with him. But after the Sage's passing away, this cannot do so. If the desire is deep and earnest, contact through reading will certainly facilitate meeting in person either that Sage, if he is still living, or some other.

327. HOW TO TRANSCEND THE FEELING OF FEAR? (24)

Turn your attention from the fear to the subject ego. Immediately, you see the ego to be nothing but the witness. Thus, you can easily get over the fear and reach the back-ground.

Existence can never be dead existence.

Existence and Consciousness are one and the same thing, viewed from two different aspects.

28th February 1952

Man alone, of all living beings, exists and knows he exists. Animals only know objects.

The dream state is as continuous as the waking state. The deeply impressionable person alone has dreams.

1st April 1952

328. WHAT ARE EXPERIENCES DURING SĀDHANA AND HOW TO INTERPRET THEM? (25)

The following is a typical instance of such an experience of an ideal sādḥaka who had accepted 'Lord Kṛiṣṇa' as his Ātma-mūrti. He had advanced to the extent of having deep and lively visions of Lord Kṛiṣṇa, talking and walking with him even with a greater sense of reality than the usual waking state experience.

In one particular vision, the sādḥaka was led on by Lord Kṛiṣṇa through a narrow path, with a thorny forest on one side and a steep precipice on the other. At last they came to a narrow streamlet with very little water in it. There was a culvert across it and a small Kṛiṣṇa temple and tank on the opposite side. Lord Kṛiṣṇa stopped and asked him, in all apparent seriousness, to bathe in the tank, to go to the temple, to offer prayers and to come back. In the meanwhile, Lord Kṛiṣṇa promised to wait there till he returned. Without a thought, he went off and did everything as instructed by the Lord.

But when he came back, he found that the quiet little stream had swollen into flood and torrents, and that the culvert had been washed away. Lord Kṛiṣṇa was still waiting on the other side of the stream. The sādḥaka was bewildered at this sudden and dreadful change. Seeing him dispirited and helpless, Lord Kṛiṣṇa immediately asked him to take courage and jump across the flooded stream. Thus encouraged by

Lord Kṛiṣṇa, he felt strengthened and without any further thought of consequences he jumped across the stream, landing safely beside the Lord; and both returned home.

The incident appears to be insignificant, but the significance is very deep. His readiness to leave the living Kṛiṣṇa behind, and to go to the temple to worship the dead Kṛiṣṇa there, clearly showed that he did not recognize Kṛiṣṇa for what he really was. To prove this to him, he found on his return to the stream that the imitation Kṛiṣṇa in the temple was helpless to take him across the rushing torrent, while a word from the living Kṛiṣṇa could perform the miracle in a moment. This incident opened his eyes to the real glory of Lord Kṛiṣṇa, who was ultimately in him.

It is to avoid such pitfalls that sādhakas are usually prohibited, during the days of their sādhana, from reading any spiritual books other than those prescribed by their Guru, and from meeting any apparent jnyānin or yōgin for the purpose of spiritual conversation.

You cannot recognize a Jnyānin from his appearance or words. But you can rest assured that a true Jnyānin will only send you back to your own Guru for instruction.

329. HOW IS ACTIVITY AND INACTIVITY RELATED TO TRUTH? (26)

From inactivity, you cannot get to the beyond without something active coming to your help. But from the active sphere, you can rise straight to the Ultimate, merely by understanding it aright.

2nd April 1952

330. WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF THE HIGHER REASON? (27)

The mind is only an expanded form of the ego. Even in our daily life, there is something in us which stubbornly refuses to accept blindly all that the mind brings in. This is a clear expression of the higher reason in us.

4th April 1952

331. WHAT IS THE TEST OF SPIRITUAL SĀDHANA? (28)

When you are engaged in any mental activity, if there is the least taint of objectivity, then that activity is not spiritual. But if there is no such objectification at all, it is purely spiritual or ātmic in nature. This is one of the tests of spiritual sādhana.

5th April 1952

332. THE MORAL OF 'BHUSHUṆḌŌPAKHYĀNA' (29)

The story is of a mythological crow (Bhushuṇḍa) in *Yōga-vāsiṣṭha*. The crow was the form assumed by a great yōgin, who by his wonderful powers managed to outlive the deluges of nature. ['Deluge' here refers to the cosmic deluge in which the whole universe is destroyed, at the end of each cosmic cycle. See notes 378 and 984.]

The moral is that he had to strain himself endlessly to maintain his ego, with the result that he was never at peace.

333. PROBLEMS AND PEACE (30)

Some people say they have no problems in life. This is meaningless talk. It only means that they are mere cowards, who stubbornly refuse to think in the light of evident facts.

Happiness and unhappiness can be conceived of as opposites only when they are considered as definitely limited expressions of Peace. They are usually compared to the obverse and the reverse of the same coin, the coin itself being Peace. If either of these expressions happens to continue indefinitely, its expressionship vanishes and it stands transformed into Peace.

334. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN DEEP SLEEP AND THE INTERVAL BETWEEN TWO MENTAL ACTIVITIES? (31)

These are really one and the same. They appear different because deep sleep comes in the disguise of a state during which emphasis is placed on its limitation, and its content is ignored. If this prejudice or disguise – which is purely a product of the waking state – is realized as such and thus given up to the waking state itself, what remains over is identical with the interval between thoughts. It is your own real nature.

335. WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT DOING GOOD TO OTHERS? (32)

It is not the nature of the act alone that constitutes its goodness. The test of every act is to see whether it binds you or releases you.

For example, if after giving charity, the thought that you have done a good deed sticks to you, it certainly binds you, though only with a golden chain. It clearly amounts to an evil, so far as yourself and the truth are concerned. Your ego gets inflated thereby.

It is the mental attitude that counts, in all such matters. You can be really good only on reaching the ultimate Truth, when even the ‘good’ loses its ‘goodness’ and becomes transformed into that ultimate Truth.

336. HOW TO EDUCATE CHILDREN? (33)

They have necessarily to be educated at school on ‘*avidyā*’ [‘false learning’], relating to all subjects having a wide and varied range; and at home on ‘*vidyā*’ [‘true learning’] regarding the real ‘I’-principle, the permanent background of all that is taught at school.

337. MEMORY (34)

Memory is double edged. It is a thought like any other thought, and it is a cheat outright. Because it makes you believe that something that never happened, happened.

338. WHERE DID THIS MISUNDERSTANDING START? (35)

The principle involved in the question is causality. Causality is only a synonym for diversity.

The fundamental misunderstanding from which every other misunderstanding originates is the thought that 'I am the body.' This misunderstanding, which is merely a thought form, can never exist in the physical plane. It exists only in the mental plane. In that plane the body cannot exist. Therefore the cause and effect can neither co-exist nor exist in different planes.

Beyond the mind there is no diversity at all. But you are searching for the cause of the misunderstanding in the plane beyond. Or in other words you are trying to establish diversity in the plane beyond, where there is no diversity. Thus if you continue to enquire into the cause of 'avidyā' [false knowledge], you would still be entangled within the boundaries of 'avidyā' itself.

339. WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF ILLUSION OR UNREALITY? (36)

Reality can never be the cause of unreality. So unreality or illusion alone must be the cause of illusion. This is meaningless, and hence there can be no cause for illusion or unreality.

It has been proved already that all that is seen is form, all that is heard is sound, and so on. All that is known is knowledge. Therefore ignorance also, when known, becomes knowledge itself. And when it is not known, there is no problem either.

Misunderstanding cannot know understanding. But, on the contrary, understanding alone can know misunderstanding. When understanding begins to know misunderstanding, misunderstanding becomes understanding itself.

340. WHO DIES? (37)

The body and the life principle are the only two fundamental entities involved in the change called death.

Of these two, the 'body' has always been dead and inert matter, and as such cannot die again. The life principle is always changeless, and so it can also never die.

The life principle does not go into the make of the body. You say you die. How do you know that? Who knows it? You cannot take note of anything without a witness. There can be a witness only when something known is concerned. But you never know death. Between two mentations, there is nothing known, and so the witnesshood also cannot be present.

As far as death is concerned, you simply give a name to the unknown and dismiss it for the time being. Therefore death is a misnomer.

13th April 1952

341. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN FEELING, DEEP SLEEP AND THE EXPERIENCE OF 'I AM'? (38)

Can I think of any feeling, for example hate? *No.* Hate as such can never be an object of thought. Hate cannot stand divorced from the objects with which it is connected. You cannot conceive of hatred. It can never appear by itself. Thoughts have to be indented upon to lead you on to it; and they themselves suddenly expire, plunging you into the experience called feeling, which is beyond all thought.

It is in the same manner that you think of deep sleep. You think of all things connected with deep sleep, other than deep sleep itself. At last all thoughts expire, and you are left alone in the state called deep sleep.

Similarly, in the thought about yourself, you think about your body, senses and mind – all distinct and separate from you – and dismiss them. When all those thoughts expire, you are left alone in yourself. You are that principle which remains over, even after everything perceivable has been eliminated from you.

342. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN ACTIVITY AND ITS OBJECT? (39)

Seeing perceives only seeing,
Hearing hears only hearing,
and so on ...

Knowledge knows only knowledge, and love loves only love. In short, the instrument utilized is itself perceived by the instrument. So also, you see only yourself in others. The child cannot see a thief in anyone, because there is no thief in the child.

343. WHY IS THERE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OBJECTS? (40)

1. The answer is in the question itself. It is the word ‘why’ which creates the question. ‘Why’ means what is the cause? This presupposes the existence of causality. And causality can exist only if you admit the existence of difference between cause and effect. Therefore, it is absurd to ask for the cause of difference. The acceptance of the principle of causality in the question itself already implies the existence of difference.
2. The question can be solved by defining difference. Difference comes into existence only through time, space and causality. We generally say that time, space and causality are the source of diversity; but to be more precise, we should really say that time, space and causality form diversity.
3. The question can also be solved by proving that there is no diversity at any time.
4. It is caused by the mixing up of one percept with innumerable other concepts which have no connection with that percept.
5. The question is finally solved by proving that all is Consciousness.

344. THE CAUSE OF DIVERSITY (41)

1. In seeking the cause of diversity in general, you posit the existence of such a cause even beyond the world. This is absurd.
2. When the earth is made into a pot, the earth neither vanishes nor undergoes any change. If a child who had no ‘pot idea’ in it already were to see the pot, it would only see the earth in the so-called pot. Here, earth – which was originally one and still remains one – is split up into two by the mere name ‘pot’; and you assume the earth and the pot to be quite separate. This assumption alone constitutes diversity.
3. An object depends upon perception alone. But perception proves only one thing at a time. So two things cannot exist simultaneously. Therefore comparison of things is impossible. Hence diversity is an illusion.

345. HOW IS TRUTH THE BACKGROUND OF *SAT-CIT-ĀNANDA*? (42)

Existence is the only thing that does not go out of existence. So existence is the Truth itself.

Existence cannot be existence without Consciousness. Therefore Truth is Consciousness.

Truth, being objectless, is incapable of being felt. So it is peace that is the background of all feelings.

Therefore Truth is the background of ‘*sat*’, ‘*cit*’, and ‘*ānanda*’ or Peace.

346. THE CONCEPT OF *SAT-CIT-ĀNANDA* (43)

There are three fundamental human experiences – namely life, thought and feeling. The most generic forms of these experiences are termed *sat* [existence], *cit* [consciousness] and *ānanda* [happiness].

These three names denote only three aspects of the one and the same thing; and that thing is the ultimate Reality.

15th April 1952

347. WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT BONDAGE? (44)

It is not objects, but only your own thoughts and feelings that appear to bind you. But thoughts and feelings can never bind you unless the ego is present to claim them as its own.

At the moment when thoughts and feelings occur, the ego is not present. The ego comes only after thoughts and feelings have disappeared. Then the ego alone is present, and no thoughts or feelings.

Therefore, thoughts or feelings and the ego can never exist simultaneously; and so you transcend bondage. Hence there never has been any bondage, at any time.

17th April 1952

348. HOW TO ATTAIN LIBERATION THROUGH ‘UPĀSANA’? (45)

The form adopted or visualized in one’s ‘*upāsana*’ is called an ‘*iṣṭa-dēva*’ or ‘*saguṇa-brahman*’. *Iṣṭa-dēvas* are of two kinds: *sāttvika-dēva* and *siddha-dēva*. *Saguṇa-brahman* is the expression of ‘*nirguṇa-brahman*’.

If it is approached with the sole object of attaining liberation, the form you visualize is called a ‘*sāttvika-dēva*’; and if the object of your ‘*upāsana*’ is not liberation but only the attainment of powers, your vision is called a ‘*siddha-dēva*’.

Even after visualizing the *siddha-dēva*, if you change your goal and long for liberation, the *siddha-dēva* himself becomes transformed into ‘*sāttvika-dēva*’ and leads you on. It is the intense desire for liberation that makes even the path of ‘*saguṇa-brahmōpāsana*’ sweet and endearing.

As long as you attach an attribute to God, He remains only as a mental concept. And together with the attribute, it becomes a percept.

349. SĀTTVIKA-DARSHANA (46)

Sāttvika-darshana is that in which the forms of the Guru and the iṣṭa-dēva appear as synonyms of the same Reality. Through sāttvika-darshana, one is taken to the right Absolute; and the statements made in that state will always point to the Ultimate. The following are some such.

1. The world is a world of relativity.
2. The effect is the cause of the cause.
3. Don't you want to see me in my real form?

Darshanas are of two kinds: 'pratyakṣha' and 'sāttvika'. Pratyakṣha is the lower type, being the object of the senses alone, and the result of being guided by a 'kārya-guru' or limited guru. The iṣṭa-dēva in pratyakṣha-darshana dances only to your tune and to your saṃskāras.

Saints were mostly yōgins or siddhas. But real Sages were few among them, like Shrī Tattvarayar, Shrī Tāyumānavar, etc.

350. HOW ARE THE 'I'-NESS (AHANTA) AND THE 'THIS'-NESS (IDANTA) RELATED? (47)

The 'I'-ness is the ego, which develops into body, senses and mind. The 'this'-ness is the non-ego, which develops into the world.

But the 'this'-ness can never stand by itself. Therefore, neither reason nor experience allows us to state that objects appear in the 'this'-ness alone.

Therefore both of them appear and disappear on Ātmā, the only Reality.

20th April 1952

351. HOW IS CONTACT WITH THE GURU MADE POSSIBLE? (48)

The mind and its working: When you take a deep thought or feeling, there is a phenomenal reaction – expressing itself simultaneously in the form of attracting other cosmic forces of a like nature, to reinforce your own mind.

As a result, you actualize your own thoughts and feelings and depend upon them all the more. It is in recognition of this principle that you are advised to take only good thoughts at all times. If your thoughts get adulterated with doubts of any kind, they invite the opposite forces as well; and as a result you are often confused or bewildered.

The same principle explains why devotees, artistes etc. attract to themselves, without any effort, other people who think and act in the same way.

It is the very same phenomenon which enables one who is thirsting for the absolute Truth with all earnestness and sincerity to meet the Guru, who is but the embodiment of the absolute Truth in the world.

352. IS THERE ANY RELATION BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE 'I'-PRINCIPLE? (49)

Take for example the figure in the rock, or the serpent in the rope. Is there any relation between the rock and the figure, or between the rope and the serpent? When you reach the rock or the rope as it is, even the idea of the figure or the serpent completely

vanishes. There is only the rock or the rope. From the plane of the rock the figure is only an illusion.

Similarly, from the plane of the 'I'-principle, the body does not exist as such. In other words, the body is also the 'I'-principle itself. Therefore, the question of relationship does not arise at all.

353. WHAT IS LAKṢHAṆA? (50)

It is a means to attain the Truth. In the aphorism, 'That is this', it is this process of indication or lakṣhaṇa that comes into play.

'That' means Truth, mixed with 'that time' and 'that space'; and 'this' means Truth, mixed with 'this time' and 'this space'. In the two parts of the aphorism, 'that time' and 'that space' can never be 'this time' and 'this space'; and therefore 'that' can never be 'this' as such. Take away the time and space qualifications from both, and pure Truth alone remains in all its glory.

This process of eliminating the material parts and realizing the Ultimate behind is called 'jagadahat-lakṣhaṇa' or 'bhāga-tyāga-lakṣhaṇa'.

Similarly, in the apparent 'I' – which is a crude mixture of body, senses, mind and the 'I'-principle – see the first three as objects pointing to the last one, the real subject. Thus eliminating the non-real part from the apparent 'I', you reach the ultimate 'I'-principle, pure.

1st May 1952

354. WHAT IS THE PROCESS AND THE LIMIT OF TRANSLATION? (51)

The art of translation is not so simple as it seems on the surface. An idea is first conceived and then expressed in the same language. The structure has to be demolished and reduced to the languageless idea before it is recast in any other language, just like the types in a foundry.

There again, you have first to conceive it afresh, according to the fundamentals of the new language; and then to express it in the words of the new language. Very often, apparently important words and analogies in the original will have to be ignored, and quite new analogies and words accepted to suit the vocabulary and trend of thought in the new language.

But this should come spontaneously and not by effort or choice. So translate only the idea as an integral whole, and never try to adhere literally to the usages of the original.

355. HOW IS KNOWING DISTINCT FROM MENTATION? (52)

A gross object can only be a sense object. Without the senses, a sense object can never be said to exist. Therefore, what is called an object is nothing but a sensation. Likewise, it can be said that an object of thought is nothing but thought itself.

In knowledge, however, there is no such instrument as the senses or the mind. Therefore, to say that I know anything is wrong. There can never be a subject-object relationship in knowledge.

An ignorant man does not draw any distinction between knowing on the one hand and perceiving, thinking and feeling on the other. Thus he superimposes an object on knowledge also.

356. THE EXERCISE OF PUTTING THE MIND IN THE BLANK STATE (53)

A yōgic sādḥaka once attempted a particular yōgic exercise which he was not authorized to do by his Guru and got into trouble. His Guru had already passed away, and so he came to Shrī Ātmānanda for help. In the course of explaining the position to him, the above question was incidentally taken up and discussed as an example.

Every sādḥaka is not permitted indiscriminately to do this exercise. Being an exercise of the mind it has its own dangers, if one goes wrong. It is dangerous to do it without sufficient precautions. Parallel to the thought-force of the individual, there are corresponding cosmic forces of the world; and both are governed by phenomenal laws. To create a blank state of the mind without safeguards, in the middle of the cosmos, is as dangerous as creating an unprotected vacuum in the midst of a high-pressure region.

The only safeguard you have to take in this case is to train your mind in a sufficiently strong course of sātṭvic thoughts, capable of warding off other undesirable thoughts that might come in from the cosmic world. Because, when your individual mind is suddenly divorced of all its own thoughts, there is a natural tendency for the thoughts in the cosmic world – particularly those in tune with your other saṃskāras – to rush in and overpower your mind unawares. The strong walls of your adherence to sātṭvic thoughts (thoughts relating to the ultimate Truth) can alone protect you against this catastrophe.

8th May 1952

357. SOME DEFINITIONS (54)

Language is the art of concealing thought.

Thought is the art of concealing Truth.

Transcending or giving up language and thought together with their saṃskāras, you reach the Truth direct.

Bondage is the conviction that the object remains over, after every experience of knowledge or peace.

Liberation is the conviction that not even a trace of the object remains over, after every such experience.

18th May 1952

358. HOW TO KEEP MY CENTRE DURING ACTIVITY? (55)

The different spheres of an ordinary man's experience are: (1) doing, (2) perceiving, (3) thinking, (4) feeling, and last of all (5) knowing. The first four kinds of activities are always changing, and the last alone is changeless.

Whenever you have an experience of any of the first four types, ask yourself the question: 'To whom it is that the particular experience occurs?' You will see without

any difficulty that it is not to the ultimate 'I'-principle, but only to one of its four mediums or instruments. Then why do you worry about them in the least?

Know that you are the knower, always at your centre, and be at Peace. What more is needed?

The instrument and the background can be represented as shown below:

Doing, perceiving, thinking and feeling	Media or instruments
Pure 'I'-principle	Background

1st June 1952

359. THE ILLUSION OF THE SNAKE IN THE ROPE AND ITS APPLICATION IN VĒDĀNTA (56)

This illustration is usually applied in Vēdānta to prove the falsity of the objective universe and the changelessness or Reality of the ultimate subject.

Here, the snake stands for the whole of the objective world – gross as well as subtle, including all thoughts, feelings, and the ego itself. The rope stands for the changeless background or Ātmā, the real 'I'-principle. Therefore, any thought or feeling of doubt regarding the illusion has to be met not by seeking an answer for it in the same plane of illusion, but by seeing the thought or feeling as part of the illusion itself, and as such dismissing it summarily as unacceptable.

It has to be remembered that the apparent 'I' or the ego is decidedly the most vicious part of the objective world; and when it is set aside as such, all doubts and questions cease, leaving you in the Reality itself.

The apparent 'I' as well as the objective world are both superimpositions upon the ultimate 'I'-principle. The rope stands for this unattached 'I'-principle.

At the moment of the experience of pure Consciousness, one is beyond all states. One only expresses it in words in the waking state.

5th June 1952

360. LOVE AND HOW TO LOVE? (57)

All worldly love is mere bargaining and has always its opposite attached to it, ready to express itself when the consideration anticipated is in any way obstructed.

But a Vēdāntin's love alone knows no bargain, and naturally knows no opposite. It is perfect and unconditional; and always in the form of giving and not taking. Therefore, even to love one's own wife or child in the best manner, one has to become a Vēdāntin first. All talk of love in this world is nothing but unadulterated fraud.

So know yourself first. Then alone can you love anybody or anything truly and unreservedly.

361. HUMAN FASCINATIONS AND THEIR REACTION UPON SPIRITUAL PROGRESS (58)

The ordinary man of the world is usually carried away by one or more of three fundamental fascinations: physical, psychological and intellectual.

Those who are victims of physical fascination live contented with their sensual enjoyments alone, and do not seek anything higher.

The second class of people are enamoured of all sorts of imaginary mental pleasures and psychic powers and are lost that way.

The last group of people, who are the incorrigible pandits, profess to be searching for the Truth, and labour hard to bring even the Ultimate within the realm of the intellect. In this vain effort, they fail miserably; but stubbornly refuse to admit their failure, and hoodwink the ignorant man by their superior intellectual powers and shrewd but misapplied logic. From this nefarious practice, they derive a sort of malicious intellectual satisfaction and pleasure, which alienate them from the Truth as long as they persist in this vicious traffic.

These last two types of people, though they start with a faint idea of getting at the Truth, are slowly side-tracked; and deceive both themselves and the ignorant public regarding the ultimate Truth.

362. WHAT IS TIME? (59)

Time consists of its three component parts – the past, present and future. The past and future cannot manifest themselves without appearing first in the present. When they appear in the present, they are also the present and nothing else. Thus the past and future depend upon the present for their very existence, and vice versa. So all are non-existent, and time is not.

‘I am’ or ‘anubhava-mātrātmā’ is the source and the end of all experiences, devoid of the experienter and the experienced.

363. SCOPE OF EXERCISES CALLED SPIRITUAL (60)

All exercises involving contemplation or meditation in any manner secure only relative purity of the heart.

If you use right discrimination and reason and examine all your experiences disinterestedly, you get to your centre, which is the inmost core of your being.

To set matters right, you are only asked to give equal emphasis to all the three aspects of your activities – namely perceiving, thinking and knowing – and to recognize that knowing is the only aspect among these which really concerns your own self.

If you continue this practice for some time, you will find the first two material aspects slowly drop away as unreal; and you stand established in your real nature, the Truth.

Therefore, don’t fail to see that every activity is recorded in knowledge, your real nature, before another activity commences.

8th June 1952

364. HOW DOES THE MIND REACT? (61)

The ordinary man is a slave of the mind and follows implicitly its dictates, as long as he is enamoured of sensual pleasures.

But when you begin to turn away from the mind and start looking inward, the mind becomes bewildered and is ready to follow your footsteps faithfully, like a slave.

Vital energy, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, thinking etc. are all verbal nouns.

... prāṇann ēva prāṇō nāma bhavati, vadan vāk, paśyamś cakṣuḥ, śṛṇvan śrōtram, manvānō manaḥ; tāny asyaitāni karma-nāmāny ēva ...

[Seen as living in itself, it gets to be called 'life';
as speaking, 'speech'; as seeing, 'sight';
as hearing, 'sound'; as thinking, 'mind'.
These are only names of functions, attributed to it.]

Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣhad, 1.4.7

12th June 1952

365. ACTIVITY AND INACTIVITY (62)

Activity and inactivity are ordinarily conceived to be opposite terms. But in fact there is no direct connection at all between them.

Activity and inactivity are related directly only to me, the 'I'-principle, which is their common background. It is only through me that activity and inactivity can even indirectly be connected.

366. EFFICACY OF THE REAL 'I' THOUGHT (63)

If you take to the deep thought, 'I am pure Consciousness', with the emphasis rightly placed on 'I' and not upon Consciousness, it amounts to a regular process of relaxation, and the brain cells do not move in the least. On the contrary, even casual ailments, like a head-ache caused by mental or physical strain, begin to disappear after such relaxation.

It has already been proved that 'I am knowledge or Consciousness.' If the meaning of this statement is rightly understood, your stand must have undergone a thorough change. You should be able to apply boldly all the activities of the one with equal emphasis to the other.

Taking 'knowing or shining' as the only expression of Consciousness, when you say 'I am shining', you must be able to take it as equivalent to 'I am I-ing'. And when you say 'I know the object', it must mean 'I am I-ing the object.' It will also prove that the object is nothing but yourself.

If I am Rāma, all my activities are spontaneously applied to and endorsed by Rāma. So also, I being Consciousness, I must also be possessed of the only quality of Consciousness – which is shining.

15th June 1952

367. COMMUNISM (64)

Communism is a noble ideal; and if properly understood, sincerely followed and consistently applied, it leads you to the absolute Truth.. The essence of its goal is equality, but it is unfortunately misapplied in practice by the modern political communists.

Equality or oneness is the attribute of the Ultimate. It is established only when you reach the Ultimate, transcending body, senses and mind. But the political communist

wants to establish equality or oneness in the physical realm, forgetting the impossibility of making bodies equal, or senses equal, or minds equal, or intellects equal. They woefully reverse the order of importance by putting the body first and the intellect last. This is the secret of the failure of their present ideal.

Real equality is possible only beyond all these realms, and the present day communists do not want to go beyond even the body. As such they are at loggerheads with their own goal. Their goal, as they conceive it, is short-sighted and barren.

The v̥dāntin alone is the real communist, who clings to his ideal steadfastly and establishes it unquestionably in the ultimate Reality – the ‘I’-principle.

368. IS THERE DIVERSITY IN EMOTIONS? (65)

It is experience that must prove emotion. When you say you were angry some time ago, you direct attention to that period of time in which you suppose you were angry. Examine the experience you had then. Was anger present there then? *No*. There was no anger. Because you cannot separate what you call anger from the ‘I’-principle. So during that period you were all alone, and that is what your experience points to. Anger becomes evident as a separate entity only when the function of memory begins its mischievous operation.

Shrī Shankara represents this memory as the veritable māyā.

smṛti-rūpaḥ paratrapūrvadr̥ṣṭāvabhāsaḥ

[Where memory appears, it forms
a show of something seen before –
a distant something not now here.]

Shrī Shankara, Adhyāsa-bhāṣhya (Introduction to Sūtra-bhāṣhya), 3.1

Memory misrepresents real experience as something that is opposed to Truth. Therefore, it is memory that misrepresents permanent Peace, as transient emotions.

If memory did not interfere, every experience now called ‘emotion’ would really stand transformed into your real nature – the only experience. It is the wonder of wonders to find that the real nature of even this memory is Consciousness or Peace.

Looking from this stand, we find no means to distinguish between ‘emotions’, as we call them now. All of them stand reduced to that one Reality or Ātmā, the true nature of them all.

Thus there is no diversity in feelings and thoughts. It is only memory that posits all difference.

19th June 1952

369. TRAINING IN BHAKTI OR YŌGA – HAS IT ANY BEARING UPON ULTIMATE REALIZATION? (66)

Even the iṣṭa-dēva in vision is only an object of your senses. You take to your sād-hana with a fund of stored up saṃskāras. The conduct of your iṣṭa-dēva towards you will be in tune with your previous saṃskāras.

But you attach greater reality to the Lord in your vision than to the objects of this gross world. The more you emphasize the Lord, you are indirectly and unknowingly emphasizing your own personal self as the perceiver. This can never be a help to the attainment of the impersonal.

It is the experience of all Sages who have had dualistic bhakti or yōgic training in their early days that all that training had really been, in one sense, an obstacle to their progress to the ultimate Truth.

370. WHY DO QUESTIONS SEEM TO RISE EVEN AFTER VISUALIZING THE TRUTH?
(67)

The mind has usually two distinct kinds of activities.

- One is outward-going and trafficking with the world of the senses, gross or subtle.
- And the other activity is inward-going, seeking the 'I'-principle.

The latter activity is called the higher reason, vidyā-vṛitti, higher logic etc. Listening to and visualizing the Truth belong to the latter. In its course, objects are no obstacle; and at the goal, there are no objects at all.

All objects belong to the outward-going function of the mind, and naturally all questions also belong to the realm of the mind.

Questions do not belong to him who was listening to and visualizing the Truth. Coming down from there to the world of the senses, you see the senses and other objects all around. Immediately, the mind thoughtlessly thinks that they also are party to the experience you had beyond the mind. This is the secret of all questions.

vismayaika śarīrāyā māyāyāś cōdya-rūpataḥ .
anvēṣyaḥ parihārō 'syā buddhimadbhiḥ prayatnataḥ ..

[Only amazement can arise
from this embodied, seeming world
that is itself made up of questioning.
Those who have intelligence
have to look carefully, to get beyond.]

Pancadashī, Citra-dīpa, 139

It is with the instrument of Consciousness that you visualize the Truth. If you use the same instrument to examine the world also, the world of the senses will not appear to you as such, but will stand transformed into Consciousness.

Therefore, the activity of the senses and mind alone is the source of this world. But these being part of the world itself, the world cannot be said to have any independent source at all.

371. IS THERE A SUBJECT-OBJECT RELATIONSHIP AT ANY TIME? (68)

The 'I'-principle is the only one thing whose existence is never questioned. This is never an object of the senses or the mind.

Regarding this 'I'-principle at the time of experience, no subject-object relationship exists.

During the perception of objects also, the experience is exactly the same. The apparent object gets transformed into the 'I'-principle or knowledge, and stands as one with it, beyond all subject-object relationship.

The activity of the Jnyānin is also the same, but undertaken knowingly. He realizes that no activity vanishes before being recorded or merged in knowledge or the Self. It

means that sound, form etc. are never perceived as such, but all of them merge in knowledge.

372. WHAT IS THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF OUR ACTIVITIES? (69)

Usually, man has three different kinds of activities – perceiving, thinking and knowing – the former two being false and the last alone real.

Invariably, the first two false activities alone are recognized in worldly transactions. And the last, but real activity is sadly ignored, though the word ‘knowing’ is used indiscriminately.

The vēdāntin proves and shows you that even the first two false activities owe their very existence to the third one. You must always bear in mind that when knowledge dawns, perception and thinking vanish.

373. HOW TO RECONCILE THE STATEMENTS: ‘I AM THE WORLD’ AND ‘THE WORLD IS NOT’? (70)

na mē bandhō ’sti mōkṣō vā, bhrāntiḥ śāntā nirāśrayā .
ahō mayi sthitam viśvaṁ, vastutō na mayi sthitam ..

[For me, there is no being bound or getting freed.
All illusion is unfounded, is at peace.
The world exists only in me. But here,
in me, there really is no world.]

Aṣṭāvakra samhitā, 2.18

There is no wave at all in water. In the verse above, Aṣṭāvakra asserts first that ‘the world shines in me’, but only to lift the layman from the mire of illusion.

Immediately, he corrects himself and comes out with the whole Truth. No, the moment the world touches me, it becomes transformed into myself.

So I am alone, and the world is not.

374. WHAT IS THE REMEDY FOR EVIL TENDENCIES? (71)

It has already been proved that mere mental repentance over one’s past evil deeds is no guarantee against their repetition. In fact it only aggravates them. Then how are we to overcome such tendencies?

If we take to evil unknowingly, an intellectual corrective might be of some avail in dissuading us from it afterwards. Most often, we take to such evil activities knowing full well the scope of their consequences, but being unable to resist the stronger cravings of the heart. When the heart and the head are thus opposed to each other, the head is helpless and meekly surrenders to the heart. In such cases no amount of intellectual correction will be of any avail.

It is here that we really need a potent remedy. The heart itself being in trouble, the remedy has naturally to come from the beyond. But beyond the heart, there is nothing but the ‘I’-principle – the Truth. Adhering to this ‘I’-principle, either by analysis or by elimination, your samskāras drop away, for want of support.

If you have heard the Truth from a Sage, the problem is easy enough. Whenever you find your heart straying away to anything undesirable, just think of the Guru, who

is the ultimate Truth, and the heart recoils with a shudder. It will think twice before daring to launch into similar mischief once again.

To one who has not had the privilege of surrendering to a Sage, it is open to approach the goal through the medium of God. Let him take the deep thought: 'I am the son of God and therefore am incapable of being a party to a wrong action.' As a result of this thought, he is unconsciously taken beyond the realm of activity and is thrown into the witness, though he does not recognize it for the time being. Frequent acquaintance with this state, which is so peaceful and captivating, slowly deprives the heart of all its outward-going propensities.

Thus, the heart becomes purified and fit to receive instructions about the Truth from a Guru. Before long, he will come into contact with a real Sage and will be illumined through him.

This is the only law that relates the phenomenal to the Absolute. The heart is always at Happiness which is one's own nature. The heart always takes you to the source and controls even the intellect.

Usually, desire for independence expresses itself only when the mind is active. But that desire itself is in no way independent, nor is the personal 'I'.

23rd June 1952

A thing can prove the existence of nothing other than itself. Sensations can prove the existence of the senses alone, and so on. So you can also prove only yourself.

yat tvam paśyasi tatrai 'kas tvam ēva pratibhāsaē .
kiṁ pṛthak bhāsatē svarṇāt kaṭak-āṅgada-nūpuram ..

[In what you see, just *you* shine forth, alone.
What else but gold shines out in golden ornaments?]

Aṣṭāvakra samhitā, 15.14

375. WHAT ARE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS? (72)

It is admitted that thoughts and feelings are in myself. It is also admitted that in me, there cannot be anything other than myself.

I cannot go out of myself to know or feel anything, and things from outside cannot come into me. The moment they touch me, they get transformed into myself; and thus I know only myself, always.

Here, thoughts and feelings become objectless. So they are myself alone.

26th June 1952

376. IDEA AND LANGUAGE (73)

For everyone, an idea takes its origin in the mind and it has a generic language of its own. It is this idea, in its own generic language, that everybody tries to express in the spoken or written language.

In this translation, speakers of some languages lay greater emphasis on the idea part, and render it into the language as it comes, considering language only as a vehicle of the thought. Malayalam is pre-eminently such a language.

But the English language sometimes puts more emphasis upon the language and the form of expression. In the application of this artificial restriction, a fraction of the idea is naturally lost.

377. THE STATEMENTS ‘THAT IS THIS’ AND ‘THIS IS THAT’ COMPARED (74)

atāṇitenṇōtukil ippadārtham-
maṇannatil paṭṭukayāṇu cittaṁ
itāṇatennākil, itil kuṇēkkūṭ-
uṇaykkayāṁ vṛttimaṇakkayalla .

[If someone says ‘That is this’,
what’s meant by ‘this’ gets there forgotten.
It gets merged (into the ‘that’).
But if it’s said that ‘This is that’,
the act of thought does not dissolve.
It just gets further emphasized.]

Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātmārāmam, 1.52

When you say ‘That is this’, the ‘this’ as such is forgotten and is merged into ‘that’. Or in other words, ‘that’ explains ‘this’.

But when you say ‘This is that’, the ‘that’ is forgotten as such and is merged into ‘this’. Or in other words, ‘this’ explains ‘that’.

As between the general and the particular, the general can well be said to be in the particular. But the particular can never be in the general. Gold is in all ornaments and can stand independent of them all. But no ornament can stand independent of gold. Thus, relatively speaking, gold alone is real and ornaments are unreal.

Similarly, ‘that’ – which represents brahman – is real; and ‘this’ – which represents the world of name and form – is unreal. But the background of ‘this’, or the permanent part in ‘this’, is evidently ‘that’ itself.

378. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE ‘DELUGE’? (75)

The ‘deluge’ is the last refuge after the misguided search, through the cosmological path, for the cause of the objective world. [The ‘deluge’ here is ‘pralaya’ – the dissolution of the world into an unmanifested seed form of undifferentiated causal potency, at the end of each cosmic cycle. It is from this unmanifest potency that the next cycle of cosmic manifestation is supposed to be caused. The concept occurs for example in the story of Bhushuṇḍa in *Yōga-vāsiṣṭha*. See notes 332 and 984.]

The root of this question, as well as of the search, is the acceptance of the principle of interdependence of objects as true. This position is not correct.

Take for example your seeing a cow and a calf in your dream. It is admitted that the see-er, the seeing and the seen are all creations of the mind. So you see the cow, and you see the calf separately. But immediately, you create a new perception that the calf is the offspring of the cow. Thus in fact, the cow, the calf and the relationship between them are three entirely different perceptions related only to the common perceiver, ‘you’.

Similarly, the whole objective world and all things gross as well as subtle – including even the ‘deluge’ and its accredited cause ‘mūla-prakṛiti’ [‘root nature’] – are all objects, and you are the only real subject.

Therefore, if you correctly understand the real significance of the statement that objects have only one relationship and that with you alone, your perspective which enabled you to visualize a ‘deluge’ disappears altogether.

29th June 1952

379. HOW TO HANDLE A MANTRA? (76)

A mantra is a harmonious sound or group of sounds, with or without a superficially intelligible meaning, but capable of creating and applying some definite and potential energy if properly uttered.

When Truth flows out of a Sage spontaneously, whether in prose or in poetry, it is a perfect mantra. All attempts to correct it in accordance with standards of rhyme or reason are nothing short of sacrilege and mutilate the mantra, sometimes producing even adverse results. Therefore, accept it as such or reject it.

380. WHAT IS THE BASIS OF IDEA AND LANGUAGE? (77)

An idea comes clothed in language. When the clothing is taken away, the idea stands as the ultimate Truth. So much so that language may be said to be the art of concealing ideas, and ideas in turn to be art of concealing the Truth.

Ideas and language have no significance except in relation to feeling in the phenomenal, or except in relation to the ultimate Truth in Vēdānta.

Tears are the expression of a subtler and deeper emotion behind them, and they have no significance except in relation to this emotion. One who sees these tears independent of the emotion that caused them has seen nothing more than ‘warm salt water, like the notorious alchemist’. The purpose of the tears is only to express that emotion. He who is capable of seeing the nature of that emotion behind the tears alone understands the real significance of the tears. He alone is competent to comment upon the tears.

Similarly, in commenting upon a vēdāntic text, he alone is competent to do the job properly who has clearly visualized the background or the Reality behind the text and has made it his own.

381. WHAT IS THE INFINITE AND HOW TO UNDERSTAND IT? (78)

The ‘infinite’ is a conception invented only for the purpose of lifting you from the conception of the finite.

Thus reaching the infinite, you find yourself even beyond it. When one thing is explained and disposed of, the opposite also is automatically explained and disposed of.

382. EXPERIENCE OF HAPPINESS IN DEEP SLEEP – AN ANALOGY (79)

Suppose a bucket is lost in a deep well, and you dive down to the bottom to make a search. You touch the bucket there at the bottom, and come up to the surface. Coming

out of the water, you say you found the bucket. But the bucket was really found while you were under the water, where there was no medium to express that experience.

Similarly, Happiness was experienced in deep sleep, but you get hold of a medium to express that experience only after coming to the waking state.

Experience is always beyond the mind. The personal 'I' knows it only when the 'I' comes to that realm of the mind. Still others come to know it when you give it a gross form by putting it into words. But the experience was clearly beyond the mind.

1st July 1952

383. HOW IS SĀNKHYA PHILOSOPHY RELATED TO ADVAITA? (80)

Advaita is a perfection of Sāṅkhya philosophy. Kapila, the founder of Sāṅkhya philosophy, conceived *puruṣha* and *prakṛiti* as separate entities but remaining identified; and he held that for liberation, the elimination of *puruṣha* was necessary. So he tried to eliminate *puruṣha* from *prakṛiti*. But in so doing, he allowed certain parts of *prakṛiti* still to cling on to *puruṣha*. The plurality of *prakṛiti* was not rightly examined by the sāṅkhyas and therefore was wrongly attributed to *puruṣha*. It thus brought in many liberated *puruṣhas*.

Advaita philosophy, by right discrimination, finds that plurality belongs only to *prakṛiti*, and that when *puruṣha* is reached, *prakṛiti* ceases to be *prakṛiti* and is transformed into *puruṣha* itself.

384. WHAT DO I KNOW? (81)

No perception ever stops half way, but always ends in knowledge. At the point of knowing, there is neither perception nor the object perceived. Therefore, you know only knowledge.

You say you know a thing because you have seen it many times. It is true, in one sense. Because, every time, you have been brought into direct contact with knowledge and not with the object. Therefore, it only proves that you know pure knowledge.

From that position, you can never be a witness. You witness only yourself. Knowing is not a verbal noun.

385. WHAT ARE QUALITIES AND THE QUALIFIED? (82)

An object, as we conceive it, is supposed to be a mixture of qualities and the qualified.

But on closer examination, we find that qualities alone are perceived, and that the qualified is never experienced. Thus the qualified remains a mere fancy, for want of proof.

Independent of the qualified, the qualities cannot exist. Therefore qualities are also reduced to mere fancy.

Thus neither the perception nor the perceived are real.

386. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SEE A FORM? (83)

We usually say: 'I see a form.' What does it really mean? It has been proved that form can never exist independent of seeing, and that form and seeing are only synonyms.

Therefore, the expression ‘I see a form’ is meaningless. It would be more appropriate to recast it as ‘I form a form’ (‘ñān oru rūpaṁ rūpikkunnu’), thereby showing that there is nothing other than myself in the form in question.

387. HOW TO PROVE ‘ALL IS CONSCIOUSNESS’? (84)

Take for example this tobacco case. What is its content? Silver. If you take away the silver from the tobacco case, the case vanishes completely. But the silver remains over, in the guise of another form.

If all forms are removed from the silver, the silver also vanishes, leaving Consciousness alone. Thus we see that Consciousness was the only reality in the tobacco case.

From ‘seeing a form’, if either seeing or form is separated, then both vanish simultaneously, because neither can exist independently of the other. Therefore both are one, but not as either. Then what is it? When form and seeing disappear, Consciousness alone remains over; and that is the only reality behind it.

Thus everything is permanent as the background, and not as the expression.

2nd July 1952

388. WHERE IS A MYSTIC AND WHERE IS A DEVOTEE, IN RELATION TO TRUTH? (85)

A mystic’s position is a very complex and confused one. He has a lot of self-made samskāras. He has to transcend all those samskāras before visualizing the Truth. This involves much strain.

A devotee’s position is relatively much simpler and easier. He has transcended most of his samskāras, by his surrender to the iṣṭa-dēva. Therefore he will be able to grasp the ultimate Truth much more easily than the less fortunate mystic.

389. IS THOUGHT OF CONSCIOUSNESS AN ABSTRACTION? (86)

It might appear to be an abstraction at the outset, when your stand is in the mind’s realm alone. But you cannot continue there for long. The object of your thought eludes the mind’s grasp; and in the attempt to comprehend Consciousness, the mind itself loses its limitations. Thus the mind ceases to be mind, and stands transformed into that Consciousness itself.

Therefore, the thought of Consciousness, though starting as an abstraction, takes you immediately to the clearest experience of the Absolute.

390. BODY, MIND AND THE ‘I’-PRINCIPLE. WHAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP AND ESSENCE? (87)

During the period of preliminary investigations in the study of Vēdānta, you are asked to try to separate body and mind from the ‘I’-principle. It is only to make you understand the relative values of the terms. Such a separation is not really possible; because, separated from the ‘I’-principle, the other two do not exist at all. Therefore they are really nothing but the ‘I’-principle. Vēdānta asks you only to recognize this Truth.

From the position of Consciousness, one can say that everything else is not. But from no position can you say that Consciousness is not. Because one has to be conscious of the Truth of that very statement before making it. Therefore Consciousness stands as the background of even that statement.

Hence, even the statement that 'Consciousness is *not*' only proves that Consciousness *is*. Therefore Consciousness is self-luminous and permanent.

391. WHAT IS THE TEST OF THE 'FREE' AND THE 'BOUND'? (88)

If, when you think of Consciousness, the 'I'-thought comes in spontaneously and vice versa, then you are free.

And if, when you think of the body, the 'I'-thought comes in spontaneously and vice versa, then you are bound.

392. CAN THERE BE TWO SELF-LUMINOUS THINGS? (89)

No. The very definition of self-luminous is that which has luminosity as its very nature. There cannot be two such things, because by definition they stand as one. If there are two such things, that principle which knows these two is alone really self-luminous.

Another definition is that self-luminous is that which illumines everything else, including other things which might claim to be self-luminous. If you accept more than one such thing, it would mean that none of them is self-luminous. On that score also, there can be only one self-luminous thing.

393. HOW IS SHIVA CALLED THE 'DESTROYER'? (90)

The function of the faculty called 'higher reason' is only to destroy all that the lower reason or mind has created. Therefore this higher reason or vidyā-vṛitti is verily the destroyer, Shiva himself.

394. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CENTRE AND CIRCUMFERENCE IN VĒDĀNTA PHILOSOPHY? (91)

The centre is only a position without dimension or magnitude. But the circumference has form, dimensions and magnitude; and is made up of innumerable points or centres. In order to reach the centre from the circumference, you must give up the limitations of form, dimension and magnitude attached to the circumference. Thus the centre is in the circumference and everywhere.

In the spiritual realm, the sense of body or mind stands for the circumference, and the real 'I'-principle for the centre. To visualize the centre, the 'I'-principle, you have only to transcend the ideas of body or mind. Then the 'I'-principle, being there already self-luminous, stands visualized without any further effort.

Therefore, if you succeed in visualizing any one point anywhere in the circumference, it is as good as reaching the centre everywhere. The effort should not be to reach the centre; but to know the centre first, and then to know that you are that.

Ferrier, the French philosopher, says: ‘Apprehension of the perception of matter is the subject of metaphysics.’ But Gurunāthan improves upon it thus: ‘It is only the beginning of metaphysics. Apprehension or knowing is always beyond the mind.’

5th July 1952

395. HOW IS THE MIND THE CAUSE OF BOTH BONDAGE AND LIBERATION? (92)

mana ēva manuṣyāṇāṁ kāraṇaṁ bandha-mōkṣayōḥ
bandhāya viṣayāsaktam, muktyai nirviṣayaṁ smṛtam

[It is just mind that is the cause
of bondage, and of liberation
also, in our human lives.
In bondage, mind is tied to objects.
But, in freedom, mind recalls
that it is truly objectless.]

Maitrāyaṇi (Maitrī) Upaniṣhad, 6.34.11

The mind has two kinds of activities. One, being extroverted, perceives objects. And the other, being introverted, perceives the real Self or Ātmā.

When the mind is introverted, it comes into touch with the absolute Self, and becomes surcharged with the aroma of Ātmā. In that state, whatever comes out of that apparent mind will be perfect in all its aspects. It comes spontaneously and without a stop. There is no apparent ego to claim any right over any of those statements. Every word or sentence written or spoken by a Sage is of this nature, each being a mantra in itself. It helps to bring you nearer the Truth.

The rest is for you to experience.

396. ART (93)

Every kind of art is conceived and designed to take you, in regular stages, from the phenomenal to the Absolute.

Take for example music. It is the art of taking you to the Absolute through sound. Music, in its gross form, is composed of distinct sounds, harmoniously blended on an apparently changeless background called ‘shruti’. This shruti again is audible and gross, but transcends the changes of rising and falling. Leaving the diverse sounds of the music, one has to get absorbed in the unity of the shruti. The purpose of shruti is to show an audible background to represent the inaudible.

Up to this state, the music functions in *āhata*, the audible. From the unity of the shruti, you have to go further still, to the inaudible or *anāhata*, which is the abode of Ātmā. This is achieved by the mind following the shruti and continuing to do so even after the shruti has ceased to be audible. Here, the mind, already divorced of its objects, rids itself of all limitations and merges into the anāhata or Ātmā. Thus you experience the right Absolute through the medium of music.

Ātmā expresses itself first in *anāhata*,
which again expresses itself in *āhata*.

Nāda is the generic name for all sounds. It literally pervades all sounds. Through the medium of any art, when you are taken from the āhata to the anāhata, you enjoy

eternal bliss. Real art should achieve this without doing the slightest violence to the inner harmony which is the absolute Reality itself. Of course there is diversity in āhata. But in music, it is so skilfully set that it does not do any violence to the anāhata behind it. This is why music so readily appeals to you.

Through the form, direct your attention to the formless light – the Ultimate – called ‘oḷi’. And through audible sound, direct your attention to the soundless *nāda*. These *oḷi* and *nāda* are the two terminating points, when you approach the Absolute through the two distinct paths of form and sound.

arūpamākumolīyurñ
śabdamiḷḷāṭṭa nādavurñ
hṛdayākāśamaddhyattiḷ
onnāyñnilkkunnitanvahaṁ .

[Right at the centre of the heart,
there is an inmost background where
light shines unformed, always at one
with an unspoken resonance.]

Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātmārāmam, 2.9

ṭhāyaññalḡitamiva nādaprayōgamuṭan-
ēkaśrutīñkaloru minnalkkaṇakkeyumit-
ēkāṣarattīlorumikkunnapōleyumit-
ākāśasūkṣmatanu nārāyaṇāya namaḥ .

[This subtle background that pervades,
throughout all changing space and time,
is like a changeless harmony
where differences are joined in one.
And it is like a light that flashes
timelessly – in that one single
background drone, which is heard used
in song and music and such arts
that work through resonating sound.]

Eruttacchan, Harināma-kīrttanam, 41

6th July 1952

397. YOU SEE THE REALITY ALONE. (94)

When an object is proved to be unreal now, its existence in the past and the future is also proved to be unreal. So an object is unreal from start to finish.

What is the proof of an object? You say you see an object. But you actually see only form. Form is nothing but seeing. So you see only seeing. But did you really see even seeing? No. Because seeing can never exist distinct and separate from you. So you did not see at all. Therefore no object exists.

The fact that you see can alone be admitted. But what did you see? Nothing. Neither form nor anything else. Still, the fact that you saw cannot be denied. Therefore, you are seeing the Reality itself and nothing else.

398. WHAT IS THE TRUTH OF CREATION? (95)

Strictly speaking, there was no creation. Creation is described in the śāstras in two ways:

1. Krama-sṛiṣṭi (creation in regular order), and
2. Yugapat-sṛiṣṭi (simultaneous, as in dream).

Of these, the krama-sṛiṣṭi is disproved and disposed of as illusion by the other, yugapat-sṛiṣṭi. And yugapat-sṛiṣṭi, in its turn, is disposed of as illusion by understanding the ultimate Truth.

7th July 1952

399. WHAT DO IDEAS PROVE? (96)

Ideas can only be considered in two ways. One as real and the other as unreal. If you take ideas to be real and consider the fact that you are able to remember them afterwards, you have to admit that you are the store-house or holder of ideas. As the holder, you must be changeless and hence distinct and separate from the ideas. Gradually you will come to realize that ideas only come and go upon the changeless self, and that ideas as such are unreal.

When ideas are considered unreal, since I am aware of them, I stand as the witness of those ideas. Since witnessing is not a function, the witness is always silent awareness or Ātmā. If you take any one activity of the mind, e.g. thinking, you find your role was only that of being aware of the thinking. So you were really the witness of the thinking. You are this with regard to all the activities of the mind. But what the activity is about is unimportant, so far as the witness is concerned.

You might say remembrance proves past thoughts or objects. But remembrance itself is only an activity of the mind. It again proves only your role as a witness. Otherwise remembrance itself would be impossible. And you are the witness of the remembrance as well.

Things are of two kinds:

1. Extrinsic or extraneous to you, and
2. Intrinsic in you.

The second can only be one, and that is your own self or real nature. To discover that, you must cease to be enamoured of everything extraneous to you and emphasize your own intrinsic nature. For example is 'seeing' extraneous to you or intrinsic in you? Certainly extraneous. Because you can very well continue even without seeing.

400. IS THOUGHT THE ENEMY OF ONE'S OWN PEACE? (97)

Yes, in one sense. If a stranger falls ill, you do not usually feel sad; but if he is related to you in any way, you indeed do. Because you relate yourself to him, at least in thought. Take away thought and you are free, whatever be that thought regarding the world or your own body or mind.

Therefore thought alone destroys your peace.

8th July 1952

401. HEART AND PRĒMA (98)

Heart + I am = I am the heart.

Love is the expression of the Self through the heart, and the heart is always wet. It takes you straight to the Self or Ātmā and drowns you in it. Language is dry and is the expression of the Self through the head or reason. It takes you only to the brink of Ātmā; and leaves you there, till the heart rises up to wet reason and ultimately to drown you in love.

So when you begin to discuss love, it is impossible to proceed with the discussion when the heart wells up. Of the different styles in literature, ‘shṛīṅgāra’ (based on human love) is the one style found best suited to clothe the highest Truth through the message of love or *prēma*. This is why even the Upaniṣhads have invariably utilized this style to express Truth. The following verse shows the phenomenal ideal of *prēma*.

oruvanutaṇorālil snēhamāyālavannu||-
orunirupamasaukhyadravyamāyālutanne
arikilmaruviyonnum ceykayillenkilum tām
maruvumorusukhattāltanne duḥkhattenīkkum .

[When someone comes to be in love,
the one who’s loved is then a source
of happiness beyond compare.
Then, merely being near that person
brings contentment, even if
there’s nothing done. Just in itself
that company brings happiness
and banishes all discontent.]

Mannāḍiyār, Uttara Rāma Caritam, 2.19

9th July 1952

402. WHAT IS AT THE ROOT OF QUESTION AND ANSWER? (99)

Every question proceeds from the answer – which always stands as experience, far beyond the realm of the mind.

Therefore questions are many, but the ultimate and correct answer to all questions is only one, and that is the changeless Ātmā, the Reality. Every question springs from the striving of the mind to bring down that pure experience to the realm of the mind.

403. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAT AND LIFE? (100)

Sat is the greatest generalization of objects, gross as well as subtle; and is the principle of Existence itself. It comprehends both animate and inanimate objects. Life, which is but the first emanation from *sat*, comprehends only animate objects. In this light, *sat* may very well be called a broader view of life.

404. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ADDRESS? (One end of life) (101)

One's address and experience are the lowest and the highest extremes of one's apparent 'I'.

When you say one's address is perfect, it means that his body identification is so complete. This is bondage of the severest type. The goal of Vēdānta is to release one from the grips of the bondages of this address, and to enable him to identify himself with that permanent principle in him which is beyond any limitation or address.

Address is a synonym for particularization, and liberation is the greatest generalization. Therefore, Vēdānta dispossesses one completely of his address.

10th July 1952

405. MEDITATION (102)

Meditation is yōgic when the mind is concentrated on any one object, or when the prāṇa is controlled in the slightest manner. The latter must be done only in the presence of an experienced Guru. Otherwise it is liable to innumerable pitfalls, which may cause ailments, physical as well as mental.

406. JNYĀNIN'S NIRVIKALPA SAMĀDHI (103)

According to the *Yōga-vāsiṣṭha*, it is the pleasant coolness you experience as a result of the firm conviction that you alone exist and that you do not see anything or do not see at all.

yathā prakāśayāmy ēkō dēham ēnam tathā jagat .
atō mama jagat sarvam athavā na ca kiñcana ..

[This body here shines by my light.
It's shown by me alone. But then,
the same is true of everything
in the entire universe.
Thus, either everything is mine,
or otherwise, nothing at all.]

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 2.2

If you accept the body, accept also the whole world with it. If not, accept neither. What a bold assertion!

407. IS PRAKṚITI REALLY AN OBSTACLE TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS? (104)

In the early stages of sādhana, when the aspirant is relying upon the lower reason alone, the world of objects appears as an obstacle to his progress.

Gradually, when he begins to awaken his higher reason and begins to rely upon vidyā-vṛitti, everything that appeared as an obstacle before gets transformed into help to lead him on to the Ultimate.

When he takes his stand in the Truth itself, prakṛiti also changes its characteristics and appears as Truth

408. WHAT IS THE MOST CONCRETE OF ALL THINGS? (105)

Concrete literally means real or changeless. Name and form are constantly changing; and their background Ātmā alone is real. Body, senses and mind are changing; and the 'I'-principle alone is changeless or real, through all states and times.

In that sense, the 'I'-principle is the only concrete thing, and all else is but illusion.

409. HOW DOES THE AVADHŪTA PATH WORK? (106)

Most of the avadhūtas take to the visible and are loath to accept discrimination. So they are advised to cultivate an intense aversion to their own body, by discarding it in many ways; and thus to get rid of their attachment to the body. Most of them take to some yōgic practices also, and thereby acquire certain yōgic powers. All this extraordinary conduct makes them admired and venerated by the general public.

But these powers (if not misused) and the practices only prepare the ground for them to listen to the Truth. So they have ultimately to surrender to a Kāraṇa-guru, and take initiation from him regarding the ultimate Truth.

410. WHAT IS 'SPHURAṆA' AND HOW DOES IT FUNCTION? (107)

The natural state of the 'I'-principle in man is unmanifested. This becomes manifest, in the case of human activities, in three distinct stages.

1. The unmanifested state of luminosity itself.
2. Becoming manifest as 'I know I am' or as self-luminosity.
3. Becoming manifested as objects.

The second of the above three stages is not recognized at all by the ordinary man. But the Jnyānin alone recognizes it and perceives it clearly sometimes, before a perception. From the first stage to the second is only a subjective change to 'I am', without losing its identity. This is called '*sphuraṇa*'. It has no object, but it has become self-luminous. That is all. When the 'I'-principle comes to the third stage of perception, it becomes manifested as a jīva.

The statement, 'I am intelligent', is made by the ordinary man and the Sage alike. To the ordinary man, it is nothing short of an integral whole, indivisible and tight. But the Sage splits it up into two distinct parts, the 'I' and 'am intelligent', identifying himself with the 'I' and considering the second part an object or attribute.

The 'I'-principle is pure and attributeless, and is added on to the attribute every time. In other words, the unmanifested 'I'-principle first prepares itself to manifest by adopting the subjective and changeless 'I know I am', then takes on the attribute and becomes clearly manifested.

In place of the three states of luminosity, self-luminosity and illumining the object, love has also its exact parallels in the course of its manifestation.

Pure Consciousness <i>bōdha-mātra</i>	Self-consciousness <i>sva-bōdha</i>	Consciousness of objects <i>viśhaya-bōdha</i>
Pure love <i>prēma-mātra</i>	Self love <i>sva-prēma</i>	Love of objects <i>viśhaya-prēma</i>

In all the three aspects, you do not change from your centre. But if you emphasize the seeing or hearing in the third aspect, you become a jīva. And if you emphasize the

knowing or witness aspect there, you stick to your centre. If you identify yourself with feelings, you become a *jīva*; and if you stand knowing the feelings, you stand in yourself.

Jīva is he who thinks or feels, and

Ātmā is he who knows both these activities (and is no 'he' in fact).

411. KNOWLEDGE HAS NOTHING TO KNOW, EXCEPT KNOWLEDGE. (108)

Everything other than knowledge is name or form. The moment you know them they become knowledge itself. So you do not really know anything other than knowledge. Thus the world is not. Then where is bondage?

412. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN THE LIFE PRINCIPLE AND DEAD MATTER? (109)

Everything perceivable is dead matter. The life principle alone can never be perceived. Therefore the life principle can never be dead matter. Nor can there be any duality or diversity in the life principle. It can only be one. Life transcends perception as well as conception.

Looking from another standpoint, the life principle is the 'is'-ness in everything. From this point of view, there is no such thing as dead matter. Everything perceived is lit up by the Self, and is alive.

13th July 1952

413. THROUGH SOUND TO THE ULTIMATE (110)

The four stages of progression to the Ultimate explained in relation to the path of sound can be applied to any sphere of life. For example:

1. *Vaikhari* can very well be represented by every perceivable expression as body.
2. *Madhyamā* can very well be represented by every expression as mind (inaudible) still with language.
3. *Pashyanī* can very well be represented by the languageless, apparently limited 'I' or witness.
4. *Parā* can very well be represented by the real Self or *Ātmā* beyond even the limitation of oneness or beyond even the apparently limited 'I'.

Ātmā expresses itself in two realms, namely the mind and the body. The Sage rests at the right end, *Ātmā*, and sees the other two as mere illusions upon the *Ātmā* itself.

But the ordinary man remains at the wrong end, the body, attributing complete reality to its form and name, and considering the mind and *Ātmā* as relatively subtle (less real).

Thus the right perspective assumed by the Sage is reversed completely by the ordinary man. To get to perfection the layman has therefore to reverse his perspective likewise.

Sage's perspective

Ātmā alone real

Mind and body unreal

Ordinary man's
perspective

Body and mind
both real

Ātmā unreal

414. TO THE ULTIMATE THROUGH DHARMA AND DHARMI (111)

Every perception has two aspects: the *dharmi* and *dharma*. The *dharmi* is the changeless background or existence upon which the *dharma*s come and go. For example we say 'the book is'. 'The book' is *dharma* and 'is' is the *dharmi*. Because the 'is' is everywhere; but 'the book' is only in the book. But it is misunderstood by an ordinary man. He takes 'book' as *dharmi* and the 'is' as *dharma* (attribute).

The 'is' can never be an attribute, because it is everywhere. It alone can be *dharmi*. If therefore you approach the Truth by way of the 'dharmi', understanding it in the right manner, you get to the ultimate Truth without any difficulty. There the 'is' and consciousness will be found to be one and the same.

Here also, the correct order is reversed, by putting the changeless after the changing. Immediately after every perception, the changeless part 'is' is conveniently forgotten, and the changing part 'book' alone is emphasized. Correctly, it ought to be said that existence (*dravya*) expresses itself as book (*guṇa*). Or in other words, 'Existence books', 'book' being used as a verb. Thus, every existing noun should be considered a verbal noun and its expression a regular verb or attribute. The Sanskrit language emphasizes this usage literally.

Existence is the only *dravya* (noun). All else is verb or attribute. *Sat* is *dharmi* and exists in all *dharma*. But one *dharma* cannot exist in another *dharma*. Get to the 'is' in every perception or find the *dharmi* in you, and you are free.

In this sense, it is said that Lord Kṛṣṇa is to be considered the only male and all other beings females. Looked at from the phenomenal, the world appears as existence, expressing itself as the world. But looked at from the standpoint of Existence, there has been no expression at all.

14th July 1952

415. WHY DOES ONE SEEK TRUTH ELSEWHERE? (112)

Because he does not know that he is himself that Truth.

416. WHAT IS THE TEST OF LOVE? (113)

In your relationship with another, if you can never even dream of any kind of ill-feeling towards that other, that relationship can be said to be bordering on pure love. What is that which you cannot help loving? Ātmā alone.

ātmāvinīkalatīlprīti, prītitān viṣayatīlām,
pīraykkum viṣayaprīti, yātmaprītipīriccīā .

[In self, what's found is quite beyond
all mere affection which is felt
for outside objects in the world.
Affection felt for outside things
can be expelled, but not so liking
for the truth of what self is.
That can't be given up or changed.]

Bhāṣha Pancadashi, Ātmānanda-prakaraṇam, 26 (Malayalam translation)

417. WHAT IS MEANT BY 'SAKALAM DRŚYAM JAḌAM' – 'EVERYTHING PERCEIVED IS INERT' (Upaniṣhad)? (114)

All that you perceive is dead and inert; because in fact you do not see anything. The object, when you seem to perceive it, is dead as object; but is living in the higher sense, as Consciousness.

That which exists can never be dead. Therefore, the material part, which is changing, alone is dead. The existence part of every object is life or Consciousness itself. This is not perceptible and is never dead.

21st July 1952

418. WHO HAS ANY PROBLEM? (115)

You say that you have many problems. But I ask you, have 'you' really any? When you examine your problems more carefully, you will find that every problem belongs to somebody other than yourself, namely to the body or mind. You, as the real 'I'-principle, have absolutely no problem.

You cannot talk of any problem unless you perceive it. When you are the perceiver, you cannot simultaneously be the sufferer or enjoyer. Thus you cannot have any problem, but you are the witness always. A patient can narrate the details of his disease to a doctor only as the perceiver and not as the sufferer. So the patient is the witness of the disease. Thus you are the eternal witness. This is what Vēdānta wants to impress upon you.

The Truth is now and here. So it is everywhere. If it is not first found now and here, it will be found nowhere else and at no other time.

The utterances of a Sage in the sahaja state are bold and uncompromising, since they directly reflect the ultimate Truth. Thinking along the lines of these bold utterances will itself be a pleasure even on the path, and will take you right to the transcendental.

419. WHAT IS REALIZATION? (116)

Realization is nothing but shifting the centre of gravity or emphasis from the object to the subject in every perception. For example, 'I see the chair.' Here 'I' comes first and 'chair' next. But the ordinary man ignores the 'I' and emphasizes only the 'chair'. Correctly speaking, he ought to be emphasizing the subject 'I' and ignoring the object 'chair'.

The God-given universe is God itself, and can be nothing else.

Invisible means not visible to the ordinary sense organs, but cognized by some higher faculty.

420. WHAT IS THE NEED OF A GURU? (117)

Knowledge is of two kinds: objective and subjective. Objective knowledge of all kinds, relating to objects gross as well as subtle, can be acquired only through objective instruments of the same nature, from the intellect down to the gross body. For this, we readily seek the help of equally objective Gurus – like persons, books, instruments and other appliances.

But, for the acquisition of subjective knowledge (knowledge regarding the ‘I’-principle), none of the above instruments nor anything objective shall be of any avail. However, the objective instruments, if properly utilized, do the simple service of proving to you that you are not the body, senses or the mind. They can do nothing more, and your intellect also cannot grasp anything beyond the objective.

The subjective experience of the real ‘I’ is exclusively the subject of Vēdānta. This can be gained only by personal contact, in an attitude of complete surrender, with a Jnyānin who is established in that subjective Reality. This Jnyānin, though appearing to the ordinary man as embodied, really stands beyond the body, senses and mind – as Ātmā itself. But the disciple, as long as he feels himself embodied, sees the Guru only as a personality. Slowly, the disciple realizes that he is that living principle beyond the body, senses and mind. Then he finds the Guru also correspondingly exalted.

At last, when the disciple, taken thus to the brink of the mind, listens to the words of the Guru explaining the nature of the positive Self, he is suddenly thrown into that supreme experience of the ultimate. It is only then that he realizes the state of the Guru to be that always, whether in apparent activity or inactivity. Thus alone can Truth be ever realized.

Another aspect of the same: You have nothing of your own. Everything you profess to possess is alien to you, acquired from different sources. Your body, your language, your ideas and everything of yours likewise are derived from very many others, each one being a Guru to that extent. All your merit or originality consists in rearranging them in a peculiar manner, calling it ‘discovery’.

Every activity of yours is the result of some things you have thus acquired from different Gurus or sources. Therefore, a Guru is essential in every walk of life; much more so in the search for the Truth, since you have to give up all that you deem to possess, before you are let into the ultimate Truth.

Adṛśyō dṛśyatē rāhur grhītēnē ’ndunā yathā,
tathā ’nubhava-mātrā ’tmā dṛśyēnā ’tmā vilōkyatē

(?)

The invisible Rāhu is perceived through the eclipsed moon. In the same way the Ātmā who is mere experience is perceived through objects

Translation by Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātma-darshan, Preface

In the quotation, Rāhu stands for Ātmā and the moon represents everything perceived (dṛishya). Rāhu or Ātmā is by nature imperceptible to the senses. But Rāhu becomes perceptible only when it comes into direct contact with the moon. Similarly, Ātmā is

recognized only when you cognize any object, and direct your attention to the knowing or the witness aspect of the activity.

For example: 'I know the chair.' 'I' is by nature unexpressed. But, in the perception of the chair, if you do take it emphasizing the 'I' or Ātmā in it, the chair only serves to show the Ātmā. Thus utilize all objects as helps to attain the Ultimate.

Every art, science or śāstra starts upon the blind assumption of the basic error that the world, as it is perceived, is real; and it proceeds to examine objects from this stand. But the vēdāntin begs to differ and boldly asks the artist or scientist what he is going to examine, questioning the very reality of the object itself. The vēdāntin calls upon you to prove the object first, before proceeding to examine it.

When you are engaged in examining the fundamentals of anything, you should not allow your past samskāras to come in and taint your judgement. The habit channels of the mind are of course difficult to overcome. So you have to guard yourself strongly against them.

When you are forced to examine what you call an 'object', strictly and impartially, you find that you rely upon knowledge and experience alone for the proof of the object. But knowledge and experience are always within you, and do not go out to meet the so called object. So knowledge and experience can in no case prove the existence of the objects, but only their existence as ideas quite within the mind's realm. Thus the objects admit themselves to be nothing but ideas.

These in their turn are again cognized by that self-luminous 'I'-principle, still further within. By applying the same argument, you see that thoughts and feelings admit themselves to be nothing but that 'I'-principle. Therefore, you see that what appears as an object is nothing but your own luminous Self.

The experienced is always one with the experience. This is applicable in all realms. Identifying yourself with the mind and examining the gross, you find the gross to be nothing but thought forms.

Next identifying yourself with the self-luminous 'I'-principle, you examine thoughts and feelings, and immediately thoughts and feelings are found to be nothing other than that 'I'-principle. Thus the whole world, including your own body and mind, is nothing but your own Self.

yat tvaṁ paśyasi tatrai 'kas tvam ēva pratibhāsaḥ .
kiṁ pṛthak bhāsatē svarṇāt kaṭak-āṅgada-nūpuram ..

[In what you see, just *you* shine forth, alone.

What else but gold shines out in golden ornaments?]

Aṣṭāvakra samhitā, 15.14

Perception, thought or feeling is not such at the time of activity. You make it such only after the event. Neither does it exist before the event. Therefore nothing objective ever exists.

421. WHAT ARE STATES? (118)

The states called dream and wakeful, when viewed from the standpoint of the apparent subject, appear only as the wakeful state. A state or experience is styled a dream when its corresponding objects are found to be non-existent.

In that sense, every past experience is a dream; and you have only one experience in the present – the wakeful.

422. HOW IS A DREAM A DREAM? (119)

You say you had a dream, relying upon memory alone. You admit in the same breath that the objects of the dream, including even the dream subject, were all unreal. This shows that memory is no proof of the reality of the objects of the experience supposed to be remembered. If the objects of perception and the organs of perception were unreal, the perception also must be equally unreal.

The mind always works conjointly with the corresponding sense organs. Therefore, when the dream sense-organs and the dream body disappear, the dream mind also disappears. Then the dream perceptions do not have a container to hold on to. Therefore, the dream perceptions are not capable of being remembered in any circumstance. Hence memory cannot prove a dream.

As you wake up from the dream state, you must wake up from the waking dream also. To say that you can now think of your past dream is also wrong. Even to think of a dream you must cast away all that is connected with the waking state, and become a dream subject for the time being.

Prakṛiti (avidyā) carries on its head the weapon with which to kill prakṛiti itself. That weapon is *vidyā-vṛitti* (the higher reason).

423. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF ENJOYMENT? (120)

To say you enjoyed anything, for example music, is wrong.

It is true you started by listening to music. At first you forgot your personal identity and were absorbed in the harmony expressed in the music. But you did not stop there. Through the expressed harmony, you were carried on to the unexpressed inner harmony of the Self and experienced your own Self there.

Coming back, you passed through the very same stages, in the reverse order, and reached the music again. Then you wantonly superimposed the bliss experienced upon the music outside.

The mistake is not in enjoying the expressed harmony, but is only in superimposing the happiness upon some external object – here music. When you say you enjoy any sense object, like music, that object is not present at the time of enjoyment. Nor is the personal ‘I’, the enjoyer, present. There is only your real Self, in its real nature of Peace.

You utilize music only as an instrument, and abandon it just before enjoyment or experience.

424. HOW DO THE YŌGIN AND THE SAGE REACT, WITH REGARD TO PLEASURE AND PAIN? (121)

When the body suffers, the yōgin, as a result of his incessant practice, takes away the mind from that spot and arrests it elsewhere, thus avoiding the pain. Even when thus separated from the body, the mind has its own sufferings. This sort of evasion does not enrich him, but on the contrary injures him much. Because, later on, he will find it much more difficult than an ordinary man would, to leave off a mind so highly developed and to rest in his real nature. The habit channels of the mind are so difficult to be overcome.

But the Sage views pleasure or pain in quite a different manner. He lets the body or mind enjoy or suffer as it comes; only seeing that it is the body or mind alone that enjoys or suffers and that he – the knower of them all – is not involved in them in the least.

The yōgins, of their own choice, leave the body to itself and labour hard to train the changing mind to expand and acquire powers.

But the one who takes to the jnyāna path leaves both the body and the mind to themselves, and chooses to retreat into his own real nature of Peace within.

425. WHO IS REALLY DOING A DEED? (122)

In the doing, there is only doing and no who (doer) nor deed. In the doer, there is only doer and no doing or deed. And in the deed, there is only deed and no doer or doing.

Therefore the question does not arise.

426. WHAT IS LIBERATION? (123)

You have to gain liberation only from the appendages, viz. body, senses and mind. The officer is an appendage of the man, who is relatively the witness of the officer.

You always desire rest. Real rest comes only from your real nature – Peace. From this background, there is always the trumpet call, resounding ‘Go to Peace!’ You respond to it *unknowingly*, every time. Thus you go back to your real nature, Peace, after every activity.

This Peace or rest is already in you. You have only to recognize it, and go to it every time *knowingly*. This is liberation. Thus you see that you were never bound.

27th July 1952

427. WHAT IS VICĀRA-MĀRGA? (124)

Vicāra-mārga is the method in which the disciple is directly shown the right Absolute, and the only effort the disciple is called upon to make is to establish himself in that Absolute.

428. TRUTH AND LIBERATION. (125)

You actually come into contact with the Truth, as the world, every moment. But you are not enriched by that in the least, until you are told by the Guru about the ultimate Truth in the most unambiguous terms.

Truth can be seemingly transmitted to the ordinary man only by word of mouth. He is taken from the lower to the higher Truth in gradual stages, working up his conviction at every step. To create this conviction, contact through some clear medium is essential. Hearing and seeing are the most convenient and important of such mediums.

429. WHAT IS REAL LISTENING? (126)

The Upaniṣhads boldly proclaim that listening to the ultimate Truth, over and over again, is the only means to ultimate realization. What is this ‘listening’?

you are perceiving the thing through the mind in a subtle manner, or that you are mentally conscious of it, or in other words that you can reproduce it in your mind.

When you search for that ‘thing’ in Consciousness, it is nowhere to be found. It has merged in Consciousness; and the statement ultimately means ‘I am conscious of myself’ or that ‘Consciousness knows Consciousness.’ Therefore, Consciousness cannot have any object other than Consciousness.

ātmānamātmanā kaṇṭu telika nī

[It’s by the self that self is seen.

That’s what you need to clarify.]

Eruttacchan

29th July 1952

433. WHAT IS PRACTICAL REST? (130)

The ideal rest, capable of relieving the exhaustion of days and nights of intense strain, is obtained by putting the mind in what is called the blank state (madhyagatāvastha), for an hour or even less, as convenient.

In order to induce that state you have to refrain from all thoughts – objective as well as subjective. But in the early stages, the mind rebels against it and takes to other thoughts indiscriminately. Then you have deliberately to dismiss those thoughts, one by one. After a sufficient period of such training, you will find that the mind comes to a blank state of absolute rest.

But this exercise should never be attempted, except under personal instructions from a competent guru.

citram vaṭatarōr mūlē vṛddhās śiṣyā gurur yuvā
gurōstu maunaṁ vyākhyānaṁ śiṣyā ’stu chinna-saṁśayāḥ
(see note 688)

*Shrī Shankara, Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stōtram, Dhyāna-shlōka 3,
at start of Surēshvarācārya’s Manasollasa*

The quotation explains how you really understand anything said by the Guru about the ultimate Truth. You understand only when you are beyond the words, language, ideas, central idea, speaker or listener. At the time of understanding, the teacher as teacher and the disciple as disciple are both absent, both having risen to the ultimate background in apparent silence.

Experience occurs only when the expression stops.

434. WHO IS THE REAL CHILD? (131)

The worldly child, who is a child in ignorance, and the Sage, who is a child in knowledge, are both unattached to objects. The child has not acquired the capacity to think, and the Sage has gone beyond the capacity to think. But the child leaves a slight saṁskāra behind after every activity, while the Sage leaves nothing behind.

Therefore, the Sage alone is the real child.

435. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF HARMONY? (132)

The inner harmony of the Absolute is first expressed in:

1. *The language of the soul or Reality* – without in the least losing its essence.
2. Next, it is expressed in the *languageless language of ideas*.
3. Next, in the *language of ideas*.
4. Lower down, it expresses itself or it is expressed in the *language of sounds*, every such integral expression being called a mantra.
5. Still further down, it is expressed in the *language of words*, being the grossest form of expression.

In all these different kinds of expression, the ideal to be maintained is that no part of that inner harmony of the language of the soul should be lost. This is possible only for a Sage, well established in the sahaja state, never slipping out of that inner harmony or real background.

Every thought and word of his is a mantra in its full sense, since the whole of his indivisible Self is in that inner harmony all the time.

30th July 1952

436. HOW ARE THE REAL FLOWER AND THE REAL ‘I’ ONE AND THE SAME? (133)

The ‘flower’ is that permanent something upon which all its adjuncts or qualities appear and disappear. So also, I am that permanent something upon which the expressions – like body, senses and mind – come and go.

Everything pertaining to the flower corresponds to the things pertaining to the ‘I’. But, giving up all adjuncts from the subject as well as from the object, we find that what remains over is neither known nor unknown, but real; and therefore is nothing but the ultimate Reality.

Therefore, the real ‘flower’ and the real ‘I’ are in essence one and the same.

31st July 1952

437. WHAT IS SILENT KNOWLEDGE? (134)

Ordinary knowledge is knowledge ‘*of this*’ (of any object gross or subtle), obtained through a corresponding instrument.

But the silent knowledge or witness has neither a medium, nor is it obtained. Therefore the witness is described as silent knowledge, viewed from the standpoint of the mind or the ego.

The ignorant mind has certain false standards set by itself, and evaluates everything according to those standards. But when the Truth is heard from the Guru, the mind gives up all its previous standards.

Thenceforward the witness, which was so long qualified as silent, ceases to be silent – in the sense that it is the background of both activity and inactivity.

438. WHAT IS INDIVIDUALITY? (135)

Individuality is not what the ordinary man takes it to be. He takes it to be adherence to one's own body, senses and mind; and at the same time he believes that the individuality is changeless. Such an individuality is never possible.

The advaitin seeks that individuality or principle in him which continues unchanged, even when the body and the mind change every moment.

That individuality, if it should be changeless, can only be the real 'I'-principle (Ātmā).

439. HOW TO ASSUAGE HUMAN SUFFERING? (136)

The problem is an illusion. Nobody actually wants to assuage human suffering as it is. Knowledge of human suffering creates a sympathetic suffering in you. It is this suffering in you that directly calls for a solution, and drives you to the habit channel of always seeking causes and remedies in external objects. Thus you attribute the cause of your suffering to the human suffering outside.

A solution could be suggested to this in two ways: objective and subjective.

1. The objective solution seeks to correct the world and its arrangements so as not to allow recurrence of the human suffering. This is not always possible or practicable, because the external objects in question are diverse and often not under our control. It is like attempting to cover the surface of the whole world with leather, in order to afford smooth walking. This is often the way of the ignorant world.
2. The other alternative, adopted by the wise one, is to seek the subjective remedy. Your knowledge of something else was certainly the cause of your pain. But that other something was never in the knowledge or in you. So, examine your 'knowledge of anything' more closely, and you find that it was nothing but pure knowledge. Even when you turn your attention inward, the suffering vanishes. So return to your real nature and you are free.

Correct yourself alone, and do not attempt to correct the kingdom of God – if ever there is one.

440. IS THE 'UNIVERSAL' A SPIRITUAL GOAL, AND DOES IT HELP AN ASPIRANT TOWARDS THE ULTIMATE TRUTH? (137)

No. From the individual to the universal is the cosmological path of progress. But this by itself can never take you to the Absolute. Even when you have expanded yourself to the extent of comprehending the whole universe, you will stand only as the expanded individual by force of samskāras, and therefore you do not transcend individuality.

The universal has also to be transcended in order to get to the Truth. You get at the same Truth by transcending the individual. Then why all this vain labour, to reach the universal?

441. WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF RENUNCIATION? (138)

Renunciation is usually considered as a means to Self-realization, but its effect is just the opposite. When you renounce an object, you actually attribute more concreteness and reality to it than when you are indifferent to it.

Thus renunciation, instead of proving the unreality of the world, makes it more real and frightful, though you are temporarily and conveniently kept away from parts of it.

442. DIFFERENCES IN THE VIEWPOINTS OF EVEN THE UPANIṢHADS EXPLAINED (139)

The Upaniṣhads are all brief records of the expounding of the Truth, to disciples of different standards, by the Sages of old at different times. The general instruction how to approach and understand those Upaniṣhads themselves is to take them all as only formal (aupacārika).

This means that it was primarily only for those to whom it was particularly addressed, and secondly for such others who could not understand anything higher. It was not meant for those who could not understand it, nor for those who could see even beyond.

Svarūpa is the thing in itself, and that changeless background to which attributes are given.

3rd August 1952

443. WHY DID SHRĪ KUMĀRILA BHAṬṬA REJECT THE OFFER OF SHRĪ SHANKARA? (140)

Kumārila Bhaṭṭa was a karmattha(?) and had a guru who followed the vēdic path. He followed the traditional path and had risen well beyond opposites, beyond virtue and vice. The only sin he had consciously committed was deceiving his Buddhist guru. Though it was done not for any selfish purpose, but for establishing the Truth, he decided at last to atone for it by burning his body alive in a flaming pile of paddy husk.

The fire had consumed him almost up to the waist when Shrī Shankara reached him and offered him advaitic Truth. He was quite calm and serene, even in the throes of death, having discarded without a thought all his past virtues. Having transcended the opposites of virtue and vice, pleasure and pain etc., and being able to stand as the disinterested witness even during the pangs of death, he must indeed have risen to the ultimate Truth.

Thus standing as Truth himself, he did not stand in need of it again from Shrī Shankara. Therefore Shrī Shankara was respectfully sent to his foremost disciple, Shrī Mandana Mishra for a spiritual duel, as desired by Shrī Shankara himself.

Kumārila Bhaṭṭa was a staunch advocate of selfless karma. Any path, if followed with sincerity and earnestness even beyond the apparent opposites, takes one to the right Ultimate. *Devotion*, *Vishishtādvaita*, *Dvaita* and all such paths in due course take you to the same goal of Truth if followed with steadfastness, even beyond opposites, with an eye on the *sat-cit-ānanda* aspect of the Absolute.

Following the expression even beyond name and form, you reach that which is really expressionless, but which expresses itself as apparent objects.

444. WHY IS SMILE EMPHASIZED IN MEDITATION? (141)

Meditation upon the smile on the face of the iṣṭa-dēva helps you to the Absolute.

Contemplation of the form of your iṣṭa-dēva does not help you to rise above body and mind. But the moment you think of his smile, you forget the name and form and are attracted to something higher and more illuminating, namely the consciousness part of it. If you hold fast to the consciousness expressing itself through the smile, you are lead on to the experience of the real Self, in due course.

nirviśeṣaṁ paraṁ brahma sākṣāt kartumanīśvarāḥ
yē mandāstē 'nukampyaṇtē saviśeṣanirūpaṇaiḥ
vaśīkṛtē manasyeṣāṁ saguṇabrahmaśīlanāt
tadēvāvirbhavēt sākṣādapētopādhikalpanam

Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, Vedānta-paribhāṣa, Chapter 8

4th August 1952

445. HOW IS THE YŌGIN'S APPROACH TO THE TRUTH DIFFERENT FROM THE JNYĀNIN'S? (142)

Yōga is a development out of *Nirīshvara-sāṅkhya* or 'Sāṅkhya denying God', and is known by the term *Sēshvara-sāṅkhya* or 'Sāṅkhya accepting God'. In Sāṅkhya, prakṛiti is not ultimately disposed of, but is only brought to an equilibrium and rendered harmless. Therefore duality still persists, in the form of puruṣha and prakṛiti, even after the supposed liberation of the individual puruṣha. Acceptance of the position of the existence of several such liberated puruṣhas also retains duality in another form. Therefore the pure Sāṅkhya never transcends duality completely.

Yōgins always strive to visualize, through the mind, an ideal set by the mind itself. It cannot be denied that every object perceived is lit up by consciousness. Therefore, if the yōgin claims to visualize the Truth in the same manner, he must certainly light up the Absolute also likewise. But with what is it to be so lit up? No, it is never possible. Therefore yōga by itself can never take you to the Absolute.

The means of meditation is also adopted in the jnyāna path. But the disciple has already been told, by his Guru, about the real nature of the Absolute. Therefore, when he meditates upon the Absolute, the mind dies or merges into the self-luminous Absolute.

Some Jnyānins, even after realization, take to meditation as a habit. But they have ultimately to give up this habit also, since it unconsciously tries to limit the Absolute to a state.

Advaita absorbs the witness of the yōgin as well as the witnessed (consisting of the 98 tattvas) into it. Further, prakṛiti is completely destroyed, even before advaita is established.

446. FROM TRIPUṬĪ TO THE ABSOLUTE (143)

1. Knower, knowing and known
– reduced to –
2. Knowing or witness and known

– reduced further to –

3. Witness alone, without the witnessed

5th August 1952

447. ‘AHAM’ (SELF) (144)

1. “na hanyate” ... aham

Aham means I am the deathless Ātmā.

[“na hanyate” means “I am not killed.” – probably quoted from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 2.20. And ‘aham’ is Sanskrit for ‘I’.]

2. aśiraskam hakārāntam

aśēṣākārasamsthitam

(?)

448. HOW IS REALITY IN THE OBJECTIVE WORLD ESTABLISHED? (145)

It is done in two ways:

1. By examining the objective world in an ascending order from the gross to the Absolute. When the gross is examined, it is reduced to mere thought forms, and thoughts in their turn are transformed into pure Consciousness. Thus the world is nothing but the Absolute.

2. By tracing the expression of the Absolute down to the gross world, in the descending order.

In this process, yourself, the one reality, seems to split itself into two – namely generic thought and consciousness, the perceiver of the thought. At this stage there is no bondage, because there is no other thing in existence except yourself and thought, and your experience is only that you know.

You see yourself as thought. It cannot be called a thought either, because from the standpoint of Consciousness, there cannot be anything other than Consciousness, and hence there is no thought.

A thought to be a thought must have an object, and therefore thought can exist only in the mind’s realm. In the plane where the generic thought is supposed to exist, consciousness alone obtains to provide an object to thought. But it is called a thought only when looked at from down below.

This generic thought, which is not thought by itself, next begets innumerable other thoughts and thus the world comes into existence, out of this pure Consciousness.

Therefore, looking from the top or from the bottom, the world is found to be nothing but the Reality.

Ātmā: The unconditioned ‘I’

First emanation: ‘I know I am.’ The most generic thought. Here I am witness of the generic thought.

Second emanation: Then you come to the particular thoughts – including time, space and causality – establishing the whole realm of the mind. Immediately, you become the ‘thinker’ in the tripuṭī (of the thinker, thinking and thought).

Third emanation: Further down, you become the ‘perceiver’, in a world of sense perceptions.

Fourth emanation: Finally, you come down to be a ‘doer’, in a gross world of bodies and actions.

This is the order in which the unconditioned ‘I’ manifests itself in different stages. And to return to the same unconditioned state, you have to ascend in the same order, relinquishing the accretions one by one.

449. ‘BEING’ AND ‘VĒDĀNTA’ – HOW ARE THEY RELATED? (146)

‘Being’, which is by nature unmanifested, seems to manifest itself as a mental being in the mind’s realm and lower down as a physical being in the gross realm.

This ‘being’ is Truth itself, but is not experienced as such by all. It is also difficult to conceive of. The world can easily be reduced to thoughts, but the further disposal of thoughts is not so easy.

It is for this that the help of ‘Vēdānta’ is sought. Vēdānta does its task most wonderfully, by proving that there never was a thought in existence, and that all that ever existed was pure Consciousness, Ātmā alone.

7th August 1952

450. WHAT IS THE EASIEST APPROACH TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH? (147)

In order that the understanding may be natural and abiding, it has to be based upon your fundamental experiences. For this, you have to begin by examining your ordinary experiences as a layman, gradually eliminating from them all extraneous elements, leaving only Truth behind.

This method alone takes you to the Truth, without any effort or doubt.

For example, examine what happens during your most ordinary perceptions, thoughts or feelings; and prove that in every case it is your own Ātmā, the Self, that is experienced as Consciousness or Peace.

451. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘I’ AND ‘YOU’? (148)

In the ‘you’, the ‘I’ is always present. But in the ‘I’, the ‘you’ is not present.

452. IS THERE RENUNCIATION IN VICĀRA-MĀRGA? (149)

Renunciation, like everything else, has two aspects: its form and its essence. Paths like those of karma, devotion, sannyāsa, yōga etc. emphasize both these aspects, sometimes the form even more than the essence.

But for those who follow the path of jnyāna or vicāra-mārga, the essence of renunciation alone is emphasized and the form practically ignored. So much so that an acquaintance of a modern Sage who adopted the direct path for instruction once told him that he wished to accept the path chalked out by him, since it called for no kind of renunciation at any stage of one’s life. Because to all appearance the Sage was leading an ideal domestic life.

But to this the Sage replied: ‘Well my friend, you are sorely mistaken. It is not the physical renunciation that really counts. If it did, every destitute beggar would be a sannyāsin. He can claim to have renounced much and to possess little.

‘But it is that preparedness to renounce everything you possess including your own life – if it is necessary for the attainment of the Truth – that really matters. You can never reach that Ultimate if there is any one little thing in the world which you are not prepared to renounce, in order to reach the Ultimate. That preparedness to renounce everything makes one a real sannyāsin.

Any amount of physical renunciation, without that complete preparedness to renounce everything, makes you only a prisoner in your own self-made mental fetters. You are not much better than a prisoner behind iron bars.

Therefore the ideal of life for one who takes to vicāra-mārga should be inwardly to be a perfect sannyāsin and outwardly to live like a ‘man of the world’.

The Sage has renounced his life completely, but has kindly permitted life to cling to Truth for the time being, to be dismissed without notice whenever he chooses. The Sage is always *in* the world but not *of* it.

8th August 1952

453. WHAT IS RASA? (150)

Rasa is that something which descends into the heart and is experienced by the heart.

[‘Rasa’ means ‘sap’ or ‘juice’ and hence it indicates the essence or the essential savour of a feeling or an experience.]

454. WHY AM I ASKED TO SEE THE GURU BEHIND ME FIRST (*Ātma-nirvṛiti*, 18.5)? (151)

You are asked first to try to visualize Me behind you, since that centre is not surrounded by any obstacles.

In front of you, you have a forest of worldly objects with which you are so familiar that you believe they have independent existence and reality. In their midst, you will hardly be able to recognize Me, the witness.

In the realm of thoughts and feelings also, it is equally difficult to recognize Me.

But if you succeed in directing your attention to Me behind the mind, you will meet with no obstacles there, and you will be forced to see Me alone. Facing Me, you will transcend all thoughts of body and mind and also the sense of inside and outside.

Then you will recognize that ‘I’ am in you as yourself, the Ātmā.

Water is always invisible. So is everything. But its existence is never denied.

455. HOW TO VIEW THE EXPRESSION? (152)

Reality, as it is, is unexpressed and imperceptible. Where expressed, it becomes perceptible to the senses or mind. But then the Reality is obscured to that extent. Therefore, do not desire any particular kind of expression, however sātत्वic.

Expression is always transient or time limited, and the expression is invariably misunderstood to be the Reality itself. Your goal, however, is always permanent peace or Happiness. And so you must desire the Reality itself, which is always in everything, as the expressed.

456. HOW CAN THE WITNESS OF JĪVA AND THE WITNESS OF ĪSHVARA BE ONE?
(153)

The shāstras labour hard, to prove the identity of these two witnesses. But according to our approach, it is comparatively easy to prove.

The only difference between jīva and Īshvara lies in the scope and limitation of each. Each is said to be the witness of its own objects or perceptions. Now, examining the objects of each, we find nothing which is an object of Īshvara alone, and which cannot also be an object of jīva. Thus, their objects being identical, the witnesses alone cannot be different.

Moreover, according to the higher shāstras, Īshvara is but the highest manifestation of the human mind, and is not different from jīva in essence. Or in other words, Īshvara is but an object of jīva. Therefore, their witnesses also cannot be different.

9th August 1952

457. WHY DOES A JNYĀNIN SOMETIMES TRY TO HELP OTHERS IN DISTRESS? (154)

The Jnyānin knows well that the source of all their distress is the fear of death, and he knows that death is a misnomer. So he tries to help them to continue to live in the illusion for a time, only long enough to make them understand that they can never die.

458. WHAT IS THE IDEAL FORM OF CHARITY? (155)

It should be spontaneous, unconditional and prompted from beyond the realm of the mind. It should be selfless.

If, after doing any charity, you continue to pride yourself over it or even think about it, you are really degrading yourself to that extent. If you continue to criticize the way in which the amount was utilized, it means that you have not actually parted with the ownership of the money.

A conditional charity means that you have engaged the recipient as a servant, to do something for you in your absence according to your instructions, expressed or implied.

Therefore, the best way to do charity would be to do it and forget all about it immediately.

459. WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF WORSHIP? (156)

Worship of God ensures pleasures of heaven (dṛiṣṭa-phala-sādhya).

Worship of the Guru ensures permanent Happiness – including the former, if desired (dṛiṣṭādṛiṣṭa-phala-sādhya).

11th August 1952

460. WHAT DO I LOVE? (157)

When love is directed to personal qualities, that love is worldly. When it is directed to the life principle, it becomes sublime. When that life principle is examined, it will be found to be nothing other than pure Consciousness (the Ātmā). Then love is transformed into the absolute Reality.

Let us examine this a little more closely. You say you love a man. Who is the man you suppose you love? Is it his body? No. Because when he dies, you fear even to go near his dead body. Thus you see that your love was really directed to the life principle which was abiding in that body. When that life is examined, it is found to be nothing other than pure Consciousness, which is only one.

Man is incapable of loving anything other than that Consciousness, the Ātmā.

461. HOW IS WAKING STATE A DREAM? (158)

By a ‘dream’ we mean something which is not real. What is Reality? That which does not disappear at any time.

Now, what is there in the waking state that does not disappear? Nothing. Therefore, everything objective, connected with the waking state, is unreal.

But what we have just called the unreal appears all the while. Yes. When the unreal appears as real we call it a dream. Therefore, the waking state is all a dream.

But there is one thing that does not disappear in any state – pure Consciousness, the Ātmā.

462. KNOWLEDGE CANNOT BE A FUNCTION. WHY? (159)

Because nothing can exist by its side to form its object. Therefore, to say that ‘I know’ or ‘I know it’ are both wrong. Functioning starts only with the inception of mind and the consequent subject-object relationship.

The sense organs and mind can function only by the consciousness part existing in them.

13th August 1952

463. WHAT DOES THE GURU GIVE ME? (160)

Answer: ‘The correct perspective.’

The world and its objects, when viewed through the perspective bestowed by the Guru, appear transformed into that ultimate Reality, just as the brackish and poisonous waters of the ocean are transformed into pure water when they pass through the heat of the sun above.

464. WHAT IS THE SAHAJA STATE? (161)

A Jnyānin, by experiencing the ultimate Happiness, knows that he experiences nothing new and that the limitation he used to put upon Happiness before realization was an illusion. Thus he knows that what one experiences as limited happiness, apparently ensuing from objects, is in fact that unlimited ultimate Happiness itself.

So even if a Sage appears to be leading a normal life as before, he does not see the world as the onlookers see it. Even when the others think that he is hunting after objects of pleasure, he from his own stand is always enjoying his *svarūpānanda*.

A Sage in the sahaja state does not bother himself – as far as he is concerned – with explaining the objective world or its activities. Death for him has taken place long ago, at the moment of his first realizing the Truth.. The subsequent stoppage of prāṇa

long after and the consequent paralysis of the body, which we usually call death, does not denote the moment of the death of his ego.

The ultimate ideal is not '*not* to see' when objects appear, but to be deeply convinced that the Reality is far beyond both seeing and not-seeing by the senses. You only witness these perceptions, and the perceptions in no way affect you.

Though the eye shows the palace on the backdrop (curtain) on the stage most realistically to you, the intellect from behind tells you it is not real, and you readily accept that correction. So also, though sense organs show the objects to be real, the 'I'-principle – standing behind the sense organs – corrects them and tells you it is all illusion. The Sage readily accepts this position and lets the body and mind continue to function as before, just as he who sees the curtain continues to see the palace on the curtain as before, but does not allow himself to be carried away by the eye's verdict.

You cannot help seeing if you look through the eyes. The only means of avoiding seeing is to cease looking through the eyes. But the Sage does not want to perform that vain labour. He is content with resting in the ultimate Truth, whatever may be the activity the mind and body are engaged in.

We talk ignorantly of the activities of the Sage. It is a clear contradiction in terms. The Sage is that principle transcending both activity and inactivity. So the Sage cannot take to any activity as the Sage; and that which is engaged in any activity is not the Sage. In short, that which is visible to our sense organs or mind is not the Sage. The Sage is invisible and the background of all perceptions – the ultimate Reality. We can in no way reconcile the Sage and the activity we so ignorantly attribute to him.

You say you went to Shāstāmangalam in the bus. Except boarding and alighting from the bus you did not perform any other activity. All motion belonged to the bus and yet you say you went, attributing the motion of the bus to yourself who was only a silent witness to the activity of the bus. Still, you claim to have gone to Shāstāmangalam. This is the play of ignorance. The Sage does not claim the activity of anything else for himself. He always gives the devil his due and never identifies himself with the body, senses or mind.

Now applying the illustration of the bus subjectively, we find that the bus represents the objective group of the body, senses and generic mind, and 'you' in the bus stand for the real 'I'-principle. Therefore, even when the Sage (the real 'I'-principle) has withdrawn all identification from the objective group, that group is left intact to function as accurately and intelligently as before, under the guidance of the very same 'ignorance' which was guiding it before. What you call 'intelligence' is based upon pure ignorance, which is as much dead matter as the body, from the standpoint of the Reality.

14th August 1952

465. NOBODY DESIRES PURE HAPPINESS. WHY? (162)

Desire is a function of the mind, and pure Happiness is on a level far beyond the mind. Therefore the mind can never conceive or desire pure Happiness. What the mind desires is the one last manifestation just before extinction or merging itself into Happiness.

Take for example the desire for the vision of your 'iṣṭa-dēva', which usually gives you immense pleasure. Exactly as the vision gives you pleasure, the disappearance of

the vision gives you pain; and this is inevitable, as the devotee knows from experience only too well. Thus, the condition just after the vision is dark and dismal, compared to the hopeful, exciting and pleasant condition just preceding it. Therefore, mindful of these two opposite conditions before and after the vision, the devotee naturally longs to prolong the pleasure as much as possible, knowing that the gloom after the vision is inevitable, and that the duration of the vision itself, though pleasant, is not under his control. So his desire for the pleasant feelings, experienced before the culmination of the vision, is greater than his desire for the vision itself, which he takes only as a logical corollary.

Moreover, the mind does not find any glamour in the ultimate Peace, from the standpoint of the mind itself. When you are hungry, what the mind really wants is the disappearance of the hunger, which can only be in Peace. The mind, being incapable of conceiving this Peace, turns to the objective food which is capable of removing the physical hunger. Thus the mind desires always only that preliminary pleasure.

Nobody except the Sage can desire that ultimate Happiness, since all the rest are in the realm of the mind. But the Sage does not desire even that, since he knows he is that already.

466. EVEN ADVAITA HAS ITS PLACE. (163)

bhāvā 'dvaitam sadā kuryāt
kriyā 'dvaitam na karhi cit .
advaitam triṣu lōkēṣu
*nā 'dvaitam guruṇāsaha
*nā 'dvaitam guru sannidhau ..

(* marks alternative versions of the fourth line.)

Shrī Shankara, Tattvopadesha, 87

1st line: bhāvā 'dvaitam sadā kuryāt

You may contemplate deeply on the non-duality when you are not engaged in any other activity.

2nd line: kriyā 'dvaitam na karhi cit

But in your activities there can never be any advaita.

3rd line: advaitam triṣu lōkēṣu

The three worlds can easily be reduced to advaita.

4th line: nā 'dvaitam guruṇāsaha

In the physical presence of one's own Guru, even a Jnyānin feels himself a child before the Absolute. That is the only altar before which an advaitin always falls bowing unconditionally. Advaita is only a pointer to the Guru. You do not reach advaita completely until you reach the egoless state. Never even think that you are one with the Guru. It will never take you to the Ultimate. On the contrary that thought will only drown you.

Advaita points only to the Ultimate.

draṣṭra-darśana-dṛśyēṣu pratyēkaṁ bōdha-mātratā
sāras tēna, tad anyatvaṁ nāsti kiñ cit kha-puṣpavat

[The see-er, seeing and the seen –
of these, each is pure consciousness.
With that, reality is found.
Whatever is not that alone
is like a flower in the sky;
it is not really there at all.]

Shrī Shankara

It means: Try always to spot out the Reality in the world. Examine the three parts of tripuṭī separately, and see the Reality in each.

The moment you admit and accept advaita, all illustrations from the word become inapplicable to it and all questions cease. Because, viewed from the stand of advaita, nothing else exists.

15th August 1952

467. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY OF APPROACHING A PROBLEM FOR AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION? (164)

It is best to take your stand, at least in idea, in the deep sleep state and see if the problem arises there. No, the problem does not appear there.

Therefore, all problems are the products of body, senses and mind, and disappear with them. They do not concern you at all.

16th August 1952

468. KNOWLEDGE KNOWS ONLY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE EXPERIENCES ONLY EXPERIENCE. HOW? (165)

Your experience alone is accepted as a proof for the existence of anything.

Suppose you see an object. What is your immediate experience? You see and you *can* see only form. But form and seeing can never be outside. They are in the mind itself. Here, a subtle sense organ and a subtle form are created in the mind, and a subtle perception takes place.

This again is not independent. It is established by the knowledge beyond the mind. Beyond the mind, there being neither object nor activity, you can only say knowledge knows knowledge. Similarly, experience experiences experience. Both these statements mean that you are all alone, shining in your own glory, even during so-called perceptions, thoughts and feelings.

I allow myself to be conditioned by time and space, and then perceive the object with the gross instrument of some sense organ. The next moment, I give up the space element, allow myself to be conditioned by time alone, and I perceive only subtle forms with subtle sense organs in the mind. The next moment, I give up the time limitation also and stand alone; and then I am experience or knowledge itself.

This experience or knowledge alone was present in the previous, apparently limited perceptions as well.

469. TIME AND SPACE ARE NOT AND SO THE WORLD IS NOT. (Another approach, assuming time to exist) (166)

Time: Does it exist inside or outside you?

If it is outside, your thoughts and feelings – which are all inside – cannot be affected or conditioned by time, and further, time must be perceptible to the sense organs. This is not so. Therefore time must necessarily be inside the mind.

Next examining in the same manner if time exists in the mind, it is not perceived by the mind either. So we find it is neither there but further inside you.

Beyond the mind there is nothing but the ‘I’-principle, and time cannot be there. Therefore time as time is not; and if it exists, it is Ātmā itself.

Space: Do you perceive space? If so, with what organ? If you say ‘with the eye organ’, it can perceive only form. Space is not form.

So space is never perceived outside; but is inside, just like time. Therefore space is also not; and if it exists, it is Ātmā itself.

470. DO YOU SEE MAN? (167)

You will be tempted to say yes. If so, please define man, without reference to any of his attributes.

You find it is impossible to define man, or any other thing in its generic sense. A thing, in its generic sense, is the *sat* or Ātmā itself. It can never be perceived.

To make it perceivable, you superimpose name and form upon this ‘*sat*’ and say you see the thing. But you see only the superimpositions; and never the thing, which is pure *sat* and not perceivable.

Therefore, nothing is ever seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelt. The ‘*it*’ is the end of all senses, or that permanent background into which all senses merge. In Sanskrit, it is called in reference to each sense by different names, literally meaning the end of each sense perception (namely *nādānta*, *rūpānta*, *gandhānta*, *sparshānta* and *rasānta*), each being significant of its source.

Thus, the generic is the only one that is the *sat* or *dharmi*. You do not perceive the generic and do not perceive anything but the generic. *Dharmi* is the Reality and *dharmas* all come and go. Thus, that which is the predicate in all worldly transactions is proved to be the real and only subject of everything.

This shows how Vēdānta or a vēdāntin is really a spiritual atom bomb; and it is no wonder that intellectuals tremble to approach it, for fear of blundering into the Right. You are the only noumenon, everything else – from intellect down to the body – being the phenomenon.

471. BEAUTY (168)

Beauty is Truth itself and that is yourself. Every object as object is uncouth and ugly, being opposed to and separate from yourself, the Ātmā. But sometimes you project your own self upon some particular object and call it beautiful, however uncouth it otherwise is.

You can never superimpose anything upon nature, since that superimposition also forms part of that nature itself.

17th August 1952

472. HOW ARE DREAM AND WAKING STATES RELATED? (169)

The lower *shāstras* attribute greater reality to the waking state, on the ground that unlike the dream state, it repeats itself. This statement is made in the waking state, from a stand clearly partial to that state.

Examining these two states impartially, we find that what we now call the dream state was a pure waking state when experienced, according to the so-called dream subject who alone experienced that state.

So there was no dream state in fact, but only another waking state, with nothing objective in common with the former waking state.

18th August 1952

473. WHY DID SHANKARA NOT EXPOUND ADVAITA IN THE DIRECT METHOD? (170)

The *shāstras*, in the days of Shankara, had such a strong hold upon the people that no other method of approach, however direct, could attract or captivate their imagination. Therefore Shri Shankara had, by force of circumstances, to adopt the laborious method of expounding the advaitic Truth through the *shāstraic* or traditional method.

But now, centuries after Shankara, people's blind faith in the *shāstras* has disappeared and they are obliged to rely upon their reason alone. The present conditions are best suited for the adoption of the direct perception method, and the best use is made of this opportunity here and now.

474. WHAT ARE THE PATHS TO REALIZATION? (171)

According to the traditional method, they are mainly *bhakti*, *yōga* and *jnyāna*. Each of these paths, though dominated by one particular aspect and approach, happily has something of the other two also in it.

Take for example, the *rāja-yōga* path. Let us analyse its composition. Why does one take to this laborious practice? Evidently for the pleasure and powers one expects out of it. This desire for Happiness is the function of the heart, and is nothing but *bhakti* for your real nature of Happiness. The discriminative faculty and the reasoning aspect, much emphasized in the course of this path, is but the *jnyāna* aspect. And the active contemplation and other exercises form the preponderating *yōgic* element. Thus all the three paths have their proper place in *rāja-yōga*.

It is the same with the other two paths also. Therefore none of these paths is exclusive or watertight.

475. WHAT DOES 'FORMAL' (AUPACĀRIKA) MEAN? (172)

Formal means not to be taken as literally correct. To be taken as a matter of concession only. Intended to serve a particular purpose alone, and that with the best of intentions.

For example, each path to the Truth is individually described as the most important in the particular *shāstra* which deals with it. This fallacy is perceived only when looked at from the phenomenal. But, on reaching the Ultimate, even the paths become illusions and the apparent fallacies also disappear.

19th August 1952

Every act, perception, thought, feeling, conduct etc. of yours proclaims to the world that you are the Reality itself.

476. HOW DO THE ACTIVITIES OF OUR ORGANS CONSTITUTE PŪJA TO THE REAL SELF? (173)

Your organs in their functions seek Happiness alone. It has been clearly shown that your real nature is Happiness. So each organ is really seeking you.

How do its functions constitute a pūja? Each activity of the organs is independent in itself and different from every other activity. So also are the different actions in the pūja to the idol. But they derive their common relationship from the fact that they are all directed to the common goal, the idol.

Similarly, the activities of the organs are also all directed to you, the real Happiness; and thus their activities become pūja done to you.

After realizing the Truth, each sense organ appears to function, but really remains functionless. Thus each sense organ virtually becomes a jīvan-mukta.

477. A DISCIPLE ASKED: HOW TO ACQUIRE THE LOVE OF PADMAPĀDA FOR THE GURU? (174)

Answer: 'By emptying your mind.'

Then how to empty the mind? Mind by itself does not want any thought. You can be said to have emptied the mind if you can so train your mind that only such thoughts as you require or permit come to you, or in other words when any thought or feeling comes to you only at your bidding. This can only be achieved by real *prēma* [love].

Reality alone has the right to come in unbidden; because that is the subject and the Reality. Thoughts and feelings sometimes come in unbidden, because you attribute reality to them. Know that they are unreal, and from that moment they will never be able to intrude upon you unbidden.

478. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE APPROACHES TO THE TRUTH, UPANIṢHADIC AND DIRECT? (175)

All Upaniṣhadic methods try to eliminate you from the anātmā, and to establish you in the Ātmā.

But here, according to the direct method, you are shown that you can never get away either from your own shadow or from your reality. You are only asked to look deep into what you call anātmā, and see beyond the shadow of a doubt that it is nothing but Ātmā – the Reality.

479. CAN PHENOMENAL RELATIONSHIP BE AN OBSTACLE TO SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT? (176)

Yes, sometimes. Shrī Shuka was the son of Shrī Veda-vyāsa, the Sage, and Shrī Janaka was the disciple of Shrī Vyāsa and a Sage himself. Shrī Shuka heard the whole

Truth from Shrī Veda-vyāsa, but did not attain complete enlightenment. So Vyāsa one day sent Shuka to Shrī Janaka, the Sage king, for ultimate enlightenment, without disclosing the relationship between himself and Janaka. Shuka went to Janaka and after some trials and discussions attained ultimate enlightenment and satisfaction.

It was only then that he found that he had not yet known his father as he ought to have, because the phenomenal relationship of father and son prevented him from seeing Shrī Vyāsa as the Guru, the Absolute.

‘The very same mistake is found repeated here, even now.’

480. AN ENLIGHTENING INCIDENT OF THE GOPĪS AT THE BATHING GHAT, AND ITS EXPLANATION (177)

One day Shrī Shuka happened to pass by the ladies’ bathing Ghat in the Yamuna (a tributary of the Ganges) where the Gopīs were bathing naked. The ladies saw Shrī Shuka, but ignored him completely – considering him only as a child – and continued to enjoy their bath. But another day, Shrī Veda-vyāsa himself happened to pass by the same way. Now, on seeing him even from a distance, the ladies rushed for their clothes and covered their bodies. How could this change in their conduct be explained?

Answer: The Absolute has two aspects – the dynamic and the static. All activities in life belong to the dynamic aspect, and all things passive belong to the static aspect. For example renunciation, relaxation etc. are passive.

Shrī Shuka was an embodiment of the static aspect of life, and there was nothing of life’s activities visible in him. He was virtually dead to the world.

But Shrī Veda-vyāsa was a Sage who was the ultimate Reality itself, transcending both the static and the dynamic aspects. And in him, both these aspects were apparently alive.

The predominating aspects in the apparent life of these two great souls had their respective impact upon the ladies in the river, and at each different time they reacted accordingly. That is all.

481. HOW TO PRODUCE THE BEST RESULTS OF ACTION? (178)

If you lose yourself in any action, that action will be most successful, in the sense that it produces the best results. How to attain this self-forgetfulness?

Direct the mind to its source, the Absolute, leaving a simple samskāra that certain actions are to be performed. When the actions are thus left to themselves with the sense organs, and the lower reason is not available to guide them, some principle from within – evidently the higher reason – automatically takes the full responsibility of guiding the actions.

Thus under the supreme guidance of the all knowing vidyā-vṛitti, the actions happen to be fulfilled to a wonderful degree of perfection. But if ever the ego comes in, in any form anywhere in the course of the action, things go wrong lamentably.

The apparent life of every Sage, if closely observed, will provide numerous instances of the mysterious fulfilment of phenomenal activities in all perfection, without an effort on his own part and without his claiming the least credit for it.

20th August 1952

482. WHERE IS THE WORLD FROM THE STANDPOINT OF EXPERIENCE? (179)

Experience alone is the proof of the existence of everything. Therefore, what is present in experience alone can be real.

Experience, which is apparently inside, has nothing in it but knowledge and Happiness. The world is nowhere in the experience and so the world is non-existent.

Therefore, the experience is neither *of* the world nor *as* the world, since the world is non-existent.

483. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SEE A THING? (180)

When you say you see an object, you see only the dead part of the object. The Consciousness part, which alone is live, can never be seen.

If you say that the sense organ goes out of its centre to the object outside, in order to cognize it, the sense organ must necessarily get hurt if any injury occurs to the object, when the sense organ is contacting it. But it never happens. Therefore, seeing is all inside and it proves nothing outside.

484. SOME DEFINITIONS (181)

Yōga-kṣhēma literally means the phenomenal as well as the spiritual needs of the individual.

Yōga (from another perspective) means directing your energies to acquire something which you are not already in possession of.

Kṣhēma means maintaining in the right manner that which you thus acquire.

Duty always depends upon your desires and upon what you want objectively. For example, a student and a teacher have different duties.

485. WHAT IS SVADHARMA AND WHY? (182)

The life to which you have fitted yourself, by birth and inheritance, is the most natural and effortless one, so far as you are concerned. To continue in the same way of life, you require only a little extra energy. Therefore much energy is left to you which can be utilized for spiritual search, and you reach the goal sooner.

But if you change your own way of life, you will consume a lot of energy in establishing yourself in the new sphere, and your spiritual progress naturally suffers to that extent. Moreover, your activities in the phenomenal walk of life are of no avail in your spiritual progress, since the former is outward-going and the latter inward-going.

Therefore the Ācāryas of old have clearly warned you against any change of svadharma, since it entails a huge waste of precious energy and only increases the distance to your spiritual goal. Your station in life and way of life, whatever they be, are best suited for you to rise in life, worldly as well as spiritual.

Hence we see in vēdic lore occasional instances of great Sages continuing their svadharma even as butchers, priests etc. (e.g. Shrī Vyādha and Shrī Vasiṣṭha).

21st August 1952

486. 'ONE IN THE ONE IS NOT ONE.' HOW? (183)

The noumenon and the phenomenon, or the one and the many, are the two entities found in the apparent universe. The 'one' is not dependent upon the 'many', nor opposed to it. It is easy to prove that the one is in the many; but the many can never be in the one.

Therefore, if you succeed in taking anybody to the unique or the one, reaching there he finds that the oneness by itself does not exist there, but that it immediately becomes transformed into the Ultimate.

An individual who has reached the Ultimate no longer remains an individual.

487. WHAT IS ARUNDHATI-NYĀYA (POINTER)? (184)

Arundhatī is a very dim and tiny star, not easily noticed, but important in the study of astronomy. Therefore it is the usual practice of teachers in astronomy to show the student first some visible object like a tree or a tower in the direction of that star, next some bright cluster of stars close to the Arundhatī and then the glimmering Arundhatī itself. Thus, the first two targets were only pointers to the actual goal.

Similarly, for those following the spiritual path, everything – from the witness down to the gross body – are all but upādhis or pointers to the Ultimate.

488. WHAT IS EXPANSION THROUGH LOVE? (185)

This path usually starts with devotion to the personal God. In this path, the practices as well as the limited enjoyments of happiness all take place in the subtle sphere. But the life and activities of the devotee himself take place in the physical sphere. The latter appears more real and concrete from the point of view of the devotee at that level. His identification with anything else in the mental sphere can never be as strong as his identification with his gross body and senses.

But if the devotee persists strenuously, his love expands to the universal, and he himself becomes Īshvara, in that sense. As Īshvara, there is nothing outside him and thus he transcends bondage and pain. Thus it is possible to teach the Ultimate through the path of expansion of love.

But in practice, it is so full of pitfalls – and the chances of getting stranded at every little turn are so great – that very few who take to that path reach the right Ultimate. The devotee is very often carried away by the glamour of the expression of love, and he loses sight of the real background, the expressionless.

The exuberance of the expression of joy, in the course of this path, is more a hindrance than a help to the devotee's progress, unless he is being guided by a Kāraṇa-guru. This difficulty, in rising beyond the name and form, was clearly experienced at a stage in the spiritual lives of Shrī Caitanya, Shrī Rāmakṛiṣṇa, etc.

God, as he is ordinarily conceived by man, is the highest manifestation of the human mind.

489. GOD IN HIS ESSENCE IS THE RIGHT ABSOLUTE (186)

God is the most generic aspect of everything in this universe. There being nothing beside him, either gross or subtle, there is no duality in God. Just as his body is generic, his thoughts, feelings etc. are also generic. He is incapable of taking a particular thought or feeling. So the grossness and subtlety vanish altogether.

Thus reaching the most generic in all aspects, he stands as the right Absolute itself.

490. WHAT IS MY SĀDHANA AFTER TATTVĪPADEŚHA? (187)

The only real sādhanā for a jnyāna sādhanā is to try not to forget his real nature, whenever he is not occupied with activities which are necessary for his life in the world.

491. IS THE 'I'-THOUGHT THEORETICAL? (188)

The thought of 'I' some say is theoretical. In that case, it will have to be admitted that you are yourself a theory, which I believe you can never admit.

Therefore, the 'I' thought is more practical than all apparently practical things.

23rd August 1952

492. WHAT IS THE WITNESS? (189)

The witness is that which is changeless – the 'I' – amongst changes.

Changes cannot appear without the changeless. But the changeless exists independent of all changes.

Changes can take place only in the changeless. But changes when examined are found to be nothing but the changeless.

All changes are in the changeless. But the changeless itself never changes.

493. WHAT IS THE BEST TIME FOR MEDITATION? (190)

It is at waking, but before becoming fully awake, so that the meditation might be the first activity on coming out of the Reality shining between the two states.

494. HOW TO TUNE MY SĀDHANA? (191)

Nature works normally and regularly. Your sādhanā should never be pitched against or contrary to the current of nature, but should always be in harmony with its course, and thus ultimately transcend nature. Otherwise, much energy will have to be wasted in counteracting the forces of nature.

495. WHAT IS LUNACY? (192)

It is different according to the ignorant man and the vēdāntin.

An ignorant man calls a vēdāntin a lunatic and a vēdāntin takes the ignorant man to be the same. But the vēdāntin can see the position of the ignorant man and also know his own. So he rightly sympathizes with the plight of the ignorant man.

But the ignorant man knows only his own position and that with the basic error of which he is a helpless victim. He is incapable of even dreaming of the position of the vēdāntin, and therefore his thoughts about the vēdāntin are quite meaningless.

The vēdāntin's so called lunacy is the real Truth and the greatest boon to this world.

496. HOW IS THERE ONLY ONE THING? (193)

One thing cannot prove anything other than that. This is an established fact and is true in all spheres.

Therefore, looking objectively, there is one thing and that is the Reality. Next, looking subjectively, we find that the 'I'-principle is the only thing that exists and that 'I' requires no proof either.

The objective cannot exist independent of this 'I', and therefore the 'I'-principle is the only ultimate Reality.

497. HOW WAS ADVAITA DISCOVERED? (194)

The following Upaniṣhadic verse describes it:

parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayaṁ-bhūs
tasmāt parān paśyati nā 'ntarātman .
kaścīd dhīraḥ pratyag-ātmānam aikṣad
āvṛtta-cakṣur amṛtatvam icchan ..

Kaṭha Upaniṣhad, 4.1

Dhīra means bold and he who dares to direct his mind inward to the Self. The meaning of the verse is as follows:

Line 1: The created sense organs are outward going.

Line 2: So your mind and senses become extroverted, and not directed to the inner Ātmā.

Lines 3 and 4: But one great soul directed his mind inward, desiring to reach immortality as a result thereof. Thus he visualized Ātmā, the inmost principle.

498. WHAT IS SAMSKĀRA? (195)

It is the impress left in the mind by past thoughts, feelings, perceptions and doings, which are supposed to influence one's subsequent activities.

499. WHAT IS MEANT BY 'I AM I-ING'? (196)

The ignorant man sees only changes in this world, and is ignorant of the changeless background behind all changes.

So the Ācārya first tries to show the changeless 'I' as distinct and separate from the changing body, senses and mind.

Then the disciple is asked to take his stand in that 'I'-principle, and to look from there at the changing world. Immediately, the changes appear an illusion; and he understands that the changes are nothing but expressions of the changeless 'I'. And that is the changeless itself.

So, when I say the world is shining, it is nothing but myself expressing or shining. Or in other words, 'I am I-ing.' Because shining is not a function, but my real nature.

26th August 1952

500. HOW CAN OBSTACLES BE CONVERTED INTO HELPS TO REACH THE ULTIMATE? (197)

Consciousness goes into the make of sense perceptions, and sense perception goes into the make of objects. Of these, Consciousness alone stands by itself. Therefore, an object is Consciousness alone. Consciousness is the essence of both perceptions and objects. It has already been proved that thoughts and feelings are nothing but Consciousness or Peace.

The only obstacles usually encountered on the spiritual path are thoughts, feelings, perceptions and objects. They become obstacles only when the emphasis is placed on the object side or material part of it and the subject ignored.

But when you begin to emphasize the subject part, which has been proved to be pure Consciousness, the objects thenceforward become means or helps to direct your attention to the Truth.

For example, if any of these so called obstacles were not there, how could you conceive of the witness and rise to the Ultimate? When there is an object, Consciousness is there to light it up. This most important part played by Consciousness is very often not noticed at all. Emphasize also that vital part of Consciousness in all your activities, and you will be surprised to find them all turned into means or helps pointing to your real Self, the 'I'-principle.

Thereafter, even the worst pain shows the real 'I'. When you tell a doctor that you have a particular pain anywhere in your body, it is not as the sufferer that you say so; because the sufferer can only suffer and cannot say. It is the knower alone that can say anything about the pain suffered. Thus the pain shows you that you are ultimately the knower, who is the real subject.

Therefore the world only helps you to know yourself. Evidently, the world was created in order to prove you.

30th August 1952

501. WHAT ARE THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN? (198)

By your merely knowing a thing, the thing does not undergo any change. You admit it was first unknown and that it was known only subsequently. By saying it is known, what you actually do is only this.

Your mind superimposes some attributes upon the original unknown. You know only the attributes thus superimposed. The unknown still remains as the background of the attributes, and remains still unknown. Thus looking objectively, we find that the thing which was the Reality was beyond both the known and the unknown, standing as the changeless background of both of them.

Now looking subjectively, you find that between two thoughts you remain alone in your own glory, and it is that Reality alone that expresses itself in your thoughts, feelings and perceptions.

So, subjectively as well as objectively, you know only the Reality. Or in other words, you can never say you have known it or that you have not known it. The real subject and object were both beyond the known and the unknown.

Thus the subjective and objective Reality is one. Before the object, there was only an indefinable 'it'. It is from that that the subject and object came into play. When it is seen that diversity springs from the indefinable one, no diversity remains.

Diversity springs from Me, and therefore it cannot affect Me.

502. HOW DOES GOD RESPOND? (199)

From the level of the phenomenal, assuming that God is all powerful, it may be asked why did he not retaliate against the deliberate destruction by Tippu of the Hindu temples which were supposed to be the citadels of God.

Answer: It was only the citadel and not God himself that was destroyed. Moreover God was in the destroyer as well. So God must have chosen to raise the destroyer by love and forbearance, intending also that we should take that lesson from him, and not be carried away by the lower passion of the ordinary man.

503. OFFERINGS TO A PERSONAL GOD AS DIRECTED BY A KĀRYA-GURU. (200)

Every time you do it, you are really sacrificing a small part of your ego also along with the offering. But you should take care not to inflate the ego at the same time, by claiming that you have made such an offering or deed or self-sacrifice. Gradually, the ego gets much attenuated. At last your ego may disappear completely and you may become one with God, leaving nothing to be desired or offered.

But towards the later stages, the ego becomes so subtle and imperceptible that you will find it extremely difficult to deal with it. Your position with regard to the ego becomes quite vague and uncertain.

The *strange lady* who was attending upon the mother of Shrī Shankara was nothing but personified 'vidyā-vṛitti' itself. Vidyā-vṛitti also vanishes or is transformed into the Truth when the Ultimate shines. This was why the lady was in a desperate hurry to disappear before Shrī Shankara – the Sage, the ultimate Truth – appeared.

In the expression '*you remember*', there is a certain amount of effort involved. But when you say you are *remembering*, it means that you are in a state of remembering, and there is no effort at all in it.

31st August 1952

504. HOW TO TAKE A DEEP THOUGHT? (201)

We are often asked to take a deep thought about certain spiritual ideas. For this, a one-pointed attention is the first requisite. To gain such attention, a deep craving of the heart is necessary towards that end. This craving is created by incessantly taking that very thought. When this craving thus created descends deep into the realm of the heart, your thought is said to have gone deep.

505. WHAT IS FUNCTION? (Its meaning and usages) (202)

Function, according to the dictionary, means action plus an obligation. But in Vēdānta, function means only action.

When a participle is added to a verb of incomplete predication, it denotes a state as well as function. But so far as the verb in the present tense is concerned, only function is denoted.

1st September 1952

506. DOES ANY PATH LEAD ONE TO THE ULTIMATE? (203)

Yes. Any path leads one to the Ultimate, provided the initiation is given by a Kārana-guru (a Sage).

According to the Sage, God is only another name given to the Ultimate, and denotes only that Reality through all the attributes heaped upon it. God is conceived as the Lord of all the universe and as such transcending the universe itself.

Devotion to God creates a spirit of self-surrender in the devotee. His ego is thus attenuated, little by little; until at last it is annihilated, leaving him alone. Transcending the ego, he becomes one with God. And being in God, he stands beyond the universe, as the ultimate Reality itself.

507. SIGNIFICANCE OF MARRIAGE (204)

The Brahmin system of marriage is the ideal Hindu marriage. It is consummated with the marriage mantra being uttered by the couple. It means: 'You shall not part, even after death.' That principle which persists even after death can be nothing other than 'Ātmā', which is only one. The man and wife are only symbols or aspirants, and the marriage is conceived of as an initiation of the couple into that ultimate Truth, the Ātmā, as suggested by that marriage mantra.

In married life they cultivate the art of selfless love, each sacrificing the interest of the lower self for the sake of the partner. Ultimately, they come to understand that each of them does not love the other for the sake of the other, but for the sake of the self in the other – the self which is indivisible and one.

Thus they are enabled to reach the ultimate Truth by following the ideal married life, of course after initiation by a Kārana-guru, without the need of any other sād-hana.

This is the secret of the invincible powers acquired and used with restraint by the celebrated pati-vratās of the vēdic age, like Anasūyā, Pāncālī and so on.

508. PERCEPTION NEVER PROVES AN OBJECT. (205)

All objects point to 'you', the pure Consciousness.

Consciousness never proves the existence of any object.

The serpent is perceived in the rope, and the serpent alone is perceived. But the serpent is not there. Therefore perception does not prove an object.

509. STAGES OF PROGRESS OF BHAKTAS, ACCORDING TO THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ
(206)

catur-vidhā bhajantē mām janāḥ sukr̥tinō 'rjuna .
ārtō jijñāsur arthā-'rthī jñānī ca bharata-'rṣabha ..

[Of those who rightly worship Me,
there are four kinds: first those who aim
for benefits to be obtained,
then those who further wish to know,
those who seek truth beyond all else,
and those who truly come to know.]

Bhagavad-gītā, 7.16

Arthā-'rthi is the lowest type, desiring worldly pleasures and benefits alone.

Thus enjoying the God's grace in the form of worldly pleasures for a considerable time, he begins to think of the almightiness and kindness and other supreme qualities of the Lord; and naturally a longing takes possession of him to come nearer to God and ultimately to know Him. In this manner, he becomes a *jijñāsu* – an earnest aspirant.

This desire in him gradually becomes deeper and he begins to ignore and sacrifice the interests of his lower self more and more, until at last he becomes ready to sacrifice even his life for the attainment of his goal. Thus he becomes an *ārta*, crying from the depth of his heart for the attainment of the Reality.

Certainly at this stage, if not earlier, he gets the privilege of coming into contact with a Sage (Kāraṇa-guru) and is initiated into the ultimate Truth. Gradually, he becomes established in the Truth and becomes a *jnyānin*.

Thus the four stages are passed in regular order, in the above manner.

2nd September 1952

510. THE SAGE OR A JĪVAN-MUKTA (207)

The Sage or a jīvan-mukta is nothing but the ultimate Reality itself, and can never be described by words.

Still, to enable the layman to get a glimpse of it, something could be said vaguely pointing to it. To the ordinary man, the Sage appears to be a *jīva* like himself. But from the standpoint of the Sage (assuming that there is such an imaginary standpoint), he is nothing but Ātmā, the Reality – and so a *mukta*. Thus the term '*jīvan-mukta*' is a misnomer, being the imaginary product of two opposing perspectives which can never be reconciled.

It can be further clarified. To the aspirant, who is a jīva, the world alone is real and all else, including even Ātmā, is unreal. But to the Sage, Ātmā alone is real and the world is unreal. Therefore, there is nothing in common between the two.

So left to himself the aspirant is helpless, since it is impossible for him to contact the Sage and thus rise to the Absolute. There is no bridge between the world and the Reality. Therefore, out of divine grace – if you may say so – the Sage comes down as the Guru, to bridge this gulf and to lift the disciple from the deep abyss.

Now let us examine the apparent activities of the ordinary man and the Sage. Both have three different perspectives, according to which they function in their lives.

1. The first and the lowest is the *perspective extroverted* (bāhya-dṛiṣṭi), attributing reality to the world of objects. This is usually found in little children and in quite ignorant people.
2. The *inner perspective* (antar-dṛiṣṭi), emphasizes the subtle activities of the mind. Here information is gained without the help of the sense organs. Everything gross becomes subtle here.
3. *Perspective introverted* (antar-mukha-dṛiṣṭi): Here all that is gross and subtle cease to exist, ending in knowledge.

The Sage and the ignorant man have all these three perspectives. But the Sage has them all knowingly, and knows that the last one alone is real. The worldly man knows only the first two perspectives consciously. Occasionally, he is thrown unknowingly into the third perspective, but he neither notes it nor emphasizes it. The Sage, from his own standpoint, has only one perspective; and that is the third one.

In the case of the intelligent adult who has both the first and the second, he is able to function when he wants through the first perspective also, without giving up his emphasis in the second. For example, on meeting a stranger, though he first notes only the qualities and subtle attributes of the man such as his profession, qualifications, purpose of visit etc., he can also on second thought (if he wants) note his form, complexion and other physical details which form the object of the first perspective.

Similarly the Sage, though established in the third perspective, can (if he is so inclined) come down to any of the other two perspectives and function through them, without losing his stand in the third.

This is how a Guru works, apparently coming down to the level of the disciple in the gross plane; and lifting him slowly from there, through the subtle plane, to the Ultimate. But the Guru himself always remains in the Absolute, allowing his body and mind to come down and lift the disciple from the phenomenal.

511. THE INCENTIVE TO WORK (208)

To the ordinary man, the fruit of action provides the incentive to work.

The fruit of action is desired simply because it is supposed to give you pleasure. And pleasure is liked for your own sake and not for the sake of pleasure. Your real nature has already been proved to be Peace and Happiness, which are the source of pleasure. Therefore, the ultimate incentive for any work is to touch your own nature of Happiness.

The ordinary man does not know this truth, and considers pleasure as something different from him. So he stands in need of some incentive to make the effort to reach it.

But the Sage knows well that this Peace or Happiness is his own nature and needs no incentive nor any effort to reach it, since it is already reached and established, so far as he is concerned.

For example, there is a saying about the life of mountaineers in Europe: 'Frugal by habit, temperance was no virtue for them'. It would seem a necessary virtue achieved after long practice, to those who were practising its opposite in their lives.

Similarly, an incentive for action is required only by those in the realm of duality. The Sage, having transcended duality, does not recognize actions to be real at all,

much less the incentives for them. If ever he appears to do anything, those actions come up spontaneously, and he never takes a thought about it afterwards.

512. EGO (209)

Every object is a pointer to the Ultimate. Even the much despised ego is a great help to the realization of the Truth. The presence of the ego in man, though in a distorted form, is infinitely better than the absence of it, as for example in a tree.

Through the ego, you perceive only objects at first. But the objects ultimately point to Consciousness. Therefore the first perception, though wrong, subsequently leads you on to the Reality; and the perception itself is made possible only by the presence of the ego.

Hence the ego is, in one sense, primarily responsible for the realization of the ultimate Truth.

513. THE GREAT WONDER (210)

ātmā 'mbu-rāśau nikhilō 'pi lōkō
magnō 'pi nā 'cāmati nē 'kṣatē ca
āścaryam ētan mṛga-tṛṣṇi-kāmē
bhāvāmbu-rāśau ramatē mṛṣai 'va

Ādishēṣha, Paramārtha-sāram

This verse means: Even though you always remain immersed in the sweet ocean of Ātmā, not only do you not taste a drop of it nor even turn to have a look at it, but you wander about running after the waters of the mirage to quench your ever-increasing thirst. No wonder you fail so miserably in your endeavour. What greater wonder can you expect in this world?

3rd September 1952

514. NOTHING CHANGES. (211)

Change and changelessness both pertain to objects, and are perceived by me from beyond both. The one can never be perceived from the position of the other.

The most common mistake committed by an ordinary man is that, on the disappearance of something, he immediately substitutes an imaginary appearance of something else called its opposite or its absence.

Now let us examine what we mean by 'change'. An object is a mixture of the background and some qualities. The qualities come and go. When some qualities disappear, others appear, the background remaining the same. Then we say the object changes, and on the surface the statement appears to be true.

Let us look deeper. The qualities merely change their place and are not destroyed. Because some passengers have alighted from and some others have boarded a train at a particular station, can you say the train has changed? No. And because some passengers have alighted from the train and boarded a ship, can you say that they have changed? No. Neither the train nor the passenger has changed.

Similarly, in the object composed of the background and the qualities, the qualities change their place. That is the only activity that takes place. Neither the background nor the qualities undergo any change. Therefore, in fact, nothing changes.

4th September 1952

515. PŪJA, MEMORY AND URGE (212)

Pūja: In the illustration of the pūja performed by the sense-organs, ‘Happiness’ is the image that receives the pūja.

It is the mind or avidyā that tells you to go into ‘samādhi’, because that is enjoyable. But don’t listen to her. If you do so, you won’t reach the ultimate Truth.

Memory is a false witness, because it was not present at the time of the activity reported as being remembered.

Urge: It is often said that a deeper urge is essential for realization of the Truth. But if you follow the urge to the last and attain realization, ultimately you find that the urge also was an illusion, and that you were never for a moment out of your own Self.

516. TALKING ABOUT A SAGE (213)

Whenever anything is said about a Sage or a Jnyānin, it is the *personal* that is described, but with the accent always on the *impersonal*.

517. AM I STATIC OR DYNAMIC? (214)

The static and the dynamic cannot co-exist as such. But they co-exist in the background, as the background. The static and the dynamic are both manifestations of the same background. Therefore, I am both simultaneously; or better still, I transcend the static as well as the dynamic.

svakaṁ vapuś ca tēnai ’va buddhaṁ jagad iva kṣaṇāt
kṣaṇāntarā ’nubuddhaṁ sad brahmai ’vā ’stē nirātmani

(?)

He began to think himself the world. Immediately afterwards, it is all absorbed into him (in deep sleep). This is what you do every moment, by recording everything in knowledge and disposing of it for ever.

518. CONTROL OF THE MIND (215)

Control of the mind is usually much talked of, and concentration of the mind is supposed to be the means of achieving it.

Concentration and distraction are both activities of the mind. Control of the mind is never possible from within the realm of the mind, but only from beyond both concentration and distraction. So one who has attained concentration cannot be said to have attained control over the mind.

Transcending the mind, there is only the ‘I’-principle; and when you stand as that ‘I’-principle, the vagaries of the mind disappear, not because the mind has been controlled, but because it has been destroyed.

Therefore, control of the mind – either from within the mind or from without – is a misnomer.

519. PROGRESS (216)

A sādḥaka progresses from activity to passivity (the witness); and reaching passivity, he transcends that also by other means.

520. HOW CONFUSION ARISES WITH REGARD TO THE WITNESS (217)

Suppose you are the witness to a particular thought. A little later, you remember that thought and you say you had that thought some time ago – assuming thereby that you were the thinker when the first thought occurred, though you were then really the witness of that thought.

This unwarranted change in your relationship with a particular thought – from when the thought occurs to when you remember it – is alone responsible for the whole confusion with regard to the witness.

When you seem to remember a past thought, it is really a fresh thought by itself and it has no direct relationship with the old one. Even when you are remembering, you are the witness to that thought of remembrance. So you never change the role of your witnesshood, however much your activities may change.

521. INFERENCE AND PROOF (218)

Inference depends upon the validity of past experiences of a similar nature. Inference is never finally correct.

Proof of anything. A thing can prove only itself. Seeing proves only seeing. Hearing proves only hearing. And so on.

Similarly, I prove only myself.

Nothing can be proved except oneself; and that needs no proof, being self-luminous.

Therefore, the statement ‘I see a form’ should correctly be put as ‘I form a form.’

522. ABSORPTION AND GRACE (219)

Absorption is the process by which the subject and the object become one in the ‘I’-principle. Absorption of everything created by the mind back into the Self, the Absolute – with the help of ‘vidyā-vṛitti’ or the functioning consciousness – is the purpose of our lives.

The real *grace* of the Absolute is in having endowed us with the two simple instruments of Consciousness and Happiness, for the specific purpose of absorbing everything into ourselves by knowledge and love.

But often we do not recognize it in our ordinary activities, and yet we go through the whole process of such absorptions unknowingly.

523. NOTHING IS AN OBSTACLE TO REALIZATION. (220)

Adṛśyō dṛśyatē rāhur grhītēnē 'ndunā yathā,
tathā 'nubhava-mātrā 'tmā dṛśyēnā 'tmā vilōkyatē

(?)

The invisible Rāhu is perceived through the eclipsed moon. In the same way the *Ātmā* who is mere experience is perceived through objects

Translation by Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātma-darshan, Preface

1. The moon helps us to know Rāhu during an eclipse.
2. The phenomenon is necessary in order to know the noumenon.
3. The world helps us to know Ātmā.

524. WORLD A WITNESS (221)

Since the world proves you, the world may well be said to be a witness.

525. WORLDLY TRAFFIC (222)

Worldly traffic is as if you were first to draw a picture. The picture does no more than externalize the idea which was in you. But you stand before the finished picture as a stranger and begin to enjoy it. You are in fact enjoying yourself.

526. DEFINITIONS (223)

Conviction comes in when what is said has been grasped.

Satisfaction comes in when what is desired has been gained.

Pleasure exists only in relation to its opposite, pain, and they are both enjoyed by the mind. But Happiness is beyond the mind.

Intuition comes in when your mind is expanded in time and you consequently become an expanded jīva. But you should remember that your misery also is equally expanded. Intuition is the highest expansion of the lower reason – still remaining within the realm of the mind.

Higher reason is the essence of the lower reason. It is connected always with the impersonal, and the lower reason is connected always with the personal alone.

Logic, beauty and harmony are all the 'svarūpa of Ātmā', viewed from different angles of vision.

Real renunciation is the employment of the Consciousness part in every perception knowingly. By this practice, the material part gradually gives way and the Consciousness part gains. This alone is real renunciation.

Causality comes in to establish relationship between objects. But it has been proved that every object is related only to its background Consciousness. Therefore two objects cannot exist simultaneously and so causality is not.

The hold of *time*, *space* and *causality* upon the ordinary man is so strong that he is not prepared to spare even the ultimate Reality from the dictates of time, space and causality.

The *phenomenal* means that which is changing. All change is in time, space and causality.

What do you *perceive*? You can perceive only the Reality. Unreality can never be perceived. Reality is in the senses and beyond the senses as well.

Life: You have three kinds of life, each distinct and separate from the rest. A *physical life*, confined to activities of body and perceptions of the senses. A *mental life*, confined to thoughts and feelings. A *self life* (or a life of the Self), being experience alone.

The first two lives are known to all. But you do not often know or note that you have a self life (or life of the Self).

527. EXPERIENCE OF BEAUTY IN AND THROUGH A PAINTING (224)

Beauty is something by which you are attracted without a cause. You are most attracted to your own self. Or in other words, your own nature is the only thing that can attract you.

So beauty is only an experience of one's own nature, at the instance of an external object. It is then that you find beauty in that object.

The painter has had an experience of his own nature as beauty which he has attempted to express in the painting. It is only such a work of art that usually arouses the sense of beauty in you, by touching your own real nature; because the real nature of the painter and yourself, both being beyond the mind, can only be the one Reality – Ātmā. As soon as you see the picture, your attention is turned to your own real nature. Then you experience your own nature, and call it beauty.

When you enjoy the beauty, you do not perceive the painting. The painting is perceived only once and immediately discarded, yielding to beauty.

528. HOW TO FACE BEAUTY (225)

Whenever you experience beauty, harmony, higher logic etc. beyond the realm of the mind, try always to merge into it. Do not try to stand as its witness. It is absurd. The witness stand is below the realm of experience.

529. 'A STATEMENT MADE BY THE GURU HELPS YOU NOT WHEN YOU TAKE IT, BUT WHEN YOU LEAVE IT.' HOW? (226)

The statement, as it comes, consists of the gross form of words or sounds and the subtle form or idea meant to be conveyed by the words. If you cling to the gross form alone, you do not profit by it. On the contrary you must leave the gross far behind, and rise to its meaning or the idea behind the statement. Then alone will the statement help to raise you up spiritually.

What would happen if the food you swallow remains unchanged in your stomach? Not only would it not help to keep your body fit, but would soon make it sick. Simi-

larly, spiritual statements if merely learnt and not assimilated will only inflate your ego and retard your spiritual progress.

12th September 1952

530. DEATH (227)

Death is separation of the gross body from the subtle body, or of the mind from the body. Therefore 'you', as a *jīva*, are dying every moment.

531. ORDERS OF THE GURU (228)

Orders of the Guru are generally of two kinds.

1. As originating from the ultimate Reality itself. It is an *imperative command and has to be obeyed literally*.
2. Originating from the Guru's love for the disciple.. Sometimes this second kind of order might go against the spirit or tend to mitigate a past order of the first type. In such cases, there are instances of the disciple having respectfully chosen to go by the first order, though a severe one, cheerfully evading the second one.

There is the example of the *sannyāsin* who was lying on the premises of Padma-tīrtha. Here the disciple's stand was that he had every right to consider himself unworthy of the Guru's love. This happens in the case of a disciple who is governed chiefly by the heart element.

But Shrī Tattvarayar, in whose *sādhana* both the *yōga* and *jnyāna* elements predominated, chose under exactly similar circumstances, to obey all the successive orders of the Guru to the very letter, without daring to interpret them in any manner.

Indeed, both were correct at their own different levels.

532. 'JĪVAN-MUKTA' (229)

This is a misnomer, because *jīva* [personality] is perceptible to the external senses alone and *mukta* [that which is free] to the internal eye alone. The two are on entirely different planes, and as such can never meet. So if someone is a *jīva* [a person], he cannot at the same time be a *mukta* [one who is free]; and vice versa. Therefore, the term 'jīvan-mukta' ['free person'] is a misnomer.

533. THE PURPOSE AND RELEVANCY OF QUESTIONS (230)

Questions often arise for those who have already heard the Truth from the Guru. The questions have a definite purpose and they have to be disposed of in the manner they deserve. Most of the questions are in the form of intrusion upon peace by uninvited thoughts. They come in only for quick destruction in the fire of knowledge. It can be done in three ways:

1. By yourself standing as the witness. Then the questions fail to reach you and return unheeded.

2. By understanding that every question points to Me (Consciousness), and on that account welcoming the questions as they come, only to be used as a help to reach my real nature.
3. By analysing the question itself and by finding that it is nothing but Consciousness – my own real nature.

534. QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD AS A WHOLE AND HOW TO DISPOSE OF THEM? (231)

All such questions relate only to time, space and causality. These three form parts of the world itself, the solution of which the question is seeking. The world as a whole can never be explained in terms of its own parts. Therefore, every question concerning the whole world is illogical.

Time, space and causality, being parts of the phenomenal, can never affect the Ultimate. Therefore, with regard to the Ultimate also, the question does not stand.

535. YOU AND YOURS (232)

You want your possessions also to be possessed of all your characteristics as qualities. You are free, permanent, happiness, and so on. Therefore you want what you possess also to have all those attributes in full. This is the secret of the embodied man's desire to be deathless, eternally free, and happy.

536. WHAT IS THE REAL GURU-DAKṢHIṆA (TO THE KĀRAṆA-GURU)? (233)

The disciple's establishment in the ultimate Truth is the greatest and the only dakṣhiṇa (offering) one can humbly place at the feet of the Guru for the invaluable services rendered by him.

537. MIND AND CREATION (234)

The creation of the world is not a fiat of the will, but is an unconscious creation. The will is only a function of the generic mind, functioning in the created world. If it were created by the fiat of the will, the many things which give you so much pain would never have been created at all.

The mind has that particular power of self-deception. Therefore, try to avoid all controversy confined to the realm of the mind alone. It is nothing but the ego's jugglery.

15th September 1952

538. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ADVICE OF LORD KṚISHṆA TO ARJUNA, AND ITS APPLICATION IN PRACTICAL LIFE (235)

The real object of the advice was to show Arjuna the path to the ultimate Truth. Human nature is composed of three distinct qualities: *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*, in ascending order. And progress consists in ascending from the lowest state of *tamas* to the next, *rajas*, thence to *sattva*, and ultimately to the beyond. There is no short-cut from the *tamas* to the *sattva*, except through *rajas*.

Tamas is dominated by sloth, dullness, despondency, inertia, etc. *Rajas* is dominated by the activity of the body and the mind; and *sattva* by knowledge or peace. Every virtue is supposed to lead one to the sāt̥tvic.

In the lower shāstras, *tamas* is represented by deep sleep, *rajas* by active wakefulness and *sattva* by samādhi. Unfortunately, *tamas* and *sattva* appear alike on the surface; but are diametrically opposite in nature, like darkness and light. The highest state of *sattva* or samādhi is attainable only by well-disciplined activity of the mind. This is possible only in the wakeful state and belongs purely to the realm of *rajas*, but inclined more to the sāt̥tvic.

Rajas, being the middle quality, is connected both with the preceding and the succeeding qualities; and one's progress to the sāt̥tvic is made possible only by taking to activities which tend to the sāt̥tvic.

The first requisite for this is the crippling of the ego which drags you down. The vital part of the ego is desire, usually for the fruits of action. For the ignorant man, this is the only incentive for action.

This incentive was taken away from Arjuna, when Lord Kṛṣṇa advised him to give up all desire for the fruits of his actions. Thus Arjuna was first made a free agent, by not being bound by the fruits of his actions. Then he was asked to engage himself in battle from a sense of untainted duty, merely because he was placed in a situation demanding it. Finally he was told also to give up that sense of duty or doership and thus he was shown the way to the right Absolute.

The three stages essential for progress, from the lowest to the highest [left to right]:

Passivity	Activity	Peace
Deep sleep or ignorance or <i>tamas</i>	Wakeful state or <i>rajas</i>	Transcendental state or <i>sattva</i> .
Cowardice	Battle against forces of anātmā	Samādhi, pointing to ultimate Peace

Christ's advice in a similar situation was to assume complete passivity, by showing the left cheek if you are slapped on the right. This is not always an expression of the sāt̥tvic element in you. If the aggressor is physically weaker and you know it and if you still keep silent and cheerful in the face of aggression, it might be an expression of the sāt̥tvic in you.

But on the other hand, if you are physically weaker and the aggressor stronger and if you meekly submit to his assault, you are more likely to be thrown into that shameful passivity which is but the outcome of cowardice and a desire to escape without further hurt. This is not likely to lift you spiritually. Moreover, Christ did not enforce the positive substitute of the detachment from desire for the fruits of action, which alone could make the passivity at least lead to the sāt̥tvic.

But to reach the sāt̥tvic, one must wade through the *rajas* or activity, as advised by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

If, following Kṛṣṇa's advice, you fight and vanquish the adversary, it helps him by bringing him to his senses and to virtue, and helps you to transcend the doership by trying to forget the fight and help the vanquished. But if you follow Christ's advice and remain passive in all circumstances, the adversary always goes away with his ego highly inflated and sinks into ignorance, not having anything positive to hold on to. The result is injury to both.

539. THE SPIRITUAL VALUES OF THE ADVICES OF LORD CHRIST AND SHRĪ KRISHNA TO THE ORDINARY MAN (236)

If you act according to Kṛiṣṇa, you are faced with two possibilities and two alone – either to die in battle, or to win and not desire the fruits of the victory as already advised. In either case, the ego or body idea is considerably crippled and you rise to that extent in the spiritual ladder.

But Christ's advice, as it stands, is ambiguous. It is more likely to be misunderstood by an ordinary, ego-ridden man. He might easily pass into passivity either out of strength or out of fear; and nothing is suggested by which the ego can be crippled, without which spirituality is impossible.

540. IS THERE VIOLENCE IN KRISHNA'S ADVICE TO FIGHT? (237)

Kṛiṣṇa's advice does not advocate raw violence, as the war maniacs of the present day do. He was advocating only activity or action.

An action can be condemned as violent only because of the motive behind it, and the motive is the expression of the ego. But Kṛiṣṇa had already crippled the ego by removing the desire for the fruits of the action, which alone can act as the incentive to an ordinary man. Thus the spiritual ground was well prepared even before Arjuna was called to action, if necessary even violent action.

Courage was the one essential requisite for the performance of such an action. Courage is the offspring of the sãttvic or the selfless or the egoless.

541. DUTY AND INCENTIVE (238)

For the ordinary man, every action needs an incentive, and the desire for the fruits of the action is the usual incentive. This inflates the ego and binds him to the phenomenal. He who desires to transcend the phenomenal must first transcend this incentive. It was for this that Arjuna was asked not to desire for the fruits of his action.

But being suddenly deprived of his usual incentive to action, he found it difficult to take to action without something to take its place. So Lord Kṛiṣṇa shrewdly substituted duty as the incentive and asked Arjuna to fight as in duty bound.

Slowly, this duty also began to react as an object of attachment for Arjuna. Therefore later on, at a higher level, Arjuna was told in plain and unambiguous words not to be a slave to duty either, and thus to be completely free from all bondage.

Thus duty is also only a stepping-stone to the Ultimate.

kartavyatai 'va saṁsārō na tām paśyanti sūrayaḥ .
śūnyākārā nirākārā nirvikārā nirāmayāḥ ..

[The world of change is always caught
in duty that is to be done.]

Those who are wise don't see that duty
as their own; for they have realized
themselves as that which shines
where objects don't appear, as that
which has no form, which does not change,
untouched throughout by ill and harm.]

Aṣṭāvakra samhitā, 18.57

542. WHY DID L-B [LORD BUDDHA] REFUSE TO ANSWER DIRECTLY, WHEN HE WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT ĀTMĀ? (239)

Ans: Ātmā is the self-luminous principle that lights up the question. The master and disciple are also the same Ātmā. Therefore, to answer the question about Ātmā directly, Ātmā would have to be somehow objectified. This is impossible. Hence the question was answered only indirectly by him, and so the answer was unsatisfactory.

But the teacher did not then choose to take that disciple to the ultimate experience of Ātmā. We do not know why.

Ātmā is in the question and in the answer as well. Ātmā is not any of the expressions perceived. It is that which makes all expressions possible.

16th September 1952

543. HOW TO TACKLE QUESTIONS CORRECTLY? (240)

All questions arise because you wrongly stress the objective part of your perceptions, instead of the subjective part which is Consciousness or Ātmā itself.

When you see an object, see what goes into the make of that object, and not merely its qualities which come and go.

The 'I', through the sense-organs, goes into the make of the object. The 'I', through thoughts, goes into the make of the sense organs. The 'I', through Consciousness, goes into the make of thoughts. And Consciousness is nothing but yourself, the 'I'.

In other words, the subject and the object are one.

544. WHEN YOU KNOW ANYTHING, YOU ARE IN THE REALITY ITSELF. (241)

When you say you are beyond the central idea, who is it that says so? Is it the central idea itself?

No. It is that principle existing even beyond the central idea that enables you to say so. That is the 'I'-principle or Ātmā.

The bare statement of the Truth, 'I am the world', is often made. Is it true in every sense? No. I am the world not by my becoming the world; but only by the world, when dispassionately examined, becoming myself.

545. HIMSA (INJURY) AND AHIMSA (NON-INJURY) (242)

An action becomes *himsa* only when there is the desire, however small, to enjoy the sensual pleasure as a result of that deed. It becomes *ahimsa* if nothing of that lower self comes in to prompt the action and to claim the fruit.

Even the law establishes guilt only if there is Mens Rea (motive or intention).

17th September 1952

546. HOW IS TRUTH TRANSMITTED (IF IT IS TRANSMITTED AT ALL)? (243)

Some say it is through language, because the disciple understands the Truth only after listening to it from the lips of the Guru.

But it has been proved already that the talking and listening are incidents on the way; and that, when the disciple ultimately understands the Truth, there is neither talking nor listening, but only Truth and Truth alone – as experience without the experienced. Therefore language can, at the most, be said to have helped to point to that ultimate goal and nothing more. Hence its relationship, if any, to the realization is only indirect.

Others say that Truth is transmitted through silence or samādhi. Here, silence also is only a medium like language and serves the same purpose as language itself, only pointing to the Ultimate, and disappearing at the point of experience. Truth is far beyond even nirvikalpa samādhi (extreme silence).

547. HOW TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE SHĀSTRAS RELATING TO TRUTH? (244)

The mere cramming of the verses and their repetition as they are is everywhere condemned. The real method is pointed out by an illustration.

A cow in its shed gets loose at night, steals into an adjoining field, eats the green paddy there, and returns to its shed. There it chews, masticates and digests the whole food in the course of the night. Throwing out the refuse as dung and urine, it absorbs the essence of the food as blood into its system, eventually delivering it the next morning as ambrosial milk. The milk shows none of the superficial characteristics of the food taken the previous night.

Similarly, whenever we happen to read a shāstra, we should assimilate its essence by intense thought, till it becomes the blood of our blood and courses through our veins. The words of the shāstra, which form the material part, are forgotten or thrown out, as the cow threw out its excreta; and the substance, when it comes out of you should be as natural, sweet and refreshing as the delicious milk, with none of the characteristics of the hard shāstraic nuts.

Even the stealthy movement of the cow has its own significance in the analogy. It means that during your pursuit after Truth, you must first detach yourself in thought from the world, avoiding the notice of the ignorant public as far as possible, and avoiding all unnecessary contact with people. Controversies should be avoided at all cost. You should show no external signs of your spiritual activities, until all the food of learning is assimilated into the sweet milk of knowledge.

548. TAT TVAM ASI (245)

‘Tat tvam asi’ is established by those who followed the cosmological path, by proving the identity between the changeless principles behind the apparent ‘I’ (*tvam*) and the objective world (*tat*). But they still have to transcend the sense of bigness of *tat* (as brahman), which is also relative, attached to that experience.

According to our method, the *tvam* is first examined dispassionately and reduced to its ultimate source, Ātmā. Thus you immediately transcend the basic error. Looking from the stand of Ātmā, which you have experienced to be the only Reality, you find

that no world exists at all. Therefore, the question of any serious examination of the *tat* does not arise, so far as you are concerned.

According to Gurunāthan, the significance of the aphorism ‘Tat tvam asi’ is also different. The aspirant is seeking the truth. So he is told: ‘You are that truth.’ Here, you are shown the Reality in the apparent ‘I’-principle itself, discarding all the appendages.

18th September 1952

549. PROBLEMS AND THE PRIORITY OF CONSIDERATION BETWEEN THEM (246)

Problems are of two kinds, fundamental and auxiliary. The ignorant man never concerns himself with the fundamental problem, but is engrossed only with the auxiliary ones and gets lost amongst them.

The fundamental problem is the identity of the *jīva* with the body and mind. All other problems hang upon this central problem. None but the *advaitin* dares to analyse this *jīva* principle directly. He successfully eliminates the material part as unreal, from the crude mixture which is the *jīva*; and he stands identified with the self-luminous life principle in it, which is *Ātmā* itself.

Others who follow various other paths also progress to some extent, but do not reach the ultimate Truth. This is because their approach is purely objective.

Therefore, he who wants to solve his problems completely and for ever must face this fundamental problem first. When that is solved, you will find that all other problems vanish, like mist before the sun.

550. ACTIVITY AND INACTIVITY (247)

The ignorant man conceives activity only as the opposite of inactivity. Therefore, when any activity ceases, he thinks that it has lapsed into inactivity and that inactivity has taken its place.

This is absurd. What we call activity is only a manifestation of the Absolute and even when so manifested it does not cease to be the Absolute, there being nothing other than the Absolute in it. Therefore when the activity ceases, it is the Absolute itself that remains over.

Similarly, what we call inactivity is also another manifestation of the Absolute, quite unconnected with any sense of activity. The inactivity also, when it vanishes, is transformed into the Absolute.

But seen from the position of the Absolute, there was no manifestation at all, because the Absolute did not undergo any change, even when supposed to be manifested or unmanifested.

20th September 1952

551. PROBLEM (248)

Some people say, without thinking, that they have no problem. Just ask such a person if he has had any desires, and if so whether any of them had to be abandoned. If there was any such occasion he must then have been miserable. He might ignore it as being silly, or obstinately refuse to admit it. Still, that amounts to a problem, however small, so far as he is concerned.

552. TO THE ULTIMATE THROUGH QUALITIES AND THE QUALIFIED (249)

The qualities and the qualified are dependent upon each other for their very existence. Therefore neither of them are real, but are only a seeming or an appearance.

Analysing the world cosmologically, it is reduced to the five elements and their qualities. The qualities and the qualified being mere appearances, the elementals and their qualities also disappear as unreal. And that principle (Consciousness), which thus examined the world, alone remains over as the Reality.

22nd September 1952

553. TRANSFORMATION OF A THING (250)

A chair is a 'chair' by convention alone. It becomes an object when you perceive it. But when you *know* it, its objectivity vanishes and it becomes knowledge. Thus your role always is to destroy the world, whenever it appears.

The world consists only of perceptions, thoughts and feelings. As soon as any one of these appears, it is absorbed into yourself as knowledge, thereby destroying completely the objectivity of the world.

554. FORM AND FORMLESSNESS (251)

Form is of two kinds. Subjective as well as objective. Without the subjective form, the objective cannot exist. Both are one or of the same nature.

Similarly, subjective formlessness and objective formlessness both mean one and the same consciousness.

555. SIGNIFICANCE OF OPPOSITES (252)

In ordinary life, one thing is supposed to depend upon its opposite or to be inseparably connected with it. Viewed from that stand, if one adopts the cosmological approach, one has to transcend both opposites (existence and non-existence of object) in order to reach the Truth.

But according to the direct approach, if you first understand that every object is directly connected only to the background, you easily reach the Absolute by transcending the objectivity of that one thing alone. Here, the opposite never comes in to trouble you. That opposite is only another object through which also you can reach the same background.

23rd September 1952

556. TIME (253)

o'ttattōnnalanēkamennu karutuṁ vyāmōhamē kālamāṁ .

[Considering one thought as many:
that's the delusion of time.]

Shrī Ātmānanda

‘The one thought’ (‘oṭṭattōnnal’) which is the permanent background of all thoughts is ‘I am.’ Usually, this background thought is forgotten and immediately a plurality of thoughts come up. This illusion of plurality is what is called ‘time’.

557. THE EFFECT IS THE CAUSE OF THE CAUSE. (254)

Because it is the effect that suggests the existence of a cause and sets us in motion to seek that cause. Therefore the effect truly serves as the cause of the cause.

558. CORRECT EXAMINATION OF THE WORLD (255)

The name ‘world’ denotes the gross as well as the subtle worlds. The subtle world is nothing but the mind or thought. The mind goes into the very make of the gross world, but is also quite independent of the world itself.

Even after the gross world has disappeared, the mind continues to exist, holding within itself the whole world deprived of its gross characteristics. Thus far, an ordinary man can well proceed, because life itself is composed distinctly of the physical and the mental aspects. So, standing on the mental plane, the physical can well be examined and reduced to the subtle.

This has again to be examined, taking your stand on a plane higher than the mind itself, but in substance not essentially different from the mind. That plane is the plane of knowledge, Consciousness or the ‘I’, which goes into the make of the mind. Taking your stand, at least in idea, in that plane of Consciousness and examining the mind, you will find that the subtle world loses its characteristics of being subtle and diverse; and it shines as pure Consciousness and one with you.

If you leave it anywhere else before taking it to this ultimate truth, the examination is incomplete and the finding, to that extent, untrue.

559. THE CONCEPTION OF OPPOSITES (256)

It does not come in, even in our ordinary statements. We bring in the idea of the opposite only subsequently, by way of interpretation or explanation to establish the first statement.

24th September 1952

560. THE CHIEF ADVAITIC APHORISMS (257)

The chief advaitic aphorisms, according to the traditional path, are four in number. They are:

1. ‘*Ayam ātmā brahma.*’ [‘This self is all there is’], being a statement of the ultimate Truth.
2. ‘*Tat tvam asi.*’ [‘You are that.’] This is the instruction given by the Guru to the disciple, regarding the identity of the backgrounds of the jīva and the world.
3. ‘*Aham brahmā ’smi.*’ [‘I am all there is.’] This is the form in which the disciple contemplates the essence of the instruction imparted through the second aphorism. By contemplating this aphorism for a considerable period, the disciple transcends the littleness of the jīva and establishes his identity with the all-comprehensive

brahman, which is the background of the universe. This conception of brahman is distinguished by its all-comprehensiveness or bigness. This is as much a limitation as the smallness of the jīva, and it has to be transcended to reach the Ultimate. For this purpose, another aphorism is given.

4. '*Prajñānam brahma.*' ['Consciousness is all there is.'] With the help of this last aphorism, the disciple transcends also the sense of bigness and reaches pure Consciousness, the Ultimate.

'*I am conscious of something*', and '*I am consciousness*' are two significant statements.

The first statement is mental, fitful and personal. But it does the invaluable service of making you understand the nature of Consciousness.

The second statement is impersonal. There, Consciousness stands in its own right, as the only self-luminous principle.

Having understood the nature of Consciousness from the first statement, it is possible to direct attention to the impersonal nature of pure Consciousness, and thus to establish oneself in it.

561. JĪVA (258)

When anything other than consciousness is added on to you, the real 'I'-principle, you become the personal or jīva.

The world should rightly be called the 'sense world'. See the world only as a 'percept' or 'object of perception'. The world is nothing but sense perceptions. So when you say you enjoy an object, it only means that you enjoy your own senses. Therefore, it is the senses that are always enjoying themselves.

This gives the clue to the manifold līlās of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa, by his yōgic powers, split himself into innumerable Kṛṣṇas; and each of the Gopīs enjoyed all kinds of līlā with the Kṛṣṇa she took to be her own. How could anyone object to it, in a purely worldly sense? It was far beyond all conceivable worldliness.

562. THOUGHT AND ITS WORKING (259)

A thought, when it is taken over and over again with increasing interest, goes deeper and deeper into one and becomes more and more intense, until at last its sense creates in us what is called a 'deep conviction'.

But if the thought is directed to the Reality which has already been visualized through the words of the Guru, it has no limited knowledge as its goal. Then, it is not a thought in the strict sense of the term, because it aspires to know nothing as a result thereof. What has to be known has already been known. Every time you repeat that thought you are brought into direct contact with the impersonal background and once again you visualize or experience the same Truth exactly as before.

Thought or remembrance are not what they are when directed to the Ultimate. Thought when it is directed outwards usually results in knowing. Thought is always taken with the object of coming to that knowledge.

Visualization by mere thought is possible only with regard to Ātmā, the Reality. With regard to nothing else is it possible. It is experiencing the same Truth in the

same manner, again and again. Gradually, you get established in that Reality. Therefore, that thought takes you beyond all thoughts.

The so called thinking about the Ultimate is not a course of remembering either. What is remembering? Remembering consists in bringing before the mind's eye what is directly perceived by the sense organs. You admit that the correctness of the perception is lost in remembering. The direct seeing of the ignorant man becomes a mere thought form when remembered. Perception takes place in the gross realm, and memory in the subtle realm.

But the visualization of the Ultimate is made in the realm beyond the mind, after passing through several transformations on hearing the Truth from the lips of the Guru. Every time you think about the Truth afterwards, you actually pass through all the different transformations as before, until at last you actually visualize the Truth even more intensely than before in the very same higher plane. This is direct perception or direct knowing or direct being or Consciousness itself.

Memory is the gross giving place to the subtle.

25th September 1952

563. LOWER AND HIGHER REASONS (260)

The lower reason differs in its interpretation and application according to individuals, since it relies only upon the personal experiences of each, which vary according to temperament and environment.

But the higher reason (*vicāraṁ* = *viśēṣeṇa carikkuka* [proceeding through discernment]), moving along a special path directed inward, relies only upon the being in the individual, which is unique. Therefore it can never be different in its application or finding.

564. THE CAUSAL BODY OF IGNORANCE (261)

The causal body of ignorance [the unmanifested potentiality of the 'unconscious'] cannot exist. Ignorance is the absence of everything.

When you say there is the absence of a cow here, it only means that it is not present here to the fleshy organ, but is present only to the subtle organ of the mind. The absence of anything is dependent directly upon the presence of that thing.

Thus the negative of anything cannot exist by itself, without at least an unconscious reference to the positive. So the causal body of ignorance is a misnomer.

suṣṭy-ēka-siddhaḥ ... śivaḥ kēvalō 'ham

[I am that unmixed absolute,
just that one perfect happiness,
attained in depth of dreamless sleep.]

Shrī Shankara, Dasha-shlokī, 1

565. IS LOVE DUALISTIC? (262)

Some Jnyānins who had no experience of love or devotion say that love is dualistic since it stands in need of an object, and that jnyāna alone can take you to the Ultimate.

The same objection can be raised at that level against jnyāna also, that jnyāna always needs an object to express itself. But the Jnyānin knows from experience that jnyāna can stand independent of objects, as pure Consciousness beyond the realm of the mind. At that level, love also gets transformed into pure *ānanda* or Peace.

The first statement went wrong simply because jnyāna was taken at the absolute level of experience and love at the lower level of expression.

It is no wonder that the Jnyānin accustomed to the path of jnyāna alone should be so ignorant of the path of love. Because of his having reached the Ultimate through jnyāna, the world so far as he is concerned has disappeared altogether, including even the expressions of love. No necessity or occasion arises, in his case, to examine the world through any other perspective. Nor is any effort necessary for his establishment in the Ultimate. All such effort has already been made. Many persons had thus reached the Ultimate through the path of jnyāna alone, and were all *jīvan-muktas*.

But in order to take the role of a Guru or an Ācārya, one has to make oneself sufficiently acquainted with the experiences in each of the different paths of jnyāna, bhakti, and yōga. This is necessary in order that the aspirants coming with partial and preliminary experiences, helpful or perverted, in any of these paths might be safely directed along the paths of their own taste and choice, and their difficulties in their own paths explained to their satisfaction. Such Ācāryas are of course extremely rare, not to be found even in the course of several centuries.

566. UPON WHAT CAN ONE SUPERIMPOSE SOMETHING? (263)

Only upon something changeless.

We usually say that the serpent is superimposed upon the rope or that the thief is superimposed upon the stump of a tree. Neither of these statements is literally true. If the statement that you have superimposed something is to stand, it is essential that the thing superimposed and the thing upon which the superimposition was made should both be present in the resultant. But neither the rope nor the stump of a tree are to be found in the resultant.

Therefore it is clear that the superimposition was made not upon the rope nor upon the stump of a tree, but on that conscious principle upon which the rope and the stump of a tree themselves were both similarly superimposed.

So you can never superimpose one object upon another object, nor one thought upon another object, nor one thought upon another thought.

567. EXISTENCE (264)

‘The non-existence of the non-existent is existence itself.’

‘Existence of the non-existent disproves non-existence.’

26th September 1952

568. PRATYAKṢHA AND PARŌKṢHA (265)

Pratyakṣha literally means ‘perceivable by the sense organs’. It is opposed to *parōkṣha* meaning ‘indirect’ or *aupacārika* meaning ‘formal’.

According to Gurunāthan, there is only one *pratyakṣha*. It can be experienced only in the ‘I’, without being connected with anything else. All else is indirect or formal.

According to this, an object perceived is parōkṣha. When that is subsequently known, it merges into the 'I' and becomes pratyakṣha and the object vanishes.

Every one has a deep sense of the Self in him which stands clearly transcending the body, senses and mind. Its form is 'I know I am.' This is direct knowledge that is known without the help of any instrument.

569. CREATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD (266)

Self-forgetfulness is the cause of the creation of the world, and self-remembrance or withdrawal to the Self is the destruction of the world.

570. ACT KNOWINGLY. (267)

This is the practical instruction by which the 'I' is visualized.

In all human activities, there is a fundamental difference between the words expressed and the actual activity. The words 'I see him', 'I hear it' etc. are quite in order. But in the activity proper, the first and the most important part 'I' is lamentably ignored and the activity or objectivity part alone emphasized. This is responsible for all bondage. The only means to liberation is to fill the omission you have so ignorantly made.

In all your daily activities, try to bring in the 'I' to the forefront. If you succeed in doing this, you have gone a long way towards visualizing the 'I'. When you do this exercise for some time, you will find that you are that changeless principle in all activity and that the activities themselves change every moment. This clearly proves that action, perception, thought and feeling do not go into your nature at all.

The activities of the ignorant man or the objective part of them usually cloud the 'I'-principle in him. But this exercise removes all possibility of such clouding of the 'I'-principle, since the 'I' is emphasized every moment.

My role is to remain changeless in the midst of incessant change, or to be unaffected by all opposites, like happiness and misery. To make this possible, one has to understand that one is beyond all opposites and that one is neither the doer nor the enjoyer.

When you say every activity belongs to you, it means that nothing belongs to you in fact, or that I am the 'svarūpa' without their touching my svarūpa.

571. PERCEPTION AND THE 'I' (268)

Perception is composed of the lighting up by the 'I'-principle plus the objective part of the perception. Take for example 'seeing'. The seeing cannot exist in an unmanifested form, either before or after the activity of seeing. But the 'I'-principle does exist as unmanifested both before and after the activity, and the very same 'I' is manifested in the seeing as well. Therefore, the object is the manifestation of the 'I' alone, and not of the senses.

This shows that when the world appears, the world is '*I-ing*'; or in other words, when anything appears I am the 'shining' in it.

All paradoxes are dissolved in the Sage.

572. WHEN I SAY I WALK, IT REALLY MEANS I AM NOT WALKING. (269)

An activity is a deviation from the normal state. When I say I walk, I mean it as an activity opposed to my normal state of non-walking. Walking is only something which comes and goes, while I am by nature non-walking or changeless. You admit you have not changed by merely walking. Walking refers to my nature which is non-walking. Thus every activity shows I am not that.

Every activity appears and disappears in me. I am changeless, and activity is incessant change. So I cannot be an activity as it is.

This 'I' has to be emphasized in the present tense just before every activity. The 'I' has to be in every activity but it is there only as the silent witness. If I am in everything which is diversity, it can only be by my being that unity itself.

573. THE BEST FORM OF MEDITATION (IF YOU MUST HAVE ONE) (270)

If you obstinately want to practice meditation, the best form for your purpose is 'I am.' It will give the mind nothing objective to cling on to, and in the very effort the mind will cease or die.

This contemplation drives away all intruding thoughts, and you are established in the 'I'. Slowly, it becomes deeper and deeper and the nature of Consciousness and Happiness begins to be experienced, since these are intrinsic in the 'I'.

During chanting or contemplation, though we begin with the word or sound, we never stop there. We begin to dive slowly into its meaning or goal of the idea; and then the chanting gradually stops, leaving you at the very goal.

Thus when you contemplate 'I am', you stand established in the real 'I'-principle. But this 'I am' can never be replaced by the term 'Guru'. Because the Guru is never an experience to anybody, while 'I am' is a clear experience for all. Therefore, to lead you to the ultimate experience, 'I am' is essential. It is true that after experience the 'I am' also merges into the Guru, who is transcendental, beyond even the background of all this world.

Shrī Shankara describes the state of nirvikalpa samādhi as the *witness of everything* (sarva-sākṣhi) but the *Absolute am I* (shivōham)

nityānandēturiyēvigatamatigatissarvasākṣīvivōham

Shrī Shankara

Truth is experienced in three distinct stages.

In the first stage, in which you just touch the ultimate background, you reach the witness.

In the second, as you stand as the witness, the witnesshood disappears and you find yourself the Ultimate, without a second to make you miserable.

Lastly, the sense of absoluteness also vanishes and you stand established in the ultimate 'I'-principle, the only Reality.

The same idea is expressed in *Ātma-darshanam*, 16.3.

dr̥ṣṭāvām bōdhamātram̐ n̐ān
ennayām̐ dr̥ṣṭyamepporūm̐
kāṇippatennu sarvvatra
kaṇṭu n̐ān viharikkayām̐

I am pure Consciousness. Realizing that every object wherever placed is asserting Me, I enjoy Myself everywhere and in everything.

Shrī Ātmānanda

30th September 1952

574. WHAT IS KARMA? (271)

The direct answer to the question is that there is no karma. It is the responsibility of the questioner to prove that karma exists. Let us examine 'karma' in detail. What is that principle which makes every karma possible?

It is evident at the outset that karma cannot exist without a doer or an agent. The proof of the existence of the doer is that you know it, or that you are the perceiver of the karma as the doer, doing and the deed.

Now take note of the fact that such a witnessing agent is indispensable for the existence of karma. Then turn your attention more closely to that agent and see if he is really an agent. Immediately you see that the so called agent is no agent, but only the perceiver of karma. As perceiver one cannot be bound by the karma.

Thus karma is no karma in the ordinary sense of the word, and all samskāras die with it.

Karma consists of three parts, namely:

1. The incentive (being samskāras),
2. The activity (of body or mind), and
3. The results or fruits thereof.

When you reach the perceivership, both the incentive as well as the desire for the fruits of action vanish. Thus divorced from the perceived and the perception, the perceiver also ceases to be a perceiver and becomes the Ultimate.

Therefore, karma is nothing but the ultimate Reality itself, and as such can never bind you.

575. KARMA AND SAMSKĀRAS (272)

Samskāra is the deep impression left behind by that which was done. Karma gives rise to samskāras and samskāras induce karma. Thus karma and samskāras depend upon each other for their very existence. This is impossible. Therefore, karma and samskāras are both a misnomer, and the perceiver or 'I' alone is the Reality.

This is what Lord Kṛiṣṇa has said about karma in general.

... gahanā karmaṇō gatiḥ

[Unfathomable is the way of karma.]

Bhagavad-gītā, 4.17

The significant story of the non-existent (kathayillāta katha) in the *Yōga-vāsiṣṭha* also shows the unreality of all karma. It has a sublime moral for each one of us. It is this: 'We, the children of the unborn barren woman, are enjoying the unborn world, just as the child in the story listened to and enjoyed the whole story of the non-existent.'

1st October 1952

576. A TEST OF THE NATURAL STATE (273)

When you are asked what you are, if the answer comes to your mind spontaneously 'I am pure Consciousness', you may be said to have reached the natural state.

577. LOVE AS VIEWED BY RELIGIONS AND BY VĒDĀNTA (274)

Religions teach you to love others at the physical and mental levels. But Vēdānta teaches you to become that love, pure and impersonal, beyond the mind's level.

578. BHĀRATA'S RENUNCIATION (275)

An act becomes true renunciation only if you renounce thereby something nearest and dearest to your heart. The greatest desire of Bhārata, when he started in search of Rāma, was that he himself should take the place of Shrī Rāma in the forest and send Rāma back to Ayōdhya to rule the kingdom.

But somehow Bhārata was persuaded by Shrī Vasishṭha their Guru to return to Ayōdhya to rule the kingdom himself till Rāma came back. This was indeed an act of supreme sacrifice and renunciation on the part of Bhārata, since he was forced by circumstances to give up his heart's greatest desire to renounce the kingdom and take upon himself Shrī Rāma's exile in the forest.

579. SOME IMPORTANT STATEMENTS MADE BY JESUS CHRIST (276)

Their levels and relative significance:

1. 'I am the son of God.' (Often repeated in the New Testament.) This is purely a preparation of the ground for spiritual progress and is in the *dvaitic* [dualistic] plane.
2. 'I am the vine and ye are the branches.' (St. John, 15.5) This is in the level of *vishishṭādvaita* [qualified dualism].
3. 'I and my Father are one.' (St. John, 10.30) This is from the pure *advaitic* level.

Evidently, these are different statements addressed to different persons, at different levels of understanding.

2nd October 1952

580. IF THERE IS ANY COMPLAINT, WHO MAKES IT? (277)

Never the Ātmā. In that case, what have 'you' to worry about?

It is only that which has no form that can assume any or many forms.

If you want to know anything subjective, you must never refer to anything in the objective world.

581. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SAY 'I AM ANGRY'? (278)

1. Since you perceive all the three states and all your activities from birth till death, you are evidently a changeless being. But when you say you are angry, you actu-

ally become anger itself. This is, of course, clear change from your centre and that cannot be. Therefore anger, or any other feeling, is only an appearance.

2. You can remember your anger afterwards. So you must have perceived the anger yourself. As perceiver, you can never be affected by the anger. So you were never angry.

3rd October 1952

582. THE GIST OF THE GURU'S TEACHING (279)

You had been enamoured of the pot. The Guru has been showing you that it is nothing but earth, without doing the least violence to the pot.

583. HEAD AND HEART – ARE THEY DIFFERENT? (280)

When you reach the Ultimate by following the path of pure jnyāna, you experience deep Peace or Happiness expressing itself sometimes in the form of gushing tears and choking voice. This is not an expression of the head, but of the heart in you.

On the other hand, there are many instances of Sages like Shrī Padmapāda and Vāṭivīshvarattamma (?) who have reached the Ultimate through the heart and heart alone, directed to their Guru – the Absolute – with deep devotion. They have subsequently guided aspirants to the Truth, even on the Jnyāna path, most successfully.

Thus it is clear that what one experiences through either path is the same Reality; and that jnyāna and devotion are but the expressions of that one Reality, the one through the head and the other through the heart.

A jīvan-mukta who is established in the Absolute does not seek to be conspicuous in any phase of his apparent life.

5th October 1952

584. WHERE IS HARMONY? (281)

We see harmony in this world only on rare occasions. But the Sage sees the same harmony always and everywhere, nay even in apparent misery and discord.

585. THE MIND AND THE WORLD (282)

The mind is the most essential part of the world and it goes into the make of the world itself.

586. FEAR (283)

... dvitīyād vai bhayaṁ bhavati .

[It's only from a second thing that fear arises.]

Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣhad, 1.4.2

Fear arises out of the consciousness of the existence of one other than yourself.

587. REMEMBRANCE (284)

When you say you remember a dream, you superimpose the dream subject upon the witness. The same process repeats itself when you remember a past incident in the waking state.

The seeming continuity of any state by itself is no proof of the reality of that state. It appears so both in the waking and in the dream states.

588. WHY DO WE ATTACH MORE REALITY TO THE WAKING STATE? (285)

No, we do not do so. Both the active states [waking and dream] are waking states when actually experienced. That state in which you remain at any particular moment is then considered to be the waking state and more real than any other.

589. HOW DO I VISUALIZE A PAST INCIDENT IN THE WAKING STATE? (286)

Certainly, you cannot visualize it before the waking, fleshy sense organs. So you have to create a set of suitable sense organs for the purpose, as you do in the dream state, and visualize the incident before them. So everything in the past is equal to a dream.

590. MEMORY (287)

Memory merges the past into the present; and the present, when examined minutely, disappears altogether. Thus time is really destroyed and you are brought nearer the Reality.

So memory helps you to a certain extent to approach the Reality, though memory itself is part of the unreality.

591. EVEN AFTER UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH, I SEE THE WORLD AGAIN. WHY? (288)

It is not you who see the world again. It is the illusion of the apparent 'I' seeing the illusion of the world. What does it matter to You?

6th October 1952

592. HOW TO APPLY THE USUAL ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE PHENOMENAL TO THE ABSOLUTE? (289)

The usual illustrations are the snake in the rope, the water in the mirage, etc. Here the snake or the water stands for the whole world – gross or subtle, including the individual perceiver – or in other words the world of objects, senses, thoughts and feelings. Even the error of seeing the snake or the mirage forms part of the perceived world. This includes the entire realm of body and mind. This could be seen only from some position beyond them – that is, from the Truth or the 'I'-principle. But then there is no world to be seen.

Still you might say you see the world again. Will you please tell me who sees it? Do *You* see it? No. Then why do you worry? Seeing, see-er and the seen all form part

of the unreality. Don't forget that. Let objects of unreality play between them. What does it matter to you – the Reality?

In an enquiry of the Truth, usually the activities of the sense organs and the mind alone are taken into consideration. But the activities of the organs of action by themselves are almost mechanical or unconscious. There, awareness does not necessarily come in. But, for the activities of the senses and mind, the presence of awareness is essential.

7th October 1952

593. HAPPINESS, MISERY AND THE 'I'-PRINCIPLE (290)

Misery depends upon diversity or objects for its very existence, and very often it bursts out into vociferous violence.

Happiness depends only upon the one Reality, the 'I'-principle. When the jīva is in a state of Happiness (not pleasure) he is touching the background unawares. And when he is in misery, he is in unmistakable duality.

When you say 'I am miserable', it means I am misery, or that misery has come upon me or merged into me, or that I am the svarūpa of misery. But misery cannot be my svarūpa.

When you say 'I am happy', it means I am Happiness or that I am the svarūpa of Happiness. But in this case the opposite is also true, that is to say Happiness is my svarūpa.

Since I am the svarūpa of misery, it can very well merge into me. But I can never merge into the misery. Thus I am the svarūpa of all.

The pot is able to merge into the earth because even when it appears as pot, it is earth and earth alone.

594. THE REAL 'I', THROUGH DIFFERENT STATES AND ACTIVITIES (291)

It has been proved that the 'I'-principle is persistently present in all the three states and that none of the changing states can be superimposed upon the 'I'-principle.

Similarly, the 'I'-principle is present in all the activities of the waking state and so none of these activities can be superimposed upon that 'I'. None of these go into the make of that 'I'-principle.

Therefore, you as that 'I' is the one, untainted Reality.

595. AN ENQUIRY ABOUT THE TRUTH OF THE WORLD, GROSS AS WELL AS SUBTLE (292)

The world has been taken up for examination from time immemorial by scientists and philosophers. Both of them rely upon the generic mind, with its varied aspects, as the only instrument for the purpose.. The scientists have tried to solve the objective diversity by reducing everything to atoms or electrons, but cannot find the way beyond. Philosophers, ignoring the gross, have taken up the subtle world of thoughts and feelings (the apparently subjective diversity) for analysis, and cannot go beyond nothingness. Thus both of them are entangled in the same vicious circle.

In every perception, thought or feeling two aspects come into operation. The view part and the material part. The view part is the result of one's own individual experi-

ence and samskāras and therefore differs with different individuals. This part, the more important of the two, is lamentably ignored by scientists and philosophers alike. They analyse only the material part of their so called experiences, taking their stand in the changing mind alone.

Their fundamental mistake is their inability to take note of a changeless principle, the 'I' standing behind, lighting up all their so called experiences. Without this stand in the changeless 'I', the changes can never be correctly examined, whether in the gross or in the subtle realm. This irrefutable stand is shown only by the v̥edāntic or advaitic approach.

For diversity to be, unity must stand behind, supporting it. You are merging diversity into unity every time a perception, thought or feeling merges into Consciousness, the 'I'.

8th October 1952

596. THE PROCESS OF REALIZATION (293)

1. You identify yourself with objects (body, senses and mind).
2. Next, you eliminate yourself from the object.
3. Lastly, the object is made to merge in you.

9th October 1952

597. REAL SLEEP (294)

yadi dēhaṁ pr̥thak-kṛtya citi viśrāmya tiṣṭhasi ...

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 1.4

This means: '*Sleep in Consciousness.*' This is the royal road to the natural state.

The thought, '*I am Consciousness*', consists of two parts: the 'I' and 'Consciousness'. Of these two, Consciousness can apparently be objectified when attached to objects. But the 'I' can never be so objectified. In this thought, Consciousness, being linked on to the 'I', cannot also be objectified. Therefore, this particular thought can never draw you outward, but will only allow itself to be drawn inward, ultimately merging in the 'I' or 'Consciousness'.

598. THE SAGE AND LOVE (295)

The Sage is impersonal, and as such can never act, think or feel as a person. As he really transcends the limits of love, he cannot limit it to an individual, society or country. His love can never be mutilated in that manner.

599. HOW TO SLEEP KNOWINGLY? (296)

Know that you are going to sleep. Let that thought be as vague as possible. Then empty your mind of all intruding thoughts, taking care not to strain the mind in the least. Having understood from the Guru that your real nature alone shines in its own glory in deep sleep, if you relax into deep sleep as already suggested, the deep sleep shall no longer be a state, but your real nature, even beyond 'nirvikalpa samādhi'.

11th October 1952

600. TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS (297)

A paragraph in which transmigration of souls is discussed by Socrates was brought to the notice of Gurunāthan. He remarked: 'So you take it for granted that you have a soul and that you are its possessor. The possessor is decidedly different from, and superior to, the thing possessed. If so, how does transmigration of your soul affect you more than the transformation of your hairs? But I question your fundamental assumption itself that you have a soul. Your knowledge and your experience are the evidence you put forward to prove it. But I have already proved to you that no one can know or experience anything other than one's own Self, the 'I'-principle. So the existence of the soul itself cannot be proved. Therefore, the question of transmigration of souls does not arise at all.'

The only experience is 'I', and 'I' is the only word which denotes experience. ('*Anubhava-mātram ātmā.*')

601. THE PATH OF THE 'I'-THOUGHT (298)

The ordinary man has the deep samskāra ingrained in him that he is the body and that it is very, very insignificant, compared to the vast universe. Therefore the only possible mistake you are likely to be led into, while taking to the 'I'-thought, is the habitual samskāra of the smallness attached to the 'I'.

This mistake is transcended by the contemplation of the aphorism '*Aham brahmāsmi.*' Brahman is the biggest imaginable conception of the human mind. The conception of bigness no doubt removes the idea of smallness. But the idea of bigness, which is also a limitation, remains over.

Ultimately, this idea of bigness has also to be removed by contemplating another aphorism: '*Prajnyānam asmi.*' ('I am Consciousness.') Consciousness can never be considered to be either big or small. So you are automatically lifted beyond all opposites.

602. BONDAGE AND LIBERATION (299)

Bondage is the wrong groove of thinking.

Liberation is effected only by the right groove of thinking, as directed by the Kāraṇa-guru.

603. OBJECTS, PERCEPTION AND REALITY (300)

The reality of every object perceived by you is only your own reality; and that object has no independent existence other than yourself.

No perception ceases until the object has been reduced to knowledge or recorded in knowledge. Then the object no longer exists as such.

But the ego wants to continue the illusion; and so says 'I know it' – even when the 'it' (meaning the object) is nowhere in the knowledge to which every perception is reduced.

13th October 1952

604. BE UNQUALIFIED AND YOU ARE FREE. (301)

What we call an object is the real background, which is unknown, and a heap of qualities superimposed upon that background, those qualities alone being known. The qualities themselves come and go, and do not go into the make of the object. So the object is in fact only that unknown and unqualified background. Thus every object is only that unknown background.

There cannot be two unknowns either. Because, even in order to distinguish between the 'two', we must know them. So there is only one unknown, and that is yourself, and it is the background of yourself as well.

That is the only Reality, the Ātmā, the ever free. Know that and be free.

605. REALITY (302)

What is not conceivable, not knowable and about which you are deeply convinced, that is the Reality. That you are.

606. THE WORLD AND WHAT IT SHOWS (PROVES) (303)

The world is nothing but perceptions, thoughts and feelings. Now let us examine what these are. Many 'presents' (experiences of the present) made into one 'present' constitute a concept or a thought. Similarly, many spatial points made into one constitute a percept.

Admitting that you cannot have more than one simultaneous experience, many 'presents' or many spatial points become impossible. So there are no percepts, thoughts or perceptions.

As ordinarily accepted, a thought is made up of many time points or 'presents' at one point of time. But there can never be more than one present at one point of time. Therefore, thought is a misnomer. And so is the world.

But still you see the world. Yes, let us for the time being concede that seeing exists. Yes, I see. But then what does this prove? It proves only 'Me' and not anything else. You say: 'The world appears.' When you say it 'appears', you mean that it is lit up by Consciousness, on your side. In the statement, the 'world' is objective and 'appears' is subjective. To whom does it appear is the next relevant question. Of course to you. You light it up by your Consciousness. So every object points to Consciousness and proves nothing else.

607. DEEP CONVICTION (304)

Deep conviction is direct knowing. Conviction is the last word of the worldly man or the mind regarding any search. If you are convinced you have attained the object of your search, it is a signal to stop all further enquiries regarding it.

Gurunāthan only uses the same word for want of a better one, to denote spiritual understanding also. But he improves upon that word by qualifying it as deep conviction. Your spiritual understanding becomes deep when you become established in it, by experiencing it again and again. And then it becomes experience pure.

608. THE MEASURE OR INSTRUMENT AND THE MEASURED (305)

Every measure or instrument is only a miniature of the measured. You measure length with an artificial unit of length. You do the same with weight, volume, etc. Thus every instrument used to measure variety is only variety in miniature; and everything measured with that instrument will be expressed only in terms of variety which is the nature of that instrument itself.

Therefore, if you use such an instrument to measure unity, it is no wonder that the unity is also expressed as variety. This is what happens when the mind is utilized to examine the 'I'-principle – which is unity itself. Thus the attempt fails miserably.

609. VARIETY (306)

'When', 'where' and 'why' are the expressions of time, space and causality in the realm of the mind, or each of them constitutes the mind itself. These three questions have *created variety* and have regular traffic with that variety, as though they have nothing to do with it. They also proceed to measure that variety.

The story of the pseudo-sannyāsin explains this beautifully. Once there lived in a village a strange sannyāsin who knew nothing of the Truth or of sannyāsa, but had only the rough externals of a sannyāsin – the ochre coloured robes, tuft and beard. However he was shrewd enough to deceive the simple villagers and command their love and veneration.

Once a real sannyāsin happened to pass through that village. The simple villagers wanted to bring about a meeting between the two sannyāsins. But the village sannyāsin was very reluctant, for fear that he might be exposed. At last he discovered a way out. He told the organizers of the meeting that he would first ask the visitor three questions. If the visitor yielded to all the three questions and had nothing to say about any of them, then it should be taken that the new sannyāsin is defeated and should be sent away immediately. The villagers agreed. The new sannyāsin, not suspecting any foul play at the meeting, also agreed to come. At last they met and the village pseudo-sannyāsin asked his three questions, one after the other, in great haste.

1. 'Have you not had a father?' 'Yes.'
2. 'Are you not a sannyāsin?' 'Yes.'
3. 'Are you not on your way to somewhere?' 'Yes.'

Alas! the three questions were answered all in the affirmative. The innocent villagers believed that the new sannyāsin was really defeated and, according to the agreement with their own sannyāsin, they drove the visitor away without a word.

This is exactly how the pseudo-sannyāsin of the ego has invented the three crucial questions of 'when', 'where' and 'why'; and flings them at every expression of the Reality.

The Reality stands illuminating even those questions and never stoops to argue. The satellites of the ego interpret this silence in favour of their own master, and altogether ignore the Reality.

610. IS NOT THAT ITSELF A THOUGHT WHICH ARGUES AND ESTABLISHES THAT THOUGHT IS NON-EXISTENT? (307)

No. Thought is that which is concerned with the outside world alone. That faculty which takes even that thought as an object of discussion can never be called a thought in the same sense, though both might superficially appear alike.

The first, thought directed outwards, creates; and the second, called vidyā-vṛitti, destroys all that the first has created. That is its only function. When nothing is left to be destroyed, it vanishes and stands as the Reality itself.

611. FEELING A DREAM A DREAM (308)

If during the experience of a dream you ever feel that it is only a dream, many seconds have not to elapse before you wake up from the dream.

Similarly, if you feel that this waking state is only like a dream, you are sure to wake up to the Reality soon.

14th October 1952

612. THE TING OF EMPHASIS (309)

The ting of emphasis, from the objective to the subjective part of your activities, is alone necessary to establish you in the Reality.

613. EXPRESSIONS LIKE ANGER AND THE SAGE (310)

Anger can exist only where there is love behind it, supporting even that anger, or in other words anger is only distorted love. Look through the expression and see the background, or look through the anger and see the love behind it.

Love, as it is, is imperceptible. But anger has more visible symptoms. Therefore, if ever a Sage appears angry, take it only as a blessing in disguise and try to see the love behind, through the visible anger.

614. HATE AND HOW TO DESTROY IT (311)

It is a usual occurrence in worldly life that you love someone when he loves you and that you hate him when he hates you.

Looking at it more closely, you see that your response was dictated purely by the other's feelings alone. Therefore, you should also direct your feelings not to him, but only to his feelings. So you should hate the hate in him; or hate hating, wherever it be. Therefore naturally, you should hate the hate in you first. When that is done you will cease to hate anybody.

You can deal effectively with all feelings in this way.

615. THOUGHT A MISNOMER (312)

Thought rises up in pure Consciousness beyond time; so thought cannot be anything other than Consciousness. Therefore, the usual conception of thought is wrong, or 'thought' is a misnomer.

616. WHO SEES? (313)

Not you, but the see-er or perceiver. The perceiver alone perceives. Each perceiver that perceives is different from every other perceiver, as a perceiver.

But you say you saw the same form as you did yesterday. Both the perceiver of yesterday and the perceiver of today saw only the particular form before each of them. They were both ignorant of what the other perceived.

But there was some other principle that perceived the sameness of the two forms. It was not either of the former perceivers of form. And that principle that perceived the sameness did not perceive the form.

Question: How to transcend the wrong groove of thought?

Answer: When the 'How' disappears.

Question: Why am I not able to experience the Truth when I am away from Gurunāthan as deeply as when I am in his presence?

Answer: Because you give room to that unwarranted sense of away-ness. You mistake the Guru to be the body and think him away or near. But he is never the body but Ātmā itself, and as such knows no nearness or away-ness. Be convinced of this Truth and your sense of away-ness will disappear, and your experience will become steady.

617. AN OBJECT POINTS TO CONSCIOUSNESS. (314)

You generally say 'The form appears.' This statement has two parts: 'form' and 'appears'.

'Form' is objective and 'appears' is something subjective. To whom does it appear? Certainly to you. Therefore you light it up by your Consciousness. So every object points to Consciousness.

618. HOW TO INTENSIFY THE THOUGHT OF THE ULTIMATE? (315)

Not like a yōgin, by applying your mind intensely to that thought.

But like a Jnyānin, relaxing all activity of the mind and merging even that last thought in the Truth itself. You have visualized the Truth in a particular state transcending the three usual states. To think of that Truth means to repeat that visualization once again, by going back to that same transcendental state. By going into that state again and again, you gradually become convinced of the Truth that that transcendental state really extends through all the usual states. Thus you become established in the Reality.

15th October 1952

619. POINTERS TO THE TRUTH (316)

Everything is a pointer to the 'I'-principle or Truth. But Consciousness and Happiness are the ultimate pointers to the same.

620. KNOWING AND ITS ORGAN (317)

If we consider knowing as a function, just like any of the senses, it should also have a corresponding organ and that is the 'I'-principle.

'I am seeing form.' Here 'form' is only another word for 'seeing'.

Similarly, when I say, 'I am knowing Consciousness', Consciousness is used only as another word for knowing.

621. CONSCIOUSNESS RECOMMENDED AS THE BEST OF THE THREE MEDIUMS FOR VISUALIZING THE ULTIMATE. WHY? (318)

Consciousness alone tells you that Existence and Happiness are both implied in Consciousness and so the Truth, visualized through Consciousness, comprehends the Existence and Happiness aspects as well.

But it might be said that Existence and Happiness also might say the same about the other two. In that case, Existence and Happiness are indenting upon the services of Consciousness even to say so. They themselves are established only by the help of Consciousness. Otherwise Existence and Happiness would never have been noted at all.

622. TEARS OF SOFT DIVINE EMOTION ARE THE PANACEA FOR ALL YŌGIC ILLS. (319)

623. ALL MENTATIONS TAKE ONE TO THE TRUTH (319A)

You can reach the background, the Ultimate, through any feeling provided you are sincere and consistent to the last.

Take, for example, hate. Here, you must continue to hate the creator as well as the created, including all the objects of your perceptions, thoughts and feelings – particularly your own body and mind and everything you call yours. Ultimately, when everything other than yourself is thus separated from you, you remain alone in your own glory as pure Consciousness and Happiness.

Looking back from that position, you find that all that you hated once was nothing but Consciousness and so you absorb it all into you as Consciousness. Thus hate is ultimately transformed into Love.

624. YOU DO NOT KNOW ANY SENSE OBJECT. (320)

When you say you know a sense object, the word 'know' is grossly misplaced.

Form can be perceived by seeing alone. To see a form, seeing is essential, and to know a form seeing and Consciousness are both essential. But seeing is not in Consciousness. On the other hand, Consciousness is in seeing.

Therefore, it is wrong to say you know form.

16th October 1952

625. 'I AM WALKING.' WHAT DOES IT MEAN? (321)

1. The statement implies that I was not walking, before starting to walk. Walking by itself was only something that temporarily came over me for a short period. Therefore it was distinct and separate from me, and so unreal.
2. From another standpoint, it may be said that I am 'walking' itself. I stand as 'walking' for the time being and there is nothing other than walking then.

draṣṭra-darśana-dṛśyēṣu pratyēkaṁ bōdha-mātratā
sāras tēna, tad anyatvaṁ nāsti kiñ cit kha-puṣpavat

Shrī Shankara

Each of the triad [of see-er, seeing and seen, or doer, doing and deed] is nothing but Consciousness. That is the Truth about it. Everything other than that is like a flower in the sky – mere illusion or imagination.

626. PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL (322)

You are the *personal*, when you are conscious of anything.
You are the *impersonal*, when you are Consciousness itself.

627. ALL BODIES ARE MINE, OR NO BODY IS MINE. (323)

When I am identifying myself with a body I call mine, all other bodies become alien to me as objects, the two together – my body and all other bodies – comprising the world.

But when what I call 'my body' is seen as my object, distinct and separate from me, naturally I have no other option left except to extend the same perspective to the whole world and group my body also along with the world of objects.

Then all bodies become mine, or no body is mine at all. In either case, I stand as the real background of the whole world.

628. BLISS SEEMS TO APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR. WHY? (324)

It is not the bliss that comes and goes, but it is you, the ego, that often goes into the bliss which is your very nature, and comes out into the mind. Your ego alone is responsible for it.

17th October 1952

629. IS READING OF THE SHĀSTRAS ESSENTIAL FOR REALIZING THE TRUTH? (325)

To this question Gurunāthan asked a counter question. Did the shāstras come from jnyāna or jnyāna from shāstras? Of course, the shāstras came from jnyāna. Then certainly, jnyāna can well be attained without the help of the shāstras, if one is guided by a Kāraṇa-guru.

(But before obtaining a Kāraṇa-guru, shāstras may sometimes be helpful to an aspirant and sometimes may be harmful as well. Because all shāstras may or may not

point to the spiritual, and the aspirant may not have the right discrimination to choose or interpret.)

630. NIRVIKALPA STATE (326)

Some yōgins hold that you can experience the Absolute only by going into the nirvikalpa state. If this is so, it is not the highest; since it limits the Absolute to a state, however broad.

Therefore, in order to reach the natural state, which is the highest, you have also to transcend this last taint, namely the misunderstanding that you can experience the Absolute only through nirvikalpa samādhī.

631. NAME AND FORM (327)

Name and form as such are not the Reality.

Name is non-existent without your being present. Form is also non-existent without your being present.

Therefore it is your presence alone that makes name and form real. So name and form are yourself, the Reality.

18th October 1952

632. SINCERITY AND EARNESTNESS (328)

1. Suppose you were to be sentenced to jail if you fail to pay up a huge debt before 11 a.m. tomorrow. How you would strain and apply every nerve to make good that amount in the time given! Similarly, you should also feel that life is not worth living until you have visualized the ultimate Truth.
2. Complete dissatisfaction with your present state of life and a longing for something better still also show sincerity and earnestness.

633. VICĀRA-MĀRGA OR THE DIRECT PERCEPTION METHOD (329)

This is the rationalistic exposition and establishment of Truth, put through the higher reason alone.

Spiritual ‘vicāra’ also creates sātṭvic saṃskāras which are doubly strong. They destroy the worldly saṃskāras and at the same time themselves become stronger and stronger. When the worldly saṃskāras are thus obliterated, the spiritual saṃskāras also disappear and stand transformed as the background Consciousness.

Examining deep sleep more closely, it is found to be no state at all. The dream and waking states are only appearances on deep sleep.

It is in and through Me that all activities take place. But all the mischief is created by the attempt to objectify that non-doer Self and its experiences, exactly as we do with the activities of the ego.

634. SAMĀDHIS (330)

The cosmological jnyāna sādḥaka’s samādhis are generally of six types:

1. bahir-dṛishyānuviddha [with sight outside]
2. antar-dṛishyānuviddha [with sight inside]
3. bahir-shabdānuviddha [with sound outside]
4. antar-shabdānuviddha [with sound inside]
5. bahir-nirvikalpa [with no diversity outside]
6. antar-nirvikalpa [with no diversity inside]

(See note 171 for explanation.)

26th October 1952

635. WHAT IS THE REALITY? (331)

Whatever you feel 'is' and 'is not', in the realm of the mind and the sense organs, is the Reality. Existence, Consciousness and Happiness when limited by the mind become life, thought and feeling. So it can even be said that there is only one thing and only one name – thing and name being only synonyms.

You suppose that world exists there. But the 'there' exists in Consciousness, i.e. your Real nature. So the world appears and disappears in Consciousness, in You.

You need only to live as a man *in* this world, and not as a man *of* this world.

636. 'FEELING WITHOUT FEELING' (332)

You say it was all Peace or Happiness in deep sleep. But neither the heart nor the mind was there to enjoy it. That experience is a typical instance of 'Feeling without feeling'.

Happiness or Peace alone is the subject, and all feelings or emotions are objects.

637. PURIFICATION OF THE MIND (333)

The purification of the mind is sought only as a help to reach the Truth.

The best way to purify the mind is to think of the Truth which you are and which is purity itself. When you know you are the purest of the pure, all thought of purifying the mind drops away. Your earnestness and sincerity to reach the ultimate Truth is the best means of purifying your mind before realizing the Truth.

638. HOW TO KNOW THE GURU? (334)

Answer: You need not and cannot know the Guru. If you know the Guru or if you do not know the Guru, in either case you cannot become a disciple. So you had better accept him when you feel you must.

639. DOES THE GURU ACCEPT ANYONE? (335)

Answer: It is not the Guru personally who accepts anyone. The Guru accepts everyone who is sincere and earnest about knowing the Truth.

Therefore, if the aspirant has accepted the Ultimate Truth as his goal, certainly the Guru's acceptance of him is a foregone conclusion. It is the spontaneous corollary to the decision of the aspirant. If the aspirant is only prepared to open the mouth of spiritual earnestness, the nectar of advaita will come in from the Guru, uninvited.

640. THE REAL BONDAGE (336)

Sense objects tie you down to the world. But when you come into contact with a Sage you get tied down to the Ultimate.

You can be relieved from the former bondage no doubt. But there is no escape from the latter.

641. WHO LIVES AND WHO DIES? (337)

It is said that an ignorant man never dies, because he is immediately born again; and the Sage alone is dead, since he is never born again.

But from another point of view, the opposite is also true, that the ignorant man always dies and the Sage alone really lives.

Seeing the Guru's body is like trying to catch the figure on a silver screen.

27th October 1952

642. THE DREAM STATE (338)

If the percept is proved to be non-existent as percept, the perceiver and perception both die at once. This is true equally of both the dream and waking states. Remove any one of the triad, and the other two also disappear immediately.

From the apparent perceiver, remove all that is perceivable or see-able and what remains is pure Consciousness.

643. MEMORY (339)

Memory is the last link in the life of an individual, binding him to the world. What has never been perceived before is supposed to have been perceived by you in a dream, by a mere statement of the memory. But memory itself was not present in the dream. Therefore memory is no proof of any former perception.

If you have seen, you cannot remember, because the rememberer is different from the see-er. When memory – which is a mere appearance – is removed, the Reality alone remains over.

30th October 1952

644. FALLACY OF SUB-CONSCIOUS AND SUPER-CONSCIOUS STATES (340)

The sub-conscious state: When the mind involuntarily and without any effort goes into a state where the mind dies, it is called a sub-conscious state – e.g. deep sleep.

Super-conscious state: When, as a result of an active effort of the mind, the objects gross as well as subtle vanish and you are thrown into a state where the mind becomes still, it is called the super-conscious state or samādhi.

But when you direct your attention to the Consciousness aspect of any activity, in any state, you transcend the mind and reach the Ultimate..

The taint of the 'sub-' and 'super-' consciousnesses lies in the samskāra that they are the cause of some other results, as ignorance is supposed to be the cause of the world.

Even when Consciousness appears limited to any object, know for certain that it is not limited. This knowledge takes you to the natural state.

Consciousness can never be 'sub' or 'super'. It is always Absolute.

645. WHAT ARE BONDAGE AND LIBERATION? (341)

When personality comes into the impersonal, it is *bondage*.

When personality merges in the impersonal, it is *liberation*.

But when it is established – so far as you are concerned – that there can be nothing other than the impersonal, it is immaterial whether you stand as the personal or as the impersonal.

646. WHAT ARE THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE TWO APPROACHES, NAMELY OF THE WITNESS AND OF PURE CONSCIOUSNESS? (342)

The witness is intended only to help you to transcend or dispose of any objective appearance as object, perception or thought, if such comes in from the outside.

But sometimes the Consciousness aspect is considered better to contemplate the Absolute, because no activity of body, senses or mind is possible without the help of Consciousness. So the Consciousness aspect comes in without any strain on your part.

Consciousness is Happiness. We should always look upon it as conscious Happiness or happy Consciousness.

647. HAS THE SENSE OF POSSESSORSHIP ANY ADVANTAGE? (343)

Yes it has. The personal God is first conceived as great on account of his possessing qualities of greatness. Thus the possessor is really the great one. But Ātmā, the ultimate background of all qualities, is the ultimate possessor.

As you begin to contemplate the qualities of greatness, you first begin to possess some of those qualities yourself and then gradually to transcend them. At last, when you begin to conceive of the iṣṭa-dēva as the background of all qualities, you too rise to the same background and you stand as one with the Reality.

648. WHAT IS THE FOURTH DIMENSION? 'TIME.' (344)

Length, breadth and thickness are the three usual standards adopted to measure space. If this space is supposed to move in any direction other than length, breadth and thickness, it is called the 'fourth dimension'.

For the vēdāntin, this is 'time'.

31st October 1952

649. YOUR REAL FACULTIES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS (345)

Your real nature has two distinct aspects, namely Consciousness and Peace; and they seem to function as though they are two distinct faculties of knowledge and love. They absorb everything into you. When an object comes into direct contact with knowledge or love, the object is spontaneously transformed into knowledge or love and it loses its identity as an object.

So knowledge and love really destroy everything external. They make the name ‘destroyer’, given to Lord Shiva, significant and meaningful.

650. THE ORIGIN AND SOLUTION OF QUESTIONS (346)

The ordinary man thinks that the objects of the world – gross as well as subtle, including body, senses and mind – are the legitimate outcome of the ultimate Truth. It is this erroneous conviction that gives rise to all manner of questions relating the objects to the Ultimate.

Whenever any question is asked touching the impersonal, what we have to do immediately is to refer to our own experience in the deep sleep state, which is purely impersonal. See if your question arises in the deep sleep state. If not, dismiss it summarily from your mind. In the world, each such question only multiplies diversity.

651. PLANES, CREATION AND THE TRUTH (347)

The gross and subtle planes are distinct and separate, the one from the other. The gross cannot be perceived from the plane of the subtle, nor the subtle from the plane of the gross. We see both from beyond both. Both of them are the expressions of their real background.

There is a lot of confusion about creation itself. The subject and objects of a state are not created individually. They come to light simultaneously and also vanish simultaneously. Look at the dreamer and the dream. When the dreamer disappears, nothing of the dream remains over. Similarly, the mind and the world are also simultaneous creations, if creation is conceded in any sense.

There are some sets of people who try to cover their ignorance and white-wash the confusion by saying that the whole is a play of the Absolute. Play can have no other purpose than innocent pleasure, or in other words, enjoyment. So the Absolute will have to be admitted to be imperfect. So they make a sorry figure of the Absolute itself.

The real solution lies ahead, in adopting the right perspective, in examining the content of any one activity as representative of the whole universe. Such an examination proves that the content of every activity and therefore of the world is nothing but pure Consciousness. But this is possible only when one has visualized one’s own real nature to be that pure Consciousness and Peace (under instructions from a Kāraṇa-guru). When one’s own centre is thus established in the ‘I’, the illusion of the world appears simply frivolous. You continue to see the mirage, knowing that it is a mirage.

Consciousness appears limited only because we look through the mind which is itself limited.

652. THE EGO’S DUPLICITY (348)

1. The ego is like a bastard born out of the illicit connection between the Absolute and the unreal. He does not appear anywhere during an activity, perception, thought or feeling. He appears only after the event, saying ‘I have done it.’
2. The ego is like the bachelor who dreamt that he was married and brought forth children, and woke up a bachelor again. The bachelor represents the Conscious-

ness part of the ego, and married life in the dream represents the illusion or the ego proper.

1st November 1952

653. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF TIME? (349)

Time strives hard in this world not to connect events, but to disintegrate them and to establish diversity.

654. WHAT IS MEANT BY 'I KNOW I AM'? (350)

'I know I am' is a single experience, recognized by all persons. It consists of two parts: 'I know' and 'I am'. The 'I am' can never be an object of 'I know'. Therefore both mean the same thing, and together are an experience in identity. When knowledge is objectless, it is not the subject either. These are the only two statements that require no proof.

Knowledge uninterrupted is Consciousness; happiness uninterrupted is Peace. Happiness is the first ebullition or sensation of Peace.

655. WHAT IS THE GUARANTEE THAT REALIZATION WILL NOT LAPSE? (351)

If it is something you get at this moment you may very well lose it later. However, your liberation is not an escape from bondage but an expression of real freedom behind that apparent bondage, knowing that bondage also is but an expression of freedom.

Bondage is ego, and the essence of ego is my real self – Consciousness.

656. HOW A QUESTION OFTEN MISFIRES? (352)

If you ask a question regarding a particular state, you throw the listener immediately into that state. If the question does not legitimately arise in that state, you cannot expect a regular answer to it.

If the questioner was not in the realm questioned, he has no authority to put that question; and even if answered, the questioner will never be able to understand it.

657. WHAT IS THE PRAKRIYĀ OF QUALITIES AND THE QUALIFIED? (353)

Qualities and the qualified are distinct and separate. Experience is the only proof of the reality of a thing. The qualities alone are experienced everywhere and the qualified is never experienced by anyone. Therefore the qualified as such is non-existent.

The qualities cannot exist by themselves without the presence of the qualified. Therefore the qualities are only mere appearances.

The qualities of the object alone being perceived and those qualities being proved to be unreal, the object as such is also unreal. The background of the changeless Reality (Consciousness) on which the changes, namely qualities, appear and disappear is alone what *is*.

It is only the expressed in the expression that makes you covet the expression.

658. ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT REALIZATION OR THE ULTIMATE (354)

In every question or comparison involving the Absolute, an attempt is made to objectify the Ultimate in however pure and sãttvic a manner. Just think where you were just at the point of putting that question. You were certainly beyond the phenomenal, and you were also beyond the ideas of the Absolute or of the experience implied in the question. That is certainly the stand of Truth. *Be there and you shall be free.*

Neither the question nor the answer really enriches you. The level at which you ask that question is beyond the relative. *Be that and you are free.*

This is true only of those who have heard the truth from the Guru. But a real Sage and a Guru may answer such questions in such a way as to take you immediately, beyond the question and beyond the usual answer, to the right Absolute afresh, without allowing such a question to arise a second time.

659. HOW A BOY OF FIVE WAS ENLIGHTENED ABOUT DEATH. AND ABOUT GOD. (355)

Ānanda, a boy of five, was incessantly tormented by thoughts and nightmares about death, which is supposed to be inevitable.

Gurunāthan: Were you not a small baby some years ago?

Boy: Yes. Yes.

G: Where is it now?

B: It is gone.

G: Where? Can you bring it back?

B: No. No. It is impossible.

G: So it is dead. Is it not?

B: No. But I am here.

G: I mean the baby you were once. It is gone for ever and will never be able to come back. That is what I mean by death. Did you cry when the baby was gone?

B: No. But till now I did not know it.

G: Similarly this boy will also die and you will be a youth. Then the youth also will die and you will become an old man. All these deaths one after the other you take pleasantly, don't you?

B: Yes, of course.

G: Then why do you cry and make noise when the old man dies? Is it also not like the many deaths you already had?

B: Yes. If this is the meaning of death, I shall not cry or be afraid of it any longer.

G: Why were you not sorry when the baby in you died? Because you knew that the baby alone dies and that you do not die. Similarly, it is only the old man in you that will die. You know that you will never die. You know your many deaths from your babyhood onwards. Similarly, you are the knower of the death of your old age also.

B: Yes! Yes! (With a luminous face.) Now I understand. I shall never more be afraid of death.

G: Now you are deathless, the Eternal. That is God. Do you follow me?

B: Yes, Gurunāthan. And the boy prostrated with tears dripping down on Gurunāthan's feet.

4th November 1952

660. WHAT IS PURITY? (356)

Only the Truth or Ātmā is pure. Everything else is *anātmā* or impure. The body, senses and mind are all impure, each in its own way. Mind may be purified by effort to the extent of even getting merged in *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Still, it is mind and may be highly pure in the relative sense, but it is impure in the sense that it is *anātmā* still, and limited by time.

Doing good to others is no criterion of purity. It is the pleasure you derive from doing good that prompts you to do it. Suppose you are prohibited by law from doing good. Certainly you feel sad. So you have to transcend both pleasure and pain, evil and good.

So you can become ultimately pure only by visualizing the Reality and establishing yourself in it.

6th November 1952

661. RELIGIONS AND THEIR MISSION (357)

Religion = Re + Lega

Re = Background; Lega = Binds

That which binds you to the background. But unfortunately no religion interprets it in this ultimate sense. All religions have the common goal to help man to lead a relatively moral, happy and contented life. Religion has been the greatest force and sanction in the world to keep man wedded to relative morality and goodness in life. It caters only to the satisfaction value, in response to the desires of man, varied as they are, according to countries, customs, manners and temperaments of people. Religion helps its adherents to prepare the ground by considerably attenuating their ego. When the ego is thus sufficiently attenuated so as to enable them to imbibe the ultimate Truth, the exceptional few get a *Kāraṇa-guru* who initiates them into the ultimate Truth.

So far as every religion goes, it is quite good and helpful to the followers. But Vēdānta comes in to supplement what religion had not been able to do. Thus Vēdānta is, strictly speaking, the fulfilment of all religions. It has no quarrel with any religion. It says to every religion: 'Please do not stop where you do. Come up higher still.'

Religious teachers and their instructions as a rule do not help one to go beyond the relative. Their goal itself is only the maximum of enjoyable happiness in duality. Some of the ancient devotees of Hindu personal Gods had the good fortune to get at the ultimate Truth in spite of the retarding influences of religion. After establishing themselves in the Truth, they looked back and analysed the stand they had formerly taken in religion. Now they could easily discover the slip they had made in religion. But they could not deny the immense purity of mind obtained through religion. This, of course, gave the devotee a good chance of imbibing the ultimate Truth, if only his attention was earnestly drawn towards Truth.

Therefore the ancient devotee-Sages codified and arranged the experiences they had had along the path of ultimate Truth, and added it on to Hindu religion in the name of ‘*darshana*’, even though in fact the *darshana* was a complete negation of religion. *Darshana* is pure Advaita Vēdānta. The mere fact that it is added on to certain Hindu religious texts does not make it part of Hindu religion. It is the fulfilment of all religions, including the Hindu religion.

662. WITNESS (358)

Question: Why am I asked not to contemplate the witness, nor deliberately take the role of the witness?

Answer: Because both are impossible.

Witnessing is done by the real ‘I’-principle in the plane beyond the mind; and activities like contemplation, remembrance etc. take place in the mental realm. When you try to contemplate the witness, you have to drag down the witness from the Ātmic plane to the mental. Then the witness ceases to be the silent witness, and what you conceive of the witness is only a thought form.

Remembrance in the realm of the mind is made possible by the presence of the witness alone. But the witness, as it is, is never capable of being remembered. Just examine – to whom does an activity appear? Certainly to Me. Or, in other words, I light it up. So I am the *witness* of the whole triad (tripuṭi). ‘The witness is an antidote to the poison of illusion.’

663. HOW DOES THE SAMSKĀRA OF UNHAPPY EVENTS BIND ONE? (359)

In the phenomenal world of duality, unhappiness has its counterpart happiness, inseparably linked with it. It is this happiness aspect, though latent, that binds one.

Looking from a slightly different standpoint, unhappiness is unfulfilled desire or obstructed happiness. As such, the essence of unhappiness is nothing but happiness itself, and it is this happiness that binds one.

664. WHY IS SUICIDE UNIVERSALLY DECRIED? (360)

Suicide is prompted by misery and desperation, and your want of boldness to face and overcome them. *Pauruṣha* does not come into play there.

665. IS THERE ANY SPIRITUAL VALUE IN FACING A PHENOMENAL PROBLEM? (361)

The world is a bundle of knotty problems and life is an incessant fight to overcome them. The fight against each problem has two distinct aspects.

1. The effort to solve the problem, and
2. The solution itself.

It has to be understood that a sincere and consistent effort at solving the problem helps one much more than the solution itself. This effort successfully develops in one a genuine spirit of self-reliance, which alone helps one to reach the ultimate Truth.

For example, look at the famous ‘Cārṣāka’ who is honoured as a *ṛṣhi* in Hindu śāstras. He denied God and religion outright. He was sincere and earnest all through

his striving, though he erred in his conclusions for other reasons. It was purely out of honest respect for his sincerity that he was honoured as a *ṛiṣhi*.

It is rightly said: 'A sincere atheist is much nearer the Truth than a superstitious bhakta.'

7th November 1952

666. WHEN AM I REALLY AND COMPLETELY LIBERATED? (362)

On listening to the Truth expounded by the Guru, you visualize the Truth and you know that you are the Truth always.

The ignorant one does not know it and cannot know it. But if you claim you have become liberated, a taint clings to your claim. You have to remove that taint also, by knowing that you have only become aware of the fact that you were never bound, and so never liberated either. Then liberation is beyond time.

667. WHAT IS THE POSITION OF THE WITNESS, AND HOW AM I TO DO THE WITNESS EXERCISE? (363)

The mind perceives objects – gross or subtle. The witness perceives the mind perceiving objects. The witness is the intermediary between the real 'I'-principle and the apparent 'I'-principle.

The witness has no body and so it has no outside. It has no mind and so it has no inside either. So the witness is always subjective, and the witnessed are all inside (meaning inside the mind) and not outside.

Everything past remains only as thought-forms, and thought-forms are cognized only by the witness. Therefore whenever any statement is made relating to the past, it means you were the witness; and if you say you had no mental activity, you were the witness to that absence also.

In the exercise of the witness aspect, you are not examining the witnessed at all. You are only eliminating – by the use of discriminatory logic – the known (witnessed) including body, senses and mind from the knower or witness. The knower is further proved to be nothing but knowingness or pure Consciousness, the real Self. Thus you rise gradually from the ego to the witness, and then you find that you are the right Absolute.

After visualization of Truth, conceding the existence of the world, the same exercise can be done in an improved form for the purpose of getting established in the Truth. You may begin by thinking that you are the witness as already known. But this thought does not continue as a thought. Because the witnessed being absent, the witness refuses to be objectified. Thus you stand as the disinterested witness, which you know to be nothing other than the Absolute. This perspective enables one to continue worldly activities effectively and disinterestedly.

668. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OCHRE COLOUR OF THE SANNYĀSIN'S ROBE? (364)

Ochre is the colour of fire; and it is supposed to represent the fire of pure knowledge, which destroys the stains of the mind – namely *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. The external

colour of the robe is expected to remind the *sādhaka sannyāsin* about his ultimate goal of Truth.

But to the householder on the direct path to the Truth, every object, thought, feeling or perception is an ochre coloured robe in effect, all pointing to his real nature.

For the sannyāsin who has reached the goal already, the robe is of no more personal service. Still, it continues to proclaim to the world the spiritual goal of his life and activities.

669. REAL SLEEP (365)

Strict inactivity is sleep.

In relaxation one should have something to hold on to. If you hold on to the 'I' and relax the senses and mind, you get to real sleep.

Let the mind be asleep to the whole world, and wakeful to the 'I'.

670. PSYCHIC RHEUMATISM AND ITS REMEDY. (366)

There is a vicious habit of locating in the world outside the cause of one's own experiences of misery, and naturally attempting to apply the remedy also to the outside. This is just like applying a local remedy to the particular part of the body which suffers rheumatic pains. Of course the ailment responds favourably for the moment and disappears, but only to appear elsewhere soon after. This play of hide and seek is no permanent remedy at all. The only true remedy is to see that even that evil is itself lit up by Truth and is Truth in essence.

You have only to correct yourself. Then your thoughts, feelings, perceptions, body – in fact everything – will undergo a simultaneous change. In this perspective, misery loses all its sting, because you see Truth or Peace as the background even of the misery.

671. SPIRITUAL LARCENY (367)

The personal in man usurping what really belongs to the impersonal is called 'spiritual larceny'.

672. IS THERE ANY TYPE OF LOVE IN THIS WORLD WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED IDEAL AND ACCEPTED? (368)

Yes. The love of the Guru for the disciple is the solitary example.

Even the love of a mother for her child is not disinterested, as long as she does not love any other child in the same way. No credit is really due to her on that score. She loves only her own flesh indirectly.

673. DOES NOT VIRTUE HELP ONE SPIRITUALLY? (369)

Yes. But not always. Even virtue by habit is no virtue. Conscious virtue alone becomes a virtue, and it is the motive or sympathy of heart that really elevates one. Frugality for any purpose is no virtue. But frugality for frugality's sake alone is good, because it inculcates selflessness which attenuates the ego.

674. WHAT SHALL WE DO WHEN YOU ARE NO LONGER WITH US? (370)

Answer: That which spoke to you will always be there to help you, and that which spoke to you should always be loved.

9th November 1952

675. PHYSICAL STRENGTH AND THE GOAL OF LIFE (371)

Question: Some say India has degenerated by losing physical strength as a result of her giving up meat eating. Is this statement justifiable?

Answer: No. What do you mean by degeneration? Is sturdy health the goal of life? No. It is only a means to one's own perfection. And perfection is not in the planes of body, senses or mind, but beyond. Developing sturdy health at the sacrifice of the ultimate goal of life, is nothing short of foolishness.

The thought waves of one who has attained such perfection (a Sage), permeate the whole world and sustain it in Truth and justice. Thus a spiritual aspirant is preparing to save the whole of humanity, while the aspirant to physical health is preparing for a physical war of defence or offence, in the name of self-preservation, without caring even for a moment to know what the 'Self' is. The Sage who knows the 'Self' finds nothing else to be preserved.

676. FOOD AND ITS REACTIONS (372)

The gross part of the food goes to the body and the subtle part goes to the mind. Foods like flesh and fish are purely *tāmasic*. They make the mind also *tāmasic*: incapable of rising to *sāttvic* heights and to higher logic.

We are also responsible morally for the *himsa* (injury) we cause in that connection. The butcher, the seller and the eater all partake of the *himsa* caused by meat-eating.

You might ask if this is not also true of consuming vegetables. No, the rudiments of mind and feeling begin only with animals. Vegetables have no such active thought or feeling which can react upon us and cause us misery.

11th November 1952

677. HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE DEEP SLEEP STATE AND THE SAHAJA (NATURAL) STATE? (373)

Before explaining this, the terms *Ātmā* and non-*ātmā* (*anātmā*) have to be defined.

Ātmā is the real 'I'-principle beyond the mind and so beyond time also.

Non-ātmā (also called *anātmā*) comprehends everything objective, including thoughts, feelings, perceptions and actions.

1. *tannēyurṁ tñallennukāṇunnavayēyurṁ*
maṛannirikkunnatū "nidra"

Forgetting oneself and forgetting the non-*ātmā* is *sleep*.

2. *tñallennukāṇunnavayēyurṁ tannēyurṁ*
maṛannirikkunnu ennuḷḷatū tñallātta-
vayettannilākki, tannēyurṁ maṛannirikkuka-
yākunnu, ennaṛiyunnatū "vastusthiti"

He who knows that the forgetting of non-ātmā is merging the non-ātmā in the Ātmā, is in the reality.

3. tannēyurñ tñallennukāṇunnavayēyurñ
mañannirikkunnatū tannilāṇennukāṇu-
nnatū “vastusthiti”

He who sees that the forgetting of non-ātmā and the apparent ‘I’ (wrongly called Ātmā) takes place in the Ātmā itself, is in the Reality.

4. tñallennu kñunnavaye tannilākki
tannēyurñ mañannirikkunnatū “vastusthiti”

He who deliberately merges the non-ātmā in Ātmā and remains forgetting himself, is in the Reality.

These four approaches are only slightly different from each other.

678. WHAT IS DISINTERESTED ACTION? HAS IT ANY TEST? (374)

Disinterested action is not possible to the ego. An action becomes disinterested only when you stand as the witness beyond the doership and enjoyership. The renunciation of enjoyership (the fruits of action) takes you only half way to the Truth. The other half, namely doership, has next to be renounced, if the action is to be made strictly disinterested.

There is no definite standard or test by which the disinterestedness of an action can be ascertained; because all standards and tests are mental, and disinterestedness concerns only the witness which is beyond the mind. The activity of a jīvan-mukta, which is disinterested action, cannot on the surface be distinguished from that of an ignorant man. Something vague can be said about disinterested action, but all that will only be a mere caricature of the Truth. There are, however, several tests and characteristics by which actions that are not disinterested can be distinguished.

Disinterested actions do not create a habit. At the same time they are performed with the greatest care and attention to detail. If you cannot exploit a particular action for subsequent pleasure or pain, that action may also be considered disinterested. The mere memory of such actions does not awaken any spirit of interest in you.

Interested actions have exactly the opposite effect. They bring in other thoughts or feelings in their train, and they create all sorts of habits. If an action lacks in perfection in any manner, or if its memory tends to create any kind of interest in you, you may be sure that such actions are also interested. If the action was prompted by the ego in the form of saṁskāras or the like, or if the action was done to the satisfaction of the ego, such action is also interested.

679. SHAKESPEARE’S SPIRITUAL POSITION IN THE LIGHT OF VĒDĀNTA (375)

Shrī Ātmānanda: In my opinion, Shakespeare was a realized soul (in the language of the west) or a jīvan-mukta (in the language of India). Spirituality is not the monopoly of any nation or country. Conditions might be favourable or partially favourable to the development of spirituality in one part of the world, and the means adopted might not be perfect in all places. But that does not preclude the possibility of rare individuals coming to perfection.

It is the law of nature, without exception, to provide the environment necessary for the fulfilment of the spiritual thirst for perfection in an individual in any part of the world, if the aspirant is sincere and earnest enough. Therefore the Sages have said: 'If you really want to know the Truth, you shall have it.'

Shakespeare was one such. No intellectual standards can ever test the spiritual greatness of a *jīvan-mukta*. Shakespeare, in his dramas, has created diverse characters of conflicting types, each with a perfection possible to perfection alone. A writer who has an individuality and character of his own can successfully depict only characters of a nature akin to his own. It is only one who stands beyond all characters, or in other words as *witness*, that can be capable of such a wonderful performance as Shakespeare has done. Therefore I say Shakespeare must have been a *jīvan-mukta*.

14th November 1952

680. IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ENJOYMENT OF HAPPINESS BY A LAYMAN AND A SAGE? (376)

Yes, of course. The layman's enjoyment is broken, because he takes it to be the product of objects. But the Sage's enjoyment is continuous; because he knows it to be the expression of his own Self, which never disappears.

18th November 1952

681. WHY IS NOT THE SAME *PRAKRIYĀ* APPLICABLE TO ALL ASPIRANTS? (377)

Different people attribute different meanings to the word 'I'. This is because differences of temperament and perspective place them at different levels of understanding.

Some persons take 'I' to denote the ego, a psycho-physical organism. The 'I' of this way of thinking must be removed in order to reach the Ultimate.

But in the case of some others, the 'I' is used only to denote the witness. In their case, the 'I' need not be removed at all. For them, it is enough if the witnessed is separated from the witness 'I'. Then the 'I' stands alone as the witness, and the witnessed is no longer in the witness. Therefore even the term 'witness' becomes meaningless and the 'I' stands as the Ultimate in all its glory.

For these two different types of aspirants, different *prakriyās* are inevitable. There are many other types also, who need still different *prakriyās*.

682. HOW TO ANSWER A QUESTION AND UNDERSTAND THE ANSWER ARIGHT? (378)

If any question is examined properly, you will see the stamp of the individual soul in it. Answering a question from the level of the question itself does not enrich you. The answer must be given from a higher plane, and the questioner must be prepared to understand such an answer.

When you say you comprehend something, you stand clearly beyond it. You can comprehend only that which is below you. The knower is always beyond the known.

683. WHY CAN'T THE REALITY BE EXPRESSED? (379)

Answer: Can you express your feelings? *No*. If so, can you hope to express the Reality – your real nature – which is far beyond even feelings?

tannatilla 'paranuḷḷu kāṭṭuvān
onnumē naran upāyam īśvaran

[God has not given anyone
a means to show what's in one's heart
to someone other than oneself.]

Kumāran Āśān, Naḷinī

21st November 1952

684. CRAZE TO IMPROVE THE WORLD (380)

Question: Looking around, we see individuals, communities and governments making herculean efforts to improve the world. Is this all in vain?

Answer: The question itself is spiritually ill-conceived and illogical. The question admits that you look out through your senses and see a sense world which is imperfect. You want to make it perfect by work which is also outside yourself.

Your sense world is inseparably connected with you through your senses. The apparent imperfection of the world is all the imperfection of the perspective that perceived the world. Apply the remedy at the source and perfect your perspective first. When you become perfect, your perspective also becomes perfect, and simultaneously the world of your perception will also appear perfect.

When you look through the senses, gross objects alone appear; when you look through your mind, thoughts or feelings alone appear; and when you look through Consciousness which is perfect, Consciousness alone appears and that is perfect.

The appearance of the world changes in accordance with the stand you take and the instrument you utilize. No amount of whitewashing can make your wall white, as long as you look through your green goggles. When one becomes perfect, one becomes impersonal; and the impersonal cannot attach any reality to the personal, much less come down to improve it.

685. WHEN DO BHAKTI AND JNYĀNA BEGIN TO APPEAR? (381)

We see in some children a peculiar sense of earnestness and sincerity, even in their play. It is this same sense in some cases that develops into earnestness and sincerity for God. In due course, this earnestness and sincerity expresses itself as *bhakti* or *jnyāna*, as occasion demands.

686. HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN BEAUTY AND THE BEAUTIFUL? (382)

Beauty is in you, always as yourself the source of all; and the beautiful is now and here. Beauty is impersonal, and the beautiful is personal.

When you are attracted by the beauty in any object, you assume there is a background for that beauty. But, on examination, you find that no such support exists. So you see that there is only beauty and not the beautiful, and that beauty is your own

Self. When you become unconscious of the beautiful, you come into contact with the beauty which is your own nature, and you say you enjoy it.

Non-ātmā is never an object for your consideration. All your attention should be directed to the Truth alone, and you will slowly get established there.

687. SAGES AS WELL AS SĀDHAKAS OF ALL TYPES RADIATE AROUND THEM THE FLAVOUR OF THEIR EXPERIENCES. (383)

In the presence of a profound devotee, you experience a trace of the happiness from the atmosphere which is charged with the happiness enjoyed by the devotee. In the presence of a yōgin, your mind, unawares, becomes slightly concentrated.

In the presence of the Sage, you feel the sublime peace that radiates from his real nature. It takes possession of you, and does not leave you even for hours after leaving his presence.

A jīvan-mukta is one who is neither bound nor free, but beyond both.

688. IS THERE ANY MEANS TO THE ABSOLUTE? (384)

Answer: If *samādhi* could be used as a means to reach the Absolute, your daily activity here and now can equally well be made a means to reach the Absolute.

Samādhi becomes a means to the Absolute only when the content of samādhi and your real nature are expounded by a Kāraṇa-guru to be pure Consciousness and Peace. Possessing this perspective, if you examine any particular activity of yours, you reach the Absolute that way also with less effort.

citraṁ vaṭatarōr mūlē vṛddhāś śiṣyā gurur yuvā
gurōstu maunaṁ vyākhyānaṁ śiṣyā 'stu chinna-saṁśayāḥ

Shrī Shankara, Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stōtram, Dhyāna-shlōka 3
– at start of *Surēshvarācārya's* *Manasollasa*

This ancient verse pictures, under the hospitable shade of a spreading banyan tree, a happy group – a young Guru and some old disciples. The Guru keeps absolute silence of body and mind, and expounds thereby the ultimate Truth, and the disciples are at once enlightened.

But why is the Guru pictured as young and the disciples as old? Truth is beyond time and ever-blooming, and therefore eternally young. The disciples, by age-long study of several śāstras and diverse exercises and experiences, all worldly, have become prematurely old and grey. They were enlightened by this ever-blooming Truth one fine day; and when Truth was experienced, they found it was quite uncaused.

Truth can never be communicated by anybody. If so, Truth becomes a commodity, capable of being handled by somebody; and consequently Truth becomes inferior to him who handles it.

The enlightenment was spontaneous; and the Guru in apparent silence was Truth itself, beyond body and mind.

689. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MORALITY? (385)

Morality, if followed intelligently and with earnestness, takes one to the egoless state, just like any other path of devotion, yōga etc. The path of *pati-vratya* (service and chastity, one-pointed love and devotion to the husband) adopted by the gems of the womanhood of ancient India was nothing other than this path of morality. Ancient history abounds in stories of arrogant yōgins of great powers and reputation and even the lords of the Trinity begging at the feet of such ladies for their thoughtless misdeeds.

Morality has the touch of the Absolute in it. The outer covering is immaterial. It is the touch of the Absolute alone that matters. That attenuates the ego every time you come into contact with it. So morality has to be observed, but without any eye on its fruits.

690. DEVOTION TO THE GURU (386)

The disciple who takes the Guru to be the formless Ultimate, is taken to the right Absolute.

However, the disciple whose sense of discrimination is less developed, but who has a deep devotion to the person of the Guru, may well take the Guru to be the form. His love and devotion compensate abundantly for the lack of discrimination; and he is easily taken through the form to the formless, and thence to the Absolute even without his knowing it. Revered Vaṭivīshvarattamma (?) – an illiterate woman devotee near Cape Commorin, who became a renowned Sage by her sincere and earnest devotion to her Guru (*Amma-svāmi*, who was a great yōgin Sage) – is a standing testimony to this class of Sages.

Though the disciple directs his love to the person of the Guru, the reciprocation comes from the impersonal which is the abode of love. When your limited love is directed to the Guru, who is love unlimited, the limitation of your love vanishes automatically.

The result can be perfect only if the Perfect is engaged in it.

691. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE ‘GURU-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP’? (387)

From the standpoint of the Guru – who is impersonal – he has no disciple. But he allows the disciple to take him as his Guru. That is all. The impersonal is not connected with the personal; but the personal is connected with the impersonal. The Truth is the world; but the world is not the Truth.

The snake is always connected with the rope. But the rope has no connection with the snake at all.

692. I AM NOT CHANGELESS. WHY? (388)

I perceive changes. To make this possible, I must have been the changeless background perceiving the changes.

But changelessness only means the absence of change. They are opposites. A taint of the change lingers in the very conception of changelessness. So I must transcend changelessness also, in order to be in my real nature.

Therefore, the path to the Ultimate lies from the changing, through the changeless, to the beyond.

693. WHERE IS FEELING? (389)

‘Feeling’ is the generic of all feelings. The generic feeling is the oneness in the diversity. It is not in the heart. It is the right Absolute.

694. HOW ARE ACTIONS AND IDEAS RELATED? (390)

Ideas, repeated often, express themselves as actions – we might call them ‘solidified ideas’. Other ideas, which are not repeated, remain as ideas ‘not solidified’. These two might look different on the surface, but in essence they are the same.

24th November 1952

695. WHY CAN I NOT SEE THE WORLD WHEN I AM IN CONSCIOUSNESS? (391)

When you see the tree, you stand as the tree. When you think of the tree, you stand as that idea. When you stand as Consciousness, both tree and idea of tree merge into Consciousness, leaving you as you are.

You cannot see the world from Consciousness, because Truth can never see falsehood. Look at the deep sleep state and everything will become clear.

696. HOW TO ANNIHILATE THE EGO? (392)

If you work against the ego, the ego most skilfully shifts its place to a higher ground.

Therefore direct your thought to your real nature, Consciousness, where the ego cannot reach. Then the limitations of thought disappear, and thought remains as Consciousness, pure. So you see that even as thought, it was not thought, but Consciousness in content.

This is the best way to annihilate the ego.

697. HOW CAN I BECOME A TRUE DISCIPLE? (393)

You can become a disciple only in three regular stages.

1. You regularly set apart some part of the day to pray to your Guru to learn to love him.
2. You feel without feeling that the Guru is the background of all your actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings.
3. You become a true disciple only at the highest level, when your personality vanishes and you stand as the impersonal truth. Then there is no duality of any kind, like the Guru or disciple or relationship.

When you say, see or think you are a disciple, you are a witness to the discipleship and not a disciple.

698. WHAT IS CONSCIENCE? (394)

Answer: It is really a coward. Repeated actions create habit. Repeated or condensed habit produces character often called 'conscience'. Those faults it has not strength enough to prevent, it has no right to accuse.

The appearance of a worse man makes a bad man appear a good man. Following one's artificial conscience is not the way to real progress.

699. WHAT ARE SLAVERY AND FREEDOM? (395)

The ordinary man is a slave to the body, senses and mind. This slavery is dissolved only in the alchemy of your love for the free (the Guru or freedom).

'Freedom' is the surrender of slavery at the feet of the Guru (the Absolute).

Usually it is slavery or bondage that craves for freedom, but often it is found unwilling to shake off bondage itself when freedom comes.

Incessant thought of bondage is not the way to transcend it. So turn your attention to real freedom or the Absolute and the bondage dies.

700. IT IS SAID THAT I AM A LOVING AND CONSCIOUS BEING. WHAT DOES IT MEAN? (396)

Being: It is the generic form of all one's experience; it is divorced of all qualities and distinctions. Then one comes to existence pure, which has no parts. This most expanded form comprehends all narrower denominations.

You admit that you are a loving being. Then the love goes into the being. It means that you are love itself, or that 'being' is love.

1st December 1952

701. THE NEED AND APPLICATION OF THE WITNESS ASPECT (397)

You are asked to do deliberately what you are doing unknowingly now. Take note of the fact that you are already and always the witness.

Remembrance is the faculty which makes life appear a connected whole. Remembrance means knowing first and recalling afterwards, without considering that the agents are different. Knowing belongs to the witness and remembrance belongs to the mind. The two activities take place in two different planes.

But knowing is strictly not an activity. Usually, all activities – of body, senses and mind – are attributed to the 'I', the background. But really the 'I' can never be involved in all this. This false identification is the root of all trouble and misery.

If you can, in any way, cease to continue this false identification, you are saved. To do this, the witness aspect is brought forward. The witness is always silent and changeless. Objects or activities are not emphasized at all in the witness aspect. The witness is unconcerned and can never be brought out for evidence regarding facts. When you stand as the witness, you see that the things witnessed are not in the witness. So you transcend all duality.

Thus standing as the witness, being all alone, you stand as the right Absolute itself. The witnessing is superimposed upon the Reality, but this does not injure you.

3rd December 1952

702. IMPORTANCE OF INTELLECT (398)

Question: Why is intellect considered all important in the world at large?

Answer: The vast majority of people in the world attribute reality to the apparent sense-world, and they live practically out of themselves. All the philosophies, sciences, arts etc. of the world are trying to explain phenomenal problems in terms of the world itself, utilizing the faculty of intellect as the instrument.

Of course the intellect is the highest faculty endowed upon man for his enquiry and traffic inside the world; and the decisions of intellect are accepted as final beyond question. This is why intellect is considered all important in the phenomenal world.

But to the vĕdāntin, intellect, though subtle, is only an object like any other object; to be examined for its content (*svarūpa*) from the standpoint of pure awareness, and disposed of as mere appearance.

703. THE HISTORY OF ADVAITA (399)

The Upaniṣhads are the oldest records of Advaitic Truth. It flourished first in North India. Subsequently, South India might have won the ascendancy over the North.

But what is true of India is true of every country; and men must have visualized the Truth in their own way in many countries. For example, the teachings of *Taoism* come very near Advaita. *Jnyānins* may differ vastly in their ways of life and in their manner of expounding the Truth; but they have much in common with Advaita.

5th December 1952

704. HAS THE WAY OF LIFE ANY BEARING UPON TRUTH? (400)

The ways of life of Shrī Kṛiṣṇa, Shrī Shuka, Shrī Rāma and Shrī Vasiṣṭha were all different. But they were all equal as jīvan-muktas.

kṛṣṇō bhōgī śukas tyāgī nṛpau janaka-rāghavau
vasiṣṭhaḥ karma-kartā ca tēṣāṃ mukti-sthitis samā

[Kṛiṣṇa enjoyed the fruits of life.

Shuka renounced what others sought.

Rāma and Janaka were kings.

Vasiṣṭha practiced formal rites.

But in that freedom each attained,

they are the same. Each is that one.]

(?)

Answer: Yes. As individuals, they were all different. They were not Sages *as such*. The Sage was Kṛiṣṇa, the Sage was Shuka, the Sage was Janaka, the Sage was Rāma, and the Sage was Vasiṣṭha. The Sage is only one, and that is the Truth. But, as living entities, they were all different.

705. HOW TO MAKE ONE UNDERSTAND THE SAGE? (401)

It is so easy. Just direct your mind to your deep sleep. The Sage is there in deep sleep. The Sage is exactly as you are in your deep sleep. If any question is put about the Sage, just ask the questioner the same question regarding his role in the deep sleep state.

Even when you are engaged in all your daily activities, does the man in you ever get disturbed? No. Similarly, the Sage is undisturbed by any of his apparent activities. When correctly examined, of course you will see there are no activities either.

Diversity can never stand scrutiny. Then why bother about activities? There is only one activity. And if activity is only one, it cannot remain as activity. It is the Reality itself.

706. HOW TO FACE ANY PROBLEM? (402)

The appearance of questions, after one has visualized the Truth, is only the futile attempt of the ego to postpone the imminent date of its own extinction.

Your real nature has been proved to you beyond doubt. See if any problem disturbs your centre, and then alone try to solve it.

When a problem arises, even on the phenomenal level, direct your attention to the '*problem*' and lose yourself in the problem. Then you will find that the result will be not the merging of yourself in the pain or problem as usual, but the merging of the problem in the 'I'. The 'I', as sufferer, becomes the suffering itself, and no pain is experienced as such.

When a question arises in your mind, see if it has any intimate connection with – or bearing upon – your real nature or the 'I'-principle. If it has not, leave it to itself. If it does bear any connection, answer it and rise by it. If a question serves to establish duality, leave it alone.

If you feel that you would be spiritually enriched by answering a question, accept it, answer it and be enriched by it. If not, leave it alone.

6th December 1952

707. HOW DOES REMEMBRANCE FUNCTION? (403)

How do you try to remember a pleasurable sensation that you have had? You think of all the details, like the place and circumstances which you suppose were connected with it, till the mind comes to a climax preceding the enjoyment sought. Just then, all the antecedent thoughts vanish, and you are thrown into that pleasurable sensation again.

Similarly, with regard to repeating the experience of Truth you have once had, you have to begin likewise recounting the place, circumstances etc., till at last all your thoughts vanish and you are thrown into that same experience again. Don't desire the expression, but direct your attention always to that which is expressed. Expressions ultimately die, in order that the expressed may be there as the Absolute.

708. WHEN I CONSIDER I AM IN SORROW, WHY IS THERE PAIN? (404)

1. The reaction can take place in two ways: one emphasizing sorrow, and the other emphasizing the 'I'. In the former case, you become sorrow and emphasize the 'sorrow' part. But if you emphasize the 'I' part, the sorrow becomes you; and then sorrow vanishes, leaving you alone.

Sorrow has parts, and you have no parts. When sorrow becomes you, it ceases to have parts and becomes one: which is Happiness – the background – your Self.

2. Because at that moment you are not that, you are not sorrow. Sorrow brings in trains of objects. When the objects are removed, sorrow is transformed into bliss, the background.

You want others to come in, in order to sorrow.

Sorrow must cease to be, in order to become you.

The heart that enjoys happiness is not the heart that suffers pain; because pain is something objective, and happiness is something subjective.

The consciousness which perceives consciousness of objects is not pure Consciousness.

You have been taken to the Ultimate; all questions have been solved on the way. Now ask a question – if you can – only from the level of the Ultimate.

709. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF SUICIDE? (405)

Suicide is not the result of hate, as it is ordinarily taken to be. But it is only a crude method of dispensing with the body, when the body happens to stand as an impediment to freedom or happiness. He who commits suicide is not the one that dies. The killer can never be the killed. So the killer remains over, even after the suicide (killing). Therefore suicide – in the sense it is understood – is a myth.

710. IS THERE ANYTHING REDEEMING OR ENRICHING IN DOMESTIC LOVE? (406)

Answer: Yes, but not in all types.

The love of father and mother for the child is selfish, because instinct and relationship of the flesh make it selfish to the core. Sentimentality is always connected with objects. If what you call love produces a limited feeling, it is certainly no love.

But the love of husband and wife can be made selfless; because they have no such things in common before marriage, and instinct does not come into play. If you succeed in loving your partner as your Self, it clears the way for the love towards any other individual likewise. Thus your love easily becomes universal and therefore objectless. This is the Reality. You will need the touch of the Guru at the last stage, and you instantly become a *jīvan-mukta*.

This was the path adopted by the *patī-vratās* (the celestial women who are the ideals of chastity and husband-worship) in ancient India, and they attained their goal smoothly and effortlessly.

711. WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF TACKLING QUESTIONS, EVEN AFTER VISUALIZATION? (407)

If, after visualizing the Truth beyond all doubt, any question arises, you are asked to look back to the source and level of the question. You are immediately referred back to the background. Thus it takes you to the Ultimate, every time questions are answered this way. It establishes you in the background more easily than in any other way.

7th December 1952

712. WHAT IS THE ACTIVITY OF THE ‘I’? (408)

No. The ‘I’ has no activity whatsoever.

I am the Reality. To be active, ‘I’ must get out of the Reality, for the time being. Because activity is only in duality. But can you ever get out of the Reality? *No.* Then all search for Truth becomes meaningless. Has the rope ever become the snake? *No.* Then where is the problem?

Nothing you have understood in a drunken mood can ever take you out of drunkenness. Such is the question ‘Why?’ Get rid of the poison, and the question disappears.

713. CAN ADVAITA BE APPLIED UNIVERSALLY? (409)

No. It is forbidden in one context alone. That is in the presence of the Guru. Everywhere else, you can boldly apply advaita and rise to the Ultimate.

It is true that advaita is the highest. But it was there all through time, and it did not come to your notice or help you in the least. It needed only a *single ray, through a word, from the flood-light of the physical Guru*, to enable you to see advaita and to visualize the Reality. The disciple, who has a throb in his heart, does not need a thought to trample down the question pertaining to the Guru, the moment it is heard. Therefore even the thought of oneness with the Guru is unimaginable to a true disciple, even from an academic standpoint.

nādvaitam guruṇā saha
(see note 466)

Shrī Shankara, Tattvopadesha, 87

rajju ajñānād bhāti rajjau yathā ’hiḥ
svātmā-jñānād ātmanō jīva-bhāvaḥ .
dīpēnai ’tad bhrānti-nāśē sa rajjur
jīvō nā ’ham dēśikō ’ktyā śivō ’ham ..

[By misperception of a rope
a seeming snake gets to appear
upon the rope that’s wrongly seen.
So too, by wrongly seeing self,
a seeming person there appears –
created by imagining,
from what is self and self alone.

When the illusion is destroyed –
by light that shows what's truly seen –
there is no snake, but just the rope.
So too, by what my teacher says,
I am no seeming person here.
I am just consciousness alone –
found absolute, all by itself.]

Shrī Shankara, Advaita-pancaratnam, 1.2

The higher śāstras endorse this view. So far as the disciple is concerned, the Guru is the light that firsts lights up even the Reality.

714. HOW DO I REALIZE? (410)

You realize not by renouncing the world, nor by allowing the world to be. But you only take note of the fact that you are always standing as that Truth.

8th December 1952

715. WHAT DOES 'TAKE NOTE OF' MEAN? IS IT ACTIVE OR PASSIVE? (411)

It is neither active nor passive. It takes place on the borderline of mind and the Reality. You may start it as a simple thought, and allow that thought to expire, leaving you as you are. You have grasped it already. Just make that grasping stronger. Hitherto, you did not recognize this fact. But now recognize it. By such a recognition, the ego is immediately transformed into the Truth.

If it is the *cure* you need, information about the composition and qualities of the medicine is not relevant.

'Taking note', at the mental level, may be taken to mean only remembering; though even remembering immediately vanishes, giving place to the Reality.

716. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SEE? (412)

When you see, the seeing alone is there and not knowledge. But of course, there is knowledge in the seeing.

So far as seeing is concerned, that knowledge part is not taken into account at all. When the seeing is completed, form vanishes and knowledge dawns. Not knowledge of the form, but knowledge pure.

Thus every object ties you down not to unreality, but to the Reality itself. Therefore every activity, in fact, destroys its object by making it vanish into the Reality.

When 'I see' is examined closely, seeing vanishes and you will be forced to say 'I do not see'. But ordinarily, you do not push far enough, in order to examine the latter statement. When examined, the 'I do not see' vanishes likewise and there is only 'I am.' Thus the Truth is beyond both 'I see' and 'I do not see.'

So regarding any object, you come to the conclusion that there is 'nothing'. Here '*nothing*' is the name of the *Reality*. Therefore in order to understand the significance of any activity, one has to transcend the opposites.

717. WHEN IS LIBERATION COMPLETE? (413)

Only when you are liberated from liberation as well. Liberation is only the end of bondage or its opposite. As such, liberation carries the taint of bondage in itself and is relative. So you have to transcend the opposites, bondage and liberation, in order to reach the Absolute.

Till then, liberation is not complete.

718. THE FALLACY OF 'TIME' (414)

1. Time is believed to be composed of the past, present and future. Of these three, the past is past only in reference to the present and the present is present only in relation to the past, future is future only in reference to the present. So all three being interdependent, even for their very existence, it has to be admitted by sheer force of logic that none of them is real. Therefore, *time is not*.

2. Experience is the only criterion by which the reality of anything can be decided. Of the three categories of time, past and future are not experienced by any, except when they appear in the present. Then it can be considered only as present.

Even this present – when minutely examined – reduces itself into a moment which slips into the past before you begin to perceive it, just like a geometrical point. It is nobody's experience. It is only a compromise between past and future as a meeting point.

Thus present itself being only imaginary, past and future are equally so. Therefore, *time is not*.

719. IRRELEVANCY OF QUESTIONS ABOUT REALITY (415)

When you ask why, when, where etc., in relation to the Reality, you take it for granted that why, when, where etc. are more real than Reality itself. This position is absurd. Therefore no such question can be asked, relating to the Reality.

720. WHY IS NOT THE SAGE ALWAYS MERCIFUL? (416)

I may admit that practice of mercy is one of the many ways suggested to enable one to become one with all others. But if one has attained that goal by other means, what more need is there for further practice of mercy in case of that one?

721. WHAT IS THE CLUE TO ONE'S OWN REAL NATURE? (417)

The only clue given to us by the unseen, to understand one's own real nature, is the 'deep sleep state'. That alone is ours in fact.

9th December 1952

722. NESCIENCE (ALSO CALLED 'IGNORANCE' OR 'MĀYĀ') IS A MISNOMER. (418)

The only phenomenal experience we have is the knowledge of an object, gross or subtle. If the object is removed from the knowledge of the object, what remains over can only be pure Knowledge or Consciousness. Similarly, when all objects are re-

moved from the knowledge of objects in deep sleep, what remains over is nothing but the same Consciousness, pure.

Therefore, to say that there is ignorance in deep sleep is absurd. Because ignorance can never co-exist with Consciousness. If ignorance is construed as absence of things, absence can only succeed and never precede the perception itself. For this reason also, ignorance is a misnomer. Many more arguments can be adduced to prove the same thing.

11th December 1952

723. HOW TO FIGHT DISLIKE TOWARDS ANOTHER? (419)

There is no doubt that the man and dislike of him are entirely distinct and separate, one from the other. It is the dislike alone and not the man that really troubles one. That dislike is purely mental. To get over that dislike, you must necessarily transcend the mental level. That is the only possible way.

Or, if you dislike another, you can rationally analyse the dislike and prove it to be none other than yourself, and the dislike is immediately transformed into love.

724. WHAT IS BEAUTY, AND ITS RELATION TO THE BEAUTIFUL? (420)

Beauty is inside, and is impersonal. But inside there is only the real Self, which is also impersonal. There cannot be two impersonals inside, because the impersonal is beyond duality and therefore Beauty is the real Self.

When an object is anointed with the gild of your own Self, you like it and call it beautiful. Thus a child, however ugly by common consent, appears beautiful to its mother. You consider something beautiful, and others consider other things beautiful. But when the object is removed, the beauty stands alone and permanent. Therefore, if the beauty and the beautiful are separated by some means, beauty is left alone and supreme. Everything beautiful is only a symbol directing you to the Self, as beauty in you.

12th December 1952

725. IS A SAGE'S LIFE BENEFICIAL TO ALL? (421)

By 'life' we mean the activities of life. They fall into three categories: physical, mental, and conscious or *Ātmic*.

Mental activities are accepted to be much more strong and effective than the physical.

But the last, though extremely rare, is the one pertaining to the Sage. They are self-effulgent activities of light and love, and their effect is imperceptible to the naked eye, unlike those of the preceding ones. They come from the Sage spontaneously, unasked. It is such activities alone that keep the moral balance of the world, even in the midst of all chaos.

726. WHAT IS THE TEST OF MY PROGRESS TOWARDS THE TRUTH? (422)

Your increased sincerity and earnestness for the Truth, which you alone can know, is the best test possible.

727. THE SAGE SOMETIMES SEEMS TO COME DOWN TO A LOWER LEVEL IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS. IS IT A COMPROMISE? (423)

No. Never. Though the level of the answer might appear lower when looked at from lower down, it is not so; because the Sage is all along emphasizing that Reality which the questioner has never noted. So the answer, unknowingly, takes the listener to the goal; and therefore the result is not a compromise at all.

728. HOW TO FACE PAIN (424)

Avoiding pain, by directing the mind away from the pain, is *yōgic* in character. But becoming the pain, or standing as witness to that pain, is purely *jnyānic*.

729. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEATH OF A LAYMAN AND A JNYĀNIN? (425)

If you concede that a Jnyānin has a body, no other concession likewise can legitimately be denied to him. Speaking from the relative level, in the case of the layman, only the gross body dies and the subtle body along with its *samskāras* is supposed to take another body on rebirth. But in the case of the Jnyānin, the mind also dies or dissolves in the Absolute and nothing remains over for rebirth.

730. WHO ANSWERS ONE'S PRAYERS? (426)

It is admitted by all that prayer, to be effective, should be sincere and deep. It means that one's identification with the inner being should be deep, although unknowingly. Therefore, evidently, it is that *being, the Self* that awards the fruits and not anything else.

731. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KINGDOMS ON EARTH? (427)

The kingdoms are mineral, vegetable, animal, man and God-man: in order of progression. They are all but layers of ignorance, viewed from the spiritual standpoint.

732. WHAT WAS THE METHOD EMPLOYED BY SOCRATES? (428)

The method of Socrates was to follow the lines already laid down. But he would say something more about the Truth, when he found that his followers were landed in a dilemma and could not proceed.

His followers did not aspire for the ultimate Truth, in the *vēdāntic* sense. They erred in so far as they failed to reckon their own part in their questions. They did not ask themselves who was to decide in solving the questions and who was to judge. They say: '*One is.*' The '*is*' is superfluous, since that '*is*' – which represents the subjective element – is already in the '*One*'.

Socrates did not attempt to expound the whole Truth to his followers in a regular order (as is done by the *vēdāntic* teachers of India). We do not know why. Even his followers, in their comments on and interpretations of his teaching, do not seem to have done full justice to the sublime stature of Socrates. This has been the experience

all over the world (particularly in India), wherever the words of a Jnyānin have been explained or interpreted by persons of lesser experience. The conflicting commentaries on the Upaniṣhads are an example of this evil.

733. HOW IS THE WORLD ESTABLISHED? (429)

When one says that the world is, the Self does not come in to prove it. It is the senses and mind, which form part of the world, that strive to establish the world.

734. WHAT EXACTLY IS THE HEART? (430)

Heart is not the seat of emotions and feelings alone, as is the usual view. It is the whole being, viewed through the faculty of feeling.

Where the heart of the Gopīs of Vṛindāvana turned to Kṛiṣṇa, their heart was their whole being: including the head, intellect etc. So, that heart could easily rise to the Ultimate.

735. WHO IS IN ILLUSION? (431)

It is only the man in illusion who thinks that he is in illusion. I have never told you that you will never be reborn. I have only said that you will be rid of the illusion that you were ever born or will die.

736. HOW TO PROCEED (432)

It is but wise to prepare yourself, before starting on a bold venture. Even before proceeding to cut down a tree, you must first examine whether the axe is sharp, else the effort will be futile and a waste of energy.

So also, when you proceed towards the Truth, you must first carefully examine the instrument and see that the real subject is utilized.

Very often, it is not so. The real subject is ignored. Then failure is inevitable.

737. WHAT ARE BIRTH AND DEATH? (433)

‘Nothing’ can never be the source of ‘something’ – ‘I’. If ‘I’ am born out of ‘something’, that ‘something’ is still with me. So I was never born, and so there is no death for me or for anybody.

You can cease to fear death only by the strength of your conviction of a solid and permanent something within you.

738. WHAT IS HUMAN EFFORT? (434)

Human effort consists in creating bondage for oneself, clinging fast to it, and wanting to become free without giving up bondage itself.

14th December 1952

739. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YŌGA AND VICĀRA? (435)

Yōga is one-pointed attention and concentration upon a set ideal.

Vicāra is concentration without giving up variety. You should not be carried away by the idea that there is anything to be attained by such strenuous effort as demanded by *yōga*. *Vicāra* makes you catch the right perspective to see the Truth as it is. You are not asked to do anything new. You are perfectly in order, even when engaged in worldly activities. Only take note of this fact. See that everything is perfect, and that you are there behind all. As Shrī Aṣṭāvakra, the ancient Sage, sings:

sama-duhkha-sukhaḥ pūrṇa āśā-nairāśyayōḥ samaḥ .
sama-jīvita-mṛtyuḥ sann ēvam ēva layam vraja ..

[You are that being which is perfect:
just the same in pain and joy,
the same in hope and in despair,
the same in living as in dying.
Only thus, as perfect being
may you come to be dissolved.]

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 5.4

You are not asked *to be* the same in both. But you are only shown that you *are* the same in both.

740. HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN HAPPINESS AND PEACE? (436)

Happiness is momentary.

Peace is happiness continued.

Happiness, as seen by the disciple, is apparent and time-limited.

Happiness, in the eyes of the Guru, is nothing other than absolute Peace itself (Happiness unlimited). It transcends even happiness. It is *sat-cit-ānanda*. Or better still, *sat-cit-shānta*.

741. IS IT IN ORDER TO SPEAK OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF AN OBJECT? (437)

No. It is wrong. The statement presupposes the existence of objects even before knowledge. This is impossible. Knowledge of the object is the only proof by which we can establish the existence of the object. Therefore, without establishing the existence of an object by some other means, the statement cannot stand. So objects are not, and knowledge is only pure Knowledge.

742. THE MYTH OF BONDAGE AND LIBERATION (438)

I know myself (I know I am). This is the only fact that does not want a proof.

Everything has to be reduced to knowledge before I can know it, or absorb it into me as knowledge; because I am knowledge myself. Therefore I can know nothing other than myself.

Bondage comes in when I do not know myself. This position is absurd. Therefore there is no bondage, and no liberation either. Knowing this, be free, and be at Peace.

743. WHAT IS WITNESSED? (439)

Only illusion. In the illustration of the figure in the rock, the 'figure-illusion' is witnessed by the rock. Similarly, everything other than Consciousness is witnessed by Consciousness. So actions, perceptions, thoughts, feelings etc. are all witnessed by consciousness. But these do not really exist. Neither does the figure. The figure-illusion alone is witnessed by the rock, and the object-illusion alone is witnessed by consciousness.

744. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU THINK OF CONSCIOUSNESS? (440)

All thought of Consciousness annihilates thought, like a moth in the fire.

745. HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE TRUTH? (441)

In talking about the Truth, you (the ego) must cease to talk, and allow it (Truth or the real Self) to talk or express itself in its own language.

746. HOW IS THE SAGE BENEFICENT TO SOCIETY? (442)

Is the Sage beneficent to himself? Yes. If so, he is beneficent to the world which is in essence himself.

Is he beneficent to humanity? Yes. He is beneficent to man as man. He proves to man that he is one with animals, vegetables and minerals. What higher form can love take than feeling one with another? This is the highest service, and this the Sage does in full.

You say one must love his neighbour as himself. When the Sage does it in full, you find fault with him. When one loves his neighbour as himself, he cannot stand separate to do service to him. So to do service, from the standpoint of a Sage, is impossible.

You can never become one with another with the body or with the mind. Beyond mind, there is no duality of any kind. One has only to rise to that level and all problems vanish. The Sage stands there in Peace.

747. HOW TO BECOME PERFECT? (443)

Some try to become one with God, in order to become perfect. But, I say, become 'man' and that itself makes you perfect. By 'man' I mean that which is common to all men, and that is impersonal and Absolute.

748. HOW TO APPLY THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE THIRSTY ONE IN QUEST OF WATER IN A MIRAGE? (444)

The thirsty man goes to the mirage for water and discovers that it is a mirage. But you ask why he still feels thirsty. This is the usual incompetency of an objective illustra-

tion for a subjective problem. Here, you must understand that everything other than himself is mirage. The thirst, the elsewhere etc. are all mirage. Therefore the water can no longer appear separate and you find yourself alone in your own glory. Stand in the Reality, your nature, and examine the mirage of the world.

17th December 1952

749. WHEN CAN ONE SEE THAT ONE IS A TRUE DISCIPLE? (445)

Never. Because, in order to see that, one must stand separate from the disciple.

The crucial point is, what is it that one wants? Is it to see that worldly life proceeds successfully, or get established in the Ultimate? If it is the former, it is impossible. If it is the latter, the former question does not arise.

750. WHAT IS ĪSHVARA? (446)

The aggregate of everything that prevents the accomplishment of your desires is *Īshvara*. Suppose you want to fly. Everything other than that desire is opposing the desire. The desire is also *Īshvara*. The body is *Īshvara*.

He who destroys everything other than himself is *Īshvara*.

All-knowingness is attributed to *Īshvara*; which means that *Īshvara* knows the past, present and future and also knows that one which knows the principle that knows these. It can be nothing other than pure Consciousness. The *all-knowing* can never be part of the known world. It is pure knowledge. It is not the principle that knows. That principle must also be known.

18th December 1952

751. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE SUBDIVIDING OR GRADING OF CONSCIOUSNESS? (447)

Usually, Consciousness is divided into the sub-conscious, conscious and super-conscious – all being based upon Consciousness. Pure Consciousness is equally present in all the three states. It is from the standpoint of Consciousness itself, and not from the standpoint of him who is conscious, that these different states are to be considered.

The services of pure Consciousness have to be indented upon, to connect the three states; and in that light there is no difference between these states. You can compare the states only by standing outside them, as their perceiver. The perceiver can never be the perceived. The perceiver is pure, impersonal Consciousness alone. It is *Consciousness* and not '*conscious*'.

All the three are expressions of Consciousness, and all the three are 'sub' or inferior from the position of Consciousness. What you call 'super' from the mental level in the waking state is 'sub' from the level of pure Consciousness. So they are only empty words.

752. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE? (448)

Deep sleep. It really saves you from going mad.

753. CAN I DIE GLADLY? (449)

Of course you can! What is the object of your life? Happiness. If you can get it even now and here, would you not die gladly? Not by ending this life, but by knowing death. That is how all Jnyānins die. Therefore, know yourself and transcend death.

754. HOW TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF DEEP SLEEP? (450)

If you merely direct attention to the deep sleep state, you are thrown into the deep sleep state. But, under the instructions of a Kāraṇa-guru, if you direct your attention to the Happiness aspect of the deep sleep state, you are thrown into the Happiness aspect, i.e. your own real nature. Then all nescience drops away, as the material parts of the ego do when you emphasize the consciousness aspect, and you remain in all your glory.

755. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF FORM AND SEEING? (451)

Form exists alone (let us suppose).

Seeing = Form + Consciousness

So, when form merges in seeing, form disappears and Consciousness alone remains over. That was the real part of seeing.

You do not actually see form. It is *form forming form*. The fleshy eye is nothing but form. It is this fleshy eye that *forms form, as if it was outside*.

756. WHAT IS WISDOM? (452)

It is not increase of knowledge, as some persons take it to be. Knowledge does not increase or decrease, as you know more objects or less. *Knowledge without object is wisdom proper*.

757. HOW IS OBJECT RELATED TO SUBJECT? (453)

The object exists only in relation to the subject. But the subject is self-evident. It is wrong to bring in the object to prove the subject.

The subject is Consciousness – the Self – and self-luminous by nature. It is really *Knowledge, objectless*.

Even from the standpoint of the ignorant man, no object can be known and no object is ever known.

758. IS THE SPIRITUAL EDUCATION OF THE MASSES POSSIBLE? (454)

No. Not by extending amenities or adjusting external objects. Spirituality is directed from diversity to non-duality. But by your question, you want to keep on the diversity – by calling it ‘masses’ – and turn your back on true spirituality.

It is a change of heart and a change of perspective that are sought by spirituality. Education cannot provide these. It can only give information to the mind and multiply diversity. There is no such thing as spiritual education. What ordinarily passes for

‘spiritual’ is only ethical or religious education. This has nothing to do with real spirituality, which pertains only to absolute Truth.

Absolute Peace is the goal of spirituality. This goal, at any rate, is not outside. Spirituality helps you to find permanent peace and live in it. Your conduct and contact thereafter will improve all those who come near you.

Platform lectures or classroom instructions cannot help you much. When you are at the centre, your perspective is so completely changed that the usual questions of the ordinary man never arise in you. The ordinary man might find it difficult to understand this.

Can the dreamer ever be made to understand that all he perceives, including himself, is a dream? *No*. Not till he wakes up from the dream. And then no proof is needed, nor is the dreamer anywhere.

20th December 1952

759. WILL SATISFACTION OF PHYSICAL NEEDS ENHANCE SPIRITUALITY? (455)

No. It will only distance it (render it still more distant). It is rightly said: ‘When a savage is converted to Christianity, really it is Christianity that is being converted to savagery.’

760. HOW COULD A PATRIOT TURN TO SPIRITUALITY? (456)

The question is itself a bundle of illusions and inconsistencies, which puts the cart before the horse. To become a real patriot is the goal of spirituality, and not the other way round. The patriot has nothing to seek. You might take it to be a paradox. I will make it clear.

1. Who is a patriot? He is one who has dedicated his life to the service of ‘his’ kingdom. Which kingdom please? You owe allegiance to different kingdoms in different states and leave them without a thought; because these kingdoms really do not belong to you and you cannot cling on to any of them as you desire to.

Therefore, first find your real kingdom. Jesus calls it the kingdom of heaven and says it is within you. But I say it is the ultimate Truth – your own real nature. Discover that kingdom which alone is yours, before calling yourself a patriot. Then you will find that what is denoted by that ‘*kingdom*’, ‘*yourself*’ and ‘*patriotism*’ are all one and the same Reality, perfect in itself.

Therefore you have nothing to achieve and nothing to do. Thus the real Jnyānin is the only patriot worth the name. Therefore, become a true patriot and you are free. The path that leads one to real patriotism is called spirituality.

2. What do you mean by ‘patriotism’? Love of the country of one’s birth. Of course you presume to love the people more than everything else in the country. What is the basis of this love? A feeling of oneness with others. Is it possible on the physical level to feel one with another? *No*. Is it possible on the mental level? *No*.

So the goal is clearly beyond the mental level. Rise to that level and then look at the problem. The question, the country and your ego all disappear, giving place to perfect self-luminous Peace. That is your country for ever. Be a patriot to it, if you still want to be one, and be at Peace.

761. WHAT IS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE? (457)

To the individual soul (ego) everything is outside. To God, everything is inside.
To the Sage (Jnyānin), there is neither inside nor outside. He is beyond both.

762. WHEN SHALL I BEGIN TO WORK FOR OTHERS? (458)

Working for oneself and working for others are distinct and separate, one from the other. You will begin to work for others only when you have finished all your work for yourself. You can help the sick only by yourself becoming a doctor first. Otherwise you will only misguide others.

All the work you have to do for yourself is only to discover your real nature or centre. Therefore establish your own centre first and then try to work for a world, if you can then find a real world demanding service.

Selfless workers have toiled to uplift humanity from time immemorial. But the world is not a jot the better for all of them. Of course those workers themselves reaped the full benefit of their own labours, by attenuating their own egos considerably by self-sacrifice, however partial.

The Jnyānin alone can help another to the ultimate Truth and Happiness.

763. WHAT IS OUR OBLIGATION TO THE SAGES WHO HAVE ATTAINED LIBERATION AND DEPARTED? (459)

Every Sage leaves a rich legacy behind, to help us reach the Truth. It is as a result of that legacy that we have been able to meet here today. We are ungrateful wretches if we do not recognize it.

We greedily grasp at the chaff and ignore the grain of Truth.

764. WHAT DOES DIVINE LĪLĀ MEAN? (460)

It is not the absolute Truth. Let us take an illustration. What is ice? You may say it is water. Next you say it is vapour. All these are only partially true. Similarly, *līlā* [divine play] expresses only the partial truth. It is a patchwork explanation which may convince you for a short time.

But from the standpoint of Truth, partial truth is as good as untruth. Because Truth has no degrees.

765. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE INTELLECT? (461)

The intellect is given to man only to measure the variety in the world.

766. HOW TO FIND OUT A REAL GURU? (462)

One who follows the path of devotion to a personal God in a *sāttvic* manner, his ultimate goal being the absolute Truth, invariably places upon his deity the responsibility of finding him a Kāraṇa-guru. The deity within gives the suggestion at the proper time and it never fails; because the suggestion emanates from his own *sāttvic* nature, which is very close to the background Truth.

But if the aspirant is one who follows the path of discrimination alone, the conditions are different.

It is never safe to accept a Guru merely on grounds of appearance and worldly reputation. Both are equally deceptive.

To test another, to see if he is competent to guide you to the Truth, is also impossible; because you will have to be higher than the other, to apply such as test. Therefore a regular test is out of the question.

The only reasonable recourse, left to you, is to put all your doubts and difficulties before the proposed Guru; and to listen to his answers patiently, relying more upon the response of your heart than upon the intellectual satisfaction that you receive from his answers. If he is able to satisfy you both ways, you may without hesitation accept him and follow his advice and instructions.

When once you have accepted a Kāraṇa-guru, you must unconditionally and unreservedly surrender your ego to the Guru: who represents the ultimate Truth. Remember the words of Shri Shankara.

... jīvō nā 'ham dēśikō 'ktyā śivō 'ham ..

Shri Shankara, Advaita-pancaratnam, 1.2

I am not the jīva. But I am Peace, because my Guru has said so.

767. IS GOD THE SAME TO ALL? (463)

No. It changes according to what one identifies oneself with, in life. To the man who identifies himself with his body, God is also embodied. To one who identifies himself with the mind, God is also possessed of the best of all attributes.

To him who transcends even the mind, God is the right Absolute.

768. HOW TO VISUALIZE THE REAL GOD? (464)

Conceding God as the creator of the universe, God must have existed even before creation – all alone as the impersonal.

God in his real nature cannot be seen from or through any created thing. So body and mind are incapable of understanding God. We are forced, therefore, to look out for some principle in man which was not created.

The real 'I'-principle, defying all the three states, is found not to have been created. So, by taking to this 'I'-principle, you may be able to visualize the real God. This is what Vēdānta tells you. Vēdānta does not deny God at all.

Standing as that 'I'-principle, you see that you are all alone in deep sleep. There is no other God there. So this 'I'-principle is the God they mean.

769. HOW TO ENHANCE THE RESPECT AND REGARD FOR THE ULTIMATE TRUTH AMONG THE PEOPLE? (465)

If an individual, already respected and revered by the general public, is made to know the Truth, the public also will gradually begin to look upon Truth with the same respect and regard. Gradually, many of them will make themselves ready even to accept his guidance to Truth. This will be a highly beneficial turn in their life and a great service to humanity.

This was the reason why, in the v̥edic age, there was a comparatively higher degree of respect and regard for the ultimate Truth, its exponents and followers than at present. Many of the ruling kings and queens of that age were Jnyānins, and some of them were the authors of the Upaniṣhads and other v̥edāntic texts. Such kings have proved to be the most ideal of kings in history.

Similarly, someone who has visualized the Truth and is established in it, will be the ideal citizen in every way.

770. CAN ANYONE IMPROVE THE WORLD? (466)

No. Who will undertake the work? The individual. He is but a part of the world which has to be improved. From where does he get the ideal or the urge to improve the world? Of course from the inner Self, which is perfect.

Before improving oneself and becoming perfect, any attempt to improve another is meaningless. Therefore, rise to that Self and make yourself perfect first. Then, to your surprise, you will find the world also perfect.

The individual worker being part of the world, he is not in a position to comprehend the world as a whole. To do that, he must necessarily stand out of the world. Then your perspective is changed, and the world also appears entirely different and perfect in itself.

771. WHAT WORK CAN A JNYĀNIN UNDERTAKE? (467)

A Jnyānin can take to any vocation in life he chooses, in accordance with his former habits and samskāras; because he knows that the activities of life have no bearing upon his real nature. He does not act for individual pleasure or happiness, but purely out of a spontaneous urge coming from deep below.

772. CAN DEMOCRACY FUNCTION? (468)

No. You may say the majority rules in the present day world. But, if you examine the facts impartially, you will find that in practice, in every country, it is the few that govern the many, and that few are guided by the one. So democracy, in practice, is a myth.

773. CAN I REMEMBER A DREAM? (469)

You can remember only your past experiences. You can think of your dream experiences only by standing as the dreamer for the time being. But you, as the waking subject, were never the dreamer. Therefore the waking subject can never remember the dream.

774. WHAT IS ĀTMIC URGE? (470)

Unconditional freedom, deathlessness, Knowledge, Happiness etc. are your very nature. These surge up as the desire in the embodied man to become free, to defy death, to know everything, and above all to be happy etc. But no embodied being can possess any of these qualities in full.

775. WHAT IS MORALITY AND WHY? (471)

Morality, as at present in vogue amidst us, is of a peculiar social type, calculated only to enable man to live up to his own ideals and lead a contented life. But you are not told why you should observe morality.

Every law curtails your individual freedom to a certain extent. That means so much of self-sacrifice is called for; and that attenuates the ego, little by little. Therefore, the ultimate goal of every law, including laws of morality, is the annihilation of the ego, resulting in the realization of the Self.

Thus the ultimate Truth is the source and goal of morality, and true morality can be observed only by understanding that source – the Truth. In this sense, all talk of petty, relative morality is futile.

Therefore, morality is only that thought, feeling or action which attenuates the ego and leads you on to Truth.

776. WHAT ARE FEELINGS OR EMOTIONS? (472)

Every feeling is said to be a wave in the ocean of Peace. The analogy is not strictly correct. Here we must understand that there is wave only in the ocean and that there is no wave in Peace. In Peace, there is neither ocean nor wave, as there is neither ocean nor wave in water. Similarly, there are no thoughts or feelings in me, the real 'I'-principle. Understanding feelings in this manner, we can enjoy even the feeling of misery, by emphasizing the real content of that misery and dismissing the illusory name and form.

Thus every emotion is a clear pointer to that permanent background Peace. So you can very well lose your apparent self at the upsurge of any emotion; not in the emotion itself, but in its permanent background.

We have all had the occasion of witnessing tragic dramas brimming over with pathos and cold cruelty towards the righteous, at which we have wept from start to finish. But the next day again we are prepared to pay in order to witness the same drama, so that we may continue to weep. What is the secret of this? Is this not the enjoyment of misery? This shows you that there is something inherent in the so-called misery that tempts you to court it again. It is nothing but the background, Peace, which is behind all emotions.

Therefore, see through every emotion and perceive that Peace alone is there. This is what every Jnyānin does. So he enjoys every feeling which you so carefully separate from Peace and thereby suffer.

777. WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE WORLD, IF ANY? (473)

A cause implies that without which the result cannot appear at all. For example, the serpent cannot appear if the rope is not there already. But we know that the rope never undergoes any change. Similarly, the world can never appear if *Ātmā* is not behind it, without undergoing any change. Therefore, if any cause is to be posited for the world, the most correct answer would be '*Ātmā itself*'.

Thus, in fact, there is no creation; and if creation is taken for granted, *Ātmā* is the only cause of it. But causality can never exist in *Ātmā*.

26th December 1952

778. THE 'CHILD IN KNOWLEDGE' (474)

Some statements made in a transcendental mood as the '*child in knowledge*', with their explanations added later on.

The child asked:

1. 'If Happiness assumes the form of riches, what does it give rise to? Bondage or liberation. Of course *bondage*!'
2. 'If riches assume the form of Happiness, what will be the result? *Liberation*.'

Explanation: So you have only to reverse the existing order of perception. Usually, you see yourself as things outside. But instead, bring everything inside you and see them all as yourself.

1. In the former, the happiness aspect is forgotten and it appears disguised as riches; hence it binds you.
2. If you understand that richness by itself is not Happiness, that when you desire for Happiness the sense of riches vanishes and that Happiness manifests in its own glory, it is *liberation*.

Now apply this principle subjectively to *bōdha* or Consciousness. Here also there are two perspectives.

1. Consciousness assuming the form of objects. This is bondage. Here, Consciousness is forgotten and the object sense alone is emphasized.
2. The object assuming the form of Consciousness or seen as nothing other than Consciousness. This is liberation. Here the object is forgotten and you get established as Consciousness, your real nature.

Consciousness to object is bondage.

Object to Consciousness is liberation.

Look behind you and you will always see the Truth.

779. TRUTH AND MIND (475)

Truth transcends both reality and unreality. But the mind can conceive only these two opposites. So the real nature of Truth is not understandable to the mind. The real 'I' down to nature is covered by both the reality and the unreality. Your memory, intelligence etc. are all in the plurality and never *one*.

780. PERCEPTION AND SENSE ORGANS (476)

'See with your ears.' It may look a paradox. But it is exactly the way that you see, with your eyes also. You do not ever see anything with your eyes; and yet you believe you see with them. So, you can as well say you see with your ears.

781. DELIGHT AND SAYING (477)

If you delightfully say anything, delight becomes the saying and remains over still. If you have delight in you already and you begin saying, the delight will cover up the saying and remain over.

But if you take delight in saying, the saying covers up the delight. Or, in other words, if you have not got the delight in you already and you simply begin to say and enjoy, the saying covers up the enjoyment and the enjoyment disappears immediately.

782. THE CHILD (478)

The child asked: 'What do you see in me?' Finding us puzzled, he himself answered.

'You do not see the Reality in me. Nor do you see the unreality. So you see the "child in knowledge" in me. I am not going to explain these to you yesterday, today or tomorrow. Because I am the ever-present. I am beyond time. At last I disappear in you.' And he disappeared.

783. 'IS THE REALITY STATIC OR DYNAMIC?' (479)

Answer: 'It transcends both static and dynamic, expressing itself in both and standing independent of both. But the static and dynamic cannot exist without me. I am none of these, but am all these.'

784. WHAT DO YOU LOVE? (480)

Answer: 'You can love only the right Absolute, represented by the life principle in others. You can love nothing else.'

28th December 1952

785. SNAKE IN THE ROPE (481)

In applying the illustration of 'the snake in the rope', in order to establish yourself in the rope (the Self), you are taking the services of the snake (the mind) which is not the rope.

786. HOW ARE YOU THE BEST KNOWN AND SELF-LUMINOUS? (482)

Answer: It is in and through you that you know anything else. So the 'I' is clearly better known than anything else known, and nothing else is required to make the 'I' known.

So the 'I' is the most concrete (real) of all things and self-luminous. The essence of a thing is 'the thing in itself' (self-luminous). It is the ultimate background.

787. SIGNIFICANCE OF GIVING A SPIRITUAL NAME (483)

The spiritual aspirant, all along, considered himself to be a jīva, possessing a name pertaining to his body. But when he is made to visualize that he is not the body, but Ātmā itself, he is given a spiritual name, which denotes only Ātmā and nothing else.

This name, which is always a synonym of the ultimate Truth, helps him to counteract the old saṃskāras of the jīva, which occasionally raise their shadows to drag him into the basic error. But when he understands that all names point to the Absolute, he gets established in the Ātmā.

788. FRIEND AND FOE (484)

Your revilers are your real friends, and your flatterers your enemies. Phenomenally, the former are supposed to relieve you of half your sins, and the latter to deprive you of half your virtues.

But a spiritual aspirant on the direct path of knowledge has nothing to do with virtue or vice. Even he is helped more by his revilers than by his flatterers, to turn his attention introspectively to his real nature.

789. THE EGO, ĀTMĀ AND THE GURU (485)

It is an invariable truth that Ātmā suffers recognition when the ego enjoys, and the ego suffers when Ātmā shines (is recognized). But this has a happy and lonely exception. When the ego thinks of the Guru and enjoys even in the mental plane, Ātmā (Guru) also shines simultaneously and delivers a pleasant death to the ego.

790. HOW TO THINK OF MY GURU? (486)

Think of your Guru only in the dualistic sphere. Don't apply your intellect to it. It is far beyond your intellect. Apply your heart to it and get lost in the Guru. Then the Ultimate dances like a child before you.

But when you think of the real 'I'-principle or 'Consciousness', think that they are the absolute Reality itself, beyond name and form.

All these are but synonyms of the ultimate Reality. But Guru alone has the revered place of honour and veneration in all planes. It is an experience that sometimes when you go deep into pure Consciousness and get lost in it (nirvikalpa samādhi of the Jnyānin), you see the person of your Guru there, and this vision throws you into an ecstatic joy taking you even beyond *sat-cit-ānanda*. Blessed indeed are you then.

29th December 1952

791. HOW TO APPROACH AN INTRUDING THOUGHT? (487)

When a thought arises in you, you invariably try to discriminate whether it is good or bad. Thereby you attribute more reality to the thought and make it abide and bind you more.

But instead, if you examine the content of the thought irrespective of the object concerned, and see that it is nothing other than your own real nature, the thought vanishes as such, leaving you in your real nature.

So adopt the latter course and be happy.

'You have only to take the non-existent from the non-existent and be ever free.'

792. WHO IS YOUR ENEMY? (488)

If you find anybody else your enemy, your lower instinct tells you to destroy him first. But don't heed to it. Instead, destroy first the ego which discriminates you from him, and you will find that both of you stand in essence as one and the same Reality, the 'I'-principle. The enmity also becomes equally objective and vanishes.

In fact, eliminate the subject and the object from their false appendages.

1st January 1953

793. HOW AM I DEATHLESS? (1)

Death takes place in time. Time is made up of past, present and future. These do not affect the 'I'-principle in any way. Therefore, from one standpoint, it may be said to be an eternal present for the 'I'-principle.

Strictly speaking, even this is wrong. Because time exists only in connection with the apparent 'I'. The activities of the apparent 'I' may be divided into five classes: actions, perceptions, thoughts, feelings and knowing. Which of these five functions do you prefer to be?

If you choose any one of the first four, you will automatically die after every such function. But experience is that you do not so die. Therefore you must be the last one – the knower – which alone continues through all activities and never dies.

You know even death. Therefore you transcend death as well.

794. HABIT CHANNELS AND REALITY (2)

The habit channels of the mind distort the Reality, and therefore they have to be destroyed. This can be done only by directing your attention to the ultimate Reality.

The Reality is in the thought itself, as its background. So thought need not go outside itself to realize the Reality.

When you direct your attention to something blank, your mind also becomes blank. Similarly, when you direct your attention to the Reality, your mind becomes the Reality at once.

795. CAN THE SAHAJA STATE BE CALLED A CONTINUOUS SAMĀDHI? (3)

No. If you are so particular about using the word 'samādhi', you may say you are then in a permanent samādhi.

But be where you are and know what you are.

4th January 1953

796. WHAT IS A DREAM? (4)

Everything other than your real nature (the Self, the ultimate Reality) is a dream.

797. WE OFTEN SEE NO COHERENCE IN A DREAM. (5)

No. The reason obtaining in the dream state is different from the reason of the waking state. Hence the apparent incoherence.

798. WHAT IS THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF SURRENDER? (6)

To '*surrender*' means strictly to 'disown'. When all untruth is surrendered, you stand as the Truth itself.

799. TO BE NEAR OR AWAY FROM THE GURU – WHICH IS MORE ADVANTAGEOUS? (7)

Each has its own advantage and disadvantage. When one is near the Guru, the obstacles that come up are transcended immediately, in spite of the retarding influences of the ego. When you are at a distance from the Guru, the progress might be slower but will certainly be steadier, being dependent on 'yourself' alone.

800. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF '*KARMA-SANNYĀSA*' (8)

It is composed of two words: '*karma*' [action] and '*sannyāsa*' [renunciation]..

Karma has meaning only when it is related to the 'I'. The real 'I'-principle is indivisible. You claim all activities to be yours. So no activity can be part of your real nature. So 'you' can have no activity. How can you renounce what does not belong to you? Then what is your relationship with activity? You are the knowing principle or the witness of the activity. The sense of permanence is given to the individuality by that Consciousness which is your real nature. Therefore '*karma-sannyāsa*' is strictly a meaningless term.

But *sannyāsa* is meaningful in another sense. You surrender your sense of separateness from the Reality, to that Reality itself (sattil nyasikkuka). This is real *sannyāsa*.

801. WHAT IS INTENSE THOUGHT? (9)

No thought which does not merge in the background, the Reality, can be intense. It is only the one that has visualized the Reality behind all appearance who can take an intense thought. Its process is to repeat the arguments to prove one's real nature.

14th January 1953

802. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EGO AND LIBERATION? (10)

It is the whole ego that seeks liberation and strives for it. When it is directed towards the ultimate Reality, the material part automatically drops away and the Consciousness part alone remains over as the real 'I'-principle. This is liberation.

803. IS WORK A HINDRANCE TO SPIRITUALITY? (11)

Not always. It is a hindrance if the ego is present. It is a help if the ego is absent.

804. WHO CAN BE FREE? (12)

Neither the body nor the mind can ever be free. Because they are dependent upon the real 'I', even for their very existence. The 'I' alone is always free, and real freedom is

its monopoly and its alone. The urge for freedom springs from that source and is usurped in vain by the body and mind.

805. WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF STANDING AS THE WITNESS? (13)

By standing as the witness, you establish yourself in the unity in diversity.

806. HOW TO EXORCIZE THE PHANTOM OF IGNORANCE FROM DEEP SLEEP? (14)

See that either end of your sleep is saturated with the thought of your real nature, your native home.

15th January 1953

807. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND *BRAHMAN*? (15)

God is conceived with the attributes of omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience etc.; and therefore he has to possess a cosmic mind, and there must be a cosmic world also for the mind to function in.

But the real 'I'-principle in man goes beyond mind and therefore beyond everything objective. In the sphere of the real 'I'-principle, there is absolutely nothing else existing beside it. It is therefore attributeless.

Brahman is also supposed to be attributeless. Therefore, for God to become *brahman*, he has to give up all the attributes attached to him.

808. WHAT ARE LIFE AND DEATH? (16)

Life is the real 'I'-principle. When you are life itself, how can you die?

809. HOW TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE WITNESS ASPECT AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS ASPECT IN PRACTICE? (17)

When your mind is active, you may take the witness thought with advantage, to eliminate yourself from objects. But when your mind is free and passive, the thought of your real nature is better.

16th January 1953

810. HOW DOES CONTINUITY COME INTO PLAY? (18)

Continuity is the characteristic of the 'I'-principle alone. Memory is its expression in the realm of the mind. Memory is the last and mental link that seems to connect the phenomenal with the Ultimate.

811. ARE EXPERIENCES RECORDED ANYWHERE? (19)

A man under certain drugs speaks of his past experiences. How then can we prove that experiences are not recorded anywhere?

Am I to accept half your story or the whole? Certainly, the whole. You have many such experiences in your dream. Are those experiences to be explained individually? *No*. The explanation of the whole dream explains every part of it.

812. HOW TO CLASSIFY EXPERIENCES? (20)

They are generally of two types – *relative* and *in identity*. Relative experiences are again divided into:

1. *Objective* – physical and outward going
2. *Subjective* – psychic or mental and inward going

But from the stand of Consciousness, all relative experiences are objective. The only experience *in identity* is the experience of the Self, as in deep sleep.

813. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NORMAL AND ABNORMAL? (21)

In ordinary parlance, the distinction between the normal and the abnormal is an attempt at measuring the more changing in terms of the less changing. This cannot have any fixity in itself. The ultimate standard of normality is the really changeless ‘I’-principle itself. So the Self is the only thing normal and everything else is abnormal, in relation to the Self.

From this standard, the waking state is the most abnormal.

17th January 1953

814. WHAT IS INDIVIDUALITY? (22)

The word ‘individuality’ is ordinarily used in a very loose sense, to denote a personality which is purely physical and mental, pertaining to the waking state alone.

To understand the significance of individuality, your own stand in life must first be defined. Where do you stand, in activity or in inactivity? When there is mental activity, you stand as the background, in relation to that activity. But between two such activities and in deep sleep, when the mind is supposed to be inactive, you stand as the absolute Reality – your real nature.

Now let us examine individuality. By this word, we mean the characteristic of the individual. Here, the individual is not the small, insignificant embodied being you may seem to be. This individual is the centre, which projects, through the five senses, the five sense-worlds which we call the universe. Thus the individual is characteristic of the universe as well. Now let us examine this individual. The characteristic of the individual should be the same throughout his three states, throughout his whole life and in both activity and inactivity. The only principle that stands unchanging in this way is the ultimate Reality (one’s own real nature). Personality is always changing and individuality is changeless.

18th January 1953

815. STAGES OF PROGRESS OF THE DEVOTEE (23)

... ārtō jijñāsur arthā-’rthī jñānī ca bharata-’ṛṣabha ..

Bhagavad-gītā, 7.16

The regular order of progress of the devotee is (1) arthā-'rthi, (2) jijnyāsu, (3) ārta, (4) jnyāni.

Of these, the third stage (ārta) is the forerunner of the jnyāni, the perfect state. It is characterized by a restless desire to attain the Truth, or in other words, a thirst for knowledge. This is pure Love itself. This thirst does not come from the heart. It comes from deeper below and it takes you to the very source.

The mind and intellect only cleanse the road and pave the way for the royal procession of the heart to the Ultimate.

816. HOW TO PROVE THAT NOTHING EXISTS EXCEPT WHEN KNOWN? (24)

ajñāta sattayilla

[There is no existence that's not known.]

An examination of the dream experience is the easiest way to prove this. The whole dream world becomes an illusion when the state changes. This is clear when you look at it from the waking state or from the Reality in the relative sphere.

Similarly, there is no evidence to prove that the waking state is not also an illusion. You may ask where does the dream world come from? If there is *something*, it might have come from something. But if it is nothing, where is it to come from? So, if it is an illusion, how could it have come from anything?

Even in the waking state, can you connect two thoughts, perceptions or objects? *No*. Because things appear and disappear one after the other and none of them can be given permanence. No two things can exist simultaneously and nothing can be connected. When this is the case even in the waking state, why do you go so far as the dream state to prove the illusion? You are the One and so you can have connection only with that One. The mind is the father of all illusion.

tiriyunnoravastha mūnnuma-
sthiramanyōnyamavēdyamenkilum
śariyāyavayētusaktīyāl-
aṛiyāmāsthirasākṣitanne ñān

[Of the three states, each comes and goes
unsteadily; and each can't know
the other states. But by what
capability can they be rightly
known? The changeless witness that
remains. Just that is what I am.]

Shrī Vidyānanda-tīrttha, Bhagavad-darshanam

19th January 1953

817. HOW IS A SAGE ALWAYS IN SAMĀDHI? (25)

Question: Is the Sage ever in samādhi?

Answer: Yes, always.

dēhābhīmānē galitē vijñātē paramātmani
yatra yatra manō yāti tatra tatra samādhayaḥ

Shrī Shankara

Because, in the case of the Sage, the activities of the mind do not leave a virile trace behind, and that makes each one of them a samādhī. Of course, the trace is there, but under complete control and it will come up only if he wants it to. If he does not want it to, it will not. If he *wants* to think, feel etc., he can very well do it. If he does not want to, no. This is the *sahaja* state.

When a Sage remembers, the memory is non-responsible and purely objective, whether it concerns a thought or a feeling. But to an ordinary man, all this is subjective. Involuntary thoughts will never come in for a Sage.

nānābhautika vastuyōgajanitānandaṁ nijānandam-
ennanyūnaṁ manatārariṇṇu varipōlbōdhiccuṇernnīṭukil
dṛśyattinnu vidhēyanenna nilapōỹ, tal svāmiyāỹ, śāntanāỹ,
paṭṭillāte jalattil āmbujadaḷaṁ pōlatra jīvicciṭāṁ

Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātmārāmam, 1.50

This means: If you properly realize from the depth of your heart that the happiness you enjoy on your contact with objects is nothing but your own real nature of Happiness, you become awakened. Thenceforward the tables are turned. You become the master of the objective world of which you had been a slave so far; and your life becomes unattached, like the lotus leaf in water.

To the Sage, all things of world – gross as well as subtle, including time, space and causality – are objective in their own relative sphere.

818. WHAT IS THE PLACE OF LAW IN THE PATH TO THE TRUTH? (26)

The law deals with logic. So one who takes to law has a good chance of rising to higher logic leading to the Truth, which is but logic in a higher form.

20th January 1953

819. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE WORLD? (27)

The world is perfect. But it appears imperfect because you use fallacious instruments of sense organs and mind and a wrong perspective of subject-object relationship. Get rid of them first. Take hold of the changeless principle of awareness in you and then examine the world. Then you will find the world perfect and entirely different from what it appears now.

820. IS DEATH LIBERATION? (28)

Not always. Death is liberation if it is ultimate death, that is the death of everything objective including even samskāras. But ordinary death is only partial, being the death of the gross body alone. It is no more than a change and does not deserve the name of death.

Real death is a t of your centre from the ego to the witness.

821. WHAT SHOULD BE MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND CONVENTIONS, EVEN AFTER MY VISUALIZATION OF TRUTH? (29)

The original customs and conventions in Hindu society were based upon advaita in some way or other. But their real significance is not known to all. You should not consider them meaningless merely on that score. You must observe those customs strictly and faithfully.

From the spiritual standpoint, it might be immaterial to you whether you observe them or not. But then you have an obligation to the less fortunate members of society, who are really in need of every one of those customs and conventions to help them through the moral and righteous way of life.

If a man respected in society – for whatsoever reason – were to break such laws of society, many others would follow him regardless of consequences; and society would disintegrate. An enlightened man will not violate any of the healthy conventions and customs insisted upon by *śāstras* and the great men of old.

Therefore, you must perform the rites for your departed ones as is prescribed by your society. They might be meaningless from the standpoint of the absolute Truth. It is wrong to apply the perspective and the tests of absolute Truth to the objective outside alone, leaving the subjective untouched.

If you mean to examine society from that standpoint, first examine the subject (the ego). Attributing reality to the body is the most meaningless of all our acts, and the conception of society is only an offshoot of this error. Therefore transcend that mistake if possible, and then all other problems vanish.

822. WHAT IS LIBERATION? (30)

From one standpoint, it may be defined as going beyond birth and death. But that is not the whole Truth. Strictly speaking, it must be defined as going beyond the delusion of birth and death.

823. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PERCEIVING THE PERSONAL AND THE IMPERSONAL? (31)

In principle, both are the same. You perceive both by becoming that for the time being.

You direct your attention to the impersonal and you stand as that impersonal.

But for perceiving the personal or objects, you also use the instruments of the sense organs and mind. You concentrate your mind (the apparent 'I') upon that object, and as a result you stand as that object for the time being. So much so that when I am there as the object, I am not here in the body.

824. WHAT DOES *PRATYAKṢHA* (DIRECT) MEAN? (32)

Pratyakṣha (direct) means that which does not demand a proof. The real 'I'-principle is alone direct.

825. WHAT ARE THE ENDS OF LIFE? (33)

Life has two ends: (1) the body (matter) which is the wrong end, and (2) the real 'I' (Consciousness) which is the right end. Spiritual aspirants alone take hold of the right end, and others take hold of the wrong end of life.

The Sage ignores matter and knows light. The ignorant man ignores light and knows matter.

The Sage sees light and matter both as light. The ignorant man sees matter and light both as matter.

There is ignorance on both sides. The Sage ignores ignorance (what is non-existent), and the ignorant man ignores what is really existent.

21st February 1953

826. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF LANGUAGE? (34)

The language of the body, gross or subtle, is the only kind of language ordinarily known. This is governed by grammar, rhythm, harmony of sound and the superficial dictionary-meaning of words (*padārtha*).

But there is an infinitely higher language called the language of Truth. In relation to this language of Truth, the authors of its writings are called *akṣhara-jnyānins* or *jnyānins* who have visualized the absolute Truth, who have discovered the ultimate goal or background of alphabets composing the language and who have discovered the infinite potentialities of alphabets or sounds.

This language is governed by the inner harmony of the Ultimate, known and experienced by the Sage alone and by the ultimate meaning of words (*paramārtha*). They do not make any effort to observe the rules of grammar or rhythm. But the grammar and rhythm being the gross expressions of the ultimate harmony, they come in uninvited to support what comes from the Truth, direct, through the lips or the pen of a Sage. If grammar fails to agree with any usage of the Sage, it is the incompleteness of grammar alone; and the learned grammarians immediately recognize it and readily incorporate it into their science.

Every sentence or verse that comes from a Sage is a *mantra*, perfect in itself. To attempt to measure, criticize or correct such lines from the level of the superficial literary men of the world is nothing short of sacrilege.

(The exceptional few among such Sages, who were also born poets, have contributed poetic works to literature expressing the divine harmony in different stages. For example, look at the works of Shrī Ātmānanda.

1. His poetic work called *Rādhā-mādhavam* abounds in the harmony of words pointing to the divine harmony.
2. His other poetic work called *Ātmārāmam* abounds in the harmony of ideas touching the divine harmony.
3. His purely vādāntic works *Ātma-darshanam* and *Ātma-nirvṛiti* directly express the harmony of Truth.)

827. WHY CAN'T I ANSWER DIVERSITY FROM DIVERSITY ITSELF? (35)

The question on diversity arises in the realm of causality itself, and you stand in that realm seeking the answer.

Suppose I give an answer by way of a cause of the diversity. The answer and the question create a new diversity. This process of multiplication of diversity will continue indefinitely. Such a solution does not serve any purpose.

So, for a real solution of the problem you must go beyond the realm of diversity, and then the question disappears as illusion.

22nd February 1953

828. SYMPATHETIC SAMĀDHI. HOW DOES IT HAPPEN? (36)

It is narrated in the *Mahābhārata* that once lying over *Shara-shayanā* [his bed of arrows], when Shrī Bhīṣhma went into a casual samādhi, Lord Kṛiṣṇa who was just then talking to the Pāṇdavas far away, was also thrown into a sympathetic samādhi. How did this happen? Shrī Tuncat Eruttacchan describes the process thus:

karaṇaṇṇaḷil viṣayaṇṇaḷe layippiccu
karaṇaṇṇaḷeppunarātmani cērttu nannāy
gōvindan samādhiyilufappicciḷakāte ...

[With objects merged back into sense-perceptions, and with sense-perceptions then completely joined back into self, Lord Kṛiṣṇa came to be absorbed in a samādhi state.]

Mahābhārata – Shānti-parvvam, 374-6

Just before going into samādhi, Shrī Bhīṣhma took a deep thought about Lord Kṛiṣṇa, whose Truth Shrī Bhīṣhma knew more or less. This thought suddenly arrested the attention of Lord Kṛiṣṇa, who knew it immediately. But Bhīṣhma straight away went into the regular jnyānin's samādhi, which is the real nature of Lord Kṛiṣṇa himself. Therefore naturally, Lord Kṛiṣṇa, whose attention was already attracted by Shrī Bhīṣhma, happily glided in to a sympathetic samādhi.

The process, adopted by Shrī Bhīṣhma for disposing of the body, senses and mind before samādhi, was the same as the one adopted by Lord Kṛiṣṇa also for initiation. This prakriyā is object-senses-consciousness (viṣhayam-indriyam-prajnyānam) – object, senses, knowledge. This is exactly the method adopted by us here.

829. THE SOLUTION OFFERED BY THE UPANIṢHADS ON FINDING EVEN THE TRINITIES IMPERFECT (37)

In the Purāṇas and other ancient texts, *Brahma* is represented as still studying something higher. *Viṣṇu* is represented as in incessant *yōga-samādhi* showing that there is some higher principle, and *Shiva* in *tapas* and meditation on something higher. So none of them can evidently take you to the beyond.

Understanding this imperfection of the trinities, the Upaniṣhads come forth showing the way to the ultimate Truth subjectively, through direct *vicāra*.

parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayaṁ-bhūś
tasmāt parāñ paśyati nā 'ntarātman .
kaścid dhīraḥ pratyag-ātmānam aikṣad
āvr̥tta-caḡṣur amṛtatvam icchan ..

[The world that happens of itself
has excavated outward holes,
through which perception looks outside
and does not see the self within.

But someone brave, who longs for that
which does not die, turns sight back in
upon itself. And it is thus
that self is seen, returned to self,
to its own true reality.]

Kaṭha Upaniṣhad, 4.1
(See also notes 180 & 497)

830. WHOSE IS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION? (38)

The instrument is dead and inert. It can never be made to share responsibility for any deed. It is not the chopper that cuts the tree. It is the 'living-ness' you transmit to the chopper that cuts it. Similarly, body, senses and mind are mere instruments under the true living-ness or awareness, the 'I'. That 'I' is alone responsible for all action.

Action is only *tripuṭī* [triad of doer, doing and deed, or subject, activity and object]. Knowledge pertains only to the 'I'. When you examine the *tripuṭī*, it vanishes in its due order, leaving you as knowledge. Thus when the 'I'-principle thinks, it is that that is called the mind (manvānō manayiti). I am called mind when that particular function is there.

831. WHAT ARE SAT, CIT AND ĀNANDA, AND HOW ARE THEY THE SAME? (39)

Sat, *cit* and *ānanda* are *lakṣhaṇas* or pointers to the 'I'-principle. They are ignorantly attributed to body, senses and mind; and you say 'I exist', 'I know' and 'I am happy' – just as the aspects of the rope are attributed to the snake you create in illusion.

Existence is permanent and cannot be attributed to the perishable body. Existence is experienced or it shines; and in shining, Consciousness comes in. In the light of pure Existence and Consciousness, no duality can appear. Non-duality is Peace or Happiness. So *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* are the three aspects of the one and the same Reality.

832. WHAT IS THE CONTENT OF SPEECH? (40)

It is different at different stages:

1. In the case of a child, *words* speak.
2. In the case of an adult, *ideas* speak.
3. In the case of the Sage, *Truth* speaks.

You become so familiar with certain ideas that they form part of the integral 'I'-principle for all practical purposes. These ideas sometimes come out like a flash,

surprising even you. Ideas come out as though by instinct, as your hands come out to protect your head or eyes in the face of sudden danger.

In the case of the Sage, when a question is put, there being no ego present, the Truth comes out spontaneously and the talk that follows is not really eloquent, but is eloquence itself.

833. HOW TO OBTAIN 'JNYĀNA SAMĀDHI'? (41)

It is possible only after listening to the Truth directly from the Guru. First, the mind is taken away from sense objects and not allowed to go after the happiness of passivity either in deep sleep or in samādhi. In this steadiness of the mind (madhyagatāvastha), you experience afresh that the happiness expressed is your real nature. Then the mind is mildly persuaded to take to Ātmā, which alone is real and is your real nature. Slowly the potential desires, which were not killed, all drop away and your real nature shines in all its glory. This is jnyāna samādhi. The mind itself is transformed into Ātmā in course of time.

You desire the happiness of samādhi because you have given up sense objects, not out of your own free will but by behest, without a substitute. Therefore objectless pleasure is welcomed. This tendency for the pleasure of samādhi can be successfully given up only by knowing your real nature from the Guru. Enjoying happiness in samādhi often strengthens your desire for it over again. The enjoyership does not die even in samādhi.

It is only the wrong notion, which prevents one from realizing one's own real nature as pure Happiness, that has to be corrected.

834. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE? (42)

Learning is darkness, and knowledge is light. Learning pertains to objects of ignorance. Its result is sharpening the intellect and accumulating information. The mind does not get a ray of light or knowledge by all this.

Knowledge takes up higher reason as its instrument, takes up the mind itself for examination and discovers its real nature to be Consciousness, the 'I'-principle. In the light of knowledge, all learning disappears as illusion.

835. WHY DOES A JNYĀNIN WEEP? (43)

Why should he not weep? Why should he laugh? What prohibits him from weeping alone? He does everything else: acting, perceiving, thinking and feeling, apparently like an ordinary man. But there is a world of difference between the activities of the two. The ignorant man acts as a slave to his passions; the Jnyānin as a master, the passions being his slaves. Therefore the Jnyānin can weep or not weep as he chooses.

But there is happiness even in weeping. The mere thought of the departed gives happiness. But that thought cannot be ordinarily separated from the allied aspects. So both together are helplessly accepted by the ordinary man. He begins to think of the agreeable aspects of the departed and gradually gets lost in the less happy aspects and weeps profusely.

But the Jnyānin knows perfectly well that his real nature Peace (objectless Happiness) is the background of all emotions, and welcomes grief and weeps like anybody else, but not for a moment does he lose sight of the background Peace.

836. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE APPROACHES OF THE YŌGIN AND THE JNYĀNIN TOWARDS HAPPINESS? (44)

The yōgin asks you to withdraw from objects in order to enjoy happiness. He uses the mind as his instrument and enjoys only the happiness reflected in his blankness of the mind. This is only pleasure.

But the Jnyānin asks you to withdraw not only from objects of mind but from the mind itself, in order to enjoy not reflected but pure Happiness. Here you use awareness or higher reason as the instrument.

The happiness of the yōgin is experienced only in concentration or oneness, and misery is experienced only in diversity.

20th March 1953

837. WHAT IS THE MINIMUM THAT AN ORDINARY MAN HAS TO DO TO ATTAIN PEACE? (45)

Shrī Aṣṭāvakra answers this question in the verse:

yadi dēhaṁ prthak-kṛtya citi viśrāmya tiṣṭhasi .
adhunai 'va sukhī śāntō bandha-muktō bhaviṣyasi ..

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 1.4

This means: 'Throw away your body first in idea and take rest in pure Consciousness. You shall at once be free and at Peace.'

When you stand as body, you are a *jīva*. When you stand as mind, you are *God*.

When you stand as truth, beyond both body and mind, you are the *Absolute*.

How to throw away the body? By simply becoming aware of it.

838. WHAT IS THE USE OF ARGUMENTS IN SPIRITUAL DISCOURSE? (46)

Only to expel the saṁskāras, which are the only impediments to understanding the Self aright. Otherwise the saṁskāras will safely lurk behind and create havoc afterwards.

839. WHAT IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL MISUNDERSTANDING? (47)

Answer: Name and its misuse.

The generic name which denotes only the Absolute is indiscriminately used to denote the particular. Thus the generic or Absolute is forgotten and the particular or the appearance is emphasized. What more is needed for misunderstanding?

22nd March 1953

840. WHY IS CONSCIOUSNESS INVISIBLE? (48)

The nature of Consciousness is 'experience' itself. The 'I'-principle is the only experience. The tests of experience are permanence and self-luminosity. Experience can never be experienced. It is '*anubhava-mātrā*-'*tmā*' (of the nature of pure experience alone).

To become visible, it must stand as an object of perception, which Consciousness can never do. To know, to enjoy, and to become it are all functions of the ego. But '*to be it*' is alone yours. *You were and are that always.*

841. WHAT IS PURITY? (49)

Purity is getting away from all that is extraneous to your real nature.

842. HOW DO I SEE? (50)

Seeing is an expression of Consciousness. Consciousness first expresses itself inwardly. It is only afterwards that it expresses itself outwardly. Unless you see yourself inwardly, you cannot see yourself outwardly either. The latter is only a corollary of the former.

23rd March 1953

843. WHAT IS MEANT BY 'GETTING ENRICHED'? (51)

It really means getting enlightened. It means you do not come out of an experience just as you went into it. You have gained some spiritual profit therefrom.

24th March 1953

844. WHAT ARE GOOD AND BAD SPIRITUALLY? (52)

Association with objects makes one *bad*. Association with the 'I'-principle makes one *good*.

2nd April 1953

845. WHAT IS REALIZATION? (53)

The ordinary man is alive to the illusion that he is bound. Therefore he has only to become alive to the fact that he is free. Realization is only this.

846. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ILLUSTRATION IN A SPIRITUAL CONTEXT? (54)

An illustration from the phenomenal is often indented upon, to clarify a particular position beyond the sensuous. An illustration should never be completely applied, but only to light up the particular aspect in question.

An illustration from the objective sphere should straight away be applied to the subjective in you.

847. CAN I UNDERSTAND ANYTHING TILL THE EGO DIES? (55)

No. In the question, you are putting the cart before the horse. You are emphasizing the ego more than the understanding.

However much you may try to kill the ego, it will only become stronger. So you have to approach it from the other end. Everybody understands in spite of the ego. The truth is that the ego automatically dies when you understand anything.

You will never succeed in bringing in light, if you insist upon removing all the darkness from your room before you do so. Therefore simply ignore the ego and try to understand, and the understanding itself will remove the ego.

848. WHAT IS FREEDOM AND HOW TO ATTAIN IT? (56)

The first scent of freedom is obtained from the urge for freedom coming spontaneously from deep within you. But you are unable to locate it and so think it comes from the outside. The ego takes up this urge and seeks for solution in its own way. You try to be free with body, senses, mind and objects and fail miserably.

At last, you discover that the urge comes from within and so look within subjectively, along the line of the heart. Following the track closely and earnestly, you reach the real 'I', behind the heart itself. Then you discover that the sense of bondage was an illusion, and that you were never bound at all. Coming out, you declare this to the world outside.

849. WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS? (57)

Like fire, it has two functions:

1. It illumines objects at a distance.
2. It destroys them on contact.

3rd April 1953

850. WHY DOES MAN GO TO WAR? (58)

Because there is war already inside him. He has not found subjective Peace and so cannot escape from either war within him or the war without, which is a corollary of the former. So try to attenuate your ego and find permanent Peace within you. Then alone will you be able to transcend all war outside.

851. HOW DOES ONE ATTENUATE THE EGO WHEN ONE HAS TO FIGHT AGAINST A STRONGER ADVERSARY? (59)

It is your selfish interest that tells you to keep away. But when you choose to fight, you sacrifice the ego and prefer even death. What greater attenuation of the ego can you have?

852. HOW TO DECIDE MY CONDUCT UNDER PERPLEXING SITUATIONS? (60)

Examine first what reigns in you, in the situation. If it is Peace, yield. If it is cowardice, well, stand up and fight. Kill your enemy (subjectively, the desire first; and then

the objective enemy next, if needs be). The fight within you is between Peace on one side, and the different feelings, thoughts and emotions on the other side.

853. HOW TO TRANSCEND FEAR? (61)

Bhītir nāma dvitīyād bhavati

Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, Nārāyaṇīyam, 91.3

Duality is the parent of fear. The moment you think that there is another existing beside you, fear sets in; and the only remedy against fear is the understanding that you are the one without a second, the ultimate Reality. Therefore, visualize the Reality and get back to fearlessness. To know that you are the silent witness to all mentations is also an equally successful remedy to eradicate all fear.

Witness thought is the surest panacea for all ills.

854. HOW TO DEAL WITH ANGER AGAINST AN ENEMY? (62)

Anger arises only because you imagine that the enemy stands against the Peace you seek to achieve by the accomplishment of certain desires. So the anger itself is the greater and nearer enemy to you.

Therefore, turn to that anger first, and examine it independently of its objects. Then you find it to be nothing but the Peace you were seeking for. The anger as such disappears, and all enemies are given a hearty send off.

855. WHAT IS THE ABSENCE OF A THING? (63)

The absence of anything is not directly perceived. It is only the background that is really perceived, and the absence of a thing is superimposed upon that background.

4th April 1953

856. HOW TO WAKE UP THE HIGHER REASON? (64)

If the outward going tendency of the intellect is curbed and the inward going tendency is encouraged, the lower reason itself is transformed into the higher reason.

857. WHAT IS IT THAT TAKES PLACE HERE, DURING THESE TALKS? (65)

The Truth is that it is the Truth that talks to the Truth, all about the Truth. The Truth goes into you undressed, not through language at all.

5th April 1953

858. HOW DOES A SAGE HELP ONE? (66)

It is one of the fundamental laws of nature that every action has a reaction. If you love someone, your affection is usually reciprocated.

So if you love even the person of a Sage, the Sage reciprocates from the right Absolute or the impersonal; because there is no trace of the personal in the Sage. What seems personal in the Sage is indeed the impersonal itself. (You have heard the story

of the travellers dying with hunger and thirst. They saw some monkeys on the tops of some coconut trees. They threw stones at the monkeys. Immediately the monkeys pelted back with tender coconuts. The travellers appeased their hunger and thirst with tender coconuts and went on.) Similarly, you get knowledge if you approach even the person of a Sage.

859. CREATION AND DISSOLUTION OF THE WORLD (67)

Creation: 1. Consciousness objectified is thought, and
2. Thought objectified is the gross world.

The reverse process is *dissolution*:

1. Gross world subjectified is thought, and
2. Thought subjectified is Consciousness.

860. IS EVERY DESIRE AN OBSTACLE TO TRUTH? (68)

Every desire rises in duality and so is generally considered an obstacle to Truth. But there are some exceptions.

Desire for freedom, desire for *mukti* etc. are not obstacles. Freedom is the characteristic of the real 'I'-principle. So by desiring freedom, the desire together with the ego merges into the 'I'-principle and you rest in Peace.

Mukti is selflessness. So, to desire *mukti* is also to desire selflessness. That can never be selfish either.

6th April 1953

861. DIFFERENCE OF APPROACH BETWEEN VĒDĀNTA AND SCIENCE (69)

Vēdānta always takes the generic of all things for discussion, and disposes of them with reference to the ultimate background. But science takes the particular objects and their mutual relationship alone into consideration, and does not at all consider the background.

862. RANGES OF ACTIVITIES OF THE SAGE AND THE LAYMAN (70)

To the Sage, all activities spring from the background, traverse the mental realm and end in the background itself. But to the layman, all activities start in the mental realm and end in the mental realm.

863. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STATEMENT 'I KNOW IT'? (71)

The statement only means 'I know.' The 'it' disappears even with the function of the sense organ. When I actually know, there is only myself as knowledge.

7th April 1953

864. WHAT IS IMPROVING A THOUGHT? (72)

The question arises out of ignorance of the content of thought. You can look at thought in two ways – from the inside and from the outside. When you look at a

thought-form from the outside, you call it a thought-form: as you call water a wave when you look at it from the outside. In whatever way you see it, and whatever you call it, its content does not change.

You see only the material side or the boundary of thought. It is the boundary alone that makes it a thought. The boundary of thought is time. But time is itself a thought. It is impossible to limit one thought by another thought. So thought is not limited by anything. Its content is Consciousness.

One who is concerned with the content of thought, ignores the boundaries, and knowing that the content is ever perfect never attempts to improve it. 'Improving thought' only means the rearrangement of the boundaries. You are not enriched by such improvement.

Still, you should beware of thoughts. Voluntary thoughts you may well take. But involuntary thoughts should never be allowed to come in unawares, to overpower you and guide you or to devour you.

865. THE LIGHT BEFORE THE EGO AND THE SAGE (73)

The ego never sees the light, though he always uses light. The Sage sees that light alone (the most vital part) in every perception. He is great who sees the light alone in all perceptions.

The 'I' is the first part of every perception. This is the light which manifests the object. But this part is usually ignored. You can speak of anything only as dead matter. I alone possess Consciousness. Even God is to be taken only as dead matter. No human being has ever reached the Ultimate, though sages may seem to live. The human being is transformed into the Ultimate itself, just before reaching it.

If you are able to stand as your real nature even for a second, and know that you were beyond time during that experience, you were really in the timeless. There is no need to lengthen the duration of that experience. That tendency is a vicious yōgic samskāra.

866. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ART AND A GENIUS? (74)

Art is an attempt to express the inner harmony of the ultimate Reality through the outer harmony created by the senses and the mind – for example music, beauty, poetry, painting and all the other arts. Everything can be made into an art, provided the ultimate goal is the inner harmony of the Absolute.

Beauty in nature is the ultimate Reality. But it has to be understood that it is not outside but within you as the real 'I'-principle. What you call a *genius* is a personality in whom a limited expression of the Ultimate is evident. It may express itself through one of the arts or in some other manner.

8th April 1953

867. WHEN AND HOW DOES HIGHER REASON FUNCTION? (75)

Higher reason is always ready to help you, provided you want earnestly to know the Truth. It is on hearing the Truth from the Guru that the higher reason is equipped and set in motion, and it does not stop till the goal of Truth is reached. The function of the

higher reason is to dissolve the mind, and then the higher reason stands transformed into Ātmā itself.

The higher reason is the fire (the Guru) that has gone into you, through the words of the Guru. It consumes the creations of your mind and vanishes at last, becoming Ātmā itself.

868. WHAT IS LONELINESS AND ITS REMEDY, IF IT CALLS FOR ANY? (76)

You are the ultimate Reality, the one without a second. Therefore, loneliness is inevitable and you welcome it; because every activity of yours is meant to make you lonely. You want Happiness, which is yourself alone, and when you are in your true nature you cannot share it with any other, because there is no other there.

When there is duality, there is always fear. Fearlessness obtains only in non-duality or loneliness. In fact, you are that always. Its nature is Peace or pure Happiness and therefore you never want to lose it. So, naturally, no remedy is called for.

869. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO TRUTH? (77)

Love prepares the way to Truth. Knowledge takes you straight to Truth. It is made possible for you to accomplish both by listening to the talks of the Sage. In love, the ego is lost and you get to Peace.

Sincerity is to be true to oneself.

9th April 1953

870. THE SAGE TRANSCENDS ALL LIMITATIONS OF LANGUAGE. (78)

Language, of course, has its own limitations everywhere. But the luminous presence of the Guru compensates for all limitations of his language, and you are taken straight to the Truth.

To be nearer the Truth, it may even be said that the Self knows the Self, or Ātmā knows Ātmā.

871. HOW TO LIVE? (79)

Live in this world knowing full well that all the limitations there are self-imposed; and that you, as the creator and imposer of the limitations, stand above all the limitations themselves. So the world can never bind you.

872. WHAT IS MEANT BY 'TO TAKE NOTE OF'? (80)

'To take note of' = to recognize.

In trying to recognize the Truth deeply, you happen to be placed there (to stand as that) and the recognition dies. So it takes you to a non-dual experience in identity.

10th April 1953

873. HOW IS THE WORLD A THOUGHT FORM? (81)

Take the mind away from the world. What remains? You can neither say that it exists or that it does not exist. So you alone remain.

Therefore, the world is only a thought.

874. WHAT IS THE PERMANENT BACKGROUND? (82)

The permanent background of everything, whether of sense organs or mind, is Ātmā itself.

Sense organs or mind, if they become permanent or changeless, are Ātmā itself. That permanent principle which stands behind perceptions, thoughts and feelings – beyond perception and non-perception, beyond thought and non thought etc. – is the real 'I'.

That which gives you light, or that which enables you to see, think etc., is the 'I'-principle. That is the permanent background.

Samskāras are habit-channels of thought, or dormant tendencies.

875. WHAT DO I LOVE? AND WHY? (83)

Your love is directed only to the real substratum or Self. You happen to love the qualities in one, simply because they belong to the substratum you love. You love, because love is the real nature of the real Self and you cannot help loving even for a moment.

876. HOW TO LOVE? (84)

Love is the feeling or sense of oneness with another.

If you correctly understand yourself to be beyond body, senses and mind, your love for another will also be for that self in him. Because there are no two selves, and love is its nature.

If your understanding is incorrect, you love the incorrect self in him; and as a result of that incorrectness, you hate others.

Genuine love absorbs everything into you, and then duality dies. But in conditioned love, or gratitude, duality persists in giving and taking. Even this gratitude, if directed to the Guru, goes deep into you, takes you beyond duality and is transformed into objectless love.

11th April 1953

877. WHEN DO I BEGIN TO LOVE MY GURU? (85)

When that which has been given by the Guru is accepted wholly, love for the Guru springs up within you.

878. THERE IS NO MOVEMENT. WHY? (86)

A vacuum is necessary to make movement possible. Something can move only into a vacuum. Nature abhors a vacuum. The real Self, as existence, infills all. If there is no vacuum and if nature is already full, how can anything move?

879. HOW TO BE AWAKE IN DEEP SLEEP? (87)

Not seeing the Reality or forgetting the Self is *sleep*.
Seeing the Reality or visualizing the Self is *waking*.
In this sense, the present waking state is sleep or *a dream*.

To be really awake is not to be awake with sense organs or mind, but with Consciousness. Give up the waking dream and be awake to the real Self.

880. WHAT DO I MEAN WHEN I SAY 'I WALKED'? (88)

I mean I never walked.

I cannot say I walked without knowing I walked. Then 'I walked' was the object, and 'I' was the witness. Walking does not go into the make of me. I was that principle which was witness to walking and non-walking. Therefore I never walked.

881. HOW DOES THE MIND BECOME PURE? (89)

The mind becomes pure by its own death. The attempt to purify the mind by any amount of other effort is futile.

882. THE SAHAJA STATE (90)

The sahaja state is the state where you maintain that certainty or deep-rooted conviction that you never leave your real nature of Consciousness and Peace.

16th April 1953

883. ALL THE WORLD IS RELATIVE. I AM THE ONLY ABSOLUTE. (91)

karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyēd akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ ...

[One who sees actionlessness in action,
and action only in actionlessness,...]

Bhagavad-gītā, 4.18
(see note 272)

To give a meaning to any activity, reference must be made at least unconsciously to its opposite. These opposites depend upon each other for their very existence. Strict laws of logic however enjoin that, in such cases, both are non-existent. Two opposites cannot exist side by side, at the same time. They say that it is exactly like saying, 'A is the father of B and B is the father of A', where the fallacy is evident.

Thus birth is birth only in relation to death, and death is death only in relation to birth. So both are non-existent, and you stand beyond both.

884. WHAT ARE THE DISTINCT STAGES OF PROGRESS TO THE ULTIMATE? (92)

First from bondage to liberation, and from liberation to pure Consciousness. You have only to come to a deep recognition of the fact that you have always been, that you are, and that you shall ever be the witness. That is all that is needed.

First you *know* that you are the Reality.
Then you *become* it.
Then you *be* it.

In the being it, both the knowing it and the becoming it expire. The first two were misunderstandings of the 'being it', at different levels.

The first knowing had an object, the last being is objectless knowledge.

17th April 1953

885. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN THOUGHT AND FEELING? DOES THOUGHT MERGE IN FEELING? (93)

No. Nor the other way round. Both merge directly in Consciousness. The question is not of much spiritual significance. Both being sensations, they may be disposed of together. But I answer it only out of academic interest.

From another perspective, it may be said that feeling is nothing but a *deep* thought. Here '*deep*' signifies the heart element. When you take a particular thought over and over again, the heart begins to function and craves for that thought. Thus thought begets feeling and descends into the heart.

886. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE? (94)

It is only to know the Truth and to be it. You can never be happy; you can only be Happiness.

All phenomenal workers try to make others happy.

But the v̥dāntin tries to make them Happiness directly, or enables them to see themselves as Happiness itself. The v̥dāntin cares for the inside of the 'he'. Others cater for the outside of 'him'. I ask such advocates of work for humanity: where, in deep sleep, is the world they wish to elevate?

To become universal is the goal of another set. It is well-nigh impossible. Even if you succeed in that attempt and become universal, the fact of becoming still remains and then the individuality also remains. You find no means to transcend the universality and the individuality (together called duality).

887. IS IT RIGHT TO HATE THE EGO? (95)

Yes. Because the ego is something which does not exist. So you hate the non-existent because you want to be the existent Reality.

The best way to annihilate the ego is not to think frequently of annihilating it. This will thereby only strengthen the ego. You need only to ignore the ego at every turn, and the ego will die a natural death.

See what Lord Kṛiṣṇa contrived at the end of his career. He made his kith and kin fight between themselves and completely exterminate the sect, leaving Kṛiṣṇa alone.

Similarly, allow the body, senses and mind and objects to fight between themselves and die, leaving You alone.

18th April 1953

888. WHAT DOES YŌGA MEAN? (96)

Yōga is a word which is used in a very broad and comprehensive sense. It is used with a different meaning in different contexts. Generally, it means only a 'path'.

'Yōga', in any context, must be understood in accordance with the level of the person who uses it and the person who listens to it. When a Sage uses the word 'yōgin', he means a *jnyāna-yōgin* or a Sage. When a *rāja-yōgin* or a *bhakti-yōgin* uses the same word, he means another yōgin of his own type.

The Sage is that principle upon which all opposites and paradoxes appear and disappear.

889. WHAT DIFFERENTIATES LOVE FROM KNOWLEDGE? (97)

Knowing with your whole being is Love itself. In thought (which is knowing with the mind alone) you do not lose yourself. But in love you lose yourself. So love entails the sacrifice of the ego.

890. WHAT IS COURAGE? (98)

If love of any kind prompts you to action and sacrifice of any degree, courage comes in. If pure love (objectless love) prompts you to action and sacrifice, that is real courage. But if love of any object prompts you to sacrifice, your courage is not genuine – but secondary and worldly.

891. HOW TO USE FEELINGS AS A MEANS TO REACH THE ULTIMATE? (99)

Love for objects is a feeling. It consists of love and the object, which are distinct and separate. In that feeling, if you turn your attention to the love part ignoring the object part, you are free.

Every feeling is obstructed love. So, see every feeling as obstructed love and fix your attention on the love part, and you are free.

892. ELIMINATED FROM OBJECTS, HAS KNOWLEDGE ANY ATTRACTION? (100)

Yes, certainly.

You love objects for enjoyment. So you love enjoyment more than objects. You have more interest in self-love than in love for objects. And you love Love itself or the Self more than self-love. So you love the Self most.

When objects are eliminated from knowledge of objects, what remains over is knowledge, your real nature or Self, and you love that most. What else can have a greater attraction for you?

893. WHY ARE TEXTS INTERPRETED DIFFERENTLY? (101)

Shrī Shankara, Shrī Rāmānuja and Shrī Madhva stand for Advaitic, Vishīṣṭādvaitic and Dvaitic sections of Indian philosophy respectively. All of them unanimously accept the prasthānatraya tripod of Hindu philosophy as their authority. This tripod of texts consists of the *Brahma-sūtra*, the *Dashōpaniṣads*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

All these texts abound in statements and verses made from the standpoint of all the three schools. Instead of being satisfied with choosing and adopting the particular verses most favourable to each school, they went out of their way and, by far-fetched argument and much straining of the intellect, attempted to read the sense of their own school into the verses more suited to the others. Shrī Shankara also has committed the same mistake, by trying to twist purely dvaitic texts into the advaitic sense. The shāstras were written to suit all grades of people in society. This is how the sacred texts came to be tortured.

20th April 1953

894. WHAT DOES THE EGO WANT? (102)

It is wrong to say the ego always wants enjoyment of objective pleasure alone. If so, why does he desire deep sleep where there is no thought or feeling? So it proves that he wants to be alone in his real nature.

The ego's activities are:

You perceive it.	All three take place in the
Then you know it.	realm of the mind alone.
Then you enjoy it.	
Then you <i>become</i> it.	On the borderline
	between mind and self.
Then you <i>be</i> it.	In the Reality or Self.

895. HOW ARE LIFE'S ACTIVITIES CONNECTED? (103)

It is through the witness alone that your varied thoughts, feelings and perceptions are connected. The real you are not connecting them at all.

Your life-eternal is ego's death – eternal. True life begins when the ego dies and consciousness dawns.

21st April 1953

896. HOW DOES A THING AFFECT ME? (104)

Things affect you both by their presence and by their absence. Both of them hide you.

897. TRYING TO IMPROVE THE WORLD IS A SACRILEGE. HOW? (105)

If there is a God who created this world, he knows and has powers to maintain it. For a creature to try to improve the world is to usurp God's own responsibilities and to correct God himself. Is this anything short of sacrilege to God? It is like the stupid railway passenger who carried his baggage on his own head all through the journey,

and alighting claimed that it was he who carried it through. The poor fool forgot that it was the train that was actually carrying himself and his baggage.

898. WHO HAS ESTABLISHED HIMSELF? (106)

He who has deeply known Consciousness (though it is ridiculous to say so) has established himself in Consciousness. He is a *jīvan-mukta*.

899. IS THERE ANYTHING HIGHER STILL? (107)

Yes. Not in content, but in the naturalness of control. Though born, as a child in ignorance, it is the highest goal to become a ‘*child in knowledge*’. All *jīvan-muktas* do not rise to that state and it is not necessary for their own purpose either.

900. HOW DO THE HEAD AND THE HEART FUNCTION? (108)

In spiritual matters alone, the head and the heart work harmoniously together. But in the phenomenal sphere, they often work each divorced of the other.

901. WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES OF LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE? (109)

Love creates an object for its enjoyment. Immediately, knowledge destroys that object, leaving love objectless. Being objectless, it is one with love Absolute. Love is enriched not by taking but by giving.

īṭatumirīparattunniprapañcaṁ samastaṁ
palatumirī vamikkurṁ vahniyil bhasmamākkurṁ
karumanapalatēvaṁ kāṭṭiyātmasvarūpē
śīśutaviśadamākkurṁ vastuvē satyamāvū

Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātmārāmam, 1.42

The verse means: The left eye representing love creates all this world for enjoyment; but the next moment the right eye representing knowledge destroys all that in its consuming fire. This is indeed one of the manifold divine *līlās* of the ‘child in knowledge’ in the field of the Ultimate, through which it explains the world and establishes the Truth.

22nd April 1953

902. IT IS SAID, I AM ALONE, IN THE INTERVAL BETWEEN MENTATIONS. WHEN THE INTERVAL IS MENTIONED, DOES NOT TIME COME IN? (110)

The interval is visualized by that principle standing beyond. To him there is no time. For he is beyond body, senses and mind. So from his stand, he was perceiving in identity. But to make you conceive it in some manner, time is merely given as a starting point. The interval being really timeless and objectless, when you make the attempt, you are thrown into the beyond – where time disappears.

A means, which is an illusion, is first adopted from the relative sphere, which is all illusion. But reaching the goal, when you look back, you find that the world-illusion

has disappeared, and the means-illusion along with it, leaving you all alone in your own glory.

23rd April 1953

903. WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL THOUGHT? (111)

Thought is an exercise of the mind, in relation to objects of the world. Thought about the Truth is not a thought in the real sense. Because Truth can never be an object of thought. So spiritual thought is a misnomer. What is actually called a spiritual thought is only a deep recognition of an established fact regarding the real 'I', beyond all subject-object relationship.

904. WHAT IS RECOGNITION? (112)

Recognition is an acceptance of the fact of Truth. Repetition of it makes the recognition deeper and deeper.

Recognition, remembrance and hope are the three props that maintain the continuity of individual life. Of these three, recognition stands nearer the 'I'-principle than the other two.

905. WHY SHOULD I AVOID SIDDHIS (POWERS)? (113)

Because they create a newer and subtler world which binds you even more strongly than the waking world, and weans you away from the path of the Reality. So the spiritual aspirant should scrupulously shun *siddhis* of all kinds.

viṭa-saṁsargavat siddha-saṁsargaṁ mōha-varddhakam
mōhāya bhayaṅkaraṁ jñātvā siddhāṁ styajati yō naraḥ
tasya nirvighnam ēkānta kalpayā nirvikalpayā
anāyāsami hai 'vā 'tma-jñāna-siddhir bhavēd dhruvam

(?)

906. HOW IS THE WITNESS TRANSFORMED? (114)

The witness is the highest limit to which one can go, on the way to the Ultimate. When you reach the witness, your understanding it as the witness disappears. But what appeared as the witness continues still, as the Reality.

10th May 1953

907. WHY DO I SEE DIVERSITY? (115)

Because you are diversity yourself. When you think you are body, senses and mind, all constantly changing, you are diversity yourself and you see nothing but diversity outside. When you see you are that changeless principle, you are no longer in diversity and then you see no diversity either.

14th May 1953

908. WHY WAS SĪTA-DĒVĪ MADE FIRST TO EXPOUND THE TRUTH OF RĀMA AND SĪTĀ TO HANUMĀN? (116)

In spite of the extreme flight of devotion to the person of Rāma and Sītā, and the profound but objective study of all the shāstras, the higher reason or *vidyā-vṛitti* had not yet awakened in Hanumān. Therefore, the word expounding the Truth, as it came from Shrī Rāma, was apt to be misunderstood.

Therefore Sītā was made to expound first the Truth of Rāma, explaining his impersonal and self-luminous aspects, extolling the glory of the Guru. Next, she expounded the truth of herself and the world, to be appearing and acting by his mere presence. Thus was Hanumān transformed into an *uttamādhikāri* (earnest aspirant) by having his attention directed to the impersonal in Rāma. Her part was only a preparation of the ground.

The crowning conclusion of *tattvōpadēsha* was given by Shrī Rāma himself in a few words and Hanumān became a *jīvan-mukta* then and there.

23rd May 1953

909. WHY AM I GIVEN A SPIRITUAL NAME? (117)

This is done in response to an urge from deep below. When everything (body, senses and mind) change, you have to be shown that you are changeless by clinging on to something at least relatively changeless. So a changeless name is given to you to show that you are changeless.

14th June 1953

910. HOW DO I SEE BEAUTY IN THE MOUNTAINS? (118)

You see only the mountain and superimpose beauty from your own nature upon the mountain. So beauty is your own projection. Now do *you* really see the mountain? If so, a child also must see the mountain. But it does not. It simply sees. Neither do *you* see the mountain. *You* too simply see. Seeing is Consciousness, the Self. Therefore you see only yourself.

911. HOW IS TRUTH TRANSMITTED? (119)

When you are angry, you lose yourself in anger and so you transmit it to another who gets angry with you in return. Similarly, when the Guru talks about the Truth, the Guru gets lost in Truth and, through the words that he uses, takes you to the Truth. So it is anger that transmits anger and Truth that transmits Truth or enlightens one.

25th June 1953

912. WHAT IS REAL EXPERIENCE? (120)

You say that you have understood the Truth. It means you stood one with the Truth.

(The very word ‘understood’ is significant. It means you stood under. Under what? Under the phenomenal. Under body, senses and mind, as their background. Whether the godfathers of the language meant the word to mean this, is a different question. It

easily yields itself to this interpretation, and it is also the perfect truth. Then why not accept it?)

That was real experience. It was not experienced by anybody. Experience is the very nature of Reality. You stood as that Reality; but you do not often take note of it. Sometimes that deep conviction of the Truth expresses itself in the realm of the mind. Ignorantly, you call that expression an experience.

Real experience you first have on hearing the whole Truth direct from the Guru. Immediately you endorse it with your whole being. To say that you experienced it, is wrong. It is the language of duality, and experience is non-dual. Experience itself is the ultimate Reality, Truth, Background, 'I'-principle, Consciousness, Love, Peace, Beauty, Harmony and whatever else you may call it.

29th June 1953

913. WHAT IS THE TEST OF THE RIGHT LINE OF THINKING? (121)

It is to see whether it takes you to the witness. If so, you are on the right line. That which expresses itself in the witnessed as well as in the witness is alone the Truth.

914. THE IGNORANT MAN AND THE SAGE (122)

The ignorant man does not experience anything other than the body, and is blissfully ignorant of the 'I'-principle.

The Sage does not experience anything other than the 'I'-principle, and knows the body to be only an illusion.

30th June 1953

915. HOW DO OBJECTS HELP ME TO KNOW THE TRUTH? (123)

Adṛśyō dṛśyatē rāhur gr̥hītēnē 'ndunā yathā,
tathā 'nubhava-mātrā 'tmā dṛśyēnā 'tmā vilōkyatē

(?)

The invisible Rāhu is perceived through the eclipsed moon. In the same way the *Ātmā* who is mere experience is perceived through objects

Translation by Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātma-darshan, Preface

Objects being known help you to understand first that there is an independent principle in you called 'knowingness'; and then, when under instructions from a Guru you eliminate objects from the knowledge of objects, you stand as pure knowingness or Consciousness itself. This knowledge is the all-pervading Reality, yourself.

So don't look down upon objects, but utilize them intelligently as a means to the Ultimate.

2nd July 1953

916. HOW TO KNOW THE UNIVERSE? (124)

To talk of the universe, a cosmic ruler etc. is all gibberish. The mind cannot conceive anything bigger than itself. The universe comprehends the individual and his mind. So the individual mind, as such, can never comprehend its own holder – the universe or

the supreme power. In order to be able to conceive them, the mind must first transcend its own limits of time and outgrow the universe. Then the mind ceases to be mind and stands as the ultimate Reality. Looked at from that stand, the universe as such disappears and stands transformed as the Reality itself. Therefore the attempt is in vain.

917. WHERE IS SUBJECT-OBJECT RELATIONSHIP IN LOVE? (125)

When you say you love yourself, you yourself and love stand as one. So also when you love another, you become one with the other. The subject-object relationship vanishes, and the experience is one of identity. In order to '*love thy neighbour as thyself*' you have to stand as Ātmā itself.

The disappearance of subject-object relationship is a natural corollary of the experience of love. So also of the experience of knowledge. This actually happens in all experiences in the plane of the relative.

Instead of taking note of the sublime Truth, after the event the ego tries to limit, misrepresent and possess it. Whenever any doubt arises, refer to the deep sleep experience. There is no subject-object relationship there.

In the experience of Happiness the mind dies. There is neither enjoyer nor enjoyed in it. There is only Happiness. It is an egoless state; but this is usurped subsequently by the ego. You are not getting Happiness by loving all, but loving all is itself Happiness. The humanitarian worker emphasizes the 'all' and misses Happiness; the v̥edāntin emphasizes Happiness, his own nature, and misses or loses the 'all'.

8th July 1953

918. WHAT ARE OBSTACLES TO SPIRITUALITY AND HOW TO REMOVE THEM? (126)

The thought that some things are obstacles is the first obstacle to you. The best way to remove them is to look straight at them and examine them. What you consider an obstacle consists of the material part and the Consciousness or Reality part. Direct your attention to the Reality part alone and ignore the material part. Then the thing ceases to be an obstacle and becomes a help instead.

919. SINCE HAPPINESS IS MY REAL NATURE WILL NOT MY WORK SUFFER FOR WANT OF AN INCENTIVE? (127)

No. The question touches the Absolute and therefore you should not expect an answer from the intellectual level. The answer can only be from the level of experience. Your work will become objectless and something other than happiness will take the place of the incentive. The work will continue to be done perfectly even to the minutest detail, unknown to the mind, and in all such work you will enjoy yourself.

25th July 1953

920. WHAT IS IT THAT REALLY BINDS ME? (128)

It is not the outside that binds you, but it is something inside. It is only your ignorance of what you are and your identification with the wrong thing (body, senses and mind) that really binds you.

svayame tanne lākkappil sukhamāy~ viśramicciṭum
inspekṭaī ennapōl dēha-pañjarē vārka saukhyamāy~

Shrī Ātmānanda

The Inspector of police and the thief may be sleeping or resting in similar and adjacent cells in the police lockup. The Inspector does not feel bound but the thief does. Thus the liberated, though in apparent bondage, is free beyond doubt.

921. WHY DO I NOT VISUALIZE ĀTMĀ? (129)

Who asks the question? If it is the ego, he can never visualize Ātmā. If it is the 'I' in you that asks the question, that 'I' is Ātmā itself and shall neither want nor be able to visualize Ātmā. Because you cannot be the subject and object simultaneously.

26th July 1953

922. WHAT ARE RULES TO A SAGE? (130)

The Sage does not follow any rules. I do not mean rules like those of the road or society, but rules of spirituality. Rules are really meant to take one to the Sage or Truth. Therefore rules humbly follow the Sage and do not dare to overtake him. Because the Sage does not need their services and they are dissolved or become meaningless in his presence.

923. WHY WAS THE ARTIFICIAL STATE OF NIRVIKALPA SAMĀDHI INVENTED? (131)

The pioneers of the traditional (cosmological) jnyāna path understood and interpreted the spontaneous state of deep sleep as the seat of causal ignorance. It was with a view to avoid or remove this ignorance by human effort that the *nirvikalpa samādhi* was invented. They succeeded in their goal only partially; because when they came out of the samādhi state, the shroud of ignorance engrossed them once again. So a permanent solution had to be sought again.

924. HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE BEAUTY IN AN OBJECT? (132)

Beauty, as the world conceives it, is nothing but the harmony of discordant things. The discordant notes in the object first attract you. Slowly, the notes die away and you become aware of an external harmony; which in its turn leads you to the inner harmony in which you yourself are lost. This inner harmony is itself beauty – your real nature.

925. DOES THIS NOT TAKE AWAY THE RELISH OF LIFE? (133)

No. Never. It only enhances the relish. At first you enjoy beauty. But then you desire to be that enjoyment which is beyond that joy, and thus you are taken to that harmony itself. You put that question because you have not experienced beauty or harmony in its fullness.

926. HOW DO THE SAGE AND THE IGNORANT MAN SEE BEAUTIFUL THINGS? (134)

The Sage sees first pure degreeless harmony and then he sees the object. So he may be said to see the object in the beauty. But the ordinary man, who stands only at the body level, sees the object first; and only then does he see something of the beauty or harmony expressed in the object. This helps him to have a peep into the beyond and nothing more.

27th July 1953

927. DEEP SLEEP AND SAMĀDHI – CAN THEY BE COMPARED? (135)

The deep sleep experience, as it is understood by the ordinary man, is a mixture of a positive and a negative experience. Samādhi of the yōgin is a positive experience alone and both take place in the realm of the mind.

928. HOW CAN SAMĀDHI EXPERIENCE BE MADE THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE? (136)

The samādhi experience is that '*I was happy.*' But when you understand, from a Kāraṇa-guru, that Happiness is your real nature, you come to realize that you are yourself the goal of samādhi. With this understanding, all hankering after samādhi disappears; though samādhi might still come upon you sometimes merely as a matter of course or samskāra. But you will never again be attracted by the enjoyment of happiness in samādhi.

If there is a general agreement with regard to anything objective, it is only an expression of the higher reason. If there is any sense of permanence or changelessness appearing anywhere, it can only be that of the ultimate background.

28th July 1953

929. WHAT OBSTRUCTS THE REALITY? (137)

The presence as well as absence of the object. When you see the wall without the usual picture hanging on it, you form a percept and a concept together – the concept getting the better of the two. The percept is the absence of the picture and the concept is the idea of the presence of the picture. It is clear that the wall, as it is, will never be perceived if your attention is directed to either of the two. Similarly, the Reality behind the world is obstructed both by the presence of the world in the waking and dream states, and by its absence in the deep sleep state. You have to transcend both in order to reach the background.

930. WHAT IS MEANT BY 'DIRECTING ATTENTION TO'? (138)

You have grown up from a baby to a man. It is a fact in itself. Can you say you remember it? *No*. You can only recognize it deeply. That is directing attention to it. Direct attention to your real nature also in a like manner.

31st July 1953

931. WHAT IS THE MISCHIEF OF TIME? (139)

Time is only an idea. World is built upon the plurality of ideas, depending upon time which is but an idea. Therefore time is not. Idea is not. Both are nothing but the ultimate Reality. This time is the arch-deceiver of all. You rely upon him to establish the world and its religions.

What you recognize is here already. But what you remember has to be brought or created by a thought depending upon the illusion of time.

You are the changeless principle. So you need only recognize that fact.

1st August 1953

932. WHAT DO I SEEK BY LIBERATION? (140)

Your own individuality, which is that changeless principle in you.

933. WHY HAS THE 'I'-PRINCIPLE NO ACTIVITY? (141)

Because the 'I'-principle has neither organs nor mind.

But it is not dead. It is ever-present and it is from it that everything else gets light.

934. HOW DOES A TATTVĀPADĒSHA HELP ME AFTERWARDS? (142)

You first listen to the Truth direct from the lips of the Guru. Your mind, turned perfectly sāttvic by the luminous presence of the Guru, has become so sensitive and sharp that the whole thing is impressed upon it as if it were a sensitive film. You visualize your real nature then and there.

But the moment you come out, the check of the presence of the Guru being removed, other saṃskāras rush in and you are unable to recapitulate what was said or heard. But later on, whenever you think of that glorious incident, the whole picture comes back to your mind – including the form, words and arguments of the Guru – and you are thrown afresh into the same state of visualization you had experienced on the first day. Thus you constantly hear the same Truth from within.

This is how a spiritual *tattvāpadēsha* helps you all through life, till you are established in your own real nature.

935. WHAT DOES THE WITNESS PERCEIVE? (143)

The witness perceives only the material part of the activity, and never the Consciousness part of it.

936. HOW TO SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH? (144)

It is usually undertaken in two ways. One way is by following an ascending order as in the traditional method, and the other in a descending order as in the direct method.

The former process is adopted by scientists, slowly ascending from the world, always attributing reality to the objective. Proceeding this way they knock against a blank wall of ignorance, because they find no way to transcend duality.

The latter is a process of descent from the *Ātmā* down to the world of objects. Here you retain your perspective of non-duality, which is the characteristic of *Ātmā*, and from that stand you find it easy to discover the Truth – even behind the diversity of the world.

If you want to see the world in the correct perspective, you must first see yourself correctly and then the world will automatically shine in its true nature.

937. WHAT ARE TRIGUṆAS? (145)

Tamas [passivity] and *rajas* [activity] are two distinct and separate qualities or attributes – each with a good proportion of the other mixed with it. But *sattva* [peace] is not a positive quality like the other two. It is that principle which keeps the balance between the other two.

Let us take an example. If a man walks and walks, without wanting to stop at all, that amounts to *sattva*, though on the surface it may appear to be *rajas*. Similarly, if a sleeping man, when he wakes up, is inclined to return to that sleep again rather than take to the activities of life in spite of all kinds of temptations for active life, that is also *sattva*, though it might appear on the surface as *tamas* itself.

So there is *tamas* in *rajas* and *rajas* in *tamas* – *sattva* balancing the two. If the ego does not come in to interfere, indolence is the Reality itself. It may also be said that there is only *sattva*. When it is divided into two, it appears as *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is the ultimate Reality itself (*shuddha-sattva*).

938. HOW DOES THE WORLD VANISH? (146)

You cannot accept the evidence of form, in order to establish form. The evidence must be provided from a higher level.

Therefore, to examine the gross world, you have to rise to the next higher plane – the mental plane. Then the idea of space and along with it the idea of outside vanish.

Next, when you begin to examine the mental plane, you have to rise to the Consciousness plane, when the sense of inside also vanishes and the world disappears completely, leaving you as the ‘I’-principle.

The mind can never conceive the ‘generic’.

3rd August 1953

939. HOW TO APPLY THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE SNAKE IN THE ROPE? (147)

The ‘this’-ness of the rope stands for the ‘I’ in me, and the snake stands for body, senses and mind. This ‘I’ is attached to the illusion as well as to the Reality beyond.

10th August 1953

940. MEMORY AND OBJECTIFICATION OF TIME (148)

Memory and objectification of time are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin, and upon that springs up the world.

Desire for liberation or Truth is not the function of the ego, but is the expression of the being in you. If one says sincerely that he takes a delight in being bound, surely he is liberated. (Of course bound being used not in any limited sense but in the most

comprehensive way.) He must be so deeply convinced of his real nature of Peace being the background of the bondage (misery) of every kind.

941. A SAGE IS IN REAL SAMĀDHI EVEN IN ACTIVITY. HOW? (149)

When you see a thing, actually you become it. The 'it' vanishes or merges in you. This is nothing but samādhī [absorption]. This is equally true in respect of other sense organs also. This is the truth regarding the activities of the ordinary man. Much more so is it true of the Sage, who is every moment conscious of it.

942. WHAT DOES MAN DESIRE – COMPANY OR LONELINESS? (150)

Only loneliness.

There is no denying that you like only Happiness, and it is to obtain Happiness that you seek company. But when Happiness dawns, you leave all company and stand alone. There you are in absolute loneliness. Even when you are deluded that your company gives you Happiness, if you carefully examine this you will find that you give up the objects including your own body, senses and mind the moment you begin to be happy. Do you like or welcome company in deep sleep, where you are all alone and happy?

943. HOW IS POWER AN OBSTACLE TO TRUTH? (151)

The yōgin takes to Consciousness as power and thus the way to Consciousness as Truth is blocked. Power is objective and you become enamoured of that power, never wanting to get beyond.

944. HOW IS A SAGE EQUIPPED TO BE A KĀRAṆA-GURU, AN ĀCĀRYA? (152)

Every Sage cannot be an Ācārya. It needs certain special qualifications to equip oneself to be an Ācārya. He must have the experience of all the different paths, particularly of those of devotion and yōga, so that he can guide the aspirants that come to him (sometimes with perverted experiences) without cutting the ground off their feet. These qualifications he can acquire by dint of exercises in the earlier stages of his spiritual life. In the light of the ultimate Truth, later on, he would be able to see the correct significance of such experiences.

There are Sages who, though they have had no such previous training, cannot help taking the role of the Guru; because they have been explicitly ordered by their own Gurus to do so. In such cases, all the necessary qualifications of the Guru come to them, as and when required. Whatever they are lacking will be supplied instantly by the *word* of their Guru. Look at the exalted certitude of Shrī Shankara when he declares:

... jīvo nā 'ham dēśikō 'ktyā śivō 'ham ..

Shrī Shankara, Advaita-pancaratnam, 1.2

By the *word of my Guru*, I am not the jīva, I am Peace itself.

945. HOW IS THE EGO TRANSFORMED? (153)

It is your thought, that every object is distinct and separate from you, that constitutes the waking state with the ego full-blown. If you stand separate from any object, that separateness will also exist between objects.

Gradually, you discover that your body is also an object like any other, and you begin to look upon it as something separate from you. Then you become a mental being. This is the first stage of progress when the ego loses its grossness.

The mental stand is next given up and then your stand is in the 'I'-principle. Then the whole of the objective world appears as a single mass and that whole mass stands transformed into pure Consciousness. Grossness vanishes first and subtleness vanishes next.

Then you stand as pure Consciousness. This experience may happen either in the dream state or in the waking state; but the result is the same. Sometimes in your dream you feel it is a dream; in a few seconds, without any further effort, the whole thing dissolves into pure Consciousness.

24th August 1953

946. WHY DOES NOT THE EXPERIENCE OF DEEP SLEEP HELP ONE SPIRITUALLY? (154)

Because the ordinary man looks upon deep sleep objectively. If deep sleep loses its sense of objectivity and becomes subjective, you are free.

947. WHAT DOES 'I KNOW IT' MEAN? (155)

First the 'it' stands for form or object. Next, 'it' stands for seeing. At last, 'it' stands for knowledge.

Thus the statement means 'I know knowledge', i.e. 'I know I', i.e. 'I. I. I.'

948. WHAT IS A PERCEPT? (156)

That which is perceived. If you emphasize the 'that' part of it, the percept becomes 'that' and ceases to be a percept.

25th August 1953

949. HOW DOES THE WITNESS STAND HELP ME? (157)

The witness stand helps you to renounce everything in effect, without renouncing anything physically or mentally.

950. HOW TO SEE THE FORM OF THE LORD? (158)

You see the Lord through his pranks or deeds or mischief in his story. So also see the Lord in and through his form.

31st August 1953

951. WHAT ARE FREE CHOICE AND FREE WILL? (159)

They are both contradictions in terms. Freedom cannot have anything beside it; so choice is out of the question. The real 'I'-principle alone is, always, free. If anything stoops to choose, it is the ego that does it. The ego is itself not free, its choice cannot be free and it cannot help another to be free. The same applies to free will. They are both misnomers.

952. ARISTOTLE SAYS THAT MAN IS A SOCIAL ANIMAL AND ABHORS SOLITUDE. IS IT JUSTIFIABLE? (160)

The remark is superficial and made from a purely social standpoint. The truth on closer examination is just the opposite. I say: 'Man is always in solitude and can never be otherwise.'

Can you share with another any part of your pain or pleasure? *No*. Even your company has to come at last to 'you' in loneliness in order to be recognized. They are also a projection of yourself.

Really there is no enjoyment in company. In company the mind is always dissipated. The mind must die in order to be happy.

Samskāras = Innate tendencies.

Witnessing = Disinterested perception.

1st September 1953

953. HOW TO EXAMINE AN ACTION (DOING)? (161)

It has to be done subjectively and not objectively. Then the doer and the deed both vanish, not being present in the doing.

draṣṭra-darśana-dṛśyēṣu pratyēkaṁ bōdha-mātratā ...

[The see-er, seeing and the seen –
of these, each is pure consciousness....]

Shrī Shankara

2nd September 1953

954. TRIPUṬĪ IS A MISNOMER. (162)

Even to say that two things exist simultaneously, you must admit that you can conceive or perceive two things simultaneously. This is impossible. So the tripuṭī [the triad of see-er, seeing and seen] cannot exist simultaneously.

15th September 1953

955. WHAT IS RENUNCIATION? (163)

Your real nature is renunciation itself. Renunciation of doership and enjoyership from all your activities is real renunciation. Renunciation can never be made. It is the natural effect of directing your attention to your real nature.

956. FALLACY OF OPPOSITES (164)

You cannot attribute activity or inactivity to another, from the standpoint of the onlooker. If you can perceive an activity without making reference to its opposite, which is only a concept at a different point of time, you are safe.

At one point of time the opposites cannot exist together. Nor are they opposites as such. Thus each is independent and complete in itself. So each is the ultimate Truth. Thus reference to opposites is impossible at the same point of time.

What you call non-walking is in fact only another form of walking. Therefore there is neither walking nor non-walking.

957. THE EGO IS LIKE A GHOST. HOW? (165)

The ghost, having no form of its own, takes possession of somebody else's form. When exorcized from there, he takes possession of the form of still another.

Similarly, the ego has no form of its own. It claims the form of doer, perceiver or enjoyer after the activity. The best way to kill the ego is to refuse to give it any of these forms. The ego will then be starved to death.

Directing attention to your real nature is the only sure means of killing the ego.

17th September 1953

958. WHY IS NOT BEAUTY SEEN IN THE SAME OBJECT BY DIFFERENT PERSONS? (166)

Because different persons have such different perspectives and different stands, setting up different standards, and they look at things also differently. So recognition and appreciation of beauty differs from person to person.

959. WHAT IS BEAUTY AND ITS RELATION TO OBJECTS? (167)

Some see beauty in the mountain. A mountain is a concrete object of perception and beauty is the experience. You cannot separate the two. So you make the mountain the possessor of beauty and call it beautiful.

But the Truth is just the opposite. Beauty possesses the mountain, because beauty exists beyond the body, senses and mind and so can exist even without the mountain or any other object. That which transcends body, senses and mind is only the 'I'-principle or Truth. So beauty is yourself.

960. HOW DO THE JNYĀNIN AND THE IGNORANT MAN PERCEIVE BEAUTY? (168)

1. The Jnyānin sees the mountain as beauty, keeping beauty as beauty, sublime to the core.
2. The ignorant man sees beauty in the mountain, keeping the mountain as the mountain gross and inert.

The Sage sees the body as *Ātmā* and the ignorant man sees *body* as *Ātmā*, each emphasizing the part italicized, and ignoring the other part.

In the first case, beauty appears as the mountain, mountain-ness vanishes, and beauty alone remains.

In the second case the mountain appears beautiful; mountain-ness is emphasized; and beauty comes and goes.

22nd September 1953

961. WHAT IS SUICIDE? (169)

You find it impossible to get what you want with this body. So you hope to get it elsewhere. You consider this body to be an obstacle to the attainment of that which you desire. So you try to remove that obstacle (your body) hoping thereby to achieve your desire.

24th September 1953

962. WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE REALITY? (170)

It is that principle which denies everything else. It cannot refuse existence to itself. You cannot say it is Consciousness. Who says so? The mind cannot. You cannot say it exists; because then it and existence must be different. You cannot say it is existence; because then you must have perceived it. Therefore you cannot say anything about the Reality.

28th September 1953

963. HOW DOES ONE LIVE? (171)

We see two distinct ways of living. They are:

1. The ignorant man's life, and
2. The jīvan-mukta's life.

Life consists of the relationship of objects and knowledge. Objects and knowledge are distinct and separate. The ignorant man attributes reality to objects alone and lives in them. His life begins with the mind and ends there. Therefore, he is bound. His activities begin from the ego and end in the ego.

But the jīvan-mukta knows that objects are nothing but Consciousness and lives in Consciousness. He knows that life begins in him, beyond the mind, in Consciousness and ends there. Therefore what ordinarily affects an ignorant man does not affect the Sage.

Thus the Sage is not upset by apparently conflicting thoughts, feelings, perceptions or actions. He sees them all as nothing but Consciousness, the Self. That is the reason why activities do not leave any samskāra in the Sage. The Sage knows that even the ego rises from Consciousness and ends there.

So the difference comes only with regard to the centre. To the ignorant man, the centre is the ego; and to the Sage, the centre is Consciousness.

Know that your relationship with an object is only 'knowing'. The jīvan-mukta is a living commentary of the Truth you have visualized. So knowing that life is Consciousness, live in Consciousness and be free.

2nd October 1953

964. WHAT IS IDOL WORSHIP? (172)

You cannot worship anything but a form. Concepts and percepts are all forms. Brahman and the infinite are also forms. An idol is only something known particularly. It is the symbol of the Absolute. But in fact nobody worships the idol; because, in practice, after looking at the idol for a few moments, you invariably close your eyes and contemplate that of which the idol is only a symbol. Nobody worships the idol, and nobody can worship without an idol.

15th October 1953

965. WHAT IS NOTHINGNESS? (173)

Nothingness can never be perceived by the sense organs nor conceived by the mind.

bhāvāntaram abhāvō 'nyō na kaś cid anirūpaṇāt

(?)

Nothingness is only the change from one positive thing to another positive thing. You become what you perceive. You are not nothing and therefore can never become nothing. So you cannot perceive nothingness. Nothingness is never perceived but only otherness.

18th October 1953

966. WHAT IS REAL BHAKTI? (174)

It is not merely the adoration of the form of the personal god. It is the resulting mobility or melting of the heart that is the real goal. You have to get that melting of the heart even in *tattva* as it comes from the lips of the Guru. This melting should happen, not in any of the lower levels, but in a higher level and by something pertaining to the right Absolute.

21st October 1953

967. WHAT IS MADNESS? (175)

Variety is madness. See the unity (witness) behind the variety and you transcend madness. Be the knower and you are sane and free.

968. HOW TO EXAMINE THE TRIPUṬĪ (TRIAD)? (176)

Tripuṭī is constituted of the doer, doing and the deed. Of these three, the doing and the deed alone are perceived. But the doer comes in only after the function, and the doer is never perceived at all. So there is no separate doer. This so called 'doer' is the witness itself, but apparently limited or misunderstood.

draṣṭra-darśana-dṛśyēṣu pratyēkaṁ bōdha-mātratā ...

[The see-er, seeing and the seen –
of these, each is pure consciousness....]

Shrī Shankara

969. WHY CAN YOU NOT SEE THE DOER? (177)

Because the witness alone can see the doer. But the witness has no eyes to see; and the doer is not in the witness. So you can never see the doer.

25th October 1953

970. HOW DOES THE SAGE TALK? (178)

The Sage always talks through *your* instruments. But there is something of the Sage even in those statements. Take note of that part with advantage and benefit yourself. The statements by themselves leave no mark behind.

8th November 1953

971. TEARS AND SAMĀDHI (179)

A great man has said that a devotee *goes into* samādhi with tears in his eyes and that a Jnyānin *comes out of* samādhi with tears in his eyes. But I say that this is not yet the whole truth. One can very well *both* go into *and* come out of samādhi with tears in his eyes. This is definitely higher than the former experiences. The experience of the devotee was the result of contemplation (bhāvam) of his iṣṭa-dēva. The second was the result of a short contact with the ultimate Truth. The third is the characteristic of the sahaja state of the established Jnyānin.

5th December 1953

972. WHO WANTS AND TAKES TO SHĀSTRAS? (180)

It is only the ignorant man, who had not had the good fortune to be blessed by a living Sage (a Guru), that usually takes to shāstra – somewhat helplessly. Knowledge (Consciousness pure) is the parent of the shāstras. As such, the shāstras can never be the father of knowledge, nor can they awaken knowledge in the aspirant. One who is being guided by a Kāraṇa-guru will never need the service of any shāstra. The ultimate purpose and utility of all shāstras is only to convince the aspirant about the supreme need of a Kāraṇa-guru and to help him to seek one.

uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibōdhata .

[Arise! Awake! Find those who are
the best, and realize the Truth.]

Kaṭha Upaniṣhad, 3.14

20th December 1953

973. PROFESSOR EINSTEIN HAS SAID: ‘WE CANNOT SAY THAT THERE IS AN “I” BEYOND THE REALM OF MIND AND INTELLECT.’ WHAT DOES IT MEAN? (181)

That certitude itself is the nature of that ‘I’ or Truth. So Einstein’s own statement actually proves that ‘I’ beyond. Further, can Einstein prove that there is anything in or below the mental level? *No*. Then he has to deny himself everywhere. That certitude, which declares that I cannot say I exist beyond intellect, is itself the svarūpa (nature) of Truth.

21st December 1953

974. ALL PROBLEMS RISE IN THE MENTAL PLANE AND THERE IS NO PROBLEM IN THE PLANE BEYOND. THEN HOW IS ANY SOLUTION POSSIBLE? (182)

Problems exist in the gross, sensual and mental planes. Each is solved not from its own plane, but only from the plane above it. Thus problems in the mental plane can be explained only from the plane beyond. For example take the palace on the stage curtain. The verdict of the eye is corrected by the intellect behind it. Similarly the experience of the mind and intellect are corrected by some principle from beyond the intellect.

23rd December 1953

975. THE KEY TO THE ULTIMATE TRUTH. (183)

Can there be a key to the ultimate Truth? Yes, of course. The interval between two mentations and deep sleep, if rightly understood, are keys to the absolute Truth.

25th December 1953

976. HOW TO PERFORM AN ACTION UNATTACHED? (184)

Worldly actions can be performed in two ways:

1. By identifying yourself completely with body, senses and mind. Then the action is spontaneous as in the lay-man.
2. By standing behind and controlling body, senses and mind in order to achieve certain results, as in the case of the yōgin. You are still the apparent I, but more detached from the body, senses and mind.

There is still a higher kind of action which is not strictly worldly.

3. Stand beyond the mind as the witness of all the activities of the mind. As witness you are unaffected by objects or actions and so you are unattached in your action.

28th December 1953

977. WHAT IS BONDAGE AND HOW TO BE LIBERATED? (185)

Diversity is bondage and non-duality is liberation.

When you, yourself, stand as the many, you cannot help seeing many outside. But when you stand as the only *one*, you can never see the many. The many in you are body, senses and mind. Stand as the one subject in yourself, and the world will also stand reduced to the one Reality. This is liberation.

If anyone says he is in trouble, ask him, 'Are you one or are you many?' He will certainly reply, 'I am one.' Then say, 'Be that one always', and all trouble will vanish at once.

978. HOW TO SEE THE FLOWER AS IT IS? (186)

You see the things possessed by the flower through the senses and mind possessed by you. But to see the flower as it is, you must stand by yourself, dispossessed of senses and mind. Then you see the flower as yourself, pure Consciousness.

8th January 1954

979. PLEASURE (1)

Pleasure (or a sigh of relief) is a prelude to the state of Peace and is often mistaken for Peace itself.

980. THE BODY (2)

The body is the cell in which both the Sage and the ignorant man seem to sleep. The one feels free and the other bound.

svayamē tanne lākkappil sukhamāy[~] viśramicciṭuṁ
inspekṭar[~] ennapōl dēha-pañjarē vārka saukhyamāy[~]

[As in a cell in his own lock-up,
an inspector of police
may rest content and be refreshed;
so also in this cage of body,
one who is in charge of it
may live refreshed, at one with that
which is contentment in itself.]

Shrī Ātmānanda
(see also note 920)

12th January 1954

981. WHAT IS THE 'IT'? (3)

The 'It' in our transactions is the real part of the world. What is this 'It'? That alone can be permanent or real which answers equally to your perception, thought, feeling and knowing. That which answers to all these four alike is only the 'I' or Consciousness. That is itself the 'It'.

982. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LISTENING TO THE WORDS OF THE SAGE AND READING THE SAGE'S WRITINGS? (4)

When you read the works of a Sage you read your own sense into his words. You try to illumine the writings of the Sage with the distorting light of your puny intellect, and you fail miserably. But, on listening to the Sage, because the Sage himself gives the full blaze of his light of pure Consciousness to the talk, his words are understood by you in the *correctest* manner, in spite of all your resistance.

Doing good to the world by itself is no criterion to prove that an individual has realized the Truth.

983. GRADATION OF LOVE (5)

Love is *conditioned* (kāma) when it is limited to your physical body.

Love is *gratitude* (snēha) when it is attached not so much to the body as to your subtle being.

Love is *prēma*, where there is no consideration of the lower self at all. The ideal goal of Hindu marriage is to be wedded in love as *prēma*.

Why does a Sage take pains to talk in order to enlighten others? It is for the self-satisfaction of the Sage, himself, and not of the apparent 'I'. The self-satisfaction of the Sage covers the whole world including the listeners. Therefore it is pure love that speaks to love. The love of the Sage is not conditioned and has no purpose. It is that love that talks.

14th January 1954

984. STATES OF GOD (6)

As the individual soul has three states, so has God.

The gross universe is God's waking state.

The cosmic mind is God's subtle word (or dream state).

Pralaya (deluge) is God's deep sleep state.

15th January 1954

985. WHAT IS YOUR PLACE IN AN ACTIVITY? (7)

An important statement is often made by you. You say, '*I stand here.*'

Who says that? Certainly not the dead inert body which is standing, but someone who has seen the standing. He, the witness, can only see and cannot say. This sayer is the ego, who identifies himself with the witness and claims the witnessing for himself.

Therefore in every statement which concerns your activities, there are three different entities involved, namely the body, the ego and the witness. Of these three, know that you are always the witness. Be there, and you are free.

986. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF MUSIC? (8)

Harmony outside takes you to harmony inside, and harmony inside is the 'I'-principle itself. Thus music takes you to the harmony behind it, and that takes you to the harmony inside which is Truth itself.

16th January 1954

987. WHY DOES NOT THE SAGE WORK FOR THE UPLIFT OF HUMANITY? (9)

Answer: Where is the humanity please, for whom I am to work?

Questioner: This humanity we see.

Answer: Why don't you then work for the suffering humanity you perceived with an equal sense of reality in your dream state?

I am working for it in my own way, not by doling out material comforts, but by examining the correctness of this apparent humanity and its apparent suffering; and proving that the whole of humanity is myself, the real 'I'-principle, and that the appearance is all an illusion.

But you are trying to reach the same goal through your organs of action. These, being products of the waking state, can never take you to the goal of Peace and Happiness which is clearly beyond the waking state.

22nd January 1954

988. FORM AND SEEING (10)

You say that all forms you see are seeing alone, because form and seeing are one. Why can't you assert for the same reason that all is form?

The basic method employed in all examination is the verification of distant things by instruments nearer and better known to you. Therefore you cannot take your stand in form and examine seeing, since seeing is nearer to you than form. So form merges in seeing and not the other way round. In examining the world, the object first reduces itself into the known. In the next step the known is found to be nothing but knowledge itself. So the world is nothing but knowledge.

23rd January 1954

989. FORGETFULNESS BY FAR EXCELS GRATEFULNESS (11)

mayy ēva jīṇatām yātu yatvayō 'pakṛtaṁ harē
naraḥ pratyupakārā 'rthī vipattim abhivāñchati

(?)

Meaning: If you have done me any good, may all thought of it die in me, and let me not long to help you in return. Because otherwise that would actually be longing for misfortune to befall upon you, in order to give me an opportunity to do you good in return.

31st January 1954

990. HOW TO CONDUCT ONESELF AFTER VISUALIZING THE TRUTH? (12)

You may conduct yourself in everyday life exactly as you have always done. But there will be a world of difference between your activities before and after visualization of Truth. Formerly you lost yourself in the objects, but now it is their turn to lose themselves in you.

991. WHEN DO YOU KNOW YOURSELF? (13)

You know yourself when there is neither something nor nothing to be known.

3rd February 1954

992. BRAIN IS INACTIVE BETWEEN MENTATIONS (14)

The state between two thoughts is the same as the state when you appear to think, 'I am' or 'I know I am.' Then the brain cells do not function even though you appear to think. If you ask the doctor to examine you at that time, he can only say that the brain is still, or not perceptible.

993. BACKGROUND (15)

The apparent variety must prove the existence of something changeless as its background. Analysing the variety and reaching the so called background, its background-

ness also vanishes and you stand Absolute in your real nature, which was merely called the background in relation to the appearance.

4th February 1954

994. WHAT IS EXPRESSION? (16)

The real 'I'-principle is not the expression. It is the Reality itself (the expressed). But when you consider it in terms of its characteristics as happiness or knowledge, with a beginning and an end, that is what is called an 'expression'.

995. WHY DO BHAKTAS NOT LIKE ADVAITA? (17)

Strictly speaking they are also seeking advaita. But they do not know what they are doing. They want enjoyment and do not want to give it up. They are afraid that they will lose their enjoyment in actual advaita. But when they are made to understand that the happiness, which they assume they enjoy, is but an expression of the real 'I'-principle (advaita), the bhakta becomes an advaitin and realizes the Truth. So the real 'I'-principle is the expressed and the happiness aspect a mere expression.

Lord Kṛiṣṇa is the happiness in the vision of the Lord. If you admit that you want that happiness in all the three states, without a break, it is only that principle that is persistently present in all the three states that can provide it. There is only one such principle, and that is the real 'I'-principle, and its real nature is pure Happiness. Therefore get beyond the name and form of the Lord and you are in advaita.

996. WHAT IS GETTING BEYOND NAME AND FORM? (18)

Understanding name and form to be but an expression of the impersonal, and then meditating even upon that name and form, takes you beyond name and form. Then, the reaction that comes is from the impersonal, and that spontaneously raises you to the impersonal.

This is the way to get beyond name and form. Understand God to be impersonal and then meditate upon any of his names and forms to get beyond all appearance. Worldly knowledge expires in 'enjoyment'; 'enjoyment' expires in 'becoming'; and 'becoming' expires in 'being'.

997. SOME SAY THAT IT IS ONLY AFTER DEATH THAT ONE CAN BECOME ONE WITH GOD. IS IT TRUE? (19)

At the moment of every enjoyment of happiness you are really momentarily dead, and have become one with God (whose real nature, *svarūpa*, is objectless Happiness). Then your body is relaxed, the sense organs refuse to function, the mind ceases to think or feel, and you enjoy happiness as you call it. All the principles that claim to live have, for that moment, died.

Therefore, you are actually dying every moment, to become God. So don't wait for the last death of the body, but know that you are doing it every moment and you become God himself (real advaita).

6th February 1954

998. APHORISMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS (20)

'Thou art that.' (Tat tvam asi)

None but a Sage can understand the real significance of this aphorism or discuss its meaning. In order to understand anything, you must stand at least one step higher than the level of the object concerned. Thus in order to understand the correct meaning of *'thou'*, you have to stand beyond the *'thou'*; and to understand the meaning of *'that'*, you have to stand beyond the *'that'*. Therefore all remarks, in books by those who are not Sages, about the meaning of such aphorisms can only be short-sighted and wrong.

999. HOW TO REALIZE *BRAHMAN*? (21)

Brahman is conceived as remote and big by the relatively small, apparent 'I'. It has to be brought into the present and experienced by the 'I'. To this there are two obstacles: the smallness of the 'I' and the farness or distance of *brahman*.

The idea of smallness of the 'I' is removed by contemplating the aphorism 'I am brahman' (Ahaṁ brahmā 'smi).

After experiencing identity with brahman, by deep contemplation, you are asked to contemplate another aphorism 'Brahman am I' (Brahmai 'vā 'ham). This process brings brahman nearer and establishes its identity with the ever-present 'I'.

But the sense of bigness attached to brahman still continues. This limitation has to be transcended by contemplating still another aphorism 'Consciousness is brahman' (Prajñānam brahmā).

Thus you reach the state of pure advaita. But this can be attained directly, even at the very outset, by seeing the 'I' to be nothing but Consciousness.

1000. WHAT DO YOU ACHIEVE BY PRACTISING YŌGA? (22)

By yōga one achieves only such things as can be achieved by other means and that only after involving much more time and effort. It is foolish to waste one's life on such things.

Realization of Truth cannot be achieved by yōga. Realization is possible only by approaching a Sage and surrendering yourself unconditionally to Him. Therefore devote your life to the attainment of that end and to nothing else.

8th February 1954

1001. CAN IT BE SAID THAT ART COMES OUT OF SUFFERING? (23)

Many artists suffer intensely. Still, profound works of art come out of them. Of course art is the expression of Truth. So can it be said that art comes out of suffering?

Let us first examine the question itself. From what level does the question arise? Certainly from the level of duality. Art is the expression of harmony. Where there is harmony, there are no words or any other kind of duality. So through the harmony of words, get to the harmony beyond, which is your real nature. Art is the expression of that harmony.

Or in other words, look at the question subjectively, find out your relationship with that question, and try to solve it from that level. Then you will find that at your own

level, the question does not arise at all. This alone is the ultimate solution of all such questions. Approach every question in this manner.

Discord and harmony are both related only to you and not to each other. If you go to either and remain there alone, it ceases to be what it is called and becomes the Truth itself.

1002. ORIGIN OF SPACE AND TIME (24)

You yourself are the permanent substratum, and the urge naturally comes from deep within you to give a similar substratum to all changes outside.

The substratum of changing objects is space; but space is as dead and inert, as an object itself. Just give Consciousness to space and it becomes the Absolute.

So also, time is the permanent substratum of thoughts and feelings and is dead and inert as well. Give Consciousness to time and it also becomes the Absolute.

By 'give Consciousness to it', I mean either see it subjectively or see it as possessing consciousness.

dvayōr madhya-gataṁ nityam asti-nā 'stī 'ti pakṣayōḥ
prakāśanaṁ prakāśyānāṁ ātmānaṁ samupāsmahē

Yōga-vāsiṣṭha(?)

I stand between 'is' and 'is not', explaining or illuminating both. When you understand that light as the being itself, the non-being disappears.

1003. HOW TO VIEW 'I AM ALL'? (25)

The all should merge in the 'I' and disappear, leaving the 'I' absolute. But if you begin to expand the 'I' into the 'all', you go wrong and still remain as the object. The objectivity must disappear completely.

If you say that 'Nothing is', it does not mean that non-existence is the end of all, but that existence is the end of all; because the 'is' at the end of the statement stands for being or existence alone.

14th February 1954

1004. WHAT IS AHANKĀRA AND HOW TO RISE ABOVE IT? (26)

Ahankāra [ego] is the sense of one's separateness from everything else. You can rise above it only by reaching the background Truth, where all sense of separateness vanishes. One of the tests of having annihilated the ego is a genuine sense of humility, expressing itself by never trying to exploit or even recognize your position of vantage and perfection.

1005. WHY ARE PEOPLE (AND EVEN GODS) FOND OF FLATTERY? (27)

All flattery is directed to the Reality behind the ego. Even though you do not know it, you are that Reality. The false identification of the ego with the 'I'-principle enables you to be pleased, and the ego wrongly claims for himself all praise.

1006. WHY DON'T 'I' KNOW MYSELF IN DEEP SLEEP? (28)

In deep sleep you are all alone. In that state, you can never split yourself into two – one part knowing the other. You had no knowledge even of yourself there. Hence you can never know that, when you *are* that.

1007. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SAY 'I ENJOY HAPPINESS' OR THAT 'I KNOW OR PERCEIVE ANYTHING'? (29)

It is all a lie. It is a distortion created by the ego, by interpreting the Truth in the ego's own terms. So whenever you say you perceive, know or enjoy anything, you are really in your own background, the Truth. When you say you see anything, you are seeing the mind assuming that form. If you are seeing the mind in that manner what is your position? You can only be the witness of the mentation.

15th February 1954

1008. ARE MIND AND SENSES PRESENT IN CONSCIOUSNESS? (30)

'Some people say that mind and senses are not present in Consciousness. That position is wrong. They are present in Consciousness. Are you not aware of the existence of mind and senses?'

'Yes, of course.'

'So are they not in your awareness which is pure Consciousness?'

'Yes.'

3rd March 1954

1009. WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY OF UNDERSTANDING? (31)

Through the expression to the expressed is the right way of understanding. When you are listening to his teaching, you are accepting the teacher as your 'self'. The expressed is always the teacher.

You are never asked to look out – through the senses or mind. Looking in, you are yourself alone as the 'I'-principle, which is another vision of the teacher. The teaching is only a means to make you look in. The teaching takes you beyond body and mind where you get a vision of the teacher himself. There you see the teacher in the whole. No part of him is left behind.

teḷivāỵ̃ oḷivāỵ̃ nilkkum oḷiyāṁ poruḷ aśramam
mama kāṇicca mal svāmi caraṇam śaraṇam mama .

Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātmārāmam, 1.19

(It means: 'My Lord has most graciously and effortlessly revealed to me the self-effulgent Truth which though ever shining was unnoticed so long. His holy feet alone are my eternal solace.')

Here the teacher, the teaching and the taught are one. The understanding is also the real 'I'-principle. To teach anything, the teacher must stand above the teaching. So the teacher, standing beyond the mind, is helping the disciple to come to that level, through the medium of teaching which takes him beyond body and mind.

You can never remember what *you* do understand. You can remember only that which the mind has understood. Here understanding the truth means becoming the Truth. If you want to repeat the same experience, think of the teacher along with the teaching and you will easily be led on to the same experience (the expressed). You cannot express yourself as you wish. So never desire that. But if the expressed (the Truth) ever chooses to express itself at any moment in any manner, enjoy it. That is all.

In all phenomenal teaching it is only '*his*' that is transmitted, often in parts, through the teaching. But in spiritual teaching it is '*he*' that is taught or transmitted and that not in part but in *full*. The Guru's form is the only object in the universe which, if contemplated upon, takes you directly to the real subject – the Reality.

12th March 1954

1010. WHERE DO YOU WAKE UP FROM A DREAM STATE? (32)

(In the dream itself or in the waking state?)

If the waking act is an act in the waking state, the waking state must have existed even before the waking act. Then it is no waking act. Nor can it ever take place in the dream state either. So the waking act is timeless. The timeless is the Ultimate, or the 'I'-principle. So you wake up into the interval between the states, where you are alone and timeless.

7th April 1954

1011. SOLIPSISM (33)

Solipsism is a cult developed in the west. They hold the 'self' as the only knowable or existent thing. According to them the ego is the 'self'. Solipsism may well be accepted by Vēdānta if the word 'self' is interpreted to mean the real 'I'-principle, which remains over even after the annihilation of the ego.

8th April 1954

1012. WHAT DO YOU KNOW IN DEEP SLEEP? (34)

You do not know anything objective in deep sleep.

But you might say you know Happiness. No, not even that. You do not know Happiness. It is unknowable.

But it may be said that you know the limitations placed on it by time or the boundaries of Happiness, which belong evidently, not to deep sleep or Happiness, but to the other states immediately before and after deep sleep. These boundaries are perceived only in the dream or waking states, and then you call the interval deep sleep and its content Happiness, since the opposite of happiness was not experienced.

Suppose that the deep sleep continues. Would you be able to recognize it? No. Still you would perceive only the very same boundaries when not in deep sleep. Therefore you do not know anything in deep sleep.

1013. INTERVAL BETWEEN TWO MENTATIONS (35)

Unable to refute the argument that Peace prevails in the interval between two mentations, some imitation teachers – possessing mere book lore – advise their unfortunate followers to endeavour to extend the period of the interval, hoping thereby to extend the Peace in time. Poor souls, they understand neither Peace nor the interval.

It is only a *Jnyānin* that can draw your attention to the interval between two mentations. In so directing your attention to it, the purpose of the *Jnyānin* is not to show you the limitations of the interval, but its content. The limitation is mere time, and the content of the interval is beyond both time and mind. When you perceive that content which is your own Self, you go beyond mind and time, and the limitations belonging only to the mental sphere disappear at once. Thus what appeared as interval ceases to be an interval, but stands as the Absolute.

So the advice to endeavour to extend the period of the interval is absurd. It amounts to advising you never to allow the mind, as such, to disappear.

1014. SHIVŌHAM (36)

rajiv ajñānād bhāti rajjau yathā 'hiḥ
svātmā-jñānād ātmanō jīva-bhāvaḥ .
dīpēnai 'tad bhrānti-nāśē sa rajjur
jīvō nā 'ham dēśikō 'ktyā śivō 'ham ..
(see note 713)

Shrī Shankara, Advaita-pancaratnam, 1.2

This verse is often quoted to establish that Peace or Happiness is your real nature. The phrase 'dēśikō 'ktyā', meaning 'by the word of my Guru', is the heart and soul of the whole verse. That word starts from the Guru, the background of *Ātmā*; and it has certainly the aroma of *Ātmā* in it. It is that word or sound carrying that aroma with it that drills itself into the disciple and makes it impossible for him to escape from visualizing *Ātmā* at once.

When once the Truth is thus visualized, you can repeat that experience as often as you want, by trying to recollect the circumstances antecedent to it which throw you into the same experience beyond all circumstances. This experience you can never remember, since it is beyond the mind. But you can remember only the antecedent circumstances which led you on to that experience. So Happiness alone is experienced and the antecedents alone are remembered.

1015. EFFICACY OF THE SPOKEN WORD OF THE GURU AND THE WRITTEN WORD (37)

When the Guru talks to you about the Truth there is no doubt that it is the words that you hear. But the words disappear at once. Nothing remains for you to refer to or to depend upon, except the Guru himself. So in case of any doubt you approach the Guru again any number of times; and every time he explains it in a different set of words. Each time you understand the same sense, more and more deeply. Therefore it is evident that it is not from words or their meaning that you understand the sense, because the words used each time are different. From this it is clear that something else also follows the words, from the Guru. It is this something that penetrates into the

inmost core of the disciple and works the miraculous transformation called experience.

When you read the written word before listening to the Truth from the lips of the Guru, that something, which follows the spoken word of the Guru, is entirely absent; and you have to depend upon the dead word which is still before you and its meaning as your ego is inclined to interpret it, in the dark light of its own phenomenal experiences. Naturally, therefore, you miss that divine experience when you only read the written word; though it is so easily and effortlessly obtained in the presence of the Guru, or after even once listening to the Truth from him.

When you listen to the spoken word of the Guru, even on the first occasion your ego takes leave of you and you visualize the Truth at once, being left alone in your real nature. But when you read the same words by yourself, your ego lingers on in the form of the word, its meaning etc., and you fail to transcend them. To visualize the Truth, the only condition needed is the elimination of the ego. This is never possible by mere reading, before meeting the Guru. Therefore listen, listen, listen and never be satisfied with anything else. After listening to the Truth from the Guru direct and after visualizing the Truth in his presence, you may well take to thinking deeply over what the Guru has told you. This is also another form of listening and takes you, without fail, to the same experience you have already had in his presence.

9th June 1954

1016. Dr. H. and his wife asked: 'WHAT BOOKS ON PHILOSOPHY SHALL WE READ'? (38)

Books will not help you much to understand the Truth. Sometimes they may even do you much harm. Suppose you read the *Bhagavad-gītā* which is recognized as one of the tripods of Hindu religion. Your only help is the existing commentaries. You do not know whether a particular commentator was a man who had realized the Truth or not. If he had not, he will misguide you. You can read only your *own* sense in a book, be it the original or a commentary.

A Sage alone can show you the Truth. But after understanding the Truth from the Sage, you may read only the few books he suggests, to keep you in the groove he has chalked out. After some time, when you are established in the Truth yourself, you may read any book, good or bad.

Every book has some nuggets of Truth in it. You will yourself be able to pick these out and throw away the dross. If nothing in the book attracts you, accept it for its existence value and thus find it an expression of the Ultimate.

1017. WHEN DOES THE HIGHER REASON COME INTO PLAY? (39)

When you want to know something beyond the experiences of the body, senses or the mind, then the higher reason comes into play.

1018. PHILOSOPHY WESTERN AND EASTERN (40)

Western philosophy is all speculation in the realm of the mind. But Indian philosophy is '*darshana*', meaning visualization or direct experience.

1019. METHODS OF SELF-REALIZATION – (COSMOLOGICAL AND DIRECT) (41)

The cosmological method consists of three distinct stages:

1. Shravana – listening to the Truth from the lips of the Guru.
2. Manana – thinking over it with concentrated attention over and over again.
3. Nididhyāsana – thinking profoundly about that Truth with the aid of reason.

This last exercise leads you to a state called nirvikalpa samādhi, where the mind remains in a state of stillness, and you stand as witness of everything. By getting accustomed to this state, by dint of the prolonged practice of samādhi, one day the seed of Truth, received from the Guru in the form of the aphorism ‘Prajñānam asmi’ (I am Consciousness), bears fruit and you realize your real nature of Consciousness. This is Self-realization.

Direct method: You listen to the Truth from the lips of the Guru, and you visualize your real nature the ‘Truth’ then and there. Then you are asked to cling on to the Truth so visualized, either by listening to the Guru as often as possible, or by repeating the same or other arguments to prove your real nature, over and over again. This last course is also another form of listening to the Guru and takes you, without fail, to that very same experience you had at first. Therefore listen, listen, listen to the Guru. This is the direct method.

11th June 1954

1020. PHENOMENAL KNOWLEDGE (42)

Phenomenal knowledge is the inherent ‘knowingness’ within you, coming out occasionally through the mind or senses.

18th June 1954

1021. WHAT IS PRACTICAL? (43)

The term ‘practical’ literally means that which is concerned with practice. By practice we mean habitual action. So ‘practical’, in the ordinary sense, involves body or mind.

But practical and impractical both depend for their very existence upon the fundamental Truth involved in the statement or experience: ‘I know I am.’ It is an assertion of the fact that I exist. Is there any mind or sense involved in this? No. It is pure experience or direct knowledge. It is more real and so more practical, if by ‘practical’ you mean real.

1022. WHY IS THERE DIVERSITY? (44)

Really there is no diversity. This is the correct answer. But it can also be answered in other ways.

1. Because the ‘why’ is there. The ‘why’ is diversity itself. One thing is divided into two by mere words and kept separate. Here begins diversity. Take for example, the earth and the pot. There is the earth in the pot, and there is earth and earth alone. ‘Pot’ is only another name for the particular form temporarily assumed by the earth.

2. Because you stand as diversity yourself. See what you are in your phenomenal life. You are the body, senses, mind or anything else you please. But please tell me, which 'you' in this medley am I to address? Each of these has its corresponding objects outside. So it is only when you stand as diversity yourself that you perceive diversity outside. When you stand as the indivisible beyond the mind, as the real 'I'-principle, there is no diversity at all, anywhere.

1023. A PEEP INTO THE HEART OF YŌGA (45)

Yōgins say vaguely that they are trying to control the mind by dint of vairāgya (dispassion) and exercise. This is easily said. But who is it exactly that controls the prāṇa and the mind?

Certainly not the mind itself; because the purpose of the exercise itself is to still the mind, and the same mind can never be simultaneously the subject and the object of the same activity. So some independent principle beyond the mind must be guiding the yōgin to control the prāṇa and the mind. Is it not better to be that free principle itself and cease bothering about the mind or anything else?

Leave the mind to itself. This is how the mind is dealt with in the direct method.

29th June 1954

1024. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FRONT AND BACK IN SPIRITUAL CONTEXT? (46)

Question: In *Ātma-nirvṛiti*, chapter 18 (verses 5-7), addressed 'To the mind', it is said: 'You should first look behind and see me there, and then I will draw you into the inmost core of your being.' What does this mean, and what is the significance of 'front' and 'back', so far as the mind is concerned?

Answer: The mind moves only in the realm of the body-samskāras. So by 'front' the mind means objects, and by 'back' it means absence of objects.

The mind is asked to look back, in its own language. Therefore it has to give up objects as a whole, when it gives up the front. But then it does not realize that the back – which is just the reverse of the front – has also simultaneously disappeared with the front.

So when the mind has given up objects and tries to look back, it is really left within itself – which is the inside of the mind, in the mind's own language. This is how the mind is drawn into the inmost core of one's being.

1st July 1954

1025. WHAT SHOULD I EMPHASIZE IN MY ACTIVITIES? (47)

Every man has three distinct and progressive perspectives of the world: through the senses, the mind and Consciousness.

Through the senses, you perceive only gross objects. As you transcend the first and reach the second stage, you perceive only subtle objects or ideas. In the last stage, everything appears as Consciousness.

The Guru wants you only to recognize and emphasize sufficiently this last faculty (if faculty it may be called) or Consciousness. If you succeed in doing at least this much after listening to the Truth from the Guru, you will without doubt get estab-

lished in the Reality. Emphasis on any one or both of the first two perspectives ties you down as a jīva.

1026. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE INDISPENSABLE ‘IT’? (48)

We usually say: ‘I saw it’, ‘I thought about it’, and ‘I know it.’

The first ‘it’ is form.

The second ‘it’ is thought-form or idea.

The third ‘it’ is pure Consciousness.

Here our attempt is to establish a changeless ‘It’ behind all the three experiences. This shows that the thing is changeless (Consciousness).

dr̥ṣṭīm jñāna-mayīm kṛtvā paśyan brahma-mayaṁ jagat

[Converting sight of objects into
seeing that just knows, that very
seeing is none other than
the world’s complete reality.]
(see note 1056)

Shrī Shankara, Aparokṣhānubhūti, 116

1027. WHAT IS WITNESS KNOWLEDGE? (49)

Witness knowledge is pure Consciousness. But mentation knowledge always appears in the form of subject-object relationship. When you stand as witness, you are in your real nature.

Mentation appears in the light of the witness. *The light in the mentation knowledge is itself the witness.* There is no mentation in the witness.

The state of the witness is the same as that of deep sleep and Consciousness pure.

4th July 1954

1028. WHEN DID YOU WAKE UP? (50)

If in your answer you refer to the waking time, it would mean that the waking state existed even before the so-called waking. In that sense waking has no meaning, and waking becomes merely an incident in the waking state. So also deep sleep becomes part of the waking state. Then the problem of waking does not arise, since deep sleep cannot be established as a separate state.

But waking is our experience, and this definitely precedes the waking state. In that condition, which we call waking, which separates the two states, waking time has not come into existence, and deep sleep has no time of its own. Therefore it is timeless, and the experience is not of a subject-object nature. This is your real nature of pure Consciousness.

Therefore every state appears in you and vanishes into you. Thus you do not wake at all, since you have never gone out of your own Self.

But speaking from a lower level, you can say that you wake up from every state into that so called interval which is your real nature, or you wake up into yourself, where there is no time and so the question ‘when’ does not apply to it.

It has been proved that you are in your real nature in between two mentations. The states are mere expanded mentations. Therefore, the interval between two states is also your real nature; and therefore you wake up into that unqualified wakefulness which is your real nature, and it is only subsequently that the next state appears.

Within the waking and dream states you are awake to the world. But between the states you are awake to your own Self.

13th July 1954

1029. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JĪVA-HOOD AND THE REAL NATURE (51)

The jīva has a nine-fold samsāra, namely:

The doer	The doing	The deed
The enjoyer or perceiver	The enjoyment or perception	The enjoyed or perceived
The knower	The knowing	The known

One's jīva-hood and one's real nature can never be perceived by each other. But standing in the jīva itself, and accepting a small taint which is neither detrimental nor instrumental to the Truth, you can visualize the Reality; and this method is the method of the witness.

21st July 1954

1030. METHODS FOR SELF-REALIZATION (52)

The methods usually adopted for Self-realization are of two kinds:

1. The absorption process (the traditional method).
2. The separation process (the direct method).

The yōgically minded jnyānins usually adopt the first method – that of *absorption*. Here you try to purify the mind and make it more and more sāttvic, until at last you make it fit to be absorbed into your own Self. There is still another application of the process of absorption. The object is at a distance. You bring it nearer by seeing. You bring it still nearer by loving. Lastly, by knowing, you absorb it into you.

The real jnyānins adopt the second method – that of *separation*. The ordinary man's self is a crude mixture of the real Self with a lot of accretions, viz., body, senses and mind. By proving, with the aid of reason and your own experiences, that you are not the body, senses or mind, and standing separate from all that, you remain in your real Self. According to this process, everything – from the intellect down to the body and the world – become objects to be separated from you.

1031. DISTINCTION AND NON-DISTINCTION (53)

Non-distinction is imperceptible and is one's real nature. It expresses itself as distinction, which alone is perceptible. Therefore, in the attempt to visualize the non-distinction of Truth, distinction which is perceptible is made a means. It merges in the non-distinction at the last stage, and then the Truth shines in its own glory.

27th August 1954

1032. WHAT BINDS ME? (54)

The world of forms is never the cause of bondage. It is the world of names alone that binds you.

A perception, left to itself, dies out naturally; but if you give a name to it, the perception becomes an idea. Then it becomes capable of being remembered, and only then does it begin to bind you.

1033. WHY DOES THE *BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ* ENCOURAGE ALL PATHS? (55)

It is proclaimed by all great men that one should not discourage an aspirant from following any path, unless one has something higher and easier to offer him. Therefore, no true śāstra discourages the pursuit of any path, even if it only serves as a preparation course.

The śāstras have varying degrees of applicability. Some have a very narrow field of scope, and others cover a very broad field. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is one with the broadest scope and so it is accepted as one of the tripods of Vēdānta. Its purpose is to point out the best and the most useful aspects of all the paths leading to the ultimate Truth. Every path has some nugget of Truth in it. The *Bhagavad-gītā* only picks them out and places them before you, for what they are worth. This is why the *Bhagavad-gītā* does not seem to decry any of the legitimate paths to the Reality.

30th August 1954

1034. ACTIONS (56)

Two distinct kinds of actions have been employed in order to visualize the Truth. They are called *voluntary* and *involuntary*, with reference to the attitude of the mind.

1. The *voluntary* action makes the mind active and tries to comprehend Truth as its object. This path is evidently doomed to failure, since it can never take you beyond objective truth.

Nirvikalpa samādhi is the highest experience that can result from such action. It is preceded by an intense effort. In the relative level, this effort may well be considered to be the cause and nirvikalpa samādhi its legitimate effect. So nirvikalpa samādhi is limited by causality. The yōgin admits that he goes into nirvikalpa samādhi and comes out of it. Therefore it is also limited by time. In order to get into nirvikalpa samādhi, the body is necessary for the yōgin to start with. Therefore nirvikalpa samādhi is also limited by space.

Thus nirvikalpa samādhi clearly forms part of the phenomenal.

2. The *involuntary* action is the other type. This is spontaneous and objectless. It comes over you involuntarily; you yield to it and merge into it. In its progress, the mind gets relaxed and ultimately disappears, leaving you to yourself all alone.

This experience denotes the real significance of the term ‘deep sleep’. The interval between two mentations is another instance of involuntary action. You stand as yourself alone in both these experiences, but you do not cease to be the same Reality, yourself, in the so called dream and waking states. Therefore you do not ever go into or come out of deep sleep, and it is uncaused.

Hence deep sleep, if correctly understood, is evidently your real nature. It is, strictly speaking, no state at all; and is far beyond any samādhi.

2nd September 1954

1035. WHERE IS THE WITNESS? (57)

A thought can never be remembered; but you can think of the object of your thought once again, or you can remember the fact that you had a thought. So you think only of the objects of your former thought.

Thought by itself is object of the witness alone. The object of the witness can never be remembered by the mind. Thought, divested of its objects, is the witness itself. So the witness is in the thought itself and not outside.

1036. HOW IS THE INDIVIDUAL RELATED TO THE COSMOS AND TO THE REALITY? (58)

Strictly speaking, the individual comprehends the cosmos. The cosmos depends upon the individual, for its very existence. The conception of ourselves as embodied beings expands until it reaches the broad generality of ourselves as *living beings*. This is the highest concept of the human mind. Here, you comprehend the whole animate kingdom.

But you can look even beyond, though the mind cannot conceive anything higher. Besides the animate kingdom, there is the inanimate kingdom, which has also to be comprehended in your further expansion. Thus, when you try to be one with the inanimate kingdom as well, you can only say you exist. But this is not conceivable.

Life is the first expression of the *sat* aspect of the Reality;

Thought is the first expression of the *cit* aspect of the Reality; and

Feeling is the first expression of the *ānanda* aspect of the Reality.

A strict examination of any expression through any of these aspects takes you to the Reality itself.

3rd September 1954

1037. A DISCIPLE ASKED: HOW SHOULD ONE LEAD A PROPER LIFE? (59)

Before answering this, life has to be first defined. In order to perceive or define life you have to transcend duality. Life is that unknown something which enables even the prāṇa to function. Therefore neither prāṇa (the vital energy), nor any principle below that, can perceive life. The only moment I live is when I direct my attention to my real nature, the right Absolute.

So to visualize the Truth constantly is the only way really to live or to lead a proper life. Hence understand the Truth and try to live it. Then life becomes a synonym of Truth.

14th September 1954

1038. WHAT DOES THE JĪVA WANT? (60)

The jīva is experience which is limited, and it also wants limited experience; but wants it for all time. That is, it wants it to be limited and unlimited simultaneously; in other words it wants limited experience itself to be unlimited. This is self-contradictory and impossible as long as you remain a jīva (a limited being).

Therefore what the jīva really wants is to become experience itself, which is unlimited and your real nature.

19th September 1954

1039. HOW DOES AN OBJECT SERVE ME? (61)

An object is innocent in itself and serves you in accordance with the perspective through which you view it.

1. If you view it as dead and inert and as distinct and separate from you, it takes you from the centre of your being to the world outside.
2. But if you look upon it as something appearing in Consciousness and if you emphasize that Consciousness aspect of it, immediately it points to you – the source of that appearance – Consciousness being your real nature.

1040. HOW TO LOVE MY RELATIONS? (62)

You have been shown that you are that permanent, changeless principle beyond your body, senses and mind. Consider your relation also as that principle.

You cannot love a changing thing, but you love only love or Consciousness. So it is that permanent principle in you that loves the same permanent principle in the other. Love is the real nature of both.

For this you have only to recognize, deeply, that love is your own real nature. No more effort is needed for its application. It follows automatically and does not stop till the whole world is absorbed into that love.

20th September 1954

1041. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LANGUAGE? (63)

It is to show the way to the Reality. This ideal, however, is miserably thwarted in its application. Language is made up of words. Each word has two meanings.

1. The literal meaning (padārtha); and
2. The ultimate meaning (paramārtha).

The literal meaning of every word pertains to name and form alone and the ultimate meaning pertains to the Reality. If you cling to the former you get lost in the world of illusion, and if you cling to the latter you are taken to the centre of your own being, the Reality.

1042. WHERE IS CONSCIOUSNESS IN GREATER EVIDENCE? (64)

Consciousness is in greater evidence in the absence of the object than in the presence of the same.

Suppose an empty space is shown to you for you to sit down. At once you recognize the absence of a seat there and refuse to sit. But in the case of the actual chair pointed out, no active thought is called for and you safely ignore the part played by Consciousness. Relatively speaking, the play of Consciousness is more evident in the former than in the latter.

21st September 1954

1043. WHY DO YOU GIVE A THING A NAME? (65)

Because you want the transient to be always associated with a permanent background; since you are, yourself, that permanent changeless principle behind the body, senses and mind.

So, that name denotes the unknown background, the Truth, which is in fact the best known.

25th September 1954

1044. WHEN I ANALYSE THE WORLD THE 'I'-NESS IN THE THINKER DISAPPEARS. THEN HOW CAN THE ANALYSIS CONTINUE? (66)

Prakriyās or processes should never be mixed up. This question arises out of the confusion of the processes of absorption and separation.

The jīva is a part of the world and, as such, cannot analyse the world as a whole or any part of it. It is only the higher reason that can do this. Therefore when the thinker drops away as you say, it does not affect the analysis at all; it is Ātmā itself as the higher reason that does the analysis and continues to be. It is always the higher reason that analyses anything, gross or subtle. It utilizes instruments, like the mind and senses, to analyse other objects. But thoughts and feelings (mentations) are analysed by the higher reason without an instrument.

1045. WHAT IS 'I'-NESS? (67)

It is used in two senses:

1. In the phenomenal plane, 'I'-ness distinguishes you from others. It contains the saṃskāras of body, senses and mind and is intended only for worldly purposes.
2. In the spiritual sense, it is the impersonal and changeless background of the apparent 'I'. It takes you to the ultimate Reality.

29th September 1954

1046. HOW IS INDIFFERENCE RELATED TO TRUTH? (68)

Indifference can be sāttvic or tāmasic, as the case may be. Indifference leading you to the ultimate Truth can be said to be sāttvic, and that leading you to mere inaction and sleep can be said to be tāmasic. Indifference must always have an object.

If your indifference encompasses the universe, in part or whole, gross as well as subtle, it is sāt̥tvic and brings you nearer the Truth.

But if you become indifferent in the least to your real nature, that indifference is tāmasic and must be shunned.

2nd October 1954

1047. HOW ARE THOUGHTS, RECORDED IN THE MIND, REMEMBERED? (69)

First of all, the question does not arise. Because no question of why, where, when and how can ever arise in relation to the Absolute. Between objects themselves the question is quite relevant; but this question refers to some principle beyond the mind, which is nothing but the Absolute. Any question which has the slightest reference to the Absolute cannot be answered in the relative and the question does not arise in the Absolute.

The mind or memory is nothing but a thought. One thought cannot record another thought. Therefore it is wrong to assume that past thoughts are recorded in the mind.

smṛti-rūpaḥ paratra-pūrva dṛṣṭāvabhāsaḥ

Shrī Shankara, Adhyāsa-bhāṣya (Introduction to Sūtra-bhāṣya), 3.1

Seeing an object for the first time and taking it to be something you perceived some time ago is what is called *memory*. Look at your dream experience, if you feel any doubt. Therefore memory does not prove anything in the past.

Thought is illuminated by a ray of light. It cannot be recorded by dead matter. It can be recorded only by Consciousness. If you take the mind to be the container of all thoughts, it must be infinite and eternal. But there cannot be two infinities or eternals. Therefore that mind is Consciousness itself and changeless. As Consciousness, it can never record anything else. Therefore memory is *not*.

Another approach: When you think that thought is recorded, you attribute an independent reality to thought. Thinking is nothing but subtle perception. It has been proved that there is no form without seeing. So in the subtle perception called thought, the same process goes on. When the sense organs – gross and subtle – are shut, the mind can no longer function. (Can you think about Truth without indenting upon the services of sense objects? Thinking in an abstract manner is impossible.) When seeing is withdrawn, the form is no longer present.

Therefore it is wrong to suppose that you are recalling the same thing, once again, by memory. The same is true about recording and recollecting thoughts.

Still another approach: You stand out as the witness of your mental activities. What is witnessed by the witness cannot be said to be past; because the witness is beyond time. But, as a result of its closeness to the witness, the ego takes up the information from the witness and claims it as a past experience of the ego. The ego twists every information which it has usurped from the witness and gives it an objective expression.

Consciousness can never be witness to anything other than Consciousness. The sense organs can never be witness to anything other than sense objects. Everything recorded in knowledge becomes knowledge itself.

1048. CHANGELESSNESS AND CHANGE ARE BOTH CONSISTENT. (70)

A changeless thing can never be changing, even for a short time; and a changing thing can never be changeless, for however short a time. So if anything has been admitted to be changeless within a period of time, it must be the ultimate Reality alone. Through memory, thought, feeling etc., you only recognize your own real Self.

yat tvam paśyasi tatrai 'kas tvam ēva pratibhāsasē .
kiṁ prthak bhāsatē svarṇāt kaṭak-āṅgada-nūpuram ..

[In what you see, just *you* shine forth, alone.
What else but gold shines out in golden ornaments?]

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 15.14

udicca bōdham prabala pramāṇāntaram enniyē
naśikkayilla, vēdāntam pramāṇam sakalattinurṁ

[Without some other means of knowing
that somehow predominates,
awakened knowledge cannot die.
It cannot suffer any loss.
Vēdānta is that means of knowing
which applies to everything.]

Bhāṣha Pancadashi, Mahābhūta-vivēka, 121 (Malayalam translation)

1049. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU REMEMBER? (71)

If you remember anything, the thing remembered must be changeless, at least between the two incidents. All changes occur in time and space. So the thing remembered, being changeless, must be beyond time and space. This means it is eternal and infinite. Only the Ultimate is such. So you remember only the Ultimate.

You can understand memory only if you withdraw into your own being.

6th October 1954

1050. WHY SHOULD ONE TRY TO ESTABLISH ONESELF IN TRUTH, AFTER VISUALIZING IT? (72)

On listening to the Truth from the Guru, you were thrown into a particular state where you visualized the Truth; even then you have to be reassured by your Guru and proved through logic that you were there. Left to yourself, you slip down and find it difficult to visualize the Truth once again.

By trying to get established in the Truth, you are only trying to create the same state as the one in which you realized yourself in the presence of the Guru. You have to do this till you are able to visualize the Truth without any effort. This is what is called the *sahaja state*, where you feel without feeling that you are there always. The habit channels of thought have to be counteracted by new channels in the direction of the Absolute.

The first visualization was time limited. That time limitation must go. That means āvaraṇa [the obscuring of Truth behind appearances] must go. Thus you get established in the Truth.

1051. *RĀDHĀ-MĀDHAVAM* (LIKE THE DRAMA OF LIFE) IS A DRAMA IN THE PRESENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS (RŪPAKAM CIT-SAMAKṢHAM). WHAT DOES IT SIGNIFY? (73)

All the world is a stage and all the men and women are only actors. The audience is that *cit* alone. The purpose of acting is not to please the actors, but to obtain the approval and recognition of the audience.

10th October 1954

1052. WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO ARE SAMĀDHI-MINDED? (74)

When you remain samādhi-minded, you try to fit the unconditioned into the compass of the mind, and you fail to reach the Ultimate.

1053. THE HIGHER REASON (75)

It is a supra-rational instrument of thought, and its function cannot rightly be called thinking.

1054. THE ABSENCE (76)

The absence of anything is not directly perceived. It is only the background that is really perceived, and the absence of a thing is superimposed on that background.

3rd January 1955

1055. WHAT ARE THE TESTS OF REALITY? (1)

1. Continuity of existence.
 2. Existing in one's own right (self-luminosity).
- nā 'satō vidyatē bhāvō nā 'bhāvō vidyatē sataḥ ...

Bhagavad-gītā, 2.16

The quotation means that which is non-existent can never *be* and that which is existent can never cease to *be*.

1056. WHAT IS IT THAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE LISTENING TO THE TALK OF THE GURU? (2)

Gurunāthan replied: 'I am realizing myself in all of you, when I am talking to you about the Truth; and you are realizing yourself in me, when you are understanding what I say.'

drṣṭīm jñāna-mayīm kṛtvā paśyan brahma-mayaṁ jagat

Shrī Shankara, Aparokṣhānubhūti, 116

The quotation means: Convert the ordinary vision into the vision of knowledge, and then you will see that everything is in you and that you are everything.

1057. PERCEPTION OF AN OBJECT AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PERCEPTION – ARE THEY SIMULTANEOUS? (3)

From the standpoint of perception they must be said to be simultaneous. But from the standpoint of the witness itself, it cannot be said to be simultaneous. Because the witness transcends time.

5th January 1955

1058. IN AN EXPERIENCE OF TOTAL LOVE, I FEEL INCAPABLE OF BEING GRATEFUL. WHY? (4)

Total love is objectless. In such love you (the ego) die, and so also in knowledge you die. By dying I mean that the ego disappears completely.

Gratitude is only the prelude to love. When love is objectless, it transcends all gratitude. It is said: 'When the heart is full, the tongue refuses to speak.' Because, in speech, the fullness of the heart is limited.

Beyond the subject-object relationship, *to know is to be*.

1059. WHAT IS THE REAL SĀDHANA? (5)

That which removes the ills of the waking state alone, is not the complete sādhanā. That alone is the real sādhanā which removes the ills of all the three states.

1060. WHAT IS THE EGO? (6)

The ego is the father of duality, he himself being one of the many, and his experience is always the apparent combination of himself with another object.

10th January 1955

1061. WHAT PRINCIPLE IN THE DISCIPLE IS THE GURU ADDRESSING? (7)

The Guru is addressing the Guru in the disciple. But you should never contemplate oneness with your Guru, in any manner. The Guru teaches you to be one with everything. Attain that first, by bringing it into your experience. Then the question will not arise; because then you will see that the Guru still stands beyond even that knowledge of oneness with everything.

Truth, feeling that it is not the Truth (the disciple), is taught by the Truth which knows that it is the Truth (the Guru).

13th February 1955

1062. WHAT IS THE PLACE OF BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ IN THE PRASTHĀNATRAYA – THE TRIPOD OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY? (8)

The *Bhagavad-gītā* expounds karma-yōga, which is nothing but the exterior of a Jnyānin. Apparently it is just the opposite of karma-sannyāsa. Karma-sannyāsa is all mental.

But karma-yōga is clearly beyond the mind. So it is not a means, but the end in itself. The Truth appears in the guise of a means to the end, just as the Sage (Truth) appears as a man to others and is so addressed.

25th February 1955

1063. WHAT IS THE ‘IT’? (9)

The ‘it’ that is thought of is not the ‘it’ that is perceived. The ‘it’ that is thought of is not the ‘it’ that is known. The one vanishes, the moment you change your stand. This last alone is permanent.

28th February 1955

1064. EVEN AFTER ONE IS ESTABLISHED IN THE ABSOLUTE, HE APPEARS TO CONTINUE HIS ACTIVITIES. WHY? (10)

For him, the personal has changed into the impersonal. But all the activities of the personal, which you appear to see, depend upon his way of life before liberation. His samskāras or tendencies which have not been destroyed, continue to guide his subsequent actions.

But he stands separate from all that, as the impersonal. The mind takes the place of the personal and directs his actions. If his samskāras have been destroyed by his former sādhana (which happens only if he is a yōgin), he remains quite passive in life.

The Jnyānins may appear dominated by apparent activity of life, or dispassion, or discrimination (vyavahāra-pradhāni, or vairāgya-pradhāni, or vivēka-pradhāni) – all depending upon the approach each had adopted to reach the Ultimate.

3rd March 1955

1065. WHY SHOULD I TRY TO VISUALIZE MY REAL NATURE AGAIN AND AGAIN? (11)

In order to add momentum to the knowledge you have already obtained about your real nature. It is not to obtain liberation. Liberation was obtained even at the first listening to the Truth from the Guru. The light of knowledge dawned that day and ever since it is at your disposal. You have only to sense the Absolute through that eye of knowledge as often as possible until you are securely established in the Ultimate.

7th March 1955

1066. RENUNCIATION AND SPIRITUAL LIFE OF INDIA (12)

How did renunciation begin to dominate the spiritual life of India, where once there were so many Sages who were ruling kings and house-holders, advocating true vi-cāra-mārga?

The change was brought about by the ingrained samskāras of the disciples. If one is engrossed with the outside world and sense-pleasures and incapable of directing attention to the Ultimate, the only alternative is to divert the attention from the world and the pleasures of the senses by advocating renunciation. This was meant only as a preliminary step to prepare one to listen to the Truth. But unfortunately, the means became an end in itself in course of time, and the real goal came to be forgotten.

8th March 1955

1067. IS NOT THE WITNESS ONLY ONE? (13)

No. It is neither one nor many, but beyond both. When you say that it is only one, you stand in the mental realm as an expanded ego and unconsciously refer to the many.

1068. SUPPOSE I TAKE THE THOUGHT: 'I AM PURE CONSCIOUSNESS.' WILL IT TAKE ME TO SAMĀDHI? (14)

No. Not always. If you take it only as a thought it will lead you to samādhī. But if you know that Consciousness can never be made an object of thought, you will be thrown into a state where the mind expires, and you will be left in your real nature as in deep sleep. It is no samādhī at all, but far beyond.

1069. WHAT IS KNOWING THE TRUTH WITH ONE'S WHOLE BEING? (15)

To forget oneself completely in knowing the Truth is to know it with one's whole being. Or in other words, it is knowing with the head and the heart combined in complete unison. When the heart is full, the tongue refuses to speak.

5th April 1955

1070. HOW TO DISPOSE OF PHENOMENAL QUESTIONS? (16)

Dispose of questions relating to gross objects by referring to dream experiences, and dispose of questions relating to the subtle world (thoughts and feelings) by making reference to the deep sleep state. This is the phenomenal way and is not final.

27th July 1955

1071. HOW AM I DEATHLESS? (17)

Sat is existence Absolute.

Life: You are 'life'. Life knows no death. So you are, deathless. You can have death only if you have life. But when you are *life itself*, how can you die, unless life dies; and life can never die.

Childhood, boyhood, youth etc., take birth and die, or come and go in the changeless 'I'-principle. That 'I' is birthless and deathless.

You talk of your past and future lives. Unless you are equally present in the past, present and future, you can never connect these three, which come and go in you. That 'You' is deathless.

Any knowledge apparently limited, if understood without reference to the object, is knowledge Absolute (Truth itself).

1072. ANALOGY OF THE SELF TO THE CINEMA SCREEN (18)

A changeless screen is needed for the manifestation of forms and their movements upon it. Likewise, a changeless background is needed for the manifestation of the changing universe upon it. This background is the real 'I'-principle. If you attempt to seize a person on the screen, it is really the screen alone that is seized and not the

person. Likewise when any part of the universe is seized (perceived), it is the background Reality that is seized (i.e. it is Reality that shines).

A thought-form (or a subtle object) can never be of a gross object, and knowledge can never be of a thought-form; because they are all in three distinct and separate planes, where one plane can never transgress into another without losing its identity. Perception is always in terms of the instrument used and the object of perception is always in the perception itself. Similarly the object of knowledge is always in knowledge, and knowledge is not affected by the thing known. So there is knowledge and knowledge alone, without reference to the thing known. This is the ultimate Truth or *Ātmā*, your real nature.

Objects cannot exist independently of the senses, nor the sense perceptions independently of the mind, nor mentations independently of Consciousness. Therefore all is Consciousness or *Ātmā*. When a perception vanishes, the object perceived also vanishes and ceases to exist in any form whatsoever: like the objects of the dream that has passed. Therefore that object can never be connected with any subsequent thought-form.

A gross object is limited by both space and time.

A subtle object is limited by time alone.

Whenever you take a thought, the corresponding gross object can never come in, because of its space limitation. If it gives up its space limitation, it ceases to be a gross object and vice-versa. Therefore a gross object can never be thought of, and a thought-form can never become gross.

Strictly speaking, you cannot say that an object exists in space, nor can you say that a thought-form exists in time. Because space is itself an object and time is itself a thought-form. You can never perceive two objects or two thought-forms simultaneously, and unless two or more objects are simultaneously perceived, you can never say one thing exists in another.

1073. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IGNORANT MAN, THE SĀDHAKA AND THE JĪVAN-MUKTA (19)

An activity has two parts, the material part and the knowledge part. No activity is possible unless it is recorded in knowledge.

The ignorant man, in his perceptions, ignores the knowledge part and emphasizes only the material object part.

The sādḥaka tries in the beginning to emphasize at least equally the knowledge part and the material part, and towards the end of his sādḥana gives more emphasis to the knowledge part than to the material.

The jīvan-mukta, at heart, ignores the material part completely and recognizes or emphasizes only the knowledge part; but knowingly, he appears to emphasize the material part as well.

1074. PROGRESS FROM OBJECTS TO CONSCIOUSNESS PURE (20)

1. *Objects*: Not objects in the technical sense, but merely things. Here the Consciousness part is not referred to at all. This is an ignorant man's stand.

2. *Consciousness of objects*: This is also an ignorant man's stand, but a little higher than the first.
3. *Objects of Consciousness*: This is the sādḥaka's stand at the beginning.
Proceeding further, he sees –
4. *Objects in Consciousness*: This is also the sādḥaka's stand, a little later.
5. *Objects As Consciousness*: This is a jīvan-mukta's stand – compare the dream state.
Higher still –
6. *Objects vanish and Consciousness reigns*.

Gross forms appear when you perceive with gross sense-instruments. Thought-forms appear when you think (i.e. when you perceive with subtle senses).

Knowledge-form alone shines when you know.
But knowledge cannot be limited by any form.
So the world is pure knowledge alone.

It is this one pure knowledge that appears as gross-form, thought-form and knowledge-form. Thus objects appear in terms of the instrument used.

30th July 1955

1075. WHY IS IT THAT EVEN AFTER VISUALIZING THE TRUTH ABOUT MY REAL NATURE I DO NOT FEEL FULL CONFIDENCE OR CERTITUDE? (21)

It can be answered in many ways:

1. Who asks the question? Certainly, the mind. Because Ātmā cannot complain. The mind that is complaining never visualized the Truth. It died in that sacred attempt. Then how can it raise any question regarding an experience which occurred when the mind was dead? Both visualizing Truth and the certitude thereafter are in the non-dual realm, beyond the mind. The mind is no part to it and not competent to put forward any question relating to that matter.
2. The first part of the question asserts the visualization of Truth. By 'visualization' is meant knowing and being. Strictly speaking there is no object to knowing, because knowing and being are one in realization. If it had been visualized it cannot leave room for any further question. If any question sprouts in the realm of the mind, one has only to refer to one's own stand during the visualization and the question vanishes at once.
3. The answer is in the question itself. The mind has to cease to be mind for visualization (i.e. realization of Truth). It is the mind that wants 'feelings' (confidence and certitude). The mind expects the Truth to shine in the realm of the mind. That is impossible.

1076. SPIRITUAL STRIVING AND ENLIGHTENMENT (22)

The ignorant man feels that he is a sufferer. He finds that suitable objects give him momentary relief, and so he seeks to hoard such objects.

But the earnest man soon discovers that nothing on earth can give him permanent relief, and so he turns to something beyond the world. This is the beginning of spirituality. Of such few, the fortunate one obtains a Kāraṇa-guru.

The Guru tells him first to analyse the ‘seeker’ in him. According to the aspirant, the seeker is only a vicious group consisting of body, senses and mind. He is shown that each of this triad is impermanent and that, as any one of them, the seeker can never attain permanent happiness. But still the urge to obtain permanent happiness does not leave him. Then he is shown that there is a permanent, changeless principle behind this group (the seeker), and that the source of the desire for permanent happiness is the presence and nature of that background.

Next he is shown that he is himself that permanent principle. He is then told its real characteristics, and he ultimately visualizes it (*Ātmā*) beyond the shadow of a doubt. This is enlightenment. The attempt is not to remove suffering from the sufferer, but only to make the seeker visualize his real nature of permanent Peace, and thereby to make him understand that he is not the sufferer even when the suffering seems to last. When he realizes that he had all along been the *Peace*, all questions disappear.

If you want to remove the suffering alone and retain the sufferer, it is never possible. Because the suffering and the sufferer always appear and disappear simultaneously.

9th August 1955

1077. VICĀRA AND DHYĀNA (23)

Vicāra is a term used exclusively in the jnyāna path. It means the removal of all obstacles that stand in the way of one’s realization of Truth.

The term ‘vicāra’ is used in entirely different senses by yōgins and by devotees. It is not used in their sense in the path of knowledge. *Dhyāna* [meditation], as it is understood by ‘upāsakas’ [worshippers], is of three kinds or stages:

1. The lowest is ‘*pratīka-dhyāna*’, exactly in the form of a gross model set before him, which allows him no deviation from the stiff model. The process is more physical or sensuous than anything else.
2. *Dhyeyānusṛita-dhyāna*, in accordance with an ideal, the fundamentals of which are set in a ‘*dhyāna-shlōka*’ or verse given to the aspirant. Here he has the freedom to adorn the fundamental form according to his taste and fancy. The process is mental. You attribute sublime qualities to your ‘*iṣṭa-dēva*’ at this stage and conceive him as the embodiment of all that is good. Thus the aspirant’s mind becomes pure and sāttvic.
3. *Aham-gṛiha-dhyāna*: Here the aspirant draws his *iṣṭa-dēva* still further inward into the inmost core of his heart, and soon he recognizes his own identity with the *iṣṭa-dēva*.

But with all this, the aspirant has only become eligible, so as to feel the necessity of approaching a Kāraṇa-guru to attain his goal. Therefore he seeks a Sage and fortunately meets one. Through his instructions the aspirant visualizes his own real nature and is gradually established in it.

1078. WHAT DOES ‘LŌKA-SANGRAHA’ MEAN? (24)

Lōka-sangraha [concern for universal welfare] produces subjective results as well as objective. The subjective course, according to Hindu tradition, is only a means of attenuating the personal ego, by diverting the goal of your actions from your narrow, cabined and cribbed personal self to the world at large. This practice slowly makes you a universal being. To follow this sādhanā, unaided, is a laborious task. Even if you succeed there, you have not reached the goal, and then you seek a Kāraṇa-guru who takes you beyond it and establishes you in the ultimate Truth. If on the other hand you have the instructions of a Kāraṇa-guru, from the very beginning, you succeed in establishing yourself in the ultimate Reality by the sādhanā of service itself.

The objective side is manifest in this sādhanā inasmuch as you engage in actions. They produce the result of raising the humanity from level to level and making them contented and happy by degrees. Even after standing established in the ultimate Reality, you may continue to perform actions of this nature, knowing full well that your real character is not affected, one way or the other, by such actions.

The course of *lōka-sangraha*, when rightly understood and followed as a sādhanā under instructions from a Kāraṇa-guru, is not intended to improve the world (or parts of it), as is professed by some faiths. When service of the world becomes your goal, you conceive the world not in the particular but in the generic sense. The generic, in all cases, is nothing but the absolute background, since all agencies of discrimination have been eliminated.

Therefore your service is directed to *Ātmā*, the real background. You are also told that the background of your personal being is the same *Ātmā*. This means you are serving yourself and you stand visualized as that *Ātmā* itself. Every action of yours in the light of this ideal of service brings you into contact with that common background *Ātmā*, and slowly you get established there. This is how *lōka-sangraha* takes you to the ultimate Truth.

1079. WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘SELFISH’? (25)

It is selfish to do, think or feel anything in the interests of the apparent ‘I’.

13th August 1955

1080. THE ‘THEORETICAL’ AND THE PRACTICAL, COMPARED TO EXPERIENCE (26)

The ignorant man considers the body as being more real than the mind. In ordinary parlance, what is retained in the mental sphere is called ‘theoretical’, and what is translated into action in the physical sphere is called ‘practical’. The advocates of the ‘practical’ assume that what they believe to be ‘practical’ has greater reality than the ‘theoretical’.

But a close and impartial enquiry proves that body, senses and mind are all changing in the three states, and that the only principle that remains changeless, all through, is the ‘I’-principle. This ‘I’ is neither gross nor subtle, but beyond both. In other words, the ‘I’ is neither ‘practical’ nor ‘theoretical’ in the ordinary sense, but beyond both. It is the only one that does not need any proof of its existence. It is the only absolute Truth or Reality.

If by ‘practical’ you mean ‘real’, the ‘I’ is more real than the changing body, senses or mind. These can exist only in the presence of the ‘I’, while the ‘I’ can exist all alone without anything else. Therefore the ‘I’ is more practical or real than the rest. The ‘I’ is the innermost principle in man and is the ultimate Truth.

The degrees of reality of a thing, if any, can be measured only in proportion to the proximity of the thing to the ‘I’-principle. According to this standard, gross objects (including the body) are the farthest from the ‘I’ and are therefore the least practical or real. The senses are nearer to the ‘I’ and so the sensations are more practical or real. The mind is still nearer to the ‘I’ and so mentations are still more practical or real than the rest.

Strictly speaking, Reality can have no degrees, there being only one Reality – the *Ātmā* – and that alone can be called experience. Experiences of the body, senses and mind are no experiences at all.

14th August 1955

1081. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF VICĀRA? (27)

Vicāra begins with a course of uncompromising arguments within yourself to prove and affirm that you are not the body, senses or the mind, and that even when all these are changing in the course of the three states, you alone stand changeless as the background, knowing the apparent changes. When the argument goes home, the objects drop away, one by one, until at last you stand alone in your own glory as the background. Then you cannot even say ‘I know’, because there is nothing else to be known and you stand as that knowledge, pure. This is, in short, the course of *Ātma-vicāra*.

mādhuryyattāl anya vastu madhurī kṛtam ākayāṁ,
vastvantarattāl mādhuryyaṁ madhurī kṛtamāyitā .

[It is from sweetness that some other
thing can get to be made sweet.
But sweetness in itself is not
made sweet, by any other thing.]

Bhāṣha Pancadashi, Pancakōsha-vivēka, 15 (Malayalam translation)

This is a significant verse to show the self-luminosity of *Ātmā*.

By association with sweetness, another thing becomes sweet. But sweetness by itself does not need the association of anything else in order to be sweet.

Similarly, all objects become known when they come into contact with the ‘I’. But the ‘I’ does not need the help of anything else in order to be known. It shines, by itself, even in deep sleep where no object exists. Therefore the ‘I’ is self-luminous.

1082. HOW AM I PEACE AND CONSCIOUSNESS? (28)

Gurunāthan: Well, let me ask you another simple question in return. Have you the faculty of sight?

Disciple: Yes.

G: How can you prove it? Is it as a result of looking at your fleshy eyes that you assert that you have eyesight?

D: No.

G: Then what is your evidence?

D: I see objects and so I am convinced that I have eyesight, without which I know objects would never be seen.

G: So you admit that objective perception of a faculty is not necessary in order to prove its existence?

D: Yes.

G: Here you must remember that when you see objects you are not possessing eyesight, but that you are actually standing as the faculty of eyesight. Do you admit that?

D: Yes.

G: Now apply the same argument to your own self. Don't you know your perceptions, thoughts and feelings?

D: Yes, of course.

G: What is your position when you know them? Examine it carefully and tell me.

D: I stand as that faculty of knowledge, or objectless knowledge, when I know anything.

G: Then, is there any moment in all the three states when you do not stand as that pure Knowledge?

D: No, I am there always.

G: Well, what may be the relationship between that knowledge and yourself?

D: (After a pause.) That knowledge can only be myself or my real nature.

G: Now, do you see how you are Consciousness?

D: Yes. Perfectly.

G: *Be there always.*

15th August 1955

1083. KNOWLEDGE IS ALWAYS APARŌKṢHA OR EXPERIENCE PURE. (29)

I am not one who knows, but Knowledge itself.

I am not one who exists, but Existence itself.

I am not in peace, but Peace itself.

With my contact even the unknown becomes known.

With my contact even the non-existent appears existent.

Non-existent body + Existence = Existent body

Objects of knowledge may be *parōkṣha* (indirect) or *aparōkṣha* (direct), as the case may be. But knowledge is always *aparōkṣha* or experience pure.

16th August 1955

1084. WHY DO I SEE DIVERSITY? (30)

Because you stand as diversity yourself (you stand as body, senses and mind).

1085. AS LONG AS I AM A HUMAN BEING, IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO KNOW THE TRUTH BEYOND? (31)

The question presupposes that you are a human being. I question that statement first. Are you a human being? Define a human being. A human being is an incongruous mixture of body, senses and mind with the 'I'-principle. All except the 'I'-principle are changing every moment.

But you will admit that you are that 'I'-principle. You, as that 'I'-principle, stand as the permanent background connecting all these changes that come and go. That 'I'-principle is distinct and separate from the changing body, senses and mind. Where is the human being in your deep sleep, when you have no body, senses or mind? Certainly nowhere.

Still 'you' are there, as that 'I'-principle. Therefore you are not a human being but a changeless, permanent principle. As such, you can very well understand that Truth, beyond.

17th August 1955

1086. PROLONGING INTERVAL BETWEEN MENTATIONS (32)

Question: Since I am myself alone between two mentations, and that only for an infinitesimal part of a second, am I to try to prolong that period?

Answer: No. You are mistaken about your position between two mentations during the so called interval. It is true that it appears as an interval to you, when you stand in time and look at it from there.

But when you reach that interval, you find yourself divested of body, senses, mind, space and time; and then the so called interval appears no longer an interval but 'timeless'. The idea of prolonging the timeless is absurd. The mistake arises because you stand as an embodied being and look at it from a distance, in the waking state.

All you have to do is to get into that so called interval, discarding all that you possess – namely, body, senses, mind, space and time. In that state, everything is perfect.

The idea of prolongation is a 'vicious samskāra' of time, which arises only after the inception of the mind. If you dance to the tune of this samskāra, you will never reach the ultimate goal. Even great yōgins have often been stranded for years in nothingness, as a result of this subtle miscalculation.

Another answer: You say you are all alone in that interval. You do not take in the full significance of that statement; instead you give it a limited interpretation. You take time along with you and think of prolongation.

But really, you are absolutely alone and there is no sense of time in it to disturb you. Hence the idea of prolongation is quite irrelevant and contrary to the idea of your being all alone.

1087. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE APPROACHES OF MODERN SCIENCE AND VĒDĀNTA (33)

Science ignores the ultimate subject altogether; and its approach is an objective one, taking for granted that the apparent universe is real. It takes into consideration only the relationship between object and object, utilizes the lower reason or intellect as its instrument, and in coming to a decision it relies upon the stored-up experiences of the

mind, which are as varied as the universe itself. Therefore, we cannot expect any finality in its conclusion. This is why science, after all its somersaults, is bewildered and knocks against the blank wall of ignorance.

But Vēdānta recognizes the ultimate subject alone; and its approach is a subjective one, taking the universe only as an appearance. It examines only the relationship of any one object with the subject 'I'. This object is considered as a symbol. Its solution applies equally to all objects, and the conclusion arrived at applies to the whole universe.

Vēdānta proves that every object depends upon the subject 'I' for its very existence. It utilizes the higher reason (vidyā vṛitti) and not the intellect as its instrument, and in order to come to a conclusion, its reference is only to the real changeless being within and to nothing else. This 'Being' or the 'I' being one, and the reference being always to that, the conclusion can be only one and the same, always the ultimate Truth.

18th August 1955

1088. REALMS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE AND ACTIVITY (34)

Man has three distinct and separate realms of existence and activity.

1. As a physical being possessed of senses, man has the world of sense objects.
2. As a mental being, man has the world of ideas.
3. As a spiritual being, man has Consciousness alone.

Of these, the first two realms and their objects are changing and ephemeral, while the third one alone is changeless and permanent, supporting the other two realms as well. Man's endeavour should be to reach the third realm somehow, and to be a spiritual being. For this, he must give up the other two realms, at least for the time being.

When he reaches the third realm of Peace and Consciousness and looks back, he will find that it lights up the other two realms as well and proves them to be nothing but Peace and Consciousness. When he understands that to be his own real nature, he is free.

You cannot have a negative experience of any kind. If you should ever experience the absence of any object, you can never do it deliberately. If you try to forget anything, the thing actually becomes more strongly manifest.

But there is one way of accomplishing the desired end. You have only to turn your attention to the background, or that which supports the object. For example; if you want to experience the absence of the chair, you need only turn your attention to the ground that supports the chair. Immediately, the chair idea vanishes.

Man is swayed to and fro by the varied experiences of the world in the waking state. He badly wants relief from this strain. In other words, he wants to forget the world, for a short time at least. So his attention is spontaneously drawn to the background. Immediately the world disappears; and Peace and pure Consciousness alone are experienced in deep sleep.

19th August 1955

1089. RESULT OF ELIMINATING FROM ME ALL THAT I AM NOT (35)

Question: Would the process of eliminating from me all that I am not, take me to my real nature and establish me there?

Answer: Certainly it will do both, provided you have heard the ultimate Truth about your real nature from the lips of a Kāraṇa-guru. Otherwise you will get stranded in nothingness, mistaking it for the Ultimate; because the experience of nothingness also gives you a reflected and limited peace or happiness.

After listening to the Truth from the Guru, if you take to any thought – and more so a spiritual thought – it expires not in nothingness but in Consciousness alone. Therefore, when all that you are not – namely the body, senses and mind – have been eliminated from you, you alone remain over as the background – Consciousness and Peace. This is nothing short of Self-realization. Repeat the same vicāra for some time. This will help you to stand established in your Real nature.

Regarding one's own real nature: '*To know is to be.*'

If you enquire into the ultimate goal or meaning (purport) of the term 'I' used by everybody alike, and if you succeed in reaching that goal, there is nothing else to be attained. I am that principle in man permeating all men alike, but at the same time distinct and separate from the body, senses and mind of all. That am I. That is *Ātmā*.

If you watch the activities of a Sage, an apparent indifference or hesitancy might often be noticed. Because with him the 'I' is never helplessly mixed up with objects and perceptions, as is the case with the ignorant man.

20th August 1955

1090. 'SURRENDER' AND HOW TO ACHIEVE IT? (36)

'Surrender' has something of a negative implication. You can never achieve surrender by deliberation. What you want is to surrender your attachment to objects. In other words, you want to forget objects (body, senses and mind).

If you start deliberately to forget them, they become more strongly manifest. Therefore the only means to achieve surrender is to turn your attention to the support or the background.

If the devotee gets more and more attached to his *iṣṭa-dēva*, surrender of all else will follow as a matter of course. You need not do anything special to attain it. An open and empty heart is the first requisite.

Surrender is an end in itself, and never a means. Surrender is something that has to come spontaneously, as a corollary to Self-realization. Surrender is no surrender, in the strict sense of the term, if you happen even to remember the fact that you have surrendered.

Surrender can never be accomplished objectively. It is only by establishing oneself in one's own Real nature, *Ātmā*, that real surrender obtains. Because you see that there is nothing else to be surrendered; and then, even the word 'surrender' becomes meaningless.

22nd August 1955

1091. FALLACY OF THE DESIRE TO KNOW OR FEEL THE TRUTH (37)

It is admitted that on listening to the Truth from the lips of the Guru, you realize your real nature at once. But you will not know it or feel it.

The desire to know that you have so realized, or the desire to feel it, is the highest imaginable illusion. Because, in order to know anything, the knower has to stand higher than the known. Therefore, if you presume that you know or feel that you have

realized the ‘Truth’ you are still in duality, and what you presume to know is imperfect. As such, it can never be the Truth.

You are ever that Truth – before, during and after the realization claimed. As far as the Truth – which is your real nature – is concerned, there had been no change whatsoever, in all time. It may be said that a Jnyānin knows that he has visualized the Truth. Yes of course. But not in the sense of knowing at the mental level, as you might desire. He knows that it is unknowable by the mind; but he knows it in an intenser light where there is no subject-object relationship. To know in that light is to be.

The ego in the mental realm is innocent and ignorant of all that has happened above his head. But he too feels that something sublime has happened, and naturally he wishes to have a taste of it in his own realm. Hence the ego’s desire to know that experience, and his subsequent, unwarranted claim to have had that experience in his own limited terms. That has to be guarded against.

In *one* sense, it may be said that a Jnyānin alone knows a Jnyānin. This does not mean any recognition on the mental level as understood by the ordinary man. From *another* point of view, it is also true to say that even a Jnyānin can never know another Jnyānin. Because Jnyānin is Jnyāna itself; and Jnyāna, which is indivisible, can never be divided into subject and object, as knower and the known.

25th August 1955

1092. ‘SHIVŌHAM’ (38)

It is an aphorism usually utilized by jnyāna sādhakas, after visualization of the Truth, to be established in that background. Its purpose is only to turn your attention to the inner Self. Its meaning should not be taken literally. If you do so, you objectify it, and then it does not represent the Self, which is always the ultimate subject.

The goal of all spiritual exercise is to change your identification from the personal, (body, senses and mind) to the impersonal (Self). The impersonal Self or Ātmā is ever-present and Self-luminous. Nothing has to be done to manifest it. All you have to do is to turn your attention to it whole-heartedly, by withdrawing your attention from the body, senses and mind. This withdrawal is possible only with the help of Consciousness, which is your real nature. When the body, senses and mind are thus completely eliminated, the consciousness – which is the background – remains over, shining in all its glory.

The word ‘Shivōham’ does not represent anything objective. It just reminds you of your real nature. Therefore, the word ‘Shivōham’ helps you considerably to get away from everything objective, and you are thrown into that state when you had the first visualization of the Truth in the presence of the Guru. This is only a means to throw you into that state again and again, till at last you are established in it, the ‘Ātmā’, rising above all obstacles.

1093. SPIRITUAL GOAL AND ITS ATTAINMENT (39)

The realization of one’s own real nature is undoubtedly the ultimate goal of all spiritual quest. The only impediment to it is the illusion that you are body, senses or mind. For Self-realization, it is the removal of this illusion that is sought.

The methods adopted to attain this end differ with the different paths. The paths of yōga and devotion adopt the method of removing the infinite variety of illusions, by accepting a generic form called 'samādhi'. Here the diversity vanishes, no doubt. But still you remain in the realm of illusion, and in the subject-object relationship. The Truth is still as remote as before, and the happiness experienced in samādhi is not a permanent one.

The state of complete identity with non-dual Ātmā, as a result of discrimination and negation of phenomena, is the vēdāntic concept of samādhi. This is distinct from the so called samādhi of yōgins. The Ātmā is denoted by the word 'samādhi'. The illusion should not reappear ever after, in any other form. This is possible only if you realize the background on which all illusions appear and disappear. This is nothing short of Self-realization.

Therefore, removing the illusion is not a means to attain Self-realization. It is only a natural corollary to it. Taking for example the illusion of the 'serpent in the rope', we find that the illusion can be completely and successfully removed only by seeing clearly, by the help of a bright light, that it is rope and rope alone. Therefore, Self-realization is both the means and the end in itself.

The only means to attain this end is to listen to the Truth (it may be about the truth of illusion itself) from the lips of a Kāraṇa-guru. Then you may yourself examine any illusion in the light of that instruction, and certainly it will take you to the real background. All possibility of illusion taking possession of you is removed by that means.

28th August 1955

1094. PROGRESS THROUGH MANTRA AND DHYĀNA (40)

This path is divided into four distinct stages, namely *vaikharī*, *madhyamā*, *pashyantī* and *parā*.

Instructions from a kārya-guru (one whose instructions take you to anything below the Ultimate) may suffice for the first two stages. But for the last two, the help of a Kāraṇa-guru is absolutely necessary.

Vaikharī is chanting of a mantra in audible tone and effecting concentration of the mind there.

Madhyamā is doing the same thing mentally and effecting concentration. This is still in the realm of the mind and concentration is on an idea.

Pashyantī: Here ideation is transcended. It may be said that here one gets to the languageless idea. Unless one understands its nature from a Kāraṇa-guru, one will be in an unconscious state. I may say something about this languageless idea.

I may convey an idea to you by means of one particular language. The same idea may be conveyed to another by means of a different language. One is certainly not a translation of the other. What is the language of that idea? It has no language, because it has gone beyond expression. If that is correctly understood, it is itself the background of the expressed idea of the first two stages. He, who gets into that state, touches the background and is not in an unconscious state. He understands, further, that the languageless idea can only be one and cannot be many. This is the experience in *pashyantī*.

Parā: Even the notion of a background is transcended here, and self-luminosity of the Reality takes possession of the *sādhaka*; and here he is in deep Peace, which is changeless.

1095. VIKṢHĒPA AND ĀVARAṆA (41)

Vikṣhēpa [distraction] and āvaraṇa [obscuring] are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin (mind). They appear and disappear simultaneously. Therefore after having heard the Truth from the Guru, whenever you transcend ‘vikṣhēpa’, ‘āvaraṇa’ also disappears and you stand as the Ultimate.

31st August 1955

1096. SPONTANEITY AND CONTEMPLATION (42)

All experience is spontaneous. You should not colour it or disfigure it.

By ‘spontaneous’ I mean that which cannot be related to any cause or effect, or which does not make any reference to its opposite. Every percept is spontaneous. Let us concede that it is related to its particular sense organ alone. As a percept it makes no reference to its opposite. If you dismiss it immediately at this stage, it does not bind you.

But you do not dismiss it immediately. Instead, the very next moment, you mix it up with innumerable other concepts and with samskāras stored up in the mind, and then you project them all together as what you call the object. The object you so conceive does not exist anywhere. It is only a bundle of sensations. The percept was nearer the real, when it occurred. But when you mixed it up with other concepts, the percept was transformed into a concept and became unreal.

Suppose you perceive form. The perception is spontaneous and makes no reference to anything else. It would be wrong even to say ‘*a* form’ because the ‘*a*’ makes an unconscious reference to other forms. Form, as a generic concept, can leave no samskāra or trace behind. It rises in Ātmā and dissolves into Ātmā. The experience of the Sage is always at this level. But knowingly he comes down and moves among the ignorant as one of them, but never forgetting the sublime Truth about it all.

Suppose you see what you call a note book. Eliminate all associated concepts and samskāras from it, and note what remains over, without reference to anything else. The note book, the book, paper, form, colour, all these vanish in succession, leaving the ‘seeing’ and the indefinite ‘it’. Next the ‘seeing’ merges in the knowledge, leaving the ‘Knowledge’ and the ‘it’ as the one indivisible Truth.

‘It occurred to me’ is the typical language of spontaneity. The sense organ by itself can never create an object. Leave each sense organ to itself and you will be free. Contemplation depends upon the imaginary permanence of the object.

1097. WHAT IS AN OBJECT AND WHAT IS ITS ESSENCE? (43)

That which could be said to exist or to shine is alone called an object. To what do the existence and luminosity found in the object belong? Do they belong to the object itself? Or are they derived from elsewhere? They do not belong to the so called object. Because the object appears and disappears in Consciousness, and existence and

luminosity can never cease to exist or shine. So the object derives these qualities from Consciousness.

‘I’ am the only Principle that never ceases to exist and that never ceases to shine. Therefore, existence and luminosity belong to me. They are my real nature – one and indivisible. Existence and knowledge are one – being intrinsic in oneself, and there being no subject-object relationship with respect to knowledge and existence. My presence as that knowledge – pure – is essential for the manifestation of any object, and it cannot be assumed that an object exists when not known. Therefore the object which appears and disappears is nothing but Consciousness.

But in our traffic with the world, we put the dead and inert cart (object) before the living horse (Consciousness). In this way, we make of life a blind show. The object has been brought into existence only by the grace of Consciousness, lending its liberal presence. Immediately, this object, which is dead and inert, usurps all the living qualities of Consciousness.

If only you succeed in seeing the world as the world of objects alone and yourself as the only subject, you are free. In other words, you have only to reinstate the independent horse of Consciousness in its rightful place in front and place the cart of dependent objects in its legitimate place in the rear, ready to be discarded at any moment without notice.

The first phenomenal experience is the percept. The next moment the percept disappears and a concept takes its place.

1st September 1955

1098. PROGRESSION OF KNOWLEDGE FROM OBJECT TO THE ULTIMATE. (44)

1. Consciousness of object.
2. Consciousness of Self.
3. Consciousness as Self.
4. Self all alone.

1099. SHĀSTRAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE (45)

It is a common illusion that one can understand the ultimate Truth from the shāstras. But the shāstras themselves proclaim from their heights that they are helpless in this matter, and that a Kāraṇa-guru alone can take you to the Truth. The Kāraṇa-guru depends entirely upon himself, the Truth, and not upon the shāstras for the purpose; though he might adopt any of the numerous methods of approach described in the shāstras. Even that is not essential. Sometimes he might adopt an entirely new approach to suit the radical change in the outlook of the world, and the peculiar aptitude and temperament of the aspirant.

The shāstras utilize only dead language as their medium. To expect light to come out of dead language is to expect the impossible. Language functions only in the realm of the mind. Beyond the mind it cannot even peep. Truth is decidedly beyond the mind, and beyond the reach of all shāstras. Even the Upaniṣhads go only so far, and take you only to the tether end of the mind. There they proclaim unequivocally that a Kāraṇa-guru alone can take you beyond, to the ultimate Truth.

This does not mean that the shāstras are of no use. To the particular aspirant who had the rare good fortune to attain a Kāraṇa-guru, the shāstras are no longer of any

use. But till such a time, they can be of immense service to an aspirant. The purpose of the shāstras, in general, is to prove to you, in the light of the lower reason or intellect, the impermanence of the apparent world including body, senses and mind, and the irrefutability of the existence of a permanent principle behind the world. When the aspirant is convinced of this, the shāstras din into his mind the supreme need of a Kāraṇa-guru to show him the Truth behind all these changes.

Therefore, the real service of the shāstras is to impress upon one the need of the Guru, and to put one on the track. The moment the aspirant begins to seek a Kāraṇa-guru, *vidyā-vṛitti* (higher reason) begins to flash its light in him and the rest is safe in the light of this divine torch. He has only to cling on to it till it leads him to a Kāraṇa-guru in flesh and blood. *Vidyā-vṛitti* is the fire that burns the forest of illusions. It is only from a Kāraṇa-guru that he can get it in full. This is why all shāstras enjoin that you should study them only at the feet of the Guru.

tattvam ātmastham ajñātvā mūḍhaś śāstrēṣu paśyati
gōpaḥ kakṣa gataṁ chāgaṁ yathā kūpēṣu durmatih

[When someone foolish does not know
that truth which stands as one's own self,
it's only then that one may look
into the shāstras – like a herdsman
looking hard, in some distress
through many caves, to find a goat
that has gone into one of them.]

Shrī Shankara, Sarva-vēdānta-siddhānta-sāra-sangraha, 291

1100. SACRIFICE (46)

Sacrifice is essential for the attainment of happiness, whether phenomenal or ultimate.

To attain phenomenal happiness you have to concentrate, for the time being, upon the object you desire. This means that you have, for some time, deliberately to sacrifice all except that object. But at the moment of enjoying the desired happiness, the object attained after so much effort also disappears. Thus everything objective is sacrificed before the enjoyment of even phenomenal happiness.

So also in the quest of that ultimate Peace or Happiness, everything objective falls away when you reach the goal.

In the one case it is temporary, and in the other it is permanent.

1101. CONSCIOUSNESS AND PEACE ARE ONE AND THE SAME. (47)

You hope to achieve happiness by the attainment of a particular object. Suppose somebody drops that object into your room when you are asleep. You do not get the desired happiness. But you get it immediately you know that you have attained the object desired. So it is the knowledge – though apparently limited by the object – that gives you limited happiness.

In the knowledge, the object known is absent. Therefore, the known must disappear, even before limited peace can be attained.

It is only the reference to the object that limits the experience of Peace. The same result arrived at without a reference to any object (that is by rising above body, senses

and mind) is the ultimate Peace. The known, as known, must disappear for the ultimate Peace to dawn. When the known – as known – disappears, it is knowledge pure or Consciousness that remains over. Thus Consciousness and Peace are one and the same, being intrinsic in you.

1102. YOU ARE ALWAYS IN DEEP SLEEP. HOW? (48)

Just think what you are in deep sleep. You will find that you are the 'I'-principle alone, divested of body, senses and mind. You see you can live quite well without any of these.

Now just see if you ever get out of that 'I'-principle in your dream or waking states. No, never. Thus you see how you are always in deep sleep. That is the real Self.

5th September 1955

1103. BEAUTY, POETRY AND LOVE ARE THE SAME REALITY. (49)

They are all, strictly speaking, synonyms of the Ultimate. If you perceive any of these without reference to the limited clothing in which they appear, you are perceiving the Reality itself. Such expressions of the Absolute are all spontaneous. Let us examine any one of them – e.g. beauty.

Beauty: It is often perceived in objects, such as the mountain, the sea, the sky, the river, the child, etc. But it has to be examined whether beauty is inherent in them. If so, everybody should perceive beauty in each of them, at all times. This is not so. I do not see beauty exactly where another sees it. Therefore beauty does not rest in the object perceived.

The only other party to the perception is one's own Self, divested of body, senses and mind which are also objects. So beauty must necessarily be somewhere in the Self – the real subject. The objects serve only as mere symbols of or pointers to the subject.

The Self is the centre of beauty and changeless. The symbols are numerous, but the centre is only one, the inmost core of one's being. Beauty is the real nature of the Self and is unlimited. Beauty anoints with its own guild everything with which it comes into contact. When beauty is superimposed upon any object, it appears limited and unreal.

In the world, you see only the beautiful. The beautiful is an incongruous mixture of dead, inert matter and living beauty by its very nature unlimited. On seeing the beautiful, your effort should be to eliminate the material accretion from the beauty part. For this purpose, you may first conceive beauty to be resting inside yourself, and matter outside. Thus, when you discard gross matter along with the sense of the 'outside' and reach the so called 'inside', you find that the inside – being relative and the opposite of outside – has also vanished with the outside, leaving you alone as beauty – the Ultimate – beyond both outside and inside.

Poetry: When you come to real poetry, it transcends imagination and all ideation. That is the Reality.

Love: Love for a desired object is pleasure-giving. When you understand that it is not the object itself that is loved, but the happiness you suppose you derived from it, the love itself is the happiness, both being intrinsic in you. That is the Reality.

The 'Reality' is the 'Absolute', or what is 'expressed' and beyond all opposites.

Sat, cit and *ānanda* are the characteristics of the ultimate Reality. They are positive in form, but negative in sense. Life, thoughts and feelings are the first expressions of *sat, cit* and *ānanda* in the relative level. When you expand life you come to *sat*, when you expand thoughts you come to *cit*, and when you expand feelings you come to *ānanda*.

After listening to the Truth from the Guru, if you get beyond the body, senses and mind, you reach the background as *sat, cit* or *ānanda*. But you do not rest there. You are then taken on to the ultimate Truth still beyond, which is Ātmā, the real 'I'.

6th September 1955

1104. DEVOTEES, MYSTICS AND JNYĀNINS (50)

These are the three distinct types of spiritual personalities recognized by the world. They have also three distinct kinds of exercises, which are usually called spiritual exercises. They have so called experiences particular to each path, which are supposed to lead them to their respective goals.

The first two follow the paths of devotion and yōga. These paths confine their practitioners to the phenomenal, and are governed by the physical and mental elements in varying degrees.

The devotee, identifying himself with his physical body, conceives his *iṣṭa-dēva* also as a physical being, of course with infinite powers and attributes, and meditates upon him. The yōgin tries to concentrate his mind upon a set ideal, which is a thought-form, with the definite object of attaining powers and enjoying happiness. In course of time, both these sādhakas get reasonably well concentrated upon their goal, and this bears visible fruits.

The devotee enjoys sensuous visions of his *iṣṭa-dēva*, which give him ecstatic joy and a limited peace. If the devotee does not rest satisfied with these and does not consider that he has gained his goal, it may be said that the ground has been prepared to enable him to receive the teachings of a *Kāraṇa-guru*.

The yōgin's mind is expanded by concentration alone, and he attains wonderful powers in the phenomenal world. He is now called a 'mystic'. His experiences are of a complex nature. If he is not influenced by the powers that he possesses and his ego is not inflated by them, it may be said that the ground has been prepared to enable him to receive instructions from a *Kāraṇa-guru*.

Those devotees and mystics who refuse to go beyond, sell their birthright for a pittance.

The third type of sādha is the jnyāna sādha. The jnyāna sādha questions the world including himself. He is not satisfied with names and forms. He wants to get to the Truth of everything and lives on until a *Kāraṇa-guru* takes him to the ultimate Truth.

11th September 1955

1105. A LISTENER ASKED, 'WHEN I KNOW THAT I DO NOT KNOW, IS NOT MY STAND THEN IN THE REALITY'? (51)

First answer: No. In your statement you make a difference between your knowing and not knowing. This is possible only in duality. Therefore, your position is not in the

Reality. But there is a luminous and changeless principle behind that statement, the mere presence of which has made it possible for you to make that statement. That principle alone is the Reality. Therefore Reality can be defined as 'the Principle which by its mere presence makes it possible for you to make any statement, irrespective of the merits or the subject of the statement'.

Second answer:

'I know that when I know, I do not know.'

In this statement, the second and third 'knowledge' are both objective and time-limited. If the first 'knowledge' is taken to represent that principle that knows the other two knowledges, then it is the Reality. It is as a result of the presence of that pure knowledge that you are able to make any statement. But as long as you do not knowingly identify yourself with that pure knowledge, your stand is not in the Reality.

If you have listened to the Truth from the Guru, any question logically analysed and steadfastly followed takes you to the Real background. The world is created out of the triad of time, space and causality and rests upon it. Therefore, it is but human to view the objects of its perception in terms of this triad. Causality prompts the enquiry into the cause or the source of all you perceive. Thus prompted, you seek the source of your thoughts and feelings. Following this search earnestly, you reach a state beyond, where thoughts and feelings do not appear as such, nor does anything else exist there except yourself as Consciousness.

This Consciousness cannot be taken to be the cause of a non-existent effect. In the so called cause, the effect is not present; and without the cause and effect being simultaneously present, their relationship cannot be established. Therefore, though you started to seek the cause, and though you could not find any, yet the earnestness and sincerity of your search lead you to the background, Consciousness, destroying the shackles of causality once and for all.

15th September 1955

1106. SUSPECT KNOWLEDGE AND PERMANENT KNOWLEDGE (52)

The knowledge, 'I know I am', is the one indubitable Reality that requires no proof to establish its existence.

The knowledge of a thing which stands in need of any proof for its existence is called 'suspect'. Such suspect knowledge is neither deep nor permanent. It may be sometimes right and sometimes wrong. All knowledge within the triad (of *tripuṭī*) is suspect knowledge. [*Tripuṭī* is the triad of knower, knowing and known; or doer, doing and deed.]

But the knowledge beyond the triad is deep and permanent. No proof is needed to establish it, and nothing can refute it.

Even the knowledge obtained in the relative level, when it is eliminated from the object known, is the Reality itself.

17th September 1955

1107. HIGHER REASON OR VIDYĀ-VṚITTI (53)

This is a supra-intellectual organon to be found in everyone. In the presence of the Guru, this organon is aroused, and is made use of, in order to understand the Truth. It corrects and supplements the findings of the lower reason. It destroys all that is objective and unreal, created by the mind; and when nothing else remains to be destroyed, it stands revealed in its own glory as the Reality – just as the fire that consumes the forest extinguishes itself when nothing else remains to be consumed, and Peace prevails.

20th September 1955

1108. PLEASURES AND SPIRITUALITY (54)

A life of placid enjoyment is inimical to you if you are given to serious thinking on any serious subject, and much more so when that thinking is spiritual.

An ordinary man believes that if he can provide for a constant stream of pleasures, he can be happy. He does not know that pleasures can never be constant.

24th September 1955

1109. VĒDĀNTIC CONCEPTION OF SAMĀDHI (55)

Samādhi, as a result of the process of absorption, does not by itself take you to the Reality. Shrī Gauḍapāda says: ‘Take away the mind from its tendency to go to samādhi to enjoy happiness and also from its tendency to enjoy the so called happiness supposed to be derived from sense objects, and it leads you to the goal.’

But how can this be done by the mind itself? It is never possible to reach the goal by any amount of effort on the part of the mind itself. By effort, you can prolong the duration of the samādhi to a certain extent and do nothing more. The complete elimination of the mind is what you have to obtain, somehow.

For this, some principle higher than the mind itself has to be depended upon, namely the higher reason. Its function is discrimination. The higher reason proves to you that it is not from the mind itself that happiness is experienced in samādhi, and that there is no enjoyer there. It is your own real nature of Peace, standing in its own glory, when the mind is temporarily stilled. It proves that the mind in any form only obscures the Reality. When you understand this correctly, your dependence upon the capacity of the mind to take you to that sublime Reality crumbles. This is how the mind is to be eliminated from the scene.

Samādhi is all right if the mind understands that samādhi is complete identity with non-dual Ātmā, where there is neither the enjoyer nor enjoyment. And when the mind knows that, it is itself changed.

28th September 1955

1110. HOW TO DESTROY SAMSKĀRAS? (56)

Shrī Gauḍapāda in *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* says: ‘Exercise of discrimination and reason alone can destroy your samskāras and take you to the ultimate Truth. But the method of using them has to be obtained from a Kāraṇa-guru.’

The exercise of the higher reason alone can destroy one's innate tendencies and lead one to the goal.

3rd October 1955

1111. SĀKṢHĀT-KĀRAṆA (57)

The ultimate cause (if any) of Self-realization is the fact of your having been accepted by a Sage as his disciple. This fact guarantees the disciple's realizing the corresponding fact that he had never been bound.

The moment the relationship between the Sage and the disciple is so established, the attention of the disciple is irrevocably directed to *Ātmā*, and the only thing that remains to be done is the removal of the 'mind', the one obstacle in the scene. All the attendant formalities of initiation, listening to spiritual discourses etc., are calculated only to give the mind a dignified and decent burial.

The life-story of Sages like Vaṭivīshvarattamma (?) proves this beyond doubt.

1112. SOCIAL UPLIFT WORK AS A MEANS TO GET TO THE TRUTH (58)

The work of social uplift is usually accepted by the world as a spiritual path. Every worker should be qualified for the particular task he undertakes, in order that the work may be orderly and fruitful. The social worker is no exception to this rule. The essential qualifications of a social worker are a clear knowledge of his own self, of the world, and of the thing common to the two. Next he should know the purpose of his work, and lastly the method of its implementation.

The very idea of social work rests on the fundamental misunderstanding that the world as it appears is real. The purpose of the work is the permanent happiness of the worker and of the world alike. When the worker happens to know the Truth that himself and the world are *Ātmā*, the ultimate Reality whose real nature is the Happiness which he has been seeking so long, his search ceases and he chooses to remain self-contented. But the ordinary social worker continues in the field, and often reaches the goal of his desire, though ephemeral. If he is sincere and earnest, his ego may get attenuated and he may become ripe, as a result of his preparation of the ground, to imbibe the teachings of a Kāraṇa-guru, which will take him to the goal.

(Shrī Ātmānanda was a strong social enthusiast and he contributed liberally for the cause. But he only held that it was wrong to attribute any spirituality to it.)

1113. FUTILITY OF SOCIAL SERVICE, BY ITSELF TO TAKE ONE TO THE TRUTH (59)

Work for the enjoyment of satisfaction of any kind is opposed to jnyāna. Jnyāna alone can take one to the goal of Truth.

Work emphasizing the world brings in diversity. Jnyāna destroys it. It is the destruction of variety that can take one to Truth – one's real nature. Work with right discrimination may prepare the ground for spiritual enquiry. It cannot do anything more.

9th October 1955

1114. EVERYTHING IS BRAHMAN. (60)

sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma

Chāndōgya Upaniṣhad, 3.14.1

The Truth about this world is that the Reality, which is imperceptible to the senses, appears as this world when looked at through the senses. The ordinary man sees only the appearance and attributes complete reality to it. At the same time, he sees also the changeability of the appearance, but he shuts his eyes to it. All spiritual paths attempt first to show the Reality behind the appearance. When looked at from the Reality itself, there is no appearance either.

To take the disciples to the Truth, phenomenal illustrations are often made use of. For example take the gold and the ornament. The ordinary man, at the first glance, sees only the ornament. But on second thought, he admits that it is made of gold. He still lays greater emphasis on the form rather than on the gold, because he relies on his sensual perceptions. After some more thought, he admits that between the form and the gold of the ornament, the form frequently changes, while the gold remains constant. Since gold is the essential constituent of all gold ornaments and since the form is only a temporary appearance leaving nothing behind, he is forced to admit that the gold alone is permanent and that the form is merely an illusion. Thus, having been shown gold in its pure formless nature, he is asked to look at the ornaments from the standpoint of gold. Then he sees nothing but gold in the ornaments (just as a banker would). Even in the appearance it is the gold that appears and not the ornament. An 'ornament' is an 'ornament' only by convention, but actually it is only gold.

Now applying the illustration to the Self and the world, having separated the world including your own body, senses and mind from the Self, you are shown the Self in its pure nature. Taking your stand in that pure Self, if you look at the world, you see the whole world as nothing but your own real Self. This is how you are helped to experience the Truth of the aphorism: 'All is brahman'. The object of Vēdānta is not to help you not to perceive the appearance; but to help you to see the essence, even when perceiving the appearance through the senses.

There is no superimposition
at any time.

Even the thought that there is superimposition,
is a superimposition.

There is no serpent in the rope
at any time.

There is no world in the Reality
at any time.

The Earth is not pot.
But the pot is Earth.

Consciousness is not the object.
But the object is Consciousness.

The wave and the ocean are both objects as such.
But in essence both are water, one and the same.

If you try to take away your mind from the ornament (as yōgins do), the ornament disappears not by itself alone, but along with the gold; and you are left helpless, in the dark. But if you succeed in seeing the gold in the ornament and understand that the gold is the only part which is permanent, then in every subsequent perception of the ornament, you will emphasize only the gold in it.

Similarly, when you see you are not the body, senses or mind – which are but ornaments of the real ‘I’ – you have only to emphasize the ‘I’ in each. It is only a ting of your interest, from the appearance to the essence, that is needed. Then, everything appears as gold or the real ‘I’.

Pure gold comprehends all ornaments. It is formless, imperceptible and is by itself no ornament. The ornament is gold in some form, and is perceptible. When you put an ornament in a crucible and apply heat to it, it melts. Then the ornament part disappears and the gold alone remains over. Of course, this gold also appears in the form of the crucible. You cannot help this as long as you look through your eyes. Pure gold is formless and imperceptible. Having transcended objectivity, it is the Reality itself.

But there is, in daily practice, a temporary and artificial reality posited between the ornament and the gold. This is what we call the bullion. It is supposed to be more permanent than the ornaments and is therefore used as a standard to measure all ornaments. The bullion has also a form and is an ornament when coined. This fact is conveniently ignored when you consider the bullion as standard gold.

Similarly, the state of samādhi, considered by the yōgins as the Ultimate, is only a state, limited by time. The absolute Reality is beyond all samādhi.

10th October 1955

1115. THE INCOMPETENCE OF SAMĀDHI TO ENLIGHTEN ONE. (61)

Yōga or mental effort is the cause, and samādhi is the natural effect. But the Absolute is uncaused. Therefore, samādhi can never be the Absolute, but only a state; and as such it can never enlighten you.

1116. A MUKTA AND AN ĀCĀRYA (62)

Liberation consists in realizing one’s own real nature, and it makes one a *mukta*. But an *Ācārya* is one who has realized the Truth, is established in it, and who is living the Truth himself in all his apparent life.

1117. THE BEST MEANS TO REALIZATION (63)

1. Allow Consciousness to come in at every stage of your perceptions. Recognize Consciousness in all your perceptions, and see that it is the only real part of the perceptions. Gradually, you realize that the whole world – including your own body, senses and mind – is nothing but Consciousness, and you are free.
2. Examine your statements regarding your own experience. A changeless ‘I’ is found underlying every such statement. It is the ultimate Reality itself.

13th October 1955

1118. INDEPENDENCE (64)

Man is born and brought up in a state and spirit of dependence. He has to depend upon his mother in his babyhood and childhood; upon his parents, teachers and friends in his boyhood; upon his wife, family and society when he becomes a householder; upon the whole world when he becomes a man; and upon God and nature all along – until he is temporarily relieved by death, or liberated for all time by knowledge.

But the spirit of independence, which is an urge from his real nature, sprouts up and rebels against this dependence at every stage of his life. All forces of nature, including his parents, try to restrain this spirit of independence in some form or other. Parents, teachers and society do this in the name of culture and education. What they mean by culture and education is only directing the mind of the boy from one set of objects, which they consider injurious, to another set of objects, which they consider beneficial, to the good of the boy in the phenomenal world. But all the while, the boy is pinned to the body, senses and mind.

This sort of curbing of the independence of the child cannot be justified, unless there is a better substitute to be given in its place. The boy's spirit of independence will never be satisfied until his attention is somehow directed to the permanent life principle in him, which is the seat of independence, from where his own urge of independence has sprouted.

Body, mind and senses are by their very nature dependent. Therefore, whenever you attempt to restrain your child from any of his physical or mental tendencies, you would do well not to do it by force, in the name of empty slogans like virtue and progress, but to try to impress upon his tender mind the existence of a permanent and luminous principle within him, which is the life principle. Slowly, he can be made to become aware of the real glory of his life principle, and he will learn to be attached more and more deeply to that principle.

This life principle is the first emanation of the ultimate Truth and, as such, there can be nothing more sublime and ennobling than this. Therefore the attachment of the boy to his life principle will transform his tendencies into sublimity and nobility much more quickly and with greater stability than any object lesson ever will.

Having obtained such a glorious start from very boyhood, when he grows up with these samskāras, he will undoubtedly come across a Kāraṇa-guru, receive instruction from him and be liberated. This is the law of nature and has no exception. Then he will find that in that state, the urge for independence has been fulfilled. Because, in liberation, he is alone and there is no place for dependence.

The parents are responsible for having given the boy a body, which by itself is the source of his bondage and misery. This is no doubt a sin in the phenomenal sense. The parents, if they are conscientious, must certainly atone for it, at least by bringing up the child in such a manner as to make him conscious of his bondage, and to instil in him that deep desire for liberation. There is no easier method of fulfilling this goal than the one just chalked out.

1119. VĒDĀNTA (65)

Vēdānta is the unfoldment of one's own real nature (the Truth), from the lowest level to the highest.

Reality is positive in form, but negative in meaning. When I say, 'It is existence', I mean only that it is not non-existence.

1120. HIGHER REASON (66)

Higher reason is that supra-intellectual organon present in all human beings, which begins to function only when the aspirant tries to understand something beyond the body, senses and mind. It may also be called functioning Consciousness. When the function ceases, it is pure Consciousness itself.

25th October 1955

1121. WORSHIP AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE (67)

Worship is a method adopted all over the world, to show one's respect and reverence to another, and to rise thereby to the level of the worshipped. Phenomenal perfection is attained through devotion to a personal God; and spiritual perfection through devotion to the 'impersonal', represented by the 'Kāraṇa-guru'. The method of worship usually adopted is generally the same, and the only difference is with regard to the goal.

The fundamental characteristic of worship and devotion is the resort to any process of incessant thinking about the object of worship. But this becomes sometimes monotonous and mechanical. To avoid this, and to give variety and ease to the exercise, certain deviations are adopted. It is but natural that one is inclined to love and revere everything related to the object of adoration. The sacred material relics, preserved and worshipped in all religions, such as the Bōdhi Tree, the chip of the Cross etc., are examples. These relics are revered not for their intrinsic worth, but only for the solemn fact of their having once been intimately connected with the goal of our devotion. Thus, in each case, these relics are mere pointers to the goal of our devotion.

This is all the more true when the aspirant is on the path to the ultimate Truth, and he has to be doubly guarded against probable pitfalls.

The devotee of the Guru should never forget that objects or persons of whatever relationship to the Guru should be utilized only to draw his attention to the Guru. Otherwise, they should be dismissed summarily.

3rd February 1956

1122. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE EGO AFTER VISUALIZATION? (1)

Even on the first visualizing of the Truth, one is liberated. But the ego seems to function even after that. Yes, Truth was visualized in spite of all adverse saṃskāras. Therefore, now, with the additional strength and light of the Truth, you have to face the saṃskāras and subdue them.

This is done easily by clinging on to the Truth and repeating the experience of visualization, as often as possible. The mind, having relinquished all adherence to the ego,

turns to Ātmā as its only support; the ego also, like a slave or a shadow, follows the foot-steps of the mind and continues to function as a mere pointer to the Ātmā.

1123. WHY DOES THE SAGE COME DOWN FROM THE ULTIMATE LEVEL TO THE LOWER ONE AND ACT ACCORDING TO THE LAWS AND CONVENTIONS OF THIS WORLD? (2)

1. The question assumes that the Sage is a person. No. The Sage is impersonal, and as such can never act.
2. The ego is the product of time, space and causality, and these laws have been created solely for its traffic with the outside world. Therefore, as far as phenomenal activities are concerned, these laws are all quite in order. But concerning anything in the beyond, or concerning the world as a whole, these laws cannot apply. Therefore the question is illogical.
3. Swami Vivēkānanda answers this question this way: ‘Illusion cannot arise except from illusion.’ But this answer is not convincing at all levels. So a clearer answer is given below. This very same question was raised and answered also in the Upaniṣhads.

jñānēnā 'jñāna-kāryasya samūlasya layō yadi
katham tiṣṭhaty ayaṁ dēha iti śaṅkāvatō jaḍān
*samādhātum bāhya-drṣṭyā prārabdham vadati śrutiḥ
*ajñānījanakāryārtham prārabdham vadati śrutiḥ
na tu dēhasya satyatva bōdhanāya vipaś citān
(* marks alternative versions of the third line.)

Shrī Shankara, Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi, 462-3

It means: If the fire of knowledge has destroyed everything, how does the body of the Sage continue? The vast majority of people cannot understand the Sage in the true light. The question has arisen from the ignorant man's standpoint, attributing reality to objects perceived; and it boils down to time, space and causality. To satisfy such dull intellects in the gross plane, the śāstras put forward the argument of ‘prārabdha’ [remaining saṃskāras continuing to unfold, at the level of personality]. But it was never intended to establish the reality of the body. The apparent body of the Sage forms part of the world which he has transcended long ago.

1124. HOW TO DISPOSE OF SAMSKĀRAS AFTER VISUALIZATION? (3)

The Truth has been visualized. But by that alone, you are not always cognizant of the Reality. When you are swayed by the former saṃskāras of your life, you forget the Truth. Then you can either look deep and destroy the world as nothing but consciousness or, conceding the existence of the world, you may know that you are its witness and unaffected by the witnessed. A time will come when the inner eye will be ever clear, showing you in your real nature even while engaged in activities.

1125. WHAT IS REASON AND HOW DOES IT WORK? (4)

Reason is of two kinds: the lower and the higher.

Lower reason (mind) is a negative instrument. Its findings are sometimes negative and sometimes positive. The negative findings may be helpful in disproving the reality of the apparent world, and in bringing one nearer the Truth. But the positive discoveries of the lower reason emphasize duality and have always been an impediment in the progress towards Truth. It is too objective and speculative.

Higher reason is a positive instrument and its positive discoveries, being based upon the one real being within, are always true and changeless. When we say the higher reason ‘destroys’, it only means that it clearly exposes the falsity of appearance. Our samskāras themselves, when they become more sāttvic, begin to notice and question the vagaries of the lower reason.

It is then that the presence of a higher faculty becomes necessary, in order to enquire and come to an ultimate decision. The higher reason comes in to answer this urge. But at last, this higher reason turns out to be the Truth itself, which stands established as the permanent background.

15th February 1956

1126. HOW DID LOGIC COME TO BE INCORPORATED INTO VĒDĀNTA? (5)

In very ancient days, the Upaniṣhads were the spoken words of universally accepted Sages. They were clear statements, most of them bold assertions regarding the ultimate Truth, as experienced by each of them.

In course of time, the blind and implicit faith of people disappeared; and different schools sprang up, questioning the assertions of Vēdānta, in the light of reason. It was then that Vēdānta began to use that supra-intellectual organon, called ‘higher reason’, to answer such questions and to establish the position of Vēdānta. This weapon is also logic, but of a purely sublime nature, making reference only to one’s own real being.

24th February 1956

1127. HOW IS TRUTH RELATED TO THE WORLD? (6)

Truth is the text; and the world, senses and mind are the commentaries thereof.

The commentaries always point to the Truth, which is only one, crisp and pointed. But the commentaries are laborious and voluminous, and they approach the Truth from different standpoints. Yet they prove the Truth, each in its own way.

25th February 1956

1128. WHAT AM I? (7)

Am I the body, senses or mind? No. If I claim to be anything, that must be with me wherever I go. Doing, perceiving, thinking and feeling do not go with me wherever I go.

‘Knowing’ alone is always with me. So I am knowingness or Consciousness alone. I am that always, and I am free. I can only be that which remains over, when the object or active part is separated from the perceiver, perception or percept.

4th March 1956

1129. LIFE'S EXPERIENCES – AN ANALYSIS (8)

Life's experiences as a whole can be easily classified into two major groups: (1) activity, and (2) absence of activity. The former comprehends the whole of waking and dream state experiences and the latter comprehends deep sleep experience alone. The former is surcharged with activity and the latter is one's own real nature. The former is activity and the latter is the Reality.

Then a legitimate question might naturally come up: 'Why then does this activity come in?'

Here, activity is used in the generic sense. But the question is itself a particular activity and, as such, it is not competent to question the inactivity, which is generic. An activity cannot exist divested of consciousness. Therefore activity is nothing but Consciousness. Thus, when minutely examined, even the question – as an activity – stands revealed as the Truth itself.

Therefore, activity as such has never been, and Consciousness was always shining in its *own* glory.

6th March 1956

1130. WHAT IS MY POSITION IN RELATION TO KNOWLEDGE? (9)

I have two positions in relation to knowledge:

1. As pure knowledge, and
2. As the knowing knowledge or knower.

The knower is not affected by the known. The knower, divested of the known, is knowledge pure.

prapañcam ēva durbōdham manyē tasyā 'nirūpaṇāt
subōdham brahma satyatvād ātmatvāt svaprakāśanāt

Viṣṇu-purāṇa(?)

28th March 1956

1131. IF CONSCIOUSNESS IS BEYOND OPPOSITES HOW CAN IT BE KNOWN? (10)

How do you know the opposites? Certainly not through the opposites themselves. Can that principle which knows opposites have any opposite? *No*. That is Consciousness, pure.

Consciousness or Happiness is that which never ceases to be. Opposites are always limited by time, and so cease to be. Therefore Consciousness or Happiness is beyond all opposites.

The teacher and the disciple both stand depersonalized when the Truth is expounded by the teacher and understood by the disciple. When you say 'he talked', you emphasize the talking and miss the Truth. So also, when you say you understood, you emphasize the understanding and it becomes mental.

1132. Mr. P.B. asked: WHEN AM I REALLY LIVING? (11)

Answer: I really live only during those moments when I identify myself with the ultimate Truth. At other moments, I was simply living dead.

1133. (P.B. again) WHEN DOES ONE VISUALIZE THE TRUTH? (12)

Answer: When the when is not.

29th March 1956

1134. WHAT HAPPENS IN SAMĀDHI AND HOW TO DIRECT IT TO THE ULTIMATE TRUTH? (13)

In seeking samādhī, you are trying to see the Truth through the absence of all activities, because you do not see the Truth during the activities. But Truth (your *svarūpa*) is not to be found in either the presence or the absence of activities which constitute the mental realm. Therefore, you must go beyond both, to get at the Truth.

The world ties you down by its presence here. The world ties you down by its absence or non-existence in samādhī. You must transcend both, in order to reach the Truth. It is beyond both activity and passivity. It is knowledge knowing everything and knowledge not knowing anything, at the same time. It is simultaneously active and passive; that is, you must transcend both to come to Truth.

You desire samādhī only for the happiness you suppose you derive from it, just as you desire an object for the pleasure you hope to derive from it. *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* advises you to take away the desire from both and you will be in your own centre. But it does not suggest how that desire can be taken away. It can only be done by knowing that the happiness experienced in either case is not the outcome of either the samādhī or the object, but that it is your own real nature and therefore intrinsic in you.

All effort to achieve one's own real nature is meaningless; because it stands already achieved. So the desire for the fruit vanishes, and you stand in the Reality.

1135. WHY DOES THE GURU TEACH AND WHAT? (14)

Because the disciples earnestly and sincerely ask questions. But when the truth is being imparted, the Guru stands as Truth beyond the talk; and the disciple is also pulled up, in spite of him. The disciple may begin by listening to the talk, but he is soon taken beyond the talk. The talk is not itself the Reality, but the Reality is in the talk and is the goal of the talk.

The personal is taken up by the impersonal for discussion, and the language of the personal acts as the medium. But the personal – including the medium – is given up, when the background is visualized.

The question presupposes that the disciple is imperfect and that the teacher is perfect. The teacher shows the disciple that he too is perfect, and there the teaching ends.

1136. WHAT IS THE JNYĀNA PATH TO TRUTH? (15)

It consists of both the traditional path and the direct path. According to the traditional path, a jnyāna sādḥaka, directed by a Jnyānin (*Kāraṇa-guru*), has to pass through four definite stages in regular order:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. 'To know it.' | From the lips of the Guru. |
| 2. 'To enjoy it', | By dint of |
| 3. 'To become it', and | personal |
| 4. 'To be it'. | effort. |

This method is built upon the saṃskāra of duality, so that the teaching lasts even after 'being it.' This trace of duality has yet to be transcended, in order to get to the ultimate Truth.

But according to the direct path to the Truth, non-duality is emphasized at the very start, proving that there is nothing other than knowledge. The saṃskāra of duality immediately disappears. Thus, 'to know it' is 'to be it'; and so there is, practically, only one step to the ultimate Truth.

1137. WHAT IS LIBERATION TO A DEVOTEE? (16)

According to the path of devotion to a personal God, there are four stages to liberation (*mukṭi*), in a regular order of progression.

1. *Sālōkya* (being in the same world as the deity),
2. *Sāmīpya* (being in close proximity with the deity),
3. *Sārūpya* (being of the same form and features as the deity),
4. *Sāyujya* (getting merged in the deity itself).

From the standpoint of Truth, the personal God – as well as the state of *sāyujya* – are only concepts of the devotee's mind. In *sāyujya*, that mind merges in its own concept. It is impossible for the individual mind to come out of that state at will; because the mind, being merged, is deprived of all initiative. Therefore, the state is more or less a well earned and indefinite rest, without any specific experience of misery. Even this state, in the relative realm, has its natural termination; and the devotee is inevitably born again as a man.

1138. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THREE STATES? (17)

1. *The waking state* represents diversity in all its nakedness. 'Realistic' (or materialistic) philosophy is based upon the apparent reality of this state.
2. *The dream state* (mental state) shows that it is all the manyness of the one. The idealistic philosophers base their philosophy upon the relatively greater reality of the mind, as compared with sense objects.
3. *The deep sleep state*: Truth alone is absolute non-duality. Vēdāntins depend upon the experience of deep sleep to expound ultimate Truth, the real nature of Man.

1139. WHAT IS THE REAL SĀDHANA? (18)

The only sādhanā that the higher jnyāna śāstras ask the earnest aspirant to undertake is: ‘Listen, listen, listen, to the words of the Guru; and contemplate nothing.’ This can also be: ‘Say to yourself over and over again what the Guru has told you regarding the Truth, the arguments used, etc.’ It is as good as listening to the Guru himself, over again.

1140. WHY DO ASPIRANTS ADOPT SUCH A VARIETY OF PATHS, ALL CALLED ‘SPIRITUAL’? (19)

It is only very few, among such practitioners, who earnestly desire ultimate liberation. Those few never fail to obtain a *Kāraṇa-guru*, at some stage of their spiritual search; and then they realize the Truth without any further difficulty.

The great majority desire the enjoyment of pleasures, according to their own tastes and temperaments. The most important among them are the *bhaktas*, *mystics*, *idealists*, *nihilists*, etc. They emphasize only certain aspects of the Reality and ignore the other aspects. Therefore, they experience only limited happiness, in varying degrees.

Bhaktas emphasize the *ānanda* aspect, subordinating existence and reason. *Mystics* emphasize the *sat* and *ānanda* aspects, subordinating reason. *Idealists* emphasize only the lower reason or intelligence, subordinating *sat* and *ānanda*. The *nihilists* (*kṣhaṇika-vijnyāna-vādis*) – standing as idealists and using intellect alone – go a bit further, but get stranded in nothingness or ‘*śūnya*’.

But *jnyānins* – adopting *cit* as the higher reason, without subordinating either *sat* or *ānanda* – prove that *sat* and *ānanda* in their true nature are *cit* itself. The *jnyānins* thereby stand established in the ultimate Truth.

1141. FALLACY OF THE DEFINITION OF ‘TIME’ AS THE PLURALITY OF EXPERIENCES. (20)

Question: Some Philosophers have tried to define time as the ‘plurality of experiences, each complete in itself’. Can this be accepted?

Answer: No. There is a confusion of thought here. The word plurality itself presupposes time. So the definition begs the question itself.

14th July 1956

1142. WHAT IS REALIZATION? (21)

Seeing things in the right perspective.

And how to achieve it?

Know yourself first.

15th July 1956

1143. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF RITES TO THE DEPARTED? (22)

From the ultimate standpoint, the problem does not arise. At that level, there is neither the departed, nor any rites for them.

But on the phenomenal or dual level, there is relative significance and relative truth in such rites. The dual plane is dominated by the mind. The mind, by its very nature, cannot exist without a support, gross or subtle. Therefore, it is believed that the mind, immediately it leaves one body, takes possession of another.

Thus the yōgin's mind, by dint of exercise, takes possession of the body set as his ideal in meditation. The jnyāna-yōgin's mind does not take possession of a body as the ordinary yōgin does, but is merged and lost in the ātmic principle or the ultimate Truth.

The departed spirit or '*pitṛi*', as it is called in Hindu religion, is only a thought-form of the departed soul, possessed of all the samskāras it had when it was alive. The purpose of all rites and ceremonials directed to the *pitṛis* is only to destroy those samskāras and set the *pitṛi* relatively free. This can be done in two ways.

The first and the highest is to know by the knowledge of the ultimate Truth that the very concept of the '*pitṛi*' is an illusion. Thus, if the son of the departed one is a jīvan-mukta, his very thought and the strength of his conviction – that he is the ultimate Truth – relieves the thought-form called '*pitṛi*' of all the bondage of its samskāras.

The next process is the performance of elaborate ceremonials, like *Tila-havana*, by which one convinces oneself that the *pitṛis* have been amply propitiated, as enjoined by the shāstras [scriptures]. An intellectual satisfaction arises out of this conviction, which gives one some peace of mind. This method is the one adopted by the very great majority.

19th July 1956

1144. SOME STATEMENTS OF FERRIER AND SOCRATES EXAMINED (23)

Ferrier, the French philosopher, has said: 'Apprehension of the perception of matter is the subject of metaphysics.' But I say: 'It is not the subject, but only the beginning of metaphysics.'

Socrates says: 'Don't go after the "beautiful", but go after "beauty", and you shall be free.' Higher religion also says: 'Don't be satisfied with being virtuous, but be virtue itself.' The statements are right, but how to achieve the goal is the problem. Both are silent on that point. The statements demand a separation of the material parts or appendages from the beautiful or virtuous. This is never possible unless one has transcended the mental plane oneself. Therefore the statements are not of much practical help to an aspirant and do not enable him to visualize the Truth. But after visualizing it with the help of the Guru, one may make use of these statements to get established in the Ultimate.

Divested of their material parts or appendages, beauty and virtue no longer stand separate, but stand as that which was the common background of both the beautiful and the virtuous.

1145. EFFICACY OF MORAL LAWS (24)

All codes of ethics and morality, if strictly followed, make you come nearer to the Truth. All such laws demand, to some extent, the sacrifice of lower self. The ultimate goal of all such laws is certainly selflessness. But unfortunately, ethics and morality – being objective in the strict sense – cannot take one to absolute selflessness.

Absolute selflessness is Truth itself, the ultimate subject. It can be visualized only with the help of a Kāraṇa-guru. All thoughts of striving for and recognizing selflessness are in the mental realm. Pure selflessness dawns only when one transcends the mind and stands as Ātmā, the real Self.

1146. WHY THE SIDDHIS OR POWERS? (25)

They are quite illusory, in relation to the ultimate Truth.

Truth is Truth, at all times and under all conditions and in all states. That which leads you to the Truth should also have some of its characteristics, such as permanence and self-luminosity.

Siddhis, acquired by dint of exercise, do not last for more than a limited number of years (usually twelve years). Even when one professes to possess them, one does so only in the waking state, which is only one third of one's whole life. One does not possess any of the siddhis in one's dream and deep sleep states. Therefore siddhis are impermanent, and depend upon the body and mind for their very existence – even during the limited time they seem to exist.

It is the exhibition of such siddhis (called miracles) that are often cited to prove the spiritual greatness of even founders of religions. Such and much greater and deeper siddhis are possessed, and sometimes exhibited, even by the commonplace yōgins of India. But such yōgins and their siddhis are shunned and detested by all Sages and all real aspirants to Truth. All men of real experience and all the higher śāstras, directing attention to the ultimate Truth, have declared unequivocally that siddhis or powers are the greatest obstacle to realization of Truth. Therefore avoid siddhis at all cost, if you aspire to the Truth.

viṭa-saṁsargavat siddha-saṁsargaṁ mōha-varddhakam ...

(?)

Sages also possess infinite siddhis even without their knowing it; not as a result of exercise, but as a result of the knowledge of the ultimate Truth. But they use these powers with the greatest restraint; nor do their powers ever fade away from them like the yōgin's siddhis, by lapse of time or by constant use (even if they do so).

1147. EXAMINATION OF AN OBJECT BY THE SCIENTIST AND THE VĒDĀNTIN. (26)

A scientist examines an object to find out its material composition alone, and that too only in the waking state. His process is objective and involves the purely physical or mental effort.

But the vĕdāntin examines an object to find out its svarūpa – that which does not change throughout all the three states which constitute the totality of man's experience. Here, dream has to be conceived in a sense more comprehensive than usual. Whatever is purely mental, or everything that is past, may be said to belong to the dream state. Evidently, the states are created in order to enable man to examine a thing subjectively or objectively, in the right perspective, and to discover the Truth behind it. The states are thus the key to the Reality, as expounded by Vĕdānta.

A so called gross object is constituted of Consciousness, thought-form and grossness. Of these, the grossness disappears when the enquirer gives up the waking state; the thought-form disappears when he gives up the dream state (mental state); and in

the deep sleep state, Consciousness alone remains over. But Consciousness was present in the other two states as well. Therefore, viewed from that standpoint, Consciousness is the substance of every object.

1148. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF EVERY QUESTION? (27)

The usual question asked is: ‘What is the truth of this object?’ What is sought is the ‘Truth’, which can never be bound by any object. Truth being imperceptible to the senses, the perceptible object is made use of, to find the ultimate Truth.

The process adopted [in the direct method] is an attempt to eliminate the material parts from the particular object. When they are thus separated, the Truth – which was the background of all that was separated – shines by itself, being self-luminous.

Therefore, whether you search for Truth through the individual subject or through a particular object, it is the ultimate Truth that is experienced as the result. It is the right perspective alone that has to be obtained from a Kāraṇa-guru.

1149. CAUSALITY IS A MISNOMER (28)

The thief comes in surreptitiously, whenever you ask a question applying the principle of causal relationship.

Causality is the product of the waking state. Nay, it is the waking state itself. It can never be successfully answered from the waking state, where alone the law of causality obtains. To answer the question, one must get beyond the waking state, to the dream or mental state. Then causality and the question both disappear, as mere illusion. One who raises such a question is pinned to the waking state.

It may pertinently be asked, is there not causality in the dream state? *No*. Certainly not. Because, what we call the dream state is a full-fledged waking state when it is experienced, and it is called a dream state only when it is past. Then causality, which appeared quite reasonable when the so called dream was in progress, becomes unreal. This amounts to admitting that causality is not real in the dream state.

There is no connection between objects themselves in the waking state. Causality is only an object, just like any other object; and the senses also are only objects, just like others. Therefore you cannot establish causal relationship, between any two objects of the waking state.

27th July 1956

1150. LIFE AND DEATH (29)

Man is afraid of death. Who says this? Is it life? Or is it death?

Certainly death cannot say this. Because it is lifeless. Then will life say so? *No*. Because life can never be out of life, and so it can never comprehend death. Then can it be the dead inert matter (body) that says so? *No*. Because it is already dead, and it cannot speak.

There is none else present to say so. Therefore either it has never been said, or it can never be seriously said, by anyone. Hence death is not, or death is a myth.

1151. HOW IS THE DREAM STATE NEARER THE TRUTH THAN THE WAKING STATE?
(30)

The waking subject holds that sense perception is the highest test of Truth. From this position, it denounces dream objects as unreal, as they are not perceptible to the waking physical senses.

In the waking state – dominated as it is by the triad or tripuṭī – the perceiver, perception and the percept are so clearly distinct and separate that it is very difficult to find anything common between them.

But as far as the dream state is concerned, there is a great difference. As soon as the dream is past, one can see clearly that the subject and the object series – appearing in that state – are both creations of the same mind, and therefore one in essence. So there is this much of non-duality in dream. To that extent, the dream is nearer the Truth.

Therefore, the clear diversity of the waking state is first examined from the lesser diversity of the dream state, and the waking state is found to be nothing other than an idea.

28th July 1956

1152. (Miss T. asked) FROM WHAT STANDPOINT AND HOW AM I TO EXAMINE AN OBJECT? (31)

Answer: For the time being, take it that you do it from the waking state. But you have heard the Truth from the Guru and know that you are not the body, senses or mind.

Examining gross objects from the waking state, you find, first of all, that objects are nothing but percepts. You can only compare the qualities of one object with those of another in the same state, or at the most refer to causality which is only another object obtaining in the waking state. This sort of comparison does not give you any satisfactory solution, about the Truth of percepts.

Thus puzzled by your vain efforts, you begin to think deeply about it. Immediately, but unknowingly, you change your own stand and become a psychological being (in the dream state). Sensual objects vanish; and so you find that gross objects, as such, are unreal. But instead, you find that the thought-forms or ideas are the Truth of all that you perceive.

This also does not satisfy you for long; because ideas also seem impermanent, as they keep on appearing and disappearing. Therefore you begin to examine ideas, in their turn. The moment you take to this, you again unknowingly change your stand to the deep sleep state, represented by awareness as the higher reason. Examining ideas accordingly, you find that they cannot exist without Consciousness and so are Consciousness itself, which is your real nature. Therefore every object is nothing but consciousness.

Causality as a law has the advantage of taking you from diversity to unity, but not beyond. Even that unity still remains only as an expanded object, and so it does not take you beyond the waking state. Causality depends upon precedence and succession, for its very existence. In other words, time is the parent of causality. But on closer examination, we find that time depends upon thought for its existence and thought depends upon time for its existence. Therefore they cancel out each other, and so time is not. Therefore causality is also not.

An honest examination of the Truth of any object is possible only when you take that object as representative of the state to which it belongs; and then you stand as the witness of that state.

The mind is the witness of gross objects. Therefore, you have to examine every gross object from the mental (dream) state. Then the grossness of the object (space-element) vanishes; and it appears as nothing more than an idea (thought-form), having existence only when the idea appears. It is a generalization of this experience that is expressed as the law that '*Objects do not exist when not known.*' This fact is the beginning of the v̥dāntic perspective (viṣayaṇṇalkk~ ajñāta sattayilla).

This is only a partial Truth. The idea has again to be examined from the still higher plane of Consciousness (deep sleep). Then you find that the object or the idea does not exist as such, even when known; but it is only pure Consciousness, through all the three states. This is the ultimate Truth, according to Advaita.

30th July 1956

1153. WHAT IS LIBERATION AND BONDAGE? (32)

The certitude that you are that changeless, self-luminous principle is *liberation*; and the conviction that you are bound is *bondage*. It comes in accordance with the general saying that you become what you deeply think yourself to be.

bhaviccapōlē bhaviccīṭuṁ nirṇayaṁ
[It's as one thinks that one becomes, essentially.]

Eruttacchan.

The moment you hear the Truth from the lips of the Guru, you transcend your body, senses and mind, and visualize the ultimate Truth, your real nature. Nevertheless, you find yourself again at the feet of the physical Guru, the embodiment of ultimate Truth. But your lower saṁskāras return, and seem to possess you.

Since you had been instructed in the direct perception method, your realization of the Truth – on your first listening to the words of the Guru – was complete. Neither *asambhāvana* [incomprehension, sense of nothingness] nor *viparīta-bhāvana* [misconception, sense of difference] can haunt you ever again. Whenever your old saṁskāras of body, senses and mind seem to take possession of you, you have only to take a deep thought of your real nature as already visualized by you, in the light of the arguments then advanced or fresh arguments as they occur to you.

When you have done this over and over again, the old saṁskāras of the lower self will become emaciated and die. It is then that you may be said to have established yourself in your real nature; and the shadow of your old saṁskāras, if at all they appear, will do so only in obedience to your sweet pleasure.

1154. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO GET ESTABLISHED? (33)

The best and the easiest method to attain that glorious goal of establishment in the Truth is to listen to the Guru over and over again.

But if such frequent personal contact with the Guru is not possible, the next best alternative is to take, as often as possible, a deep thought of the Truth as first visualized in the presence of the Guru. This brings you into the climate of the Truth every time, and you experience it afresh.

When the samskāras of your real nature become strong enough to subdue the old ones by their very presence, you have no further sādhana to do. Desires can no more tempt you away from the Truth, and questions can no more disturb you. Because you always rest all alone in your own glory; and even when your body, senses and mind are functioning, you know (without knowing) in your heart of hearts that your real centre is never shaken.

You can face the death of the body with as much ease and complacency as you used to witness a pleasant ceremony in life. You may give vent to your feelings and emotions as vehemently as any ignorant lady; but you will be able to stop your feelings surprisingly suddenly and engage yourself equally naturally in any other activity of life, like an adept actor on the stage. If ever your attention is drawn to your real nature – by any word or hint from the outside – the activities of the body, senses and mind all vanish like a dream, and you remain in Peace at the inmost core of your being.

1st August 1956

1155. WHO? (34)

The question ‘who’ is the samskāra of the waking state. When closely examined, we find no ‘who’ even in the waking state perceptions. Examine the tripuṭī [the triad of doer, doing and deed, or knower, knowing and known].

jñēya vastukkaḷ vērpetṭāl jñānam onna vaśiṣṭamām,
jñātr svarūpam atu tān; śūnyam allatorikkalum

[If objects that are to be known
are clearly separated out,
one knowing consciousness remains.
That is the knower, in its own
true nature, as it always is.
It never can be emptiness.]

Bhāṣha Pancadashi, Pancakōsha-vivēka, 23 (Malayalam translation)

There is no agent ‘who’, behind the tripuṭī. The knower is knowledge itself. So activities go on without an agent. The agent comes in after the incident, as an impostor.

ninav ill onnu ceyyumbōl
tan ceyyunn enn oruttanum
vyaktam āṇ atinālum tān
karttāv all enna vāstavam

At the time a thing is being done, there is no thought or feeling
that one is doing it. This is further proof that one is not a doer.

Ātma-darshan, 9.4

It is admitted that there is seeing and that there is an object, but not a separate see-er. Nobody experiences a see-er, at any point of time. In this prakriyā, only duality is taken into account and not the triad. It is the impersonal principle in the seeing (Consciousness) that examines the object.

It is mind seeing.
It isprinciple consciousnessmind.

Therefore it is the same impersonal principle that knows your body, senses and mind. The personal principle is not present in any activity.

The ego is a child born of no mother. The ego is a bachelor who dreams that he married the body and senses. You are always groaning under his weight.

2nd August 1956

1156. WAKING AND DREAM STATES DISTINGUISHED (35)

When you perceive an object outside, you are in the waking state. When you find that your perception had been a dream, you have come out of that state. Thus when you see that grossness is a dream, you get out of the waking state.

1157. INDIVIDUALITY (36)

Individuality is the impersonal principle, standing as the background of the changing body, senses and mind and also lighting them up.

But this word is grossly misunderstood and misapplied. It cannot be denied that individuality is changeless. A changing personality can never be the changeless individuality.

The urge for individuality comes from deep below. It comes from the changeless Ātmā behind. Ātmā is the only changeless reality; and individuality, if you want to use the term, is Ātmā itself.

3rd August 1956

1158. FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT (37)

There is no perception either in deep ignorance or in pure Consciousness, either in darkness or in dazzling light. In dim light alone, objects seem to appear. But do you really perceive the object? *No*.

1159. CONSCIOUSNESS ALONE, PERCEIVED OBJECTIVELY AS WELL AS SUBJECTIVELY (38)

1. Light by itself is not perceptible to the naked eye. You perceive light only when it is temporarily obstructed by an object. This perception of light you wrongly call the object. This is a phenomenon usually misunderstood; and the fallacy is, on the face of it, obvious.

Similarly, pure Consciousness is not perceivable, as is evident in deep sleep. But when it is confined or limited to a particular object, it seems to become perceptible. Even then, it is not the object but it is Consciousness alone that is perceived. Therefore, nobody has ever seen or perceived an object, but only light or Consciousness.

2. Take hold of an object. You find the object cannot appear without the help of Consciousness. Take hold of Consciousness that is in the object. This is possible only with the help of a Guru. Then you reach pure Consciousness objectively. Take hold of Consciousness in the senses or mind in the same manner and you reach pure Consciousness, your real nature, subjectively. Both being one, you stand in *advaita*.

If you achieve that degree of identification with the light of knowledge as you had with body in the waking state, there is nothing more to be achieved. Then the impersonal becomes stronger than the personal. The sādḥaka [aspirant] who stands as the personal does the sādḥana [spiritual work] of acting the part of the impersonal.

‘*I know I am.*’ In this, the ‘am’-ness does not belong either to the senses or to the mind. This is intrinsic. This is the nature of self-luminosity.

7th August 1956

1160. MENTAL RECOGNITION OF TRUTH (39)

The ordinary aspirant naturally desires to visualize and stand established in the ultimate Truth, and also to know and feel that he does so. But when he visualizes the Truth, he understands that it is never possible to know or feel it.

It will take time for the saṃskāra of that desire to leave him completely. Therefore, every time that saṃskāra comes up, he has only to direct his attention to the Truth visualized and the saṃskāra will vanish for the time being. When this is repeated, the saṃskāra will die a natural death.

If you say that you stand established in the Truth, you are wrong. It is also wrong to say that you have not established yourself in Truth. In either case it is mental recognition that is sought. Truth can never be recognized by the mind.

In the course of a discourse with Paṇḍit Panniśṣēri Nāṇu Piḷḷa, Gurunāthan is said to have established by argument that everything that appears is mental and that *advaita* (Ātmā) is the ultimate Truth. At this point, the paṇḍit is reported to have interrupted: ‘Then who is it that speaks?’ Straightaway came the answer from Gurunāthan, ‘Brahman.’ The shrewd paṇḍit knew he was cornered, and did not dare to ask any more questions. But what was the significance of that reply?

Speaking consists of two distinct parts or components in it: the material part composed of sound, words and meaning; and the other part, Consciousness, which is alive. The former depends upon the latter for its very existence; and so the latter, Consciousness or brahman, is the svarūpa [true nature] of speaking. Therefore, the reply directs you to emphasize that self-luminous principle in speaking, which alone makes speaking speaking.

1161. SEE THE IMPERSONAL IN AND BEHIND THE PERSONAL. (40)

The personal can never know either the impersonal or even the personal. It is the impersonal, standing behind the personal, that enables it to know anything, even in the ordinary sense. Try to see that impersonal, even in the personal, and that will resolve all phenomenal problems. If the ego dies and still the speech continues, what speaks? Certainly the self-luminous Self, not the ego.

When you hear a sentence, what is it that connects the words which are already past? Only the Self. Therefore, see that Self through words, speech, act, etc. This exercise alone will in due course establish you in the ultimate Truth, the real Self

1162. WHAT IS THE TEST OF PROGRESS? (41)

1. If you feel pleasure in talking, discussing, singing or thinking about the ultimate Truth as often as possible, you may rest assured that you are progressing in the right direction.
2. If, when left alone or when retired to rest, the thought that spontaneously comes to your mind is about the ultimate Reality or your Guru, again you are well on the way of progress.
3. Usually, pleasure is enjoyed at the end of a thought. But if that pleasure begins to appear uncaused, even during the thought about the ultimate Truth, you are indeed fortunate and are in Truth already.

You go wrong when you bring in gender when speaking of the Truth. The words 'jīvan-mukta', 'Jnyānin' etc. are masculine. But you have no gender, as is clear from deep sleep. Not that you are neuter, but that you are beyond gender. Therefore, you are pure Jnyāna or Truth itself.

9th August 1956

1163. HOW TO NEGATE OBJECTS AND ARRIVE AT THE TRUTH? (42)

The world of body, senses and mind and their corresponding objects may be viewed from two standpoints:

1. As being constituted of the presence and the absence of objects, gross or subtle; and
2. As being constituted of the ultimate subject and a variety of objects.

It has already been proved that one's real nature is pure Consciousness and Peace. Looking at the world from the first standpoint, the presence as well as the absence of objects have to be proved to be non-existent. This has to be done successively from all the three states, reducing the gross object first to a mentation and then the mentation to pure Consciousness. This process does not establish that the world is not, but rather that the world is nothing but your own real nature, Consciousness.

Viewing the world from the second standpoint, when everything objective (whether gross or subtle) is disposed of as unreal, that principle – the real Self – which disposed of everything else, remains over as the sole survivor. Even the mind being already disposed of, this survivor stands above in all its glory as pure Consciousness, the real Self.

1164. WHAT IS THE PROOF OF CONSCIOUSNESS? (43)

That very question is the proof. That question is lit up by Consciousness.

The outer light, lighting up objects outside, and the inner light of Consciousness have something in common in their characteristics. Both are imperceptible to the sense organ or the mind. The existence of the outer light is affirmed by the fact that objects are manifested in its presence. Similarly, the light of Consciousness is proved by the fact that objects are lit up (or known) in its presence.

1165. HOW TO DISTINGUISH MONISM FROM ADVAITA? (44)

There is a fundamental difference between the two.

Monism, meaning ‘unity’, is only a concept, with a definite trace of the mind in it. Its purpose is to destroy diversity, and not to find out the ultimate Truth.

Advaita or non-duality negates even the mind as unreal, and remains over as its background. This principle is therefore beyond the mind; and it is self-luminous, there being nothing else to light it up.

1166. WHAT IS ADVAITA (NON-DUALITY)? (45)

Ātmā, the ultimate Truth established by Advaita, is the only thing that *is*. Everything else is only an appearance on it.

Truth is imperceptible, and the ordinary man knows only his perceptions. Advaita is a method of leading the ignorant man from the percept (object) to the ultimate Truth. Advaita refers to duality (or two). This ‘two’ is very often misunderstood to be the numerical two. But no, this ‘two’ stands for the basic ‘two’, viz. the subject and the object, or the perceiver and the perceived – the father of the many.

Your recognition of this basic two is otherwise called the basic error. Removal of this error and the re-establishment of the ultimate Truth is the purpose of Advaita (Non-duality).

onnāyaninneyiha raṇṭennu kaṇṭaḷavil
uṇṭāyoriṇṭal bata miṇṭāvatalla mama
paṇṭēkkaṇakkevaruvān nin kṛpāvalikaḷ
uṇṭākayenkal iha nārāyaṇāya namaḥ

[When what has always stood as one
is seen as two, there comes to me
a sad frustration and regret,
which can’t be rightly spoken of.
To bring about the true, original
account, Lord may Your kindness
rain on me that worships You.]

Eruttacchan, Harināma-kīrttanam, 2

The quotation points to you – as Happiness, in the retreat into deep sleep every day. This process [of removing error] is easy enough. Infinite diversity can easily be reduced to the basic duality of subject and object. Applying the tests of Truth – namely changelessness and self-luminosity – to the subject and object, they are easily disposed of as mere appearance and unreal. But when the appearance is so disposed of, the common background which is pure Consciousness remains over and responds to all the tests of Truth. Therefore it is that Truth itself which appears as the diverse world.

The positive always has a taint of the mind in it. When the world is negated as unreal, it does not mean that the Truth is positive. Positive is also a relative term, within the realm of the mind. Truth is beyond both positive and negative, and is the background of both. But the term ‘positive’ is first utilized as a means to eliminate from you all that is negative. When everything negative is thus disposed of, what remains over as the supposed ‘positive’ no longer appears positive. Its relativity being lost, it

stands in its own glory as the ultimate Truth. Therefore, the Ultimate is pointed to in a negative manner, as non-duality.

1167. WHAT IS LIFE? (46)

In appearance, life is limited. But in reality, life is unlimited Truth. How? I know *I am*, and I say everything *is*. This is no inference, but the clearest of experience.

This 'am'-ness' or 'is'-ness is the ultimate Truth, the source of all life. Because we see that even dead matter *is*. We are sure there is no life in dead matter. Therefore we see that 'am'-ness' or 'is'-ness goes even beyond life and death, and lights up both.

It is from this 'is'-ness that all life flows.

1168. THERE IS NEITHER GIVING NOR TAKING IN LOVE. (47)

'Love' means becoming one with the object of your love. When both are one, there is no one to give and no one to take. It is only in loose language or in degraded love that such transactions take place, where the personal identities are not lost.

Real love is advaita, and nothing else exists beside it. If love can be said to give anything, it is love alone and that in fullness, leaving no trace of itself behind to claim to have done so. In taking also, you surrender the whole of your personality to the object of your love. In either case the doer dies, leaving behind Love supreme.

1169. YOU MUST GIVE UP FREEDOM IN ORDER TO BE REALLY FREE. (48)

Freedom is ignorantly attributed to body, senses and mind, though all the three are by nature bound. Most human endeavours are calculated to perform this miracle of freeing the ever-bound, and so they end in failure.

The urge for freedom is real and comes from beyond the mind. It is wrong to apply it to the mind, or to things lower still. What is needed is freedom from the traditional limiting agencies, namely time and space. Such freedom is the characteristic of Ātmā, the ultimate Reality, alone. This is one's own real nature, and it is from there that the urge comes.

Body, senses and mind being never-free, and the real 'I'-principle being ever-free, the only way to attain freedom is to identify oneself with that real Self within. This means surrender of attachment to body, senses and mind. In other words, you must give up the desire for the freedom of body, senses and mind, if you want to attain freedom of the Self.

1170. HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH THROUGH LANGUAGE? (49)

Ultimate Truth is beyond the mind and is imperceptible. Therefore Truth can only be pointed at from the phenomenal, with the help of certain words that have to be understood as *lakṣhaṇas* or pointers to the Truth. These words, however subtle in their concept, are still subject to certain limitations by time and space, imposed upon them by the mind.

Therefore, in understanding the ultimate through *lakṣhaṇas*, you have to relinquish with great care the material vesture imposed upon them by the mind, and then direct your attention to that which still remains over as the background of the *lakṣhaṇas*.

That background is nothing but the 'is'-ness standing as the common background of all objects.

Sat, *cit* and *ānanda* are such lakṣhaṇas and have to be understood to mean nothing but this ultimate 'is'. The ultimate 'is' takes one much nearer the Truth than any other word, because the 'is' has much less of the mind in it than the others, and it gives a much more correct import of the Truth. 'That which is' comes from the ultimate 'is', and therefore the 'is' is nearer the Truth than that which is.

This is called *bhāga-tyāga-lakṣhaṇa* or *jagadahat-lakṣhaṇa*. (See note 353)

11th August 1956

1171. 'WATER DOES NOT FLOW.' WHAT DOES IT MEAN? (50)

No one can deny that one can make a statement only about something one has already known, and that the knower is distinct and separate from the known.

While examining any statement, brief or elaborate, it has to be taken as a single unit in itself and you are not entitled to split it into parts. If you do so, each part becomes a fresh statement which has to be considered independently and separately.

The question can be approached from different standpoints. Take for example an ordinary statement: 'I am walking.' Let us view it from different standpoints.

1. I must certainly have known the fact before the statement was made. Therefore as knower, I was behind the statement and separate from it (the known). Thus, in every statement of mine, I stand behind the statement knowing it – the statement always being the object and myself, though in it, not concerned with it in the least. 'Water does not flow' is only an illustration to prove this truth. When I say 'I act', I am behind that statement knowing it. Again, when I say 'I think', or again when I say 'I know the thought', I am behind each of those statements, quite unconnected with the statements themselves.
2. When I say 'I am walking', I make you understand thereby that I am the walker. But just think, am I really the walker? *No*. If I am, I can be nothing else. But, the next moment, I seem to be the thinker or feeler. Therefore, I can be none of these. But it also cannot be denied that I was in the walking. Therefore it has to be understood, that I was in the walking, not as the walker but as myself, unconcerned with the activity, just as water *is* in 'flowing-ness' as well as in stagnancy.

1172. WHAT IS SLEEP? (51)

According to grammar, the verb 'is' and its variants are considered verbs of incomplete predication and so do not denote any particular action. All other verbs always denote action. We usually say, 'I sleep.' What does it really mean? Sleep is used as a verb and must denote some action. But do I sleep? Is there any action in sleeping? *No*. Sleep is neither an action nor non-action. There is no ego in sleeping, and there can never be a sleeper. Therefore nobody sleeps, and sleep is *not*.

1173. WHAT IS THOUGHT? (52)

Thought is an attempt at connecting the past and the present, by bringing the past to the present. But the past, being past, can never be brought to the present. Therefore

thought is impossible. The past and the future depend upon the present for their very existence; and the present, on strict examination, disappears altogether. Therefore time is *not*.

Whatever is present is only Consciousness. Past was present once and so the same in content, viz. Consciousness. Every point of thinking is only Consciousness. What then are you going to connect and with what? Therefore thought is a misnomer.

1174. WHAT IS THE WORLD? (53)

The Absolute, wrongly supposed to be time, space and causality, is the manifested world.

The three states exist here, not for nothing. Take them all together, as an integral whole and not separately. Between themselves, they explain each other. The waking and dream states also explain each other. Deep sleep explains the other two. So the three states are intended to enlighten you, about your real nature. A unanimous affirmation from all the three states, and particularly from the deep sleep state, is the only criterion for the reality of a thing.

1175. REALIZATION AND ESTABLISHMENT (54)

When you listen to the Truth from the lips of the Guru you *realize* that very moment. When you allow that conviction to go deep into your very being and when you make it your own, you stand established in it.

13th August 1956

1176. LIMITATION OF ARGUMENTS TO GET AT THE TRUTH (55)

Of course the Guru makes use of certain arguments to extricate the attention of the disciple from the obstacles, and to direct it to the Truth behind. Here the arguments do not work by themselves. They are supported by a mysterious something which emanates from the Guru and thus accompanies them. That is *love*. That is *light*. In its presence, the arguments penetrate so deep that they do not leave a trace of the obstacles behind.

Immediately, you visualize the Truth; and you are asked to cling on to that Truth already visualized. You are expected to cling on to the Truth spontaneously, without the help of any argument, if possible. In that attempt, if you find the obstacles still getting the better of you, of course you have to seek the help of arguments. In that case, it is always better to take recourse to fresh arguments of your own, so that you may avoid the possibility of ever becoming subservient to them. If fresh arguments do not come up, the only alternative is to adduce the old arguments themselves, keeping in mind that the arguments are there only for the purpose of removing stubborn obstacles which block the way to the Truth.

When one is thus established in the Truth, arguments are of no more service. Still you may see a Sage, well-established in the Truth, sometimes expatiating upon such arguments. It is a sweet recreation and a delight for him.

vidyayumāyī vinōdicciripporu vidyōtamānamātmānārī

Eruttacchan, Addhyātma-rāmāyaṇam

1177. GURU DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP (56)

The disciples, from their own standpoint, have a Guru. But the Guru, from his own standpoint, has no disciples. He is beyond duality and unity.

14th August 1956

1178. CAN A SAINT, THROUGH LOVE ALONE, REACH THE ULTIMATE TRUTH? (57)

No. The devotee or the saint knows only objective or limited love. The saint might have risen to the state of universality. Still, it is only a concept and objective in character. He is entangled in his own creed. He begins to believe that his creed is the only means to ‘salvation’ – a term which he does not himself clearly understand. Therefore he tries to spread his creed as widely as possible.

An over-enthusiasm in this direction often makes fanatics of most of them. It is true that they start with love for their personal deity or their creed. But when fanaticism begins to set in, they begin to fall from the ladder of progress. Their egos get hardened and perverted, and they refuse to listen to reason. Their progress to the Truth is thus lamentably blocked. But an exceptional few among them, in whom an adherence to reason persists, succeed in getting a Kāraṇa-guru and attain liberation.

1179. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HEAD AND THE HEART (58)

The head and the heart are not water-tight compartments. They complement each other. It may be said that ‘It is a harmonious blending of the head and the heart in the ultimate Truth that is called realization.’ It may generally be said that one gets enlightened through the head, and gets established in the Truth through the heart. A thought, when it is deep, becomes feeling or in other words descends into the heart.

Deep knowledge or objectless knowledge is ‘Love’. Love always gives and never takes.

If only the giving is spontaneous and prompted by the heart alone, it is efficacious and divine. The slightest taint of the ego in the giving pollutes it to that extent.

If you follow the path of love, until love is its own fulfilment, you reach the highest. But an ignorant aspirant can never complete it unaided. The help of a Kāraṇa-guru is absolutely necessary, at least towards the end. The instance of Shrī Caitanya is an example of this.

1180. JNYĀNA SĀDHAKAS SOMETIMES THINK ALOUD. WHY? (59)

When you follow the path of Advaita, you may, at an advanced stage, experience a spontaneous exuberance of knowledge or love overflowing from you freely. On such occasions, you may be found talking, even unasked, to those around you about the advaitic Truth. This may be said from your own standpoint to be simply ‘thinking aloud’, because you are not doing it with any intention to convince others or to convert them. Really, there is no doer or ego behind it. It is only your own real nature of advaita, not being able to contain itself within you, bubbling out through your mind and the vocal organ. This only shows that you are getting established, more and more firmly, in the advaitic Truth.

1181. SAGE, SAINT AND MYSTIC DISTINGUISHED (60)

Sage, saint and mystic or yōgin follow three different paths.

He is the *Sage*, who starting as the seeker after the ultimate Truth, follows the jnyāna path under the guidance of a Kāraṇa-guru, and proceeds straight to his goal; examining his experiences in all the three states in the light of changelessness and self-luminosity, and disposing of all such as are found wanting. Thus transcending his own body, senses and mind (the personal), he visualizes his own real nature (the impersonal) and soon gets established in it.

The *saint* is one who follows the path of devotion to a personal god and develops an intense love (though personal) towards him. This love, in course of time, purifies the devotee's heart immensely and makes it sāttvic, though he still cannot transcend the limits of his own personality. His concept of God also develops, until it reaches omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. Here he is stranded, and has sometimes to wait for years to get help from a Kāraṇa-guru to take him beyond (as Shrī Caitanya did). If he is fortunate enough to keep his sense of reason alive, and if he succeeds in keeping himself away from the mire of fanaticism, he will be able to obtain a Kāraṇa-guru and will be liberated.

The *mystic* is a yōgin, who like the saint confines his examinations and his experiences to the waking state alone. The yōgin sets before himself a mental ideal of his own creation (a mere thought-form) and begins to concentrate his mind upon that ideal. During concentration, he gets into a state of blissful ignorance of everything else. It is a state almost akin to deep sleep, and he calls it 'samādhi'. This state is accompanied by a sense of happiness that captivates him; and he thus becomes engrossed and entangled in it. The concentration of mind releases the immense potentialities of the mind, in the form of powers or siddhis. These also, in turn, seduce and entangle him. Thus entangled in a vicious world of his own creation, the yōgin finds it extremely difficult even to aspire for a Kāraṇa-guru, and liberation is lost sight of. But there is a class of mystics who follow the path of rāja-yōga mixed with a course of jnyāna practices chalked out by a Kāraṇa-guru, of course in the cosmological way. They will certainly reach the ultimate Truth, though with some delay. All mystics and siddhas, other than this class of rāja-yōgins, have to be scrupulously avoided and detested as worse than lewd and licentious persons.

viṭa-saṁsargavat siddha-saṁsargaṁ mōha-varddhakam ...

(?)

1182. THE ORIGIN OF SAMĀDHI (61)

The ordinary man perceives only objects and attributes reality to them alone. Though he would admit that there is also consciousness, he is incapable of believing that Consciousness can exist by itself. In order to give such persons an opportunity to perceive pure Consciousness without objects, samādhi was indented upon by Ācāryas of old. Even that samādhi was coloured, inasmuch as it was considered to be objectless.

But the same result, and much more, can easily be achieved by examining the deep sleep state in the right manner.

1183. WHAT IS ĀVARAṆA? (62)

That by which you consider deep sleep to be a state of unconsciousness, while Consciousness reigns in all its purity there, is *āvaraṇa* [obscuring].

1184. REALITY IN THE WAKING STATE (63)

Waking is reality to both the ignorant man and the Sage. But their concept of reality is fundamentally different. To the ignorant man, waking means waking to the gross world; but to the Sage, waking is waking to his own real nature.

1185. WHY DOES A JNYĀNIN TALK ABOUT STATES THAT ARE UNREAL? (64)

A Jnyānin often talks about the three states or the personality, knowing full well that all of them are, as such, unreal. But it is not without a purpose. It is possible to show the Reality only through the so called 'unreal'. They are first examined in order to show that they are the known and that you are the knower. Next it is shown that the known is nothing but the knower itself – Pure Consciousness.

1186. G. asked: CAN IT BE SAID THAT THE ULTIMATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ERRORS? (65)

Answer: If there is error...

Error always has Truth as its background; and so error is strictly no error. Could there be an opposite of error?

15th August 1956

1187. SUBJECT AND OBJECT IN ACTIVITY (66)

In every activity, there is only object and no subject.

Examine any activity. There seem to be two 'I's, functioning simultaneously: the ego or apparent 'I' as the doer, and the 'I'-principle or real 'I' as the knower. The former is ever-changing and the latter is never-changing. Therefore I am always the knower and never the doer. Thus there is no doer or subject, and there is only action without an actor.

The real 'I'-principle is present in all action. You believe that an actor or subject is indispensable for every action; therefore you conclude that the 'I'-principle is acting. Really, the 'I'-principle is not concerned with the acting at all. Thus you are no doer, enjoyer or perceiver, but only the knower.

At every step, the presence of Consciousness is absolutely necessary, in all thoughts, feelings and sensations. This Consciousness is unconcerned with the object or the activity.

For further corroboration, you may examine the deep sleep state. You had no thinking, feeling, or sensation in the deep sleep state. Therefore the 'I'-principle, as pure Consciousness, alone was there. So this is true of all the three states. Therefore the 'knower Consciousness' should rightly be called 'non-doer Consciousness'. Hence, if you say you are sleeping, it means you are not sleeping; and if you say you are doing, it means you are not doing.

16th August 1956

1188. Madam G: HOW TO GIVE UP BODY, SENSES AND MIND? (67)

It is called 'renunciation'. Renunciation is of two kinds. The yōgin's and the jnyānin's.

1. The yōgin's renunciation consists of taking the mind away from body and senses. This takes one only to a blank state and not further.
2. The jnyānin's renunciation is *understanding* that he is the light or Consciousness on which the body, senses and mind appear, and that even that appearance does not exist when that light is withdrawn. Knowing this Truth, the jnyānin permits the innocent appearance to exist; and he literally *stands under*, in all his glory, as its background.

1189. KNOWLEDGE IN THE THREE STATES (68)

Knowledge without quality is the content of deep sleep.

But in the other two states, quality is clearly perceived. And if the object is taken away from it, the suffix '-er' automatically drops away, leaving the knower as pure knowledge.

1190. WHAT IS MY RELATION TO THOUGHT OR FEELING? (69)

1. You are thought or feeling, devoid of the characteristics of thought or feeling.
2. You are the knower of thought or feeling, when thought or feeling is there.
3. You are pure knowledge or Peace, when there is neither thought nor feeling.

17th August 1956

1191. HOW TO DISPOSE OF ANY OBJECT? (70)

Whenever I want to dispose of any object, my stand is always in the background.

1192. HOW DOES SAT-CIT-ĀNANDA EXPRESS ITSELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE? (71)

Every enquiry you make concerns some object that is believed to exist. In other words the enquiry starts with the 'is'-ness or the *sat* aspect of the Reality. But you don't stop there. Then you want to know it. Here the *cit* aspect comes in. When you know it, you immediately experience a satisfaction or peace which is the *ānanda* aspect of the Reality. Thus *sat-cit-ānanda* is experienced in every activity of life.

1193. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LOGIC OF REINCARNATION OF SOULS? (72)

People say they have had many lives, before the present one. But the truth is that you die with every thought or feeling. So you live many lives even in a short period of time. This is not noticed or perceived by the ordinary man. It is in order to draw his attention to this Truth that the illustration of the broader, and to him more conceivable, chain of life is brought in.

1194. HOW TO LOVE MY MASTER BETTER? (73)

If one feels that he is not able to love his master as he desires, it really means that he still loves his master deeply, but that he is not yet satisfied with the love he gives him. That is all. This dissatisfaction with the depth of one's own love for the master is the nature of true love; and it will never disappear.

1195. PRAṆAVA-YŌGA (74)

Of all paths of yōga, the Praṇava-yōga exercises [of meditation on the mantra 'aum'] take one nearer to the ultimate Truth. But still one has to listen to the Truth, direct from the lips of the Guru, in order to visualize it.

1196. HOW CAN DEEP SLEEP ALLEVIATE MY PAINS OF THE WAKING STATE? (75)

Answer: You get cured of your pain and disease immediately you get into deep sleep; and you begin to suffer again when you come back to the waking state. But if you can bring something from deep sleep to bear upon the waking state, certainly the pain will be relieved in the waking state also.

30th August 1956

1197. WHAT IS 'MAN'? (76)

In order to be a man, one has to indent upon Consciousness; in other words one must know it. Therefore, 'Man is Consciousness.'

Man has three distinct entities or spheres of life.

1. As a physical being,
2. As a mental being, and
3. As a knowing being.

1198. THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS THE WORLD (77)

1. The *scientist* identifies himself with the physical body, and so deals with objects and their relationship with each other.
2. The *yōgin* and the *mystic* identify themselves with the mind, as ideas or ideals which are only subtle objects, and visualize them accordingly.
3. The *vēdāntin* identifies himself with Consciousness, which is his own real nature, and sees everything as Consciousness.

1199. THE TRADITIONAL COURSE OF REALIZATION, INTERPRETED IN THE LIGHT OF THE DIRECT METHOD (78)

The traditional course of realization is through *shruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*. This may cosmologically be termed *shravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. But in the light of the direct method they may be interpreted to mean:

1. *Shruti*: Listening to the words of the Guru, about Truth.
2. *Yukti*: Thinking, with the aid of intellect and reason, over the Truth so expounded.

3. *Anubhava*: Thinking profoundly, in the light of higher reason, about the Truth as one's own real nature – till the Truth descends deep into one's own being, as experience.

According to this method, the ultimate test of realization is whether the higher reason endorses your experience as true. If it does, realization is complete.

31st August 1956

1200. WHAT IS THE WORLD? (79)

We experience only consciousness of objects, gross or subtle. Can you draw a line of demarcation between Consciousness and object, in that experience? *No*. Consciousness can well exist, all alone, without objects. But, objects can never exist without Consciousness. Therefore, all is Consciousness.

1st September 1956

‘If one is deeply convinced of the unreasonableness of all questions, then it is very easy to get established in the Truth.

A thing has never been born of itself and a thing has never been born of anything else...’

Shrī Shankara

If one has risen to the level of seeing that an object is nothing but Consciousness appearing in the form of the object, then in that level: ‘To know is to be.’ But in the waking state, one is in a much lower level, where *tripuṭī* functions and knowing is not taken right up to ‘being’.

1201. THE HIGHER REASON AND ITS FUNCTION (80)

The principle that impartially examines all the three states is called ‘higher reason’ or ‘*vēdāntic* reason’, and during that period it appears to be dynamic. When the examination is over, that principle seems to remain static.

But the truth is that it is changeless. Even when it seemed to be dynamic, it was also static. In other words, it is beyond ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’, though appearing as either even simultaneously. The function of this higher reason is either to annihilate the three states as such or to prove them to be nothing but Consciousness.

2nd September 1956

1202. THE TYPES AND THE ORDER OF DEVOTEES (81)

According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, there are four types of devotees or aspirants.

... ārtō jijñāsur arthā-’rthī jñānī ca bharata-’ṛṣabha ..

Bhagavad-gītā, 7.16

The lowest in the rung of the ladder is *arthā-’rthī* – the one who approaches the personal God for the attainment of worldly wealth and pleasures. When his efforts are crowned with success on some occasions, his attention is gradually attracted to the

person of the God who has been so kind to him, and he desires to know more and more about that God.

During this period of transition, he begins to ignore with indifference his own pleasures as well as objects of pleasure. The devotee at this stage is called a *jijnyāsu* – one who yearns to know more about the truth of God. He continues in this state for some time and his earnestness to realize God and the Truth increases by leaps and bounds.

The delay in the fulfilment of this desire makes him pine for it day and night. This state makes him what is called *ārta* – the ‘miserable’. In this state, in most cases, the aspirant happens to meet a Kāraṇa-guru. Under instructions from him, the aspirant progresses very quickly.

At last he happens to listen to the ultimate Truth from the lips of the Guru. Immediately, he visualizes the Truth and becomes what is called a *jnyānin* in embryo. He continues his efforts for some time more to get established in the Truth already visualized. Thus in due course he becomes a *Jnyānin* at all levels. Such a *Jnyānin*, lord Kṛṣṇa says, is His own *Ātmā*.

... jñānī tv ātmai 'va mē matam .

Bhagavad-gītā, 7.18

1203. HOW TO FACE THE EGO’S QUESTION? (82)

It is the ego that puts all sorts of naughty questions. But alas, the ego dies immediately after every question, and does not remain even to listen to the answer.

‘To whom, then, am I to address the answer?’ asked Gurunāthan once. The ego has shown, by its own conduct, that the question is as frivolous and illusory as himself, and that no reasonable answer can be expected for such unreasonable questions. If an answer can be given, it is only to prove that the question itself is absurd.

If you want to understand anything said by another correctly, you must first correct your own stand in accordance with the level at which the topic is discussed. If the gross is discussed, you should take your stand in the subtle; and if the subtle is discussed, you should stand in knowledge to understand it.

4th September 1956

1204. AUTHORSHIP AND ADVERTISEMENT (83)

Ancient Indian works of merit, particularly spiritual ones, were all *apauruṣhēya* (of undisclosed authorship), for example many of the Upaniṣhads.

Pauruṣhēya, the habit of advertizing the authorship in order to enhance the sale of the book, is a degenerate modern tendency of the inflated ego.

1205. SHRĪ SHANKARA AS HE APPEARED (84)

Shrī Shankara has appeared in his life as a devotee, a yōgin, a mystic, and lastly as a vēdāntin. He appears in his true colours only in the commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* and in his last and independent prakaraṇa works.

The commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtra*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Dashōpaniṣhads* etc. were all theological in approach, intended only to crush the intelligentsia of the land, who

were misguiding and polluting the spiritual life of the country. They could be fought and made to surrender only on their own ground of theology and the shāstras. Therefore Shri Shankara, in the course of his work of destroying the wild and pernicious growths in the religious and spiritual life of India, made capital use of the existing systems of theology and shāstras.

After removing the weeds and preparing the ground, he sowed the seed of Advaita, in his own independent manner, and without relying on any external aids.

Some of the philosophers of the West as well as of the East did not understand what Shankara really stood for. Many of them took him to stand only for the waking state and the waking world. But his last, independent works clearly show that he stood for that permanent, self-luminous principle which is the background of the waking, dream and deep sleep states and their worlds.

1206. PERSPECTIVES CONTRADICTORY (85)

Man moves indiscriminately between the sensuous, mental and conscious planes. An ignorant man holds that he is the body supporting the mind within, and that the mind supports the Ātmā still within. But the spiritual aspirant's position is exactly the opposite. He believes that Ātmā holds the mind and that the mind holds the body. A spiritual aspirant must fix his stand firmly before starting on an enquiry, to make sure that his findings are reasonable and correct. The following verse shows this stand quite clearly.

arkkānalādi veļivokke grahikkum oru
kaṇṇinnu kaṇṇumanamākunna kaṇṇatinu
kaṇṇāyirunna poruḷ tānennuḥaykkumaḷav
ānandamentuhari nārāyaṇāya namaḥ

Eruttacchan, Harināma-kīrtanam, 4

1207. A NEW APPROACH TO EXPLAIN THE APHORISM 'THOU ART THAT.' (86)

'Thou art that' consists of two parts, 'thou' and 'that', the meanings of which have to be clearly understood.

Explaining the meaning of 'thou', you are first told that you are not the body, senses or the mind. Leaving it there, the 'that' is taken up. You know you are there in deep sleep, without a body, senses or mind. That which you are in deep sleep is shown to you to be the meaning and goal of 'that'.

Thus you are quite naturally made to visualize – not merely to understand – what you really are. This is how the aphorism 'Thou art that' is to be understood. The following verses amply illustrate this Truth.

śraddhasva tāta śraddhasva nā 'tra mōham kuruṣva bhōḥ .
jñāna-svarupō bhagavān ātmā tvaṁ prakṛtēḥ paraḥ ..

[Be sure of it, be deeply sure
that you make no confusion here.
You are what knowledge truly is,
just that from which all guidance comes.

That is the self, just what you are,
beyond all nature's functioning.]

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 15.8

appanē kēlka, mōhika vēṇṭā prakṛti-dūraṇ
ātmāvām bhagavān bōdha-rūpan nī tanneyāṇ eṭō

Malayālam translation of above, by Shrī Ātmānanda

yadi dēhaṁ pṛthak-kṛtya citi viśrāmya tiṣṭhasi .
adhunai 'va sukhī śāntō bandha-muktō bhaviṣyasi ..

[If separating body out,
you stand at rest in consciousness,
then here and now you come to peace
and happiness, where you are free
from all restraining ties and bonds.]

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 1.4

1208. ALL INDIRECT PATHS TO THE TRUTH ULTIMATELY COME ROUND TO THE DIRECT PATH. (87)

Innumerable paths have been adopted, from time immemorial, for the attainment of Truth; and Sages who came out that way had also been not few. The path adopted by the majority was cosmological.

Whatever sādhana one might adopt in the beginning, actual visualization is possible only through the direct method represented in the aphorism '*Prajnyānam asmi*' – '*I am consciousness.*'

This aphorism is taken up by the cosmological approaches only at the very last stage, after other aphorisms have been exhausted.

But the direct method is based upon the truth of this vital aphorism, and the aspirant assimilates it even at the initial stage of his sādhana. Therefore, his visualization is complete, the moment he listens to the Truth from the lips of the Guru.

13th September 1956

1209. HOW TO GET ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH SAMĀDHI OR THROUGH PHENOMENAL HAPPINESS? (88)

The three states may well be termed sensuous, mental and conscious states.

Even in the waking state when you suppose you enjoy something, you are not standing separate from Happiness, but as that Happiness itself. When you come out of that state, you interpret that non-dual experience in subject-object terms.

So also in nirvikalpa samādhi, there is no duality and there is perfect bliss. But on coming out of it, you express it in dual terms, in terms of subject-object relationship. This is wrong. It is not the experience by itself that really enlightens you, but it is the correct understanding of its significance. It is not possible to obtain the correct meaning of it except from the Guru; and until you obtain it directly from him, nirvikalpa samādhi will only be a source of transient happiness to you.

It is true you were in an egoless state, both during the experience of worldly happiness and in the nirvikalpa samādhi. But your subsequent interpretation posits the ego

there retrospectively. That is because you rely more upon the mind's function and its satisfaction.

Therefore, coming out of samādhi, you must humbly and reverently wait upon the Guru, and place before him at his sweet convenience all your experiences. Then the Guru will explain the meaning of it, and you will understand that you were visualizing your own real nature and that you have never been bound. This is how one who is addicted to samādhi has to become liberated.

But he who follows the direct method of jnyāna can come to the same state of liberation by correctly examining any casual worldly experience of happiness, as instructed by the Guru, and by finding that it is one's own real nature of Peace that manifests itself as limited happiness in all the three states.

1210. HOW DOES ADVAITA EXPRESS ITSELF EVEN IN OUR WORLDLY ACTIVITIES?
(89)

You see a picture and enjoy its beauty. What does this mean? It means that, for the time being, you change your stand from the gross externals to the subtle idea, and that you forget your personal self or ego. It is only in such a state that you experience peace as beauty or Happiness.

At such moments you are standing in advaita. The original painter had first within himself an experience of advaitic beauty or Peace. This gradually condensed into an idea, which still further condensed into the gross picture. The onlookers are also taken, in the reverse order, to the same experience of advaitic beauty or peace experienced by the painter.

It is true you experience sublime beauty or happiness on witnessing objects like a mountain, the sea or a waterfall. This is because you forget your lower self for the time being and stand as one with the object, in the advaitic sense.

15th September 1956

1211. ASPIRANTS THOUGH MANY, THE LIBERATED ARE FEW. (90)

All aspirants do not go in quest of the ultimate Truth. The large majority of them seek powers, mental satisfaction or mental happiness. Such persons get entangled in a subtle world of their own creation, or in the happiness experienced in the samādhi state. They are so completely satisfied with such fleeting happiness, at the mental level, that they do not even aspire for anything more real, in the beyond.

But the exceptional few, who fortunately sense something beyond, approach a Kāraṇa-guru, under whose instructions they easily attain liberation and get established in their real nature of Peace.

1212. HOW TO VIEW THE WORLD? (91)

The awareness which is the witness of the three states is also the witness of every activity or inactivity, in each state. At every step, the witness asserts and proves that you are not the doer or enjoyer, but that you are always the knower. Thus the world, including life, can well be divided into two distinct entities: the one being the permanent awareness, and the other being everything else that appears and disappears.

Every statement of yours, if examined in the correct perspective, leads you to the ultimate Truth. Take for example the statement: 'I am walking.' What does it mean?

1. 'Walking' gets a meaning only from its source, 'non-walking'. So walking expresses only its source, 'non-walking'. So both walking and non-walking disappear as such, and you stand as that awareness beyond all opposites.
2. When one who has visualized the real 'I'-principle says, 'I am walking', 'walking' can only appear as an object of the 'I'. If one says 'I am the walker', the 'walker' is then the object. In any case, it is the changeless 'I'-principle that is emphasized and brought to notice.

Whenever you proceed to examine an object, take it to be an object first, and yourself the subject. An object can be an object of Consciousness alone. Therefore, when you take it as an object, Consciousness automatically comes in, the object loses its objectivity, and it shows you your real nature, Consciousness. This explains the whole world of objects, and it is not necessary to examine another object.

An object is a gross object when you are a physical being. But that is not the whole truth. You are at times a mental being. Then the object is only an idea. Even that is not the whole truth. You are at other times a conscious being. Then the object also becomes Consciousness.

So a strict and complete examination, of any object, leads you to the ultimate Truth.

1213. RELIGION AND ITS SCOPE (92)

Religion rests upon blind faith in so called revelations, scriptures, and a personal God. Human tastes and tendencies differ, all over the world. Religions respond to the diverse tastes and tendencies, and so inevitably multiply differences.

Religions propose only to help man to lead a good, just and moral life on earth. For that purpose, each religion has invented its own temptations and threats, in the form of heaven and hell. They also recommend a strict code of ethics to guide their followers. Each religion insists upon the adoption of its ethics, just so far as it can serve its own limited, phenomenal purpose.

If pressed beyond these arbitrary limits, the same ethics destroy even the foundations of the religion and its personal God. This is what Vēdānta does. The practice of ethics involves a certain amount of self-sacrifice. When practised to the very end, every ethical law takes one to selflessness. This means the certain death of the ego, which no religion contemplates, but which Vēdānta wishes to achieve.

Therefore a Kāraṇa-guru can even make use of the ethics of religion, to lead its devotees to the ultimate Truth. Religion does not seem to recognize the scope and the potentialities of its own ethics. Though unknowingly, even religion, through ethics, advocates Vēdānta. Vēdānta is therefore the fulfilment of all religions.

1214. CAN THERE BE A UNIVERSAL RELIGION? YES, ONLY VĒDĀNTA. (93)

The concept of a universal religion implies a personal God – being at the same time universal and also being acceptable to multifarious humanity. In fact a personal god is created by man in his own image, and heaven in accordance with his varying tastes. Most religions bank upon heaven and its glammers, peculiar to the country of its birth. The God and the heaven of one religion have no fascination for the follower of an-

other religion. Therefore, no one religious conception can ever captivate the imagination of all alike. So a universal religion is impossible.

Vēdānta is the only such religion – if religion it may be called – appealing to the head and the heart alike, accepting the Guru (ultimate Truth) in place of God, the innermost being as the Self, and transcending all concepts and even the universe in its application. It welcomes all religions into its embrace and lends a helping hand to take them higher still, till all differences are reconciled and permanent Peace established.

Vēdānta alone is capable of explaining, strictly and rationally, the real significance of the tenets and ethics of a religion. Take for example, Jesus Christ's statement: '*Love thy neighbour as thyself.*' Love is the expression of the state of oneness. So to love another really, you must become one with the other. How is it possible to achieve that oneness, either in the physical or in the mental realm? Impossible! And religion does not go beyond these two realms.

Strict oneness is possible only in the realm beyond the mind. Vēdānta is the only gateway to it. Reaching its portals, you realize that you had ever been one with your neighbour in essence, and that love is your real nature. That love is already there and you have to do nothing to create it. You have only to know the truth about yourself and the so called neighbour. No religion can show you this truth. It is the subject of Vēdānta alone. So come to Vēdānta and cure all your ills.

16th September 1956

1215. CAUSALITY AND ITS ULTIMATE GOAL (94)

The urge to search for a cause shows that you are dissatisfied with the effect and that you consider the cause to be more real. Therefore everything that comes under the category of effect is considered to be relatively unreal, and the ultimate cause or source is alone considered real. So you negate the effect and seek the real source, in the name of causality. Therefore, the enquiry of cause is also an indirect search for the ultimate Truth.

This may be pursued in different ways. Some of the important approaches (angles of vision) among them are mentioned in the following verse:

yasmin sarvaṁ yasya sarvaṁ yatas sarvaṁ yasmāyidaṁ
yēna sarvaṁ yaddhi sarvaṁ tat satyaṁ samupāsmahē

Upaniṣhad(?)

Any one of the above six modes of approach, if pursued steadfastly and sincerely, without deviating or stopping short on the way, will take one to the ultimate Truth, provided one is instructed by a Kāraṇa-guru. They may be defined as follows:

1. 'yasmin sarvaṁ' – In what does all this appear or disappear.
2. 'yasya sarvaṁ' – To what does all this belong.
3. 'yatas sarvaṁ' – From what does all this arise.
4. 'yasmāyidaṁ' – For what purpose is all this.
5. 'yēna sarvaṁ' – Of what is all this made.
6. 'yaddhi sarvaṁ' – What is all this?

'tat satyaṁ samupāsmahē' – That Truth I adore.

1216. EXPERIENCE AND SPIRITUAL SĀDHANA (95)

It has been the bane of spiritual life, all over the world, to consider and extol as spiritual experience every kind of unusual expression of happiness, ecstasy or perception, external or internal. They are actually the result of mental exercises ignorantly called 'spiritual'. Every devotee, mystic or yōgin will naturally have any number of such experiences to narrate. None of these so called experiences have anything really spiritual about them. They are purely mental and may serve to purify the mind to a great extent. Even nirvikalpa samādhi of the yōgin is no exception to this rule.

Really spiritual experience is only one. Its tests are changelessness and self-luminosity. The only experience that stands these two tests is the real 'I'-principle or pure awareness. All the rest disappear in time, and so are unreal.

A spiritual aspirant guided by a Kāraṇa-guru is told, in unambiguous terms, always to test his experiences in the light of the question: 'Have you got the whole of what you really want?' If your experience – be it nirvikalpa samādhi – fails to answer this question in the bold affirmative, reject it and try again.

At last you come to that experience which never parts from you and which leaves no part of your want unfulfilled. That is the real 'I'-principle – pure Awareness.

17th September 1956

1217. RIGHT UNDERSTANDING (96)

Ordinary understanding is supposed to be a function of the personality or the ego. But even science has of late come to admit that depersonalization is necessary for right understanding. In other words, science admits that understanding is the faculty or nature of the transcendental Awareness.

1218. WHAT IS THE TOTALITY OF ONE'S EXPERIENCES? (97)

It consists of the experiences of the three states together with that Awareness which, while standing distinct and separate from the states, also lights up the states themselves. Therefore, the witness of the states is also the witness of each mentation or perception.

1219. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAPPINESS AND THE EGO? (98)

Even that which is supposed to be the enjoyment of happiness in the waking state occurs only when the ego or the lower self is forgotten or disappears. Whenever the ego disappears, it is the background – Peace – that shines in its own glory.

This is later on usurped by the ego and interpreted as enjoyment of happiness experienced by him. But in fact, the ego was nowhere on the scene at the time referred to.

1220. MIND IN DREAM IS DIFFERENT FROM MIND IN THE WAKING STATE. HOW? (99)

The point was clarified by reference to two relevant dream experiences.

1. Mr. U.K. had a dream that his mother's sister died suddenly, and relatives and neighbours were gathered in the house for the performance of the last rites. Just

then Mr. U.K.'s grand uncle, who was the head of the family, solemnly proposed that the cremation may well wait till her sister (U.K.'s mother who was then apparently in perfect health) also died, so that both could be cremated together. Mr. U.K. and the assembled relatives listened calmly to the uncle's declaration, perceiving nothing unusual or unreasonable in the proposal. It was accepted by all as being just the right thing. Even Mr. U.K.'s mother did not raise a protest, but calmly awaited her own death. The waking mind would never have accepted such a monstrous proposal.

2. Smy P.A.'s father had another strange dream. He watched, most disinterestedly, the death of his own body in the dream. He saw his body being decorated and carried to the cremation ground, accompanied by several mourners. This is another instance of the dream mind, the nature and experience of which could never be reconciled with those of the waking mind. No more evidence is needed to prove that the dream mind is different from the mind in the waking state.

19th September 1956

1221. I AM MYSELF ALONE AS PURE CONSCIOUSNESS, IN DEEP SLEEP. (100)

I, by my mere presence, illuminate all objects. When the objects are removed, what can I be but light itself?

When I am myself the sun, how can darkness approach me? I am myself alone, as Consciousness and Peace, in deep sleep. As such, how can I address deep sleep except as 'I'? Since there is no time in deep sleep, both questions, when did one go to sleep and when did one come out of it, are irrelevant.

1222. IMPORTANCE OF FULL AND CORRECT DATA (101)

The data which is fractional cannot lead to anything but fractional truth.

Truth is one and indivisible. Therefore, what appears as fractional truth is nothing short of untruth.

Science, yōga, philosophy, devotion, mysticism and such other paths, all take into consideration only the waking state experiences and so work upon fractional data. Therefore their findings are not the truth. No intelligent man can seriously consider a bare one third of one's life's experiences alone, ignoring the remaining two thirds.

1223. OBJECT IS NOTHING BUT IDEA. (102)

Even according to science, an object is only an idea.

Science says that the proof of the existence of an object can only be its perception by the senses. The perception, when it is examined, is found to be this. Certain rays of light passing through the eyeball fall on the retina, producing an inverted image there. The optical nerves take this impression to the brain centre, from where it is transmitted to the mind as a mere idea.

What you experience is only this idea. The idea does not prove the existence of the object at all, but only the idea. Therefore an object is nothing but an idea.

1224. WHEN DOES MY REAL NATURE SHINE AS IT IS? (103)

Whenever the ego-mind subsides or disappears, the background Awareness shines as Happiness. Whenever objects of Awareness disappear, pure Awareness shines by itself, as pure Consciousness.

1225. WHAT IS THE END OF AN APPEARANCE? (104)

Appearance can never merge in anything else. The non-existent snake can never be said to merge in the rope.

Shrī Gauḍapāda

24th September 1956

1226. WOULD IT NOT SERVE THE SAME PURPOSE IF I CONTEMPLATE THAT EVERYTHING IS MYSELF? (105)

No. It will never be possible to transcend duality that way; because contemplation is thought and you cannot transcend the samskāra of everythingness (duality) in that realm. Thought, which is your only instrument if considered distinct and separate from you, will defy all attempt at absorption by another thought. Therefore the suggestion, though it may appear reasonable on the surface, is neither practicable nor enriching. On the contrary, it will lead you to a state of nothingness where you will find yourself helplessly stranded and deprived of all power of initiative to go beyond.

1227. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM ‘ADVAITA’ (106)

‘Advaita’ is the most significant term to denote the ultimate Truth. The ignorant man knows only the world, and everything beyond it is unknown to him. In this sense, Truth is unknown.

Still, he strives to attain that Truth. The world as known is the impediment to the attainment of Truth. Therefore the prakriyā adopted for this purpose is the scrupulous rejection (*neti*) of everything known.

At last, the principle which rejected everything else remains over as incapable of being rejected, and without a second. Looking from the known world, that principle can only be characterized as the ‘not-known’, in the negative. It is unknown, and not unknowable. If it is considered positive, it becomes known and then the knower comes in and duality is set up. Therefore, the most significant term to denote the characteristic of Truth is advaita (non-duality). The ultimate knower can never be known.

26th September 1956

1228. PRAKRIYĀS (PROCESSES OR METHODS) AND THEIR USE. (107)

Innumerable prakriyās have been prescribed in the śāstras, to help aspirants to the Truth. The indiscriminate use or comparison or mixing up of prakriyās are strictly prohibited. Ācāryas declare unequivocally that any *one* prakriyā, which suits the temperament and capacity of the person concerned, is enough to lift him up to the ultimate Truth.

1229. INSISTENCE UPON QUALIFICATIONS AND MENTAL STANDARDS FOR ASPIRANTS (108)

Qualifications and mental standards, like dispassion and renunciation, are intended only for those aspirants who are temperamentally incapable of using their reason or discrimination in the right manner, and who do not pitch their goal as high as the ultimate Truth.

But in the case of one who has the earnestness and sincerity to attain the Truth, no other qualification need be insisted upon. In spite of all his apparent shortcomings, he visualizes the Truth, the moment he listens to the Truth from the lips of the Guru. Thereafter, everything necessary comes in spontaneously, when needed, as a result of the light that has gone in already. This leads him on till he is established in the Truth.

1230. THE TRUMPET CALL OF VĒDĀNTA (109)

‘Awake, arise, and stop not, till the goal is reached’ is the trumpet call of Vēdānta.

All religions serve human tastes and ignorantly multiply differences. But Vēdānta alone serves the changeless Truth and reconciles all differences without exception. The wise saying goes:

Where no two religions, mystics, yōgins, scientists or philosophers agree, no two sages have ever disagreed about the ultimate Truth.

1231. BODY REACTS DIFFERENTLY UNDER SAMĀDHI AND UNDER DEEP SLEEP. WHY? (110)

Awareness cognizes ideas and co-ordinates the three states.

Question: The body of a person in samādhi sits up erect and seems controlled by the individual, while the body of one in deep sleep lies completely relaxed without any symptom of extraneous control. Why this difference?

Answer: Samādhi is artificial, being the product of preconception and intense effort. A part of the world, in the form of the samskāras of these two, go with you into samādhi.

But in deep sleep you leave everything as well as their samskāras and carry with you nothing of the world except *sat-cit-ānanda*. So deep sleep, which is *vastu-tantra*, is superior to samādhi, which is *kartri-tantra*.

All questions relating to the conduct of the body in samādhi are a spurious mixture: of the experience of happiness known to oneself alone, and of the body then known only to the non-self. They have no common ground, and so the question is not relevant.

1232. AFTER VISUALIZATION OF TRUTH, HOW CAN I MAKE THE EXPERIENCE PERMANENT? (111)

Answer: Get acquainted with yourself, more and more.

Disciple: This is so simple, so intimate, so natural and so wonderful. But what shall I do to accomplish it in practice?

Answer: Say to yourself what you are, as often as convenient, adducing arguments and throwing yourself into that same state of visualization as you had on the first occasion. This will establish you there, in course of time.

1233. ‘I KNOW I AM.’ HOW TO PROVE THAT THIS IS NO ACTION? (112)

I say I am the doer and I am the enjoyer. The doer is not the enjoyer. But I am both. So I am the non-doer background of both. I know doing and enjoying. This knowing is my nature – not an action – for it never parts from me.

Therefore, ‘I know I am’ means: ‘I shine in my own light.’

28th September 1956

1234. WHAT IS MEANT BY SAYING THAT A THING ‘EXISTS’? (113)

An inert thing has to depend upon something else, in order even to exist.

That something is self-luminous Awareness. Therefore an object is Awareness itself. If a thing cannot exist in its own right, the existence part must come from elsewhere, i.e. from Awareness.

2nd October 1956

1235. NO BRIDGE BETWEEN TRUTH AND UNTRUTH (114)

The relative world and the Absolute are in two entirely different levels, and there is no bridge or relationship between them. ‘Jīvan-mukta’ is a contradiction in terms. To correlate mind and its objects with pure Awareness – the Sage – is wrong. Even the ‘he’ is wrong, so far as the Sage is concerned. The ‘he’ is not. Therefore, his so called objects are also not. The jīvan-mukta himself is not. The principle called ‘jīvan-mukta’ has neither mind nor senses. It is jnyāna-svarūpa itself. Shāstras describe the jīvan-mukta only from a conceivable level.

(In spite of all this, the disciple of a Kāraṇa-guru can never deny his own experience that the apparent person of the Guru serves as the safest and the surest bridge to the Truth.)

1236. WHY DO SHĀSTRAS DILUTE THE TRUTH? (115)

Most of the existing, recognized shāstras were not addressed to uttamādhikāris or to persons at a comparatively higher level of spiritual progress. They were addressed to persons who did not aspire to the ultimate Truth, who did not follow the direct path of jnyāna, and who did not see their Guru as the embodiment of that Truth. But one who has listened to the Truth from the lips of a Kāraṇa-guru, and has visualized the Truth himself, is well on the way to get established in the Truth.

Therefore, no written book will be of any help to him, in the work of getting firmly established in the Truth already visualized. The purpose of a spiritual book, be it an *Upaniṣhad*, is only to give the aspirant who has not obtained a Kāraṇa-guru an indirect knowledge (parōkṣa-jnyāna) of the nature of the Self, and to emphasize the supreme necessity of approaching a Kāraṇa-guru to help him to realize it. To one who has gone beyond both these needs, books are of no service whatsoever.

But this is not true of books written by your own Guru. They discuss the truth in the same manner as it has been expounded to you; and that impersonal personality of your Guru as that ultimate Truth is there, so far as you are concerned, in every syllable of it, because the Guru is there in you already. Therefore, those books will help you every time, as much as a personal contact with your Guru would.

1237. WHAT IS PRATYAKṢHA? (116)

Pratyakṣha (irrefutable perception) is of three kinds: *Sensual* pratyakṣha, *mental* pratyakṣha and *conscious* or *bōdha* pratyakṣha. You will lose your hold on the Truth if you cling on to any of the former two pratyakṣhas, but if you cling on to the *bōdha* pratyakṣha alone, you will never do so.

‘*Sva-sthiti*’ is a more significant term than the ‘*sahaja state*’ to denote the natural state. The knowledge one happens to have about one’s own Self can never be indirect. The knowledge that obtains as a result of adopting any of the prakriyās, like examination of the three states, is decidedly direct Self-experience itself. This is made possible only by listening to the Truth from the lips of the Kāraṇa-guru, with a deep sense of earnestness and sincerity on the part of the aspirant.

‘*Shravana*’, or listening to the Guru, is alone said to be the ‘*sākṣhāt-kāraṇa*’: the ‘genuine cause’ of liberation (if any cause could be attributed to liberation).

4th October 1956

1238. REALITY, HOW TO DEFINE IT? (117)

Reality is beyond existence and non-existence. This is true even in the case of a so called object. How? Let us take an example. We say: ‘A chair exists’, and ‘A chair does not exist.’ The ‘chair’ is present in both these opposites. Therefore the chair is necessarily beyond the opposites. Beyond the opposites, there can be only one thing which is real. That is the real Self. Therefore, an object is that Reality itself.

If you say you have life and death, it means you have neither. Because you are in both. As such, you can only be something distinct and separate from life and death, and so necessarily beyond both. That is the conscious principle – the real ‘I’.

5th October 1956

1239. SAT, CIT AND ĀNANDA PROVED TO BE ONE AND THE SAME (118)

Ānanda is experienced by man in the name of ‘happiness’. It is the knowledge of the existence aspect of the Reality in the form of an object that first attracts the ignorant man. He then begins to desire it, and strives to possess it. The moment he knows that he has obtained the thing he desired, the mind comes to a standstill and his real nature of Peace shines as in deep sleep.

But immediately, when the mind appears again, the memory of the desire and the effort that preceded its achievement colour the mind by contrast, and the pure Peace is therefore called ‘happiness’ for the time being. If that happy state is allowed to continue indefinitely, the sense of happiness will soon give place to deep Peace, as in deep sleep. Therefore, even the happiness supposed to be derived from objects is nothing other than one’s own real nature of Peace.

The *jīvan-mukta* knows this Truth beautifully well and is established in that Peace. Therefore, he does not fall a victim either to desires or to objects. Whatever you experience as a result of effort, prompted by desire, is not Peace in its true nature. It is tainted to that extent. Whatever the heart enjoys is a limited and tainted Peace.

Real Peace is the experience of one's own real nature (*ānanda-bhāva-svarūpa*). *Ānanda* or *peace* is the experience one gets spontaneously on knowing, beyond the mental realm, that one's real nature is pure Consciousness.

Next, let us examine '*cit*' in the same manner. We say that objects of consciousness are diverse. But we are certain that the objects alone are diverse and that the Consciousness which cognizes these objects is changeless. This Consciousness is also uncaused; and it exists, all alone, even in the absence of all objects, e.g. in deep sleep. Therefore, it is Self-luminous and is *vastu-tantra*.

Lastly, let us examine '*sat*'. We say several objects exist. Every object depends upon pure existence for its own individual existence; but pure existence does not depend upon anything else for its existence. Look at deep sleep. The real 'I' exists all alone, without any other object, in deep sleep. And I know I exist. This pure existence is called *sat*. The *sat* is *vastu-tantra* and Self-luminous.

Life's activities are impossible without the help of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. But *sat-cit-ānanda* is in no way attached to the objects concerned, which are but appearances upon *sat-cit-ānanda*. It shines all alone in deep sleep, as my real nature. Objects appear manifested in existence and in the light borrowed from my own Self. So they are not other than myself.

Sat, *cit* and *ānanda* are the one and the same. In order to say that *sat* is, *sat* must be known. To do this, Consciousness must come in. Therefore Consciousness and *sat* are one. When that Knowledge of *sat* dawns, a sublime peace filters down from that Consciousness, as the Sage poet sings:

aṭivē, aṭivān adaivamē aṭivilūfum ānanda vāriyē

Tāyumānavar

Neither is this peace different from *cit*. Therefore *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* are the one and the same Reality, viewed from the three different perspectives of life, thought and feeling.

1240. MENTAL SATISFACTION REGARDING A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE (119)

Question: I have perfect certitude that I have understood and visualized the Truth. Still, I feel that there is something wanting. I do not know what. What is the cause and the remedy for this trouble?

Answer: You mean you do not get full mental satisfaction. Is that not so? Satisfaction is the outcome of the fulfilment of desire. It may result both from that which is right and from that which is wrong. It can, however, never be the identical experience in the two cases. Diversity is its rule, as with everything else which is phenomenal. Satisfaction is a measure only of phenomenal enjoyment. It can never be a measure of the Absolute. Satisfaction always presupposes an object, with all its limitations. There is nothing phenomenal which can satisfy everyone, for all time. The many can never do this.

But there is only one thing – the *Ātmā*, the impersonal Self, by nature changeless, self-luminous, and being Peace itself – that can bring permanent Peace or satisfaction.

Being changeless and uncaused, it cannot strictly be called satisfaction. It may be called ‘objectless Happiness’. The knowledge that ‘I am that changeless experience itself’ is the svarūpa of satisfaction. This satisfaction is therefore self-luminous. No other satisfaction can be self-luminous.

The experience of being impersonal cannot be the object of any desire. It takes one beyond the mental level of satisfaction. But the memory of the age-long samskāras of satisfaction prompts us still to crave for satisfaction, even when we stand beyond it. Therefore, that false craving has to be ignored as illusion or destroyed in the light of the higher reason.

6th October 1956

1241. HOW TO UNDERSTAND EXPERIENCE? (120)

Experience is of two kinds: vastu-tantra and karṭri-tantra.

1. *Vastu-tantra* is begotten of Ātmā.
2. *Karṭri-tantra* is begotten of doership.

All Experiences of duality, including even the yōgin’s nirvikalpa samādhi, are karṭri-tantra. The experience which takes me straight to my real nature, of Peace and Consciousness, is alone vastu-tantra.

vastutan vaśamāṁ jñānam; karttradhīnam upāsanam

[It’s only on reality
that knowledge rightfully depends.
But meditation must depend
upon a doer of some kind.]

Bhāṣha Pancadashi, Dhyāna-dīpam, 73 (Malayalam translation)

Vēdānta alone adopts vastu-tantra; and that too, to destroy karṭri-tantra and its creations that obscure the Reality. All other systems or practices or beliefs – karma, yōga, devotion, mysticism, religions... – all adopt karṭri-tantra. Satisfaction is the goal of all these.

Vastu-tantra, being ātmic, is beyond feeling. Karṭri-tantra, being mental, is capable of being felt, but is fleeting. Mental satisfaction can be derived both from Truth as well as from untruth. Vastu-tantra is not the result of any activity or inactivity. But karṭri-tantra is always the result of activity, which takes the form of desire and effort for its fulfilment.

When the disciple – who is a waking subject – is told by the Guru that even his phenomenal satisfaction is not derived from objects, but that it is his own real nature shining in its own glory, his doership (which is the centre of karṭri-tantra) crumbles for ever. Desires torment him no more, and satisfaction is transformed into permanent Peace.

When this sublime Peace, vastu-tantra, is sought to be brought down to respond to karṭri-tantra, guided by varying tastes and tendencies, a host of new concepts in the form of religions, heavens, objects of pleasure and so on begin to appear. Therefore, give up your tastes, tendencies and desires – not violently, but by knowing, and by knowing more and more deeply, that all satisfaction is the expression of your own real nature of Peace – and you shall be for ever free.

The state of Peace in deep sleep is the most familiar experience of vastu-tantra in daily life. The annihilation of all kartṛi-tantra is the ultimate goal of Vēdānta. This establishes vastu-tantra without any positive effort whatever. Look at deep sleep. You have only to give up your attachment to body, senses and mind, in the waking and dream states. Immediately, Peace – vastu-tantra – dawns, permanent and self-luminous.

Deep sleep comes involuntarily, and without the help of discrimination. Therefore it disappears, after a while. Establish the same state voluntarily and with discrimination. When once you visualize it this way, it will never disappear.

9th October 1956

1242. WHAT IS THE WORLD (PRAPANCA)? (121)

Answer: Drishyatva – perceivability. *Drishyatva* can never be in *drishya* [the seen] or the object. It can only be in *adrishya* [the unseen]. This *adrishya* (Ātmā) is alone the basis or background of *drishyatva*.

Drishyatva implies knowledge. Therefore it is Knowledge itself. The word ‘percept’ is the nearest English equivalent to *drishyatva*. A percept implies perception, and perception implies Knowledge.

1243. EVERY WORD DENOTES THE REALITY ALONE. (122)

If I say ‘I am *man*’, I mean I am *sat, cit, ānanda*. How?

The essential precaution one has to take in order to understand a word correctly is to be prepared to understand just what is meant to be conveyed by the word, and nothing more or less. This is not what we generally do. We understand much more than what is conveyed by a word.

Let us take the same illustration: ‘I am *man*.’ It is the meaning of the word ‘man’ that we have to examine. ‘Man’ is unqualified, without number or gender. There is no diversity in ‘man’. The word ‘man’ represents the whole man-kingdom. That which is ‘man’, in all men, is changeless. In this sense, ‘man’ is not limited by time or space. The only Reality, beyond time and space, is *sat-cit-ānanda*. Therefore, ‘man’ in its real sense is *sat-cit-ānanda* itself. So are all other words – ‘animal’, ‘bird’, ‘table’, ‘pencil’, etc. Every word in its strict sense means *sat-cit-ānanda*, the real Self.

It is never possible to make the apparent many into one. You need only understand that the manyness is an illusion, and that its background alone is real. The simple word ‘man’ is understood by everyone, no doubt; but nobody grasps its right meaning. It is not understood by the senses or mind, but by Knowledge alone. Knowledge cannot know anything other than Knowledge. Therefore what is understood by the word ‘man’ is Knowledge itself.

Ignorant man considers himself a particular being. He has been long trained in the habit of understanding even general statements in a particular sense, in accordance with his own tastes and tendencies. But in order to understand a general statement correctly – for example ‘man’, ‘water’ etc. – one has to stand as a general being, beyond senses and mind. From that stand, one can never perceive anything other than one’s Self – ‘Consciousness’.

1244. QUOTING THE SCRIPTURES (123)

The habit of quoting the scriptures and accepting their authority blindly is definitely a slavish mentality. The scriptures are only views of some of the ancients, recorded in books. They had their own particular ways of reasoning and modes of thinking. There is nothing wrong in your accepting their views, provided you understand them in the light of your own reason and make them your own.

You must yourself be able to establish those views, adducing arguments and illustrations – whether old or new it is immaterial. But you must not rely upon the names of the scriptures, or of their authors, to create conviction.

10th October 1956

1245. ILLUSTRATIONS EMPLOYED BY VĒDĀNTA (124)

The illustration of ‘earth and the pot’ is usually adopted in Vēdānta to bring home the Truth that the world is nothing but Ātmā. But in applying the illustration to the problem of the world, mistakes often creep in. In this illustration, ‘earth’ should be taken to represent Ātmā; and ‘pot’ to represent everything other than Ātmā, gross or subtle, including name, form, utility etc., in other words ‘object’ in the most comprehensive sense.

The proposition is that there is no pot independent of earth. To disprove this, it is not relevant to bring in other objects, ignoring the fact that they are already represented by the pot in the illustration. Thus, all side issues like the potter’s labour, utility of the pot, and contents of the pot are quite irrelevant, since they attribute independent existence to the pot. Therefore there is no pot as such at any point of time, but only earth. Similarly, there is no object or world as such, but only Ātmā.

It is best to see the pot to be nothing but earth, even when the pot remains as pot. It can also be seen to be only earth by destroying the pot as such. But the second method is rather crude and childish.

1246. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF REALIZATION? (125)

The plainest and simplest way of putting it is this: ‘I had mistaken myself to be a thinker, doer, perceiver and enjoyer. That misconception has disappeared.’

Here the question ‘how’ does not arise. But it has to be understood clearly that realization is no action.

11th October 1956

1247. THE STAND OF AN ADVAITIN (126)

An earnest advaitin must studiously give up all contact with theology, scholasticism and mysticism, and take to pure *vicāra* alone, if he wants to get established in the ultimate Truth in the shortest time possible.

14th October 1956

1248. IṢṬA-DĒVA (127)

‘*Iṣṭa-dēva*’ [‘chosen deity’] is the form given by you to your own *iṣṭa* (desire). Therefore, one who worships an *iṣṭa-dēva* is virtually worshipping his own desire (liking).

So much so, a boy getting a vision of his *iṣṭa-dēva* will invariably see him as playing with him in the sand or water. Because play is the then element and desire of the boy himself, at that age. No actual portrait of any *iṣṭa-dēva* exists anywhere. Your own desire or fancy is your only guide in creating the form of your *iṣṭa-dēva*.

Sculptors and painters have of course given us some models. But they are only forms of their own imagination. For example, M. Tampi has produced many portraits of Shrī Kṛiṣṇa, Dēvī, Shāstā and other deities. He had never seen them in the waking state, and naturally he was at a loss to conceive their face and form. Therefore he thought of his own Guru and prayed to him to bless him so that he could paint a picture of the desired *iṣṭa-dēva*. Straightaway he imagined a form and painted it. But it is strange that the prominent features in all his pictures – whether of Kṛiṣṇa, Dēvī or Shāstā – have generally the stamp of the features of his own Guru.

This proves clearly that the *iṣṭa-dēva* is nothing but one’s desire personified. The worship of such a being can never take one beyond the mental realm of one’s own likes and dislikes.

But if the worship is directed to the *iṣṭa-dēva* as an ‘*Ātma-mūrti*’ [‘embodiment of Self’], as explained and directed by a Kāraṇa-guru, one can rise to the Ultimate gradually by that and that alone.

23rd October 1956

1249. DREAMS AND WAKING BODY (128)

A pandit took up a question discussed in the higher shāstras on Advaita.

Question: If dreams are quite unreal, why is it that they sometimes leave visible reactions on the waking body?

Answer: The shāstras try to explain this by positing a second dream in the interval between the dream and waking states. But this gives no satisfactory solution to the spirit of the question, because the answer is sought in terms of the waking state.

The question arises in the waking state, assuming causality to be real and the dream alone to be unreal. A correct solution is possible only by viewing the question from a higher level, beyond the dream and waking states, from the stand of the disinterested witness.

1. Viewing from there, both the dream and waking states seem equally unreal and therefore the question does not arise.
2. The dream was first examined and proved to be unreal, not in order to show that the waking state was real, but to show that it was equally unreal. Because it is impossible to find any difference between the two states at the moment of experiencing them.
3. Even in the waking state, it is never possible to connect two incidents; because the past remains only as an idea or dream, and the present alone appears as the gross in

the waking state. As each appears in different states and at different points of time, the two can never be connected. So also in the dream state, the so called cause and effect can never be connected.

4. The dream state is also a waking state, when experienced. Therefore, the waking and dream states may well be considered as successive waking states. Taking each waking state as one experience, no relationship can be established between two successive waking states, one being past and the other present.

3rd November 1956

1250. EXPERIENCE AND DISTORTION (129)

The real experience of the Self is knowledge in identity. When the experience is expressed in words, as 'I enjoyed...', 'I perceived...' etc., in the form of subject-object relationship, it is a clear distortion of the experience itself. This distortion distances the ego far from the centre.

1251. A JĪVAN-MUKTA AND THE STATES (130)

A jīvan-mukta does not destroy the states. He only illumines the states and understands them to be nothing other than the real Self.

But the onlooker might not perceive this internal change in the jīvan-mukta's perspective. He may still take him to be the old jīva, a subject of the changing states.

20th December 1956

1252. HOW IS A THING CONSTITUTED? (131)

A thing may be said to be real only if it continues to be real in all the three states, that is at the sensual, mental and transcendental levels. In the subjective realm, the body is a percept, the mind is an idea and the 'I'-principle is Consciousness – the Reality. The senses, mind and the 'I'-principle each contribute their respective quotas to the make of any object.

The sense organ concerned contributes the one fundamental percept, the mind brings forth its store of former concepts and heaps them upon the first percept in the form of supplementary percepts, making the object a perceptual whole. The 'I'-principle contributes its quota – the sense of reality – to the object, and makes it appear real.

This last part is represented by the pronoun 'It', in the case of every object. The 'It' continues changeless, through all apparent changes.

26th December 1956

1253. THE STAND OF CĀRVAKA EXAMINED (132)

Cārvaka asserts that there is nothing beyond the world perceived. Evidently, he takes into consideration only the waking, objective world.

But when his attention is drawn to the dream and deep sleep worlds, which are equally strong percepts when experienced, he is forced to admit that there is something beyond this apparent world. Then again, who is it that says that there is nothing beyond the world? Is that principle comprehended by the world, or not? *No*. It cannot

be. It must certainly stand beyond the world. So Cārvaka's statement itself proves that there is a principle beyond.

If you say it is the brain that decides, the brain has to rely upon the body for its very existence. The dream body has also a brain. It has to be decided which brain is one to rely upon. The waking and dream brains disprove each other. Hence, that principle which stands beyond is the 'I' or Consciousness. It is the only thing that does not need any proof to establish its existence. This 'I' is not a percept, and so stands clearly beyond the world.

Vēdānta begins with that principle standing beyond body, senses, mind, and even beyond the witness. Nobody can deny his existence in the deep sleep state, when he is without a body, senses or mind. That is the 'I'-principle in one, beyond the body, senses and mind.

28th December 1956

1254. WHAT IS THE RIGHT APPROACH TO A PROBLEM? (133)

Every problem has two standpoints. One is that of the ego; and the other is that of the 'I'-principle.

Suppose you desire an object. A desire shows your imperfection, at least to that extent. And the urge to become perfect comes from your own being deep below, which is by nature perfect, or one without a second. Therefore, desire points to your real nature, and you can realize it by viewing it in the right perspective. This is from the ego's standpoint.

Looking from the standpoint of the real 'I'-principle, you find that desire shows the pain of separation from the object desired, and a longing to end that separation by obtaining it. It shows an eagerness to establish that oneness or perfection, your real nature, whenever you seem to stray away from it by identification with body, senses or mind.

29th December 1956

1255. THE WORLD AND BRAHMAN SHOULD BOTH MERGE IN THE 'I'-PRINCIPLE. (134)

The world, posited in space, is an appearance on the Reality. The term 'world' rightly comprehends also the generic space and time in which diversity is supposed to appear. The process of visualizing the Reality in the world is by completely separating the appearance part of it from the Reality.

But usually, in that endeavour, the world alone is eliminated, leaving behind unnoticed both space and time tagged on to the Reality. The consequent superimposition of the sense of time and space, on the Reality behind, gives it the idea of bigness. This is responsible for the fallacious concept and name, 'brahman'. When this sense of bigness is also eliminated, brahman itself stands revealed as the ultimate Reality, the 'I'-principle.

This is possible only by listening to the Truth from the lips of the Kāraṇa-guru.

1256. WHAT ARE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE? (135)

The concept of inside and outside is born only with the inception of the body idea or the idea of space. When you transcend the body, even in idea, the space idea also vanishes, and with it the idea of bigness and smallness as well. In other words, you transcend all opposites.

1257. HAS TRUTH NO OPPOSITE? (136)

No. The only possible opposite to Truth is untruth. But when you strictly examine untruth, you find it to be nothing but an appearance on Truth. Therefore Truth has no opposite.

1258. WHAT IS APPEARANCE AND WHAT IS IT THAT APPEARS? (137)

Appearance certainly is not Truth. Because Truth can never appear or be subject to time and space. What else then can it be that appears? Can it be appearance itself? *No.* Because appearance is appearance only on appearance. Hence appearance can never appear. Therefore appearance is *not*. It is only an illusion. Truth alone is.

Memory proves that I am the witness. Suppose I make a statement, now, about a thought I had yesterday. In relation to the past thought, I am the witness. But in relation to the present statement, I am the sayer. None but the witness has the authority to say. Thus I am the witness, and as witness I stand identified with Consciousness.

5th January 1957

1259. THE UNANSWERABLE QUESTION (1)

The question is often asked: 'Who is a Guru?' or 'What is a Guru?' But the answer is not so easily understood.

To the intellectual, the Guru is always an enigma. The Guru represents the ultimate Truth, and stands in non-duality. The question is raised in duality, in the mental level, about the Guru who is standing in non-duality. There cannot be any answer in either level. The question cannot be understood in the mental level since it pertains to the Guru in non-duality. And in non-duality, the question does not ever arise.

The Guru is beyond all questions and all duality. A question is the expression or synonym of duality.

1260. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SUICIDE AND ITS REMEDY (2)

Suicide means the killing of the self. Suicide is usually contemplated to avoid a dragging pain or dishonour. But instead, you are courting another pain of an intenser type, though for a shorter period, and with a most uncertain future. Therefore, if any other means can be suggested to get away from the pain, it would certainly be acceptable to one who contemplates suicide. Prove to him his identity with the changeless principle behind body and mind; and prove to him that the pain belongs to the mind alone, as a result of its identification with body.

Thinking of committing suicide means trying to kill the self. Who tries to do so? The self itself. Is it possible to split the self that way? *No*. Therefore direct your attention to the thought of committing suicide and kill it; in other words, 'kill the killer'.

Seeing a golden time-piece placed just below a photograph of Gurunāthan in his room, a lady disciple enjoyed the sight and said: 'It looks beautiful there.' Immediately Gurunāthan turned to her and said: 'But there is a deeper significance than you think. You see, the time-piece represents time; and I stand above it, transcending time. You must also stand likewise. Everything you see here will have a similar significance, if only you look deep enough.'

15th January 1957

1261. WHY DO SO FEW PEOPLE TAKE TO THE ULTIMATE TRUTH? (3)

Answer: In this question you want to tie down the causeless to causality. It is impossible.

Qn: Why does one go to a Guru?

Ans: To get beyond the why, and then the question disappears.

24th February 1957

1262. MIXING OF LEVELS (4)

Indiscriminate mixing of levels is always to be discouraged. It leads to confusion of ideas.

But in every sādhanā, there is mixing of the two levels [of Truth and untruth], to a certain extent. That mixing is helpful in establishing you in the Truth, since you emphasize the goal of Truth through all right sādhanā and strive to eliminate all that is other than the Truth.

Thus even the mixing of levels, when done with discrimination, leads you to the background.

26th February 1957

1263. THE SPECTATOR AND THE ACTOR IN LIFE (5)

Man is both the spectator and the actor in the drama of life. The spectator is real, but the actor is unreal.

27th February 1957

1264. WHAT IS LIMITATION? (6)

The presence of objects and absence of objects are respectively termed limitedness and unlimitedness, or conditionedness and unconditionedness, of consciousness. The so called unconditionedness is also a limitation put upon Consciousness, and is generally called 'samādhi'. Truth is still beyond.

2nd March 1957

1265. KNOWING AND LOVING (7)

Knowing and loving come in as a result of your not wanting to be separated from the thing. But there is a world of difference between the knowing in the relative level and knowing in the absolute level.

In the absolute level, to know is to be. In the relative level, there is the apparent distinction brought in between the existence and knowing parts.

If you continue to know as in the absolute level, the 'It' cannot stand as different from knowledge and non-duality is established.

1266. SHOULD NOT ONE WHO HAS KNOWN THE TRUTH BE KIND TO OTHERS? (8)

The question rises out of a confusion of levels. The question tries to connect truth and untruth. Truth is in the absolute level, and the rest of the question is in the relative level.

You must see that it is not enough to be kind alone, but you should stand as one with others as Truth. Then the question will not arise. With change of state, the field of reference changes completely.

11th March 1957

1267. APPEARANCE AND DISAPPEARANCE (9)

It is appearance that goes into the make of disappearance. So there is only appearance and no disappearance. Disappearance appears. That is all.

Appearance is 'seeing' itself, and 'seeing' is Consciousness itself. So all is Consciousness, the real Self.

14th March 1957

1268. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE EGO? (10)

The ego is a spurious entity which does not exist and can never exist. It does not stand the slightest scrutiny. What is the difference between the ego and the other things which you have accepted to be illusions? Such things have at least a momentary appearance, in the mental level. But the ego has not even that. It is never experienced by anybody at any time.

You stray away from knowledge, down to the object known; and that is the ego.

18th March 1957

1269. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SEE AN OBJECT? (11)

1. First, you see form. This belongs to the field of percepts, which is the outcome of the senses.
2. Next, you join it on to innumerable concepts, which belong to the realm of the mind.
3. Lastly, you attribute a permanence to it which belongs to your own Self and is denoted by the 'It' in relation to all objects.

All these together go to make the so called object. But when you emphasize the ‘It’ which was always there – all through – the other two naturally disappear; and the ‘It’, which was so long unknown, now becomes known in the real sense.

1270. HOW TO EXAMINE AN OBJECT? (12)

The examination of an object must be conducted from all three states, with equal completeness. You are doing this, though unknowingly, all the time. You have only to note it and understand it correctly, as follows:

1. When the percept appears, the waking state sense organs function.
2. When the concepts (as ideas) are added on, the dream state is brought in.
3. At last, when knowledge dawns, the deep sleep state beyond the mind comes in.

Therefore, you confirm every object only after systematically examining it from all the three states.

23rd March 1957

1271. VALUE AND ITS APPLICATION (13)

Values are of two kinds:

1. Truth value, and
2. Satisfaction value or happiness value.

They are essentially different.

Happiness depends upon one’s tastes, which are different in different persons. Therefore the happiness value, as gauged by different persons, must also be different. Happiness is the criterion which guides the life of the great majority of persons – dominated as they are by the tastes and desires of the mind.

Truth, which is identical with the being in man, is of the nature of differencelessness. This is only one and self-luminous. It is only the one that has visualized the truth that can adopt it. Therefore it is only vādāntins, who are few in number, that can understand and apply the Truth value.

1272. HOW DOES *SAT-CIT-ĀNANDA* EXPRESS ITSELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE? (14)

The first expression of the Reality in life is that ‘something *is*’. This is the *sat* aspect. Beyond a vague ‘is’-ness, it yields nothing more.

You want to know it and begin to search for more information about it. Then you know it, without the help of any light other than your own Self. This is the expression of *cit*.

As soon as that knowledge is complete, a spontaneous satisfaction oozes out of that knowledge. This is the expression of *ānanda*.

Existence, Consciousness and Peace express themselves in all experiences or activities of life. This happiness which flows from the mere knowledge of an existent thing is self-luminous happiness, which is ‘vastu-tantra’ [‘coming from Truth’].

But the happiness which is the outcome of varied tastes and efforts is only worldly and a reflection of the *ānanda* aspect of the Reality. This is ‘kartṛi-tantra’ [‘coming from doership’].

1273. OBSTACLE MADE A MEANS (15)

Body, senses and mind are supposed to be the clothing of the real Self within. The ignorant man emphasizes the clothing alone and loses sight of the Self. But with the attainment of a spiritual outlook the position is reversed, and the very same clothes are made a help to visualize the Self within.

The way to achieve this is to make the clothing of the Self as thin as possible so as to see through them. Or, in other words, make the body, senses and mind function in such a manner that you can see through them. Then your attention is caught by the Self within; the mind and senses lose their significance as obstacles and become mere pointers to the Self.

1274. WHAT IS REAL DESTRUCTION? (16)

The destruction of an object really means the disappearance of the object, without its leaving any trace, even as an idea. This is never possible in the physical or mental realms. But in the worldly sense, destruction only means disintegration in any manner.

Yōga and devotion accept the latter interpretation of the term; and they strive to destroy the mind by purifying or expanding it, keeping on the separateness once and for all. You can never destroy a thing by anything like cleaning, correcting or mending it in the same level. This is why yōga and devotion fail to destroy the mind, and lead one only to a state of peace limited by time and called 'samādhi'.

Real destruction is achieved only by jnyāna or Vēdānta – not objectively but subjectively – by eliminating the sense of duality once and for all, and thus seeing the object as nothing but your own Self.

1275. HOW DOES JNYĀNA HELP ME? (17)

The jnyāna path does not claim to take you to the Truth or to illumine the Truth. You are always the Truth, and the Truth is self-luminous. So the jnyāna path claims only to remove the obstacles in the way – viz. the sense of separateness and its objects – by applying the correct tests of Reality, such as changelessness and self-luminosity. When all obstacles are thus removed, the self-luminous 'I' remains ever shining in all its glory. This is called visualization or realization.

Jnyāna alone is *vastu-tantra* [governed by Truth]. But devotion, yōga, karma and all other paths are *karṭri-tantra* [governed by doership].

25th March 1957

1276. WHAT IS TRUE LOVE? (18)

Love is deeper knowledge, and is usually considered to be feminine. The knowledge of the intellect, which is relatively superficial, is usually considered to be masculine. If you know the Truth with your own being, that knowledge itself is love, and is both feminine and masculine or beyond both.

If the ego takes leave of you in the course of an activity, it takes you straight to pure love. Love can be made permanent only if it is made unconditional and spontaneous, and if it expects nothing in return.

1277. WHAT IS BEING? (19)

‘Being’ is being and is independent of its opposite, non-being. Non-being can exist only on being. But being can exist all alone.

30th March 1957

1278. WHAT IS THE TRUTH OF PERCEPTION? (20)

I am Ātmā, the self-luminous Consciousness. It may be said that I first manifest myself as objectless Consciousness, by my own nature or self-luminosity. It is this objectless Consciousness that expresses itself as an idea or sensual object; and you say you perceive it.

But when the so called perception takes place, the apparent object loses its limitations; and its content, Consciousness, stands as the objectless Self. Therefore, it is nothing but the Self that you perceive.

1st April 1957

1279. BHĀVA AND ABHĀVA (21)

Bhāva [being] and abhāva [non-being] as generic terms are Consciousness itself, indeterminate in nature and identical with the Self. They can never be conceived by the mind. When you know them or speak of them, they become determinate and distinct, and separate from you and from Truth.

1280. HOW DOES THE WORLD APPEAR AND WHAT IS ITS SOLUTION? (22)

Pure Consciousness, which is the ultimate Reality, expresses itself first as self-consciousness, without admitting any medium whatsoever. This is the most immediate of all knowledge and is identical with ‘being’, completely beyond subject-object relationship.

This Consciousness seems to degenerate, by appearing to express itself through the mind and senses, as thoughts and perceptions. By accepting the medium of the mind and senses, the appearances – namely thoughts and perceptions – seem to be separate from the Self. This is how the world appears, though in essence it is nothing but the Self.

Therefore, the solution of the world does not lie in any objective search outside, by way of the sciences or philosophy, but in withdrawing into the real Self within one. This may successfully be achieved by following the ordinary mental knowledge itself to its very source, through the most immediate expression of knowledge, namely self-consciousness or objectless knowledge.

3rd April 1957

1281. WHAT IS ‘VICĀRA’ – ‘DISCRIMINATION’? (23)

It is a peculiar kind of activity, but not ‘thought’ as it might seem to be. Its purpose is removal of untruth (body, senses and mind) by arguments. What is left over is the real Self (absolute Truth) as the real background.

1282. WHAT IS REAL KNOWING? (24)

‘To know’, in the real sense, is ‘to be’.

You were Peace or Happiness in deep sleep. It is a fact and a certainty. How do you know it now? Whatever you think or say about it is wrong. Thought and statement both take place in the sphere of duality and refer only to objects distinct and separate from you. But at the point of knowing in deep sleep, you were in identity with Peace or Happiness. It is not possible for the mind to know it or remember it. It was pure being alone. Real knowing is always being, and answers only to the Truth.

But worldly knowing is always separate from you, and answers only to satisfaction in the mental level. Your goal should always be the ‘Peace’ of deep sleep, which is ‘being’ itself and not anything expressed or expressible.

You say you are a man, because you know you are a man. But when you know that you are a man, you can never stand as a man, but only as a principle distinct and separate from man. Therefore you are not man, but that principle which knows man, otherwise called the witness or knowledge.

Don’t you say you ‘feel pain’? But is not pain itself a feeling? Therefore the statement is redundant. It is also wrong to say you ‘know the pain’. Because here knowing and feeling are both mentations. They are not possible simultaneously. But it is our experience that we know the mentations simultaneously. This is not known by the mind itself, but is known from a higher plane, by the witness.

The witness’s knowing of a thing is ‘being it’. It is the consciousness in the thought or perception of the thing itself that is the witness. The ego knows a thing only as subject and object. The ego is the false identification of the body, senses and mind with the real Self. The objects of the ego also suffer from the same false identification with the Reality. The purpose of the witness is to reveal this false identification of the object with the reality.

The witness has been defined as the consciousness in the object itself. Consciousness transcends both time and space. As such it can never see the object as separate from it – either in time or space. So it sees the object as itself. Thus it is the ‘being’ in the object itself that is called the witness, in order to eliminate the objectivity of the object. Then the object ceases to be object, as such, and stands as Consciousness.

1283. THE COURSE OF LIBERATION IN SHORT. (25)

The course of liberation, or the solution of the world, consists of only three simple steps.

1. Malady: *The wrong identification* with body, senses and mind, by which man appears to be bound and becomes miserable.
2. Remedy: *Separation*. Body, senses and mind are shown to be distinct and separate from the real Self, which stands as the perpetual knower or witness.
3. Recovery: *Right identification*. Standing as that witness, you stand identified with the being, and the witnessed disappears. Then the witness ceases to be witness, but stands as the ultimate Reality – Consciousness.

4th April 1957

1284. WHO KNOWS MY IDEAS? (26)

Certainly not another idea. Because two ideas cannot exist simultaneously.

It is the transcendental Consciousness alone that can know an idea and know it not through the subject-object relationship, but by being identical with it. It is the non-empirical Consciousness that knows the idea; just as you know happiness in deep sleep, by being identical with it.

The moment an idea is known, the material part of the idea drops away and its essence – pure Consciousness – alone remains over. What you call an idea now is not really idea, as you presume, but only pure Consciousness. Because an idea is known by pure Consciousness, and Consciousness cannot know anything other than Consciousness.

Therefore, the ego's knowledge is also non-empirical. When you emphasize the Consciousness aspect, which is the essence of the ego, the ego gets immediately transformed into non-empirical Consciousness.

The moment you know Happiness, it is non-empirical and one with you.

Thus, whenever you know anything, you stand as one with the thing, as Consciousness pure.

1285. HOW IS AN OBJECT KNOWN? (27)

An object can remain as an object only if it remains distinct and separate from you, and yet connected with you in subject-object relationship. The object has necessarily to give up its objectivity in order to be one with you, or to be identical with you, when known.

This happens both in the relative level of the ego and also in the absolute level, with identity established in either case. In the level of the ego, the ego loses itself in the object and becomes identical with it, for the time being. But in the absolute level, you make the object lose itself in you, as Consciousness for ever.

1286. THE DEEP SLEEP STATE IS ALWAYS IN THE PAST. (28)

When you experience deep sleep, you stand identified with pure Consciousness or Peace beyond time. It can never be called the present in deep sleep. But when you refer to it from the waking state, you call the preceding state the 'deep sleep state' and then it is only an idea.

Similarly, every thought or perception is nothing but the ultimate Reality or knowledge, at the moment when you know it. But when you refer to it subsequently, you make an idea of it, which is not the thing referred to at all. This is the truth of the whole world, which – though a heap of thoughts, feelings and perceptions – is nothing but pure Consciousness.

1287. INDETERMINATE IGNORANCE IS ALSO THE REALITY. (29)

Because ignorance of everything is the same as knowledge of everything, which is pure knowledge. 'Everything' is an empty word, incapable of limiting knowledge in any manner. The generic of bhāva [being] or abhāva [non-being] is one and the same.

4th April 1957

1288. REALITY CANNOT BE OBJECTIFIED. (30)

It is thought and speech alone that obscure the reality. So cease these activities and the Reality will shine in its own glory.

Do not try to objectify Reality. The yōgin tries to objectify what refuses to be objectified.

1289. THE STATES ARE NOTHING BUT CONSCIOUSNESS. (31)

The knowing act is the last act or link in the chain of any activity. There is nothing else, anywhere, to know it. The last knowing act, without itself being known, is non-empirical and is the ultimate Reality.

Every knowing in the relative level can be referred to a knowing beyond. The last one is transcendental Consciousness. The transcendental Consciousness alone can witness the states. Transcendental Consciousness cannot witness anything other than itself. So the states are nothing but Consciousness.

1290. HOW ARE STATES EXAMINED? (32)

In deep sleep, the concept of general ignorance is destroyed, in order to show your real nature.

Ignorant knowledge gives reality to objects, forgetting its essence – knowledge. Here, in the waking state, your ignorant knowledge is destroyed, in order to show that you are the transcendental.

1291. WHAT IS *SARVA-JNYATVA* – ALL-KNOWINGNESS? (33)

The ‘all’ here is only one object which has to be disposed of, like any other object, and shown to be nothing but Consciousness, the real Self. This is all-knowingness (*sarva-jnyatva*).

1st May 1957

1292. M.M.H. asked: I KNOW GURUNĀTHAN IS IN ME. STILL WHY DO I DESIRE TO GO TO TRIVANDRUM TO SEE MY GURU? (34)

Answer: Your Guru is in you as yourself – the ultimate Truth. That is everywhere. But your Guru as he is in Trivandrum is something more than that. There he also has a living body which has been instrumental in liberating you, and towards which your love and adoration flow spontaneously. Therefore you have to go to Trivandrum to fulfil that desire, not any more to understand Truth. But, of course, your establishment in Truth gets firmer with every such visit.

Actually, whenever you think of your Gurunāthan you are at Trivandrum.

1293. HOW FAR CAN THE BOOK OF A SAGE HELP AN ASPIRANT? (35)

There is as much difference between a Sage and his book as between yourself and your image in a mirror. The image is devoid of the life principle which is the very

substance of the original. The image is a reflection of the exterior alone and has no interior.

Similarly, the book or language can convey only the mere exterior of Truth. But Truth has no distinctions such as exterior and interior. Therefore nobody can get at the essence of Truth through books or through language alone. A book, as such, is dead and inert, and cannot answer a new question arising from the one dealt with in the book. Whenever you read a book, you read something of your own sense in it. This, however, you cannot do when you read the books of your Guru.

Language is limited, but the Guru is unlimited. If anybody considers the Guru to be limited, by a particular body or mind, he is wrong and that conception is not the real Guru. But if body and mind cease to have their character as such, they are also the Guru.

2nd May 1957

1294. RELATION OF THE OBJECTIVE TO THE SUBJECTIVE (36)

The objective world does not include the subject. But the subject includes the objective world. Therefore, you cannot find a correct explanation of the objective world from the objective world itself, but only from and through the subject.

1295. THE GURU THOUGHT (37)

It is taken indiscriminately in more than one way.

One such way is the thought: 'I am the Guru.' *This is forbidden*; because, by that thought, the ultimate is crushed and the apparent 'I' gains in strength.

But in the next thought, 'The Guru is in me', the ultimate will gradually devour the 'me' and leave one as the ultimate Truth.

1296. THE VISION EXPERIENCED BY THE YŌGIN (38)

When the world is examined objectively, emptiness is the background of all appearance, because it is there before and after appearance. Examining it subjectively, your Self – Consciousness – is the background.

This emptiness is thus Consciousness itself. This is why the yōgins see emptiness when the world disappears; because they look at all things objectively.

If you ask why the world appears, you must ask the world and not me. The world must explain itself to you.

6th May 1957

1297. WHAT IS LIFE? (39)

A headache is a feeling. But we say: 'I feel a headache.' It is impossible to feel a feeling. But in fact you stand as that feeling. You are that. But then, the 'that' also disappears and you stand as yourself alone.

So feeling or thinking is being the feeling or thinking itself. This is the Truth. But you separate yourself from thought or feeling, and that is life. Whenever the mind functions, you are spatializing the absolute.

1298. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU REMEMBER? (40)

When you think of something you had perceived elsewhere, you are really in thought, taking yourself over there and trying to have the same direct experience of the thing as you had on the first occasion. It is never possible to take the thing over to where you are, as one ordinarily imagines one can.

20th May 1957

1299. I DO MY SĀDHANA IN THE WAKING STATE. HOW CAN THE DREAMER BE BENEFITED BY THAT? (41)

A question in the waking state should have reference only to a waking subject or a waking object. A dream can never be either. So the question, as it is, cannot arise.

But the so called dream comes out as an idea in the waking state. An idea is nothing but Consciousness. A thought in the waking state about a dream comprehends only the dream state. But an answer to that on the spiritual level comprehends all the three states, because it takes you beyond all states.

A dream really means all that which has passed away. Therefore, the answer to a question about the so called waking state rightly includes the dream state as well. Whatever is past is an idea. A dream never exists in the present. So it is only an idea. A waking state experience may be said to have had a present, and it subsequently becomes the past. But the so called dream state has never had a present. If you say that during the dream you were in the present, I say it was at that point of time not a dream but a waking state. So, on that score also, there never was a dream. Therefore, there is only a waking state or only a dream state.

So there is no room for comparison. Reference can be made only to the past. By the time you perceive anything, the thing said to be perceived is in the past.

25th May 1957

1300. I AM CHANGELESS. (42)

The very mention of one's age proves that one is changeless, at that period of time. Therefore one is changeless through all time. Space is derived from time. Therefore one is changeless as regards space as well.

If I say I am 57 years old now, it means that I have been changeless all through the apparent changes I have undergone – like childhood, boyhood, etc.

That which appears on Me is life. That which gets separated from Me is death. Looked at from a deeper level, even death forms part of life.

26th May 1957

1301. HOW IS THOUGHT EGOLESS? (43)

During the occurrence of a thought, you do not have the thought that you are thinking. You stand identified with the thought itself, and so there is no duality or ego. It is after the event that the ego comes in and claims that he thought. This is a lie. Therefore, every mentation is egoless, at the moment it occurs.

You know every mentation just as you know Happiness in deep sleep. By being it.

1302. SPIRITUAL SPHERE AND SHĀSTRAS (44)

The spiritual realm is covered by three progressive stages, namely:

1. *Ajāta-vāda* [‘There is no creation’ – the final, subjective stage],
2. *Drīṣṭi-sṛīṣṭi-vāda* [‘Perception begets creation’ – the intermediate, mental stage], and
3. *Vyavahāra-pakṣha* or *sṛīṣṭi-drīṣṭi-vāda* [‘Creation is perceived’ – the worldly, objective stage].

Most shāstras abound in the third (the lowest) stage of vyavahāra-pakṣha. Their variety and volume confound the ordinary reader with their innumerable arguments and counter-arguments – all purely academic. In all those arguments, the trace and colour of the waking state is felt and emphasized.

The correct approach is to stand as the awareness that witnesses the states. That alone is the Truth, and that alone has the right to speak of any state. When you know the waking state, you stand separate from the waking state, and then the waking state disappears as such.

‘If you but open your mouth, advaita is gone.’

28th May 1957

1303. WHAT IS MEMORY? (45)

Memory is past, and memory is about the past. Memory is something which upholds non-experience as experience, as though it has taken place in the past. The sense of experience is taken as the only proof.

But really there was no experience and memory can be no proof of it. Memory and experience depend upon each other for their very existence. So both are non-existent. Thus memory is a misnomer.

1304. HOW NOT TO FORGET THE TRUTH? (46)

Suppose you light a cigarette and continue to talk. If you forget the cigarette, it will be extinguished. So you have to allow it frequently to remind you of itself. Similarly, you need only to allow Truth to come in uncalled, whenever you happen to forget Truth in the midst of activities.

1305. KNOWLEDGE OF OBJECTS, IF INTELLIGENTLY PURSUED, TAKES ONE TO TRUE KNOWLEDGE. (47)

You know that there is a knowledge which stands knowing this limited knowledge. Immediately, you turn your attention to it. When you stand as that background knowledge, all the rest disappears and you are left alone in that pure knowledge.

Just as light has to be present before an object is seen, knowledge is there as knowledge or awareness, before it appears as the knowledge of an object. The knowledge of an object is changing; but the knowledge before and after the knowledge of an object is changeless, and therefore real.

Let the knowledge of objects turn your attention to that Reality behind, and you shall soon be established in it.

1306. THE BANE OF OBJECTIVITY AND ITS REMEDY (48)

The knowledge that every mentation is nothing but pure, impersonal experience takes one to the height of Vēdānta. Objectivity, in any form, is the only obstacle to Truth. If you transcend it, the subjectivity also naturally disappears, and you stand as the Reality yourself.

Objectivity does not pertain to the object. Consciousness objectified is the object. The object is an object on account of you. The world of objects never affects one, except through one's own thoughts. Therefore the only thing needed, to be free, is to transcend thoughts. This is possible only by examining thoughts and disposing of them, without leaving even a trace behind. The trace is the objectivity attached to the thought. This objectivity can be eliminated only by examining thought subjectively; and finding that it is nothing but awareness, the Self, and that all appearance was illusion.

If the least trace is left behind, it sprouts up in the form of memory, which is but a fresh thought. Memory is the one thing that creates the whole world, and memory is the last link that connects one with the phenomenal world. If memory is understood to be nothing but a thought, which in turn is nothing but pure Consciousness – the Self – then memory, and the whole world with it, is merged into the Self.

29th May 1957

1307. TWO PERSONAL QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS (49)

In the absence of our master, a stranger asked us: 'What difference can you mention between your master Shrī Kṛiṣṇa Mēnōn and other great men of India?' Of course our answer had to be polite but frank. We said: 'Literally, our master disowns everything, while the others are found invariably to own some things, if not many things.'

Another day the same stranger asked our master himself: 'Well Sir! How is your philosophy different from the philosophy of Jesus Christ or Gandhijī?'

To this Shrī K.M. promptly replied, with great personal respect towards the great men, but with greater regard for Truth itself: 'The answer depends upon the definition you give to the word philosophy. If by philosophy, you mean something meant to take you to the ultimate Truth, I have not known that either Jesus Christ or Gandhijī had any philosophy.'

30th May 1957

1308. IGNORANCE A MISNOMER (50)

Ignorance is only in retrospect or in the past. You cannot say there is ignorance now. It is only the positive knowledge of something that can posit the precedent ignorance of that something. Therefore, to say that there was ignorance before any finite knowledge is absurd. Thus determinate ignorance is not. Indeterminate ignorance is knowledge itself. Therefore ignorance in any form is a misnomer.

1st June 1957

1309. MEDITATION (51)

It is an activity of the mind and is purely yōgic in character. Its process consists of spatializing the object of its meditation, chiefly outside and in front of the one who meditates. Even if one tries to meditate on the formless, this idea of space and of the outside comes in.

If one who has heard the Truth from the Guru can transcend this tendency of spatialization, meditation can well be used to establish oneself in Truth. For this, the first thing one has to do is to give up the outside, and to draw the meditation within, into one's own inside or the Self. The inside is supposed to be the seat of the subject, and there the subject-object differentiation is not possible. Then spatialization ceases, and one stands as the real Self.

1310. DEVOTION (52)

So also bhakti or devotion is a mental attitude directed to an object, generally an *iṣṭa-dēva* [a chosen form of God]. This by itself does not give the ultimate result, mōkṣha.

Mōkṣha [liberation] is impersonal. To attain mōkṣha, the goal of bhakti has to be gradually changed to the impersonal, by understanding the nature of God. But the truth about God is that it is the highest concept of the human mind. Therefore, a subjective examination of the mind has to be gone through and its background, the Self, visualized. This can never be done by the mind alone, unaided.

Hence the truth of one's own real nature has to be heard from the lips of a Sage (Guru). By that, one's own svarūpa [true nature] is immediately visualized. It is then that incessant devotion has to be directed to that goal. That is real bhakti, and it enables one to get established in Ātmā. That is mukti (liberation).

14th June 1957

1311. FUTILITY OF USING THE MIND TO KNOW THE TRUTH (53)

The mind functions in a long series of activities in the nature of subject-object relationship. But the last action of the series is an exception to this order, and it is not known or remembered by any other principle. This knowledge is not exclusive. It is an action of perfect identification, by being it – as knowing Happiness in deep sleep, by being it. This last knowledge is non-empirical and so is transcendental.

This knowledge is not opposed to anything else, but is the ground of all empirical knowledge. It is only from this stand – as this transcendental knowledge – that the mind can rightly be analysed. This stand cannot be acquired by any amount of mental exercises or watching. You get that stand only on listening to the Truth, from the lips of the Guru. All mental exercises and yōga only strengthen the mind and tighten the hold of the ego, while what you need is to transcend the ego-mind.

Even empirical knowledge is nothing other than this transcendental knowledge. But, with the inception of thought or memory, you make the transcendental appear limited and separate it from yourself. This is how the mind makes a mess of the Truth. To use such a mind to understand the Truth is foolish.

Even when the mind dies a natural death in deep sleep, one stands free as this transcendental knowledge. Therefore, create the same condition knowingly, by ignoring the mind and its vagaries altogether and going beyond it, in the light of the transcendental Truth as heard from the Guru. There is no other path to true liberation.

All the so called paths only pave the way, and some even obscure and distance the Truth. Therefore beware. Beware of promises, pleasures and powers achieved or anticipated. All these seduce you from the Truth.

17th June 1957

1312. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SAY, 'I KNOW HIM'? (54)

It is not the body, senses or mind that is known. It is the mutual recognition of the impersonal 'I' in both, in sublime identity. It is non-empirical knowledge itself. No subject can become an object. Both are one and the same Absolute, beyond both individuality and universality.

The indeterminate (nirvishēṣha) knowledge or ignorance is Truth itself. Examine deep sleep. You are there, happiness is there and knowledge is there, but in identity with you. God is only a concept, while you are no concept but the Truth itself.

18th June 1957

1313. TRANSFORMATION (55)

It is only the snake [illusion] that gets transformed into the rope [reality]. But, on the other hand, the rope never gets transformed into a snake.

1314. WHAT IS PRATYAKṢHA (DIRECT EXPERIENCE)? (56)

Is it body, senses, mind, intellect or something still higher, which sometimes corrects even the intellect? Certainly the last is the nearest, and so relatively more direct (pratyakṣha) than all the rest.

1315. HOW TO ROOT OUT PAIN? (57)

Question: Though I have been told that I am not the body, senses or mind, I am not able to escape from or forget suffering when it comes?

Answer: Evidently, you want to replace pain by pleasure. The truth is that both these are illusions, and that you stand as that Truth even when pleasure and pain come and go. It is not removal or forgetting the pain that is sought, but only the right knowledge that pain and pleasure are nothing other than your real nature – Consciousness. Therefore, you are not affected by whatever may come.

19th June 1957

1316. PEACE AND ACTIVITIES OF BODY AND MIND (58)

One can be said to be perfectly healthy in body and mind only if no part of the body or mind makes itself felt. A part makes itself felt only when there is something wrong with it. You know that you have a head only when it aches.

You know things in the waking and dream states by separating them from yourself. That is when duality comes in. So in the case of the healthy man, the body and mind continue to function smoothly, without making any one of them specially felt; and in this way, he remains in a state of external peace, short-lived though it may be.

But in deep sleep, you stand in your own glory, when neither the body nor the mind comes in to disturb your real nature of Peace. Even with phenomenal knowledge, at the moment of knowing, you stand in identity with the object, in perfect non-duality. It is only subsequently that you import thought and separate the thing known. When there is identity, thought or recognition is impossible.

All this is concerning the involuntary experience of peace one has occasionally, though this peace depends upon the incidental subsidence of activity. This is made permanent and independent of the presence or absence of activities in the case of the *jīvan-mukta*, by his conscious experience of the nature of Peace, his own real Self. The apparent activities of his body, senses and mind do not disturb the tranquillity of his nature.

When you really know a thing, you stand identified with that thing. But, when you *say* you know, you do not know.

1317. HOW TO MAKE USE OF ANALOGY IN A SPIRITUAL CONTEXT? (59)

Every analogy in a spiritual context should immediately be applied to the subject, and the truth revealed thereby.

Take for example the snake in the rope. The snake is symbolic – representing the whole world, including all appearances. The rope is the changeless background ‘I’ or Consciousness. Nothing other than the rope has ever been there. Therefore the snake is *not*, and so also the world is *not*. You are alone the ultimate Truth.

22nd June 1957

1318. INCOMPETENCE OF DUAL YŌGA AND BHAKTI TO LEAD TO THE ULTIMATE TRUTH. (60)

Both yōgins and bhaktas utilize their mind as their only instrument of *sādhana*. Their attempt is to concentrate upon a set ideal or the form of an *iṣṭa-dēva*. Both these are nothing but concepts of the mind, even though it may be as expansive as *brahman*.

Relatively speaking, a concept is only a fraction of the mind. The goal of yōgins and bhaktas is to merge the *dhyātṛi*, the one who meditates (including his whole being of *sat* and *cit*), in the *dhyēya*, the object of the meditation. This is impossible.

But what happens is only a long forgetfulness of oneself, as in deep sleep. This state does not profit you any more than the usual deep sleep. Coming out of it, you are exactly the same old individual. Therefore yōga as such never takes you anywhere beyond the mental realm. This inefficacy of meditation is exposed by *Shrī Aṣṭāvakra* in the verse.

acintyaṁ cintamānō 'pi cintā-rūpaṁ bhajaty asau
tyaktvā tad bhāvanaṁ tasmād ēvam ēvā 'ham āsthitaḥ

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 12.7

1319. THE APPROACH OF THE JNYĀNIN COMPARED TO THAT OF THE YŌGIN (61)

The condition of the jnyānin is expressed in the luminous line of Shrī Aṣṭāvakra.

sama-duhkha-sukhaḥ pūrṇa āśā-nairāśyayōḥ samaḥ .

[You are that being which is perfect:
just the same in pain and joy,
the same in hope and in despair...]

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 5.4

The yōgin tries, by dint of exercise, to be callous to pain as well as pleasure, or to forget both. This does not help him for long. Because he comes back to his body and mind after some time, and then they affect him adversely with redoubled force. But the jnyānin sees by discrimination that he is the witness to both pain and pleasure even when they appear; and so he remains ever unaffected by the opposites. This was illustrated by the following incident which actually took place recently.

A Sage who was also a great yōgin had a cancer and was operated upon by the doctor without anaesthetic. He stood the operation with such composure as though nothing was happening. This strange conduct surprised an eyewitness who was also a disciple, who was himself on the way to the Truth. This disciple later narrated this incident with visible emotion to his Guru himself, when he had recovered. The Guru wanted to correct the disciple without wounding his feelings. So he asked the disciple in all apparent seriousness: ‘What part of the great man was performing the miracle of taking the mind away from the centre of operation and escaping from the pain? Was it the yōgin in him? Or was it the jnyānin in him?’

Disciple: ‘Certainly the yōgin in him.’

Guru: ‘How was it possible?’

Disciple: ‘As a result of his long yōgic sādhana and the resulting powers.’

The Guru continued: ‘But the jnyānin in him was absolutely unconcerned about either pain or pleasure, since they do not affect him as their background.’

Composure and consternation are both mental. The yōgin sticks to the former and remains in the mental realm. The Jnyānin stands beyond, clearly transcending the opposites. The exhibition of miracles by the yōgin has no truth value at all, and the appearance of the common place in the activities of the Jnyānin does not take away even a grain from his absolute Truth value.

Shrī Vidyāraṇya immortalizes this truth about a Jnyānin in the words [the quote below is a Malayalam translation]:

irunniṭṭō, kiṭanniṭṭō, paṇipetṭō, peṭāteyō,
smariccō, vismariccōtān cākāṁ bhramam udicciṭā

[Seen sitting up or lying down,
remembering or forgetting things,
in trouble or untroubled, no
confusion can arise at body’s
death, for one who has realized.]

Bhāṣha Pancadashi, Mahābhūta-vivēka, 119 (Malayalam translation)

‘The “I”-principle or awareness is the real revelation – the revelation of the three states.’

‘The subject is constitutive of the object.’

‘The moment you perceive and know the object, the object abolishes itself (disappears by self-sacrifice) and reveals the Awareness.’

‘The very word “appears” signifies Awareness, and that Awareness is my real nature.’

‘Objects point to you – abolishing themselves.’

‘To become aware of the fact that I am birthless and deathless is real liberation.’

‘To get established in that certitude is *jīvan-mukti*.’

1320. KNOWING THE ‘I’ (62)

When I say ‘I’, I know what I mean. So also when you say ‘I’, I also know what you mean, because the ‘I’ is already familiar to me. This knowledge is obtained by identity alone. Therefore even if the sayer means only his body and mind, still one who knows the Self, knows him also to be that Self.

Knowledge of Self is knowledge *as* Self.

22nd September 1957

1321. SIGNIFICANCE OF ‘AUM’ (63)

‘Aum’ has three distinct parts: ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’, representing the waking, dream and deep sleep state experiences. Examining each part separately, you find that each part is a twisted manifestation of pure sound which represents Ātmā – the ultimate Reality. It is the sound itself that appears twisted as ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’. This sound is thus in the manifestation, between the three parts and beyond them. Knowing that this pure sound represents Ātmā, the real ‘I’-principle, if you repeat or listen to the repetition of ‘aum’, you will get more and more firmly established in the Reality.

‘I shine in my real nature between mentations, as mentations, and beyond mentations.’

15th October 1957

1322. SOME ASSERTIONS (64)

Religion, scholasticism, yōga, devotion etc. can never by themselves take you to the ultimate Truth. But of course they help you in their own way, to prepare the ground to receive the truth at last from the Guru.

The totality of one’s experiences consists of the three states, together with the most important factor – awareness – standing out of the states as the knower or witness thereof. But this factor is usually ignored.

The name ‘deep sleep’ is only a synonym for the real ‘I’-principle.

The Awareness is the witness or knower of the appearance and disappearance of the states, and also of the content of each state.

22nd October 1957

1323. THEORY AND PRACTICE (65)

Theory is speculative thought or mere supposition existing only in the realm of the mind, in order to explain something in the phenomenal.

Practice is that which brings thoughts to the body level.

Truth is beyond practice and theory. To bring down the 'I'-principle to the mental level as theory, and still further to the body level is absurd. You learn swimming from theory in books. It is only he to whom body is all important that wants practice and depends upon theories. It is the ignorant man that does so.

If you begin to theorize or practice Truth, it ceases to be the Truth as such. Is 'I am' a theory? What is more immediate and intimate to you than 'I am'? So it is beyond theory and practice. 'I am jīva' is theory. 'I am body' is practical to the layman.

To apply theory and practice to 'Truth', upon which they themselves depend for their very existence, is absurd. Don't follow the line of error, by reversing the process of the line of Truth. Body is comprehended by mind and mind is comprehended by Self, in the Jnyānin. In the ignorant man, body holds mind and mind holds Self.

Even thinking or meditation distances the 'I' from you. So you are asked only to repeat what you are, and not to think or meditate. The knowledge of the 'I'-principle is experiential knowledge, and even 'Consciousness' may be called theory.

29th October 1957

1324. WHAT IS THE KNOWN? (66)

When the variety is seen and reality is attributed to it, see that you are an ego-ridden being.

Without the 'I' (aham) being there, there can never be the 'this' (idam). So the this is nothing other than the Truth (the *svarūpa* of the 'I').

The 'I' is known only in identity. The generic of anything is neither space limited nor time limited. The known, when it is known, ceases to be known, abolishing itself as such.

23rd December 1957

1325. ARE YOU HAPPY? (67)

When you say you are happy, you are not happy. For then, you stand away from your happiness and are objectifying it. When you are happy, you are not happy in the literal sense, but you are happiness in identity, and then you do not know it.

Similarly you do not know the states. Take for example the waking state. You know the objects in the waking state. But do you know the knowing of the object? *No*. Remaining as part of the waking state, you can never know the waking state as a whole. So the waking subject can never know the waking state. But the transcendental principle beyond all states can alone know it. That principle cannot know anything other than itself, and that only in identity. So nobody knows the states. Therefore the states are *not*.

A Sage elevates his disciples not through tattvōpadēsha alone, but by all varieties of activities and inactivity. Truth is *differenceless*. The interpretation that deep sleep is

the experience one had in the past is purely a construction of the ego in the waking state.

1326. THE SUBJECT IS CONSTITUTIVE OF THE OBJECT. (68)

The object is made an object only by the presence of the subject as such. Therefore, to say that an object exists, when there is no corresponding subject to objectify it, is absurd.

Ignorance is an object only in retrospect, and there is never a subject to support it. This position is anomalous. Therefore ignorance is *not*.

24th December 1957

1327. WHAT IS THE SUBJECT? (69)

The last of a series of acts, without itself being known, is the subject.

1328. THERE IS CONNECTION EVEN IN SEPARATENESS. (70)

Even concerning the so called phenomenal knowledge, it is knowledge in identity. We say A and B are there, without any apparent relationship between them, except the recognition of the existence of each other. So there is this connection established between consciousness and existence. Thus, knowledge bridges the gulf of separateness.

1329. HOW TO SEE THINGS IN THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE? (71)

Suppose you see this stool. The following activities take place there.

1. The sense organs supply the form.
2. The mind supplies concepts or ideas.
3. The Self supplies the sense of Reality.

Of these three, the first and second items are disconnected and get connection only through the third, the Self. So, to see through the changeless Self is the right perspective. If you see through either of the first two items, which are changing, you cannot come to any definite conclusion.

The first is in space, the second is in time, and the third is beyond. So through the first two items, you come progressively closer; and in the third, you become one with your own Self – the Truth.

26th December 1957

1330. WHO SEES THE STATES? (72)

The subject who sees objects is called the ‘object-self’, which is in turn perceived by the real Self. The subject who sees objects is never seen by the subject himself.

If you say you are in the waking state, you are then *not* in the waking state, for certain. Because when you say so, you know the waking state as your object. The real Self alone can know it. But there is nothing else for it to know. So what appears as the

waking state is the real Self. So are all states. The waking subject has no authority to assert this.

When you say you know the waking state, the ego who asserts this either stands out and ceases to be the ego, or what he sees is only part of the waking state.

29th December 1957

1331. WHY IS IT MORE DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE WITH TRUTH THAN WITH UNTRUTH? (73)

Question: You reconcile yourself in a moment without any effort with the world which is a lie. But you find it very hard and take long to reconcile yourself with the Truth, even after visualizing it. Why is this?

Answer: Because you are yourself a lie and look upon Truth as something alien to you. Hence the delay in reconciling yourself with Truth.

30th December 1957

1332. EXPERIENCES OF TRUTH (74)

Truth is experienced in three ways:

1. Truth is before you, as objects of perception.
2. Truth is in you, as knowledge of objects.
3. Truth is yourself, as objectless knowledge, as Self.

3rd January 1958

1333. THINKING AND KNOWLEDGE (1)

Knowledge unites, in being or in identity. Thinking separates, in subject-object relationship.

Knowing has no place in the ordinary thought process. Thinking about something which has to be known is wrong, since it moves in a vicious circle. You cannot think of anything you have not known. Such thinking can never take you to the Truth.

But when you direct your thought to something (say yourself) which you have otherwise visualized, the thought loses its own characteristics and limits, and stands revealed as that Self (Consciousness) itself. Thought is thus reduced into its essence.

5th January 1958

1334. THOUGHT AND ITS APPLICATION (2)

Thought is applied usually in two ways, with opposite results.

1. It is applied *objectively*, in order to know something that is not already known.

The mind's natural tendency is to project the object of its thought into space, in terms of its own stock of former concepts. Therefore, when thought is applied with effort in this manner, to know any phenomenal object, gross or subtle, the object you consequently arrive at is pre-eminently an object of your own mind's creation. It is changing and so an untruth.

2. Thought is applied for the purpose of *recognizing the Self*, which you have already visualized on listening to the words of the Guru.

But when you direct your thought to the Self you have already visualized, it is a sudden switch-over to the real subject, which can never be objectified. The mind, in that attempt, loses its own sense of objectivity. Thus deprived of its own dross, the mind stands revealed in identity with the real 'I'-principle. Here, thought ceases to be thought, and helps you to get established in the Truth you have already visualized.

Suppose you decide to visit the seat of your Guru you know already. The moment you take that thought, you are there – at the feet of your Guru. Even the picture of the house of the Guru and all the long way to it vanish into insignificance. Your body treads the road mechanically, but the heart is at the goal. The thought directed to the Truth already visualized has the same effect.

7th January 1958

1335. WHAT DO I WANT AND HOW TO SECURE IT? (3)

You want to know only something which is existing. If you want satisfaction in the mental level from something which leans towards virtue, you become religious-minded and get momentary satisfaction. But if you want to know that which really exists, by the knowing alone you get something called 'Peace', which is the source of all happiness. It is of the nature of knowledge and existence. If you seek it, you limit it and miss it. If you want to know without any purpose, you spontaneously get Peace.

If you lose yourself in any knowledge, be it apparently limited, you get to Peace. Therefore, 'Lose yourself, lose yourself' in any kind of knowledge. That is all that you have to accomplish, and you get to Peace instantaneously.

Satisfaction is personal or private, and creates the many.

Truth is impersonal or public, and destroys diversity.

10th January 1958

1336. WHAT ARE THE STATES AND HOW TO KNOW THEM? (4)

The waking subject is the chief constituent element of the waking state. So he cannot know it. The 'I'-principle beyond cannot also know it, since there are no states in its realm. Similarly, the dreaming subject cannot know the dream state. The deep sleep state is also not known by the sleeper, if there is one. So the three states, as such, do not exist.

In fact all the three states are only one and the same background principle – Consciousness – and not states as they appear.

In the deep sleep state, you stand as that. But in the waking and dream states, you stand on memory and miss the Truth. Therefore, dispense with memory, and you are at once beyond all states and in Truth.

14th January 1958

1337. THE TURĪYA STATE AND HOW TO KNOW IT? (5)

In the turīya state or nirvikalpa samādhi, which results from the yōgin's meditation, the subjectivity merges in the objective ideal – a mere concept – set before him. Thus the subjectivity vanishes for the time being, leaving objectivity all in all. But still you are no nearer the Truth than before. You may even be said to be at a greater disad-

vantage in that state, because you have lost all power of initiative to help you to transcend the state.

Truth is beyond subjectivity and objectivity. It can be visualized only by the deep discrimination and reason one obtains on listening to the Truth from the lips of the Guru, in the waking state.

The yōgin's artificial states are all great obstacles to the smooth visualization of Truth.

17th January 1958

1338. WHY THE PATH OF NEGATION? (6)

A positive knowledge of Ātmā is impossible. Therefore the path of negation is adopted. Your position after negation of body, senses and mind is 'being it', though it is generally called 'knowing it'. There 'to know' is 'to be'.

1339. THERE WAS NO DREAM! HOW? (7)

The so called dreamer was never dreaming, from his own standpoint. The dream is only a thought of the waking subject when he was not dreaming. So there was no dreaming, at any point of time. Therefore, there was no dream.

1340. WHY DO DOUBTS SOMETIMES TEASE EVEN A JĪVAN-MUKTA? (8)

Question: Though I have clearly visualized the Truth, why is it that doubts still seem to arise often?

Answer: It is only in certain weak moments of the mind or ego, when it lays greater emphasis on its material aspect, that questions regarding certain parts of the world arise.

1341. WHY CAN'T ONE OBTAIN TRUTH FROM THE BOOKS OF A SAGE? (9)

This can be answered in many ways:

1. Who asks the question? Of course the ego-mind. The mind can understand only in terms of the mind. The Truth transcends the mind and so cannot be understood in terms of the mind. You read books and understand them only at the mental level. Therefore Truth cannot be understood from books.
2. Truth cannot be understood from anything other than the Truth. Because everything other than the Truth is untruth. Thus book, as such, is also an untruth; and anything understood from it, by the mind, is also untruth.
3. The question itself is the product of ignorance. The question presupposes that Truth can be obtained from somewhere else, as an object of the mind. But the fact about Truth is that it is the Self. You are that always, and the question of obtaining it is wrong and does not legitimately arise. It is the activities of the body, senses and mind that obstruct your visualizing the Truth, your real nature.

Then you might ask how does the Guru help you. Truth being your real nature, it has not to be obtained from elsewhere, but the obstacles on the path have to be removed;

and then the Truth, being self-luminous, shines in its own glory. This is actually what the Guru does.

If a child asks where its body is, no book can teach it where it is. The nurse has only to remove the child's clothes and nothing else has to be done to show the child its own body. Similarly, the Guru creates the conditions wherein your real nature of Truth shines in all its glory, and the mind with all its questions disappears for ever.

15th February 1958

1342. LIFE (10)

(A casual statement.) The ordinary man's life is a swing between a tear and a smile.

17th February 1958

1343. HAVE THE STATES ANY LESSON FOR THE SPIRITUAL ASPIRANT? (11)

Answer: Of course. The three states give us lessons capable of establishing us in the ultimate Truth. But it needs a Kāraṇa-guru to direct our attention to those lessons and to interpret them correctly.

The lesson of deep sleep is that I get to my real nature of Peace and Consciousness, when I transcend body, senses and mind.

The lesson of dream and waking states is that it is the one Consciousness – my real nature – that divides itself into the subject series and object series, and that I am witness to all mentations.

1344. BONDAGE AND LIBERATION (12)

Bondage is identification with body, senses and mind.

Liberation is the giving up of that identification, by visualizing what you are, in the regular order.

1345. THE KNOWN FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES (13)

The lowest: Whatever is known is the knower himself.

Higher still: Whatever is known is knowingness itself.

And ultimately: It is pure Consciousness, the Self.

1346. IS THE SILENCING OF THE MIND OUR GOAL? (14)

No. It is only a means. It is achieved in two ways:

1. By utilizing meditation or yōga as the means to silence the mind. The mind gets into a state of nothingness or blankness where, it wrongly presumes, it identifies itself with the Ultimate. But no, the Truth is far beyond.
2. By utilizing right discrimination and reason to analyse the mind. The mind as such disappears, and you stand in your real nature. The activity of the mind is the only obstacle; and when it disappears, for whatever reason, you imagine you have silenced it. But really, the mind is dead.

1347. WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE STATES? (15)

A state as a whole can never happen to its own subject, which is comprehended in that state itself. It cannot happen to Awareness either, since they are in two different planes. And there is no third party concerned in the affair. Therefore the states are not.

A disciple: Is there any benefit in using good words and extending blessings and help to others?

Answer: Yes. If they come from you spontaneously.

1st March 1958

1348. WHAT ARE PROBLEMS, THEIR SOURCE AND REMEDY? (16)

It is you (the ego) who create your own problems, and you yourself in turn get entangled in them. The teacher (the Guru) has only to draw your attention to that principle which created the problems, and immediately the creator and the created both vanish. Then you stand by yourself alone – free from all problems, and for ever.

2nd March 1958

1349. WHAT IS MEANT BY EXAMINING A PERCEPT? (17)

A percept, at the outset, is distinct and separate from you. The process of examination is to bring it nearer and nearer the Self, and at last to merge it in the Self.

You examine the percept, identifying yourself with the perception; and then the percept vanishes, getting merged in the perception. Then the perception is examined in its turn, yourself standing as pure Consciousness. Then the perception also vanishes, as such, getting merged in Consciousness, ultimately leaving Consciousness alone.

parāg-ārtha pramēyēṣu yā phalātvenā sammatā
saṁvit sai 'vē 'ha mēyō 'rthō vēdāntō 'kti pramāṇataḥ

[Where any object is admitted
among others to be known,
what there results is consciousness
and that alone. Just that needs to
be known. That's what Vēdānta
demonstrates, in everything it says.]

Pancadashī, Kūṭastha-dīpa, 11

1350. THOUGHT IS IMPOSSIBLE. HOW? (18)

Answer: Thought is possible only in terms of language. Language is possible only in terms of continued sound. But sound can exist only at a single point of time. Thus language as such is impossible, and so is thought.

1351. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'FORM', 'SEEING' AND 'CONSCIOUSNESS'? (19)

'Seeing' is the verb-form of 'form', because seeing goes into the make of form.

‘Consciousness’ or Awareness is the noun-form of ‘seeing’; because, without Consciousness, seeing cannot be seeing.

6th March 1958

1352. ĀTMĀ IS ANYHOW UNAFFECTED. THEN WHY CAN’T I LIVE AS I CHOOSE?
(20)

What does it matter to you if Ātmā is unaffected? You are miserable only when you are affected, and it is only then that you seek a remedy. Or in other words, it is only then that you earnestly want to be unaffected. For this, there is absolutely no other means except to be the Ātmā itself. Know that you are that, and be free.

1353. “‘I’ AS ĀTMĀ AM UNAFFECTED.’ (PANCADASHĪ) THEN WHY SHOULD THERE BE ANY BREAKING OF THE ‘KNOT OF THE HEART’ (‘HRĪDAYA-GRANTHI’)? (21)

Answer: Don’t forget the former part of the statement. That itself is the cutting asunder ‘the knot of the heart’.

The former part of the statement is: “‘I’ as Ātmā ...’. It means ‘I’ identifying myself with Ātmā, which is by nature unaffected. Here the knot already remains cut. Therefore, if that preamble is accepted, there is no need for any further effort in that direction.

1354. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF ALL PROBLEMS, AND HOW TO DO AWAY WITH THEM FOR EVER? (22)

Answer: The world is nothing but a bundle of problems raised in an unbroken chain by the ego, while he himself always eludes recognition.

All sciences and yōga run after analysis and the examination of individual objects, ignoring the arch-usurper – the ego – altogether. Their methods can never exhaust the world problem, nor end in any reasonable conclusion.

Therefore, the only right approach to solve problems is to direct attention to the subject of all this trouble, the ego. The moment you begin to do that, you unknowingly take your stand in the Awareness beyond the ego or the mind. Then the ego sheds all its accretions and stands revealed as that Awareness itself. Looking from that position, the baffling world problem disappears like mist before the sun, never to appear again.

1355. WHAT IS SPACE? (23)

The ignorant man thinks of objects as existing in space. But space as ‘this’ or ‘that’ cannot remain over, independent of the objects themselves. Space and objects both being mutually dependent for their very existence, they can both be disposed of as unreal. Then Consciousness alone is left over, as real.

Therefore space is a misnomer, and what appears as space is nothing but Consciousness.

1356. WHAT IS ‘MAHĀ-BUDDHI’? (24)

When the mind ceases to objectify, it is *mahā-buddhi* itself. The other terms – higher reason, vidyā-vṛitti and functioning Consciousness – are only synonyms of mahā-buddhi. This is the only instrument to help one to visualize the Truth; and this, though the birth-right of all human beings, can be awakened to active function only with the help of a living Kāraṇa-guru.

1357. WHAT IS MONISM? (25)

It is only a mental position, being the opposite of dualism. It is often mistaken to be non-dualism. Non-dualism is pure Advaita, which is a clear negation of both dualism and monism and stands beyond both. Advaita is what remains over, after rejecting all that stands as ‘this’ or ‘that’.

1358. WHAT IS THE SAFE ASYLUM FOR THE TROUBLED MAN? (26)

There can be only two asylums for anyone. They are the ‘I’ and the ‘this’.

The ‘I’, being impersonal and standing beyond the mind, cannot hold anything else. But the ‘this’ holds all the diversity of this world. Therefore, standing as the impersonal ‘I’, you have to examine the ‘this’ dispassionately. Then the ‘this’ gets reduced into the ‘I’ itself, which is nothing but the ultimate Truth.

1359. HOW IS THE COSMOLOGICAL OR TRADITIONAL PATH OF JNYĀNA DIFFERENT FROM THE DIRECT PATH? (27)

In the *direct path* (also called *vicāra-mārga*), if the aspirant is found to be tolerably sincere and earnest to get to the Truth, he is accepted as a disciple by the Kāraṇa-guru. Then the whole Truth is expounded to him; and the aspirant, who listens to the talks of the Guru with rapt attention, is made to visualize the Truth then and there.

Having secured the strongest certitude and affirmation from his own ‘Being’, regarding the correctness and intensity of his experience of Truth, he is asked to cling on to it in his own way. This clinging on, in due course, makes his own real nature of Truth more and more familiar to himself; and thus he gets gradually established in the Reality. There is nothing that can be an obstacle to him, at any stage.

But the case of the aspirant following the *traditional or cosmological path* to the Truth is quite different. After a long and arduous course of preliminary exercises, the Guru one day explains the meaning of the aphorism ‘*Tat tvam asi*’, and proves that the substance of the individual and of the cosmos is one and the same. But this knowledge remains with the aspirant only as indirect (parōkṣha) or objective knowledge. In order to make this knowledge direct and to experience the Truth, he has to continue his efforts for very many years, by way of contemplating on the three different aphorisms one after the other, each for a different purpose.

The main difficulties in the indirect experience of Truth (as ‘*Tat tvam asi*’, meaning *kūṭastha* and *brahman* are one) are:

1. The distance and strangeness of brahman;
2. The smallness of kūṭastha or ‘I’ as usually understood; and
3. The bigness of brahman, which is also a limitation.

Remedies: By deeply contemplating on the aphorism ‘*Ahaṁ brahmāsmi*’, brahman is brought into immediate and intimate contact with the ‘I’.

Next, by contemplating on the aphorism ‘*Brahmaivāhaṁ asmi*’, the sense of smallness usually attributed to the ‘I’ is sought to be removed.

Lastly, by contemplating on the aphorism ‘*Prajñānaṁ brahma*’ the sense of bigness (the natural corollary of the concept of brahman) is also eliminated, leaving the Self as Ātmā, the ultimate ‘I’-principle.

But according to the *direct method*, it is expounded at the very outset that ‘I am Consciousness’ (corresponding to the meaning of the last aphorism in the cosmological path). This does not leave any room for any subsidiary problem, and the aspirant visualizes the real nature of the self instantaneously. He has only to cling on to that experience, in order to get established in it.

8th March 1958

1360. HOW ARE HAPPINESS AND CONSCIOUSNESS ONE? (28)

From the experience in deep sleep, we see that Happiness is self-luminous, or that Happiness lights itself up. This ‘lighting-ness’ of Happiness is what is called ‘Consciousness’. Both are intrinsic in the Self. This is how one knows Peace in deep sleep. This is knowledge in identity. Therefore, ‘*Happiness can never be unintelligent.*’

1361. IS ‘VICĀRA’ THINKING ABOUT THE TRUTH? (29)

No. It is entirely different. ‘*Vicāra*’ is a relentless enquiry into the truth of the Self and the world, utilizing only higher reason and right discrimination. It is not thinking at all.

You come to ‘know’ the meaning and the goal of vicāra only on listening to the words of the Guru. But subsequently, you take to that very same knowing, over and over again. That is no thinking at all. This additional effort is necessary in order to destroy saṃskāras. When the possessive identification with saṃskāras no longer occurs, you may be said to have transcended them.

You cannot think about anything you do not know. Therefore thinking about the Truth is not possible till you visualize it for the first time. Then you understand that Truth can never be made the object of thought, since it is in a different plane. Thus thinking about the Truth is never possible. The expression only means knowing, over and over again, the Truth already known.

1362. A disciple asked: WHEN CAN I BE SURE THAT I AM SECURE? (30)

Gurunāthan: Do you ever think that you are that tree?

Disciple: No.

Gurunāthan: Similarly, knowing what you are, equally strongly, you are quite secure in the real ‘I’.

10th March 1958

1363. HOW DOES KNOWLEDGE FUNCTION? (31)

Knowledge is of two kinds:

1. Of the nature of subject-object relationship.
2. Of the nature of identity.

The former comprehends all phenomenal knowledge, and the latter pertains to spiritual experience alone. In the latter, ‘consciousness of self’ is to be understood as ‘Consciousness as Self’.

Peace in deep sleep can exist only if Consciousness is also there. That is, it must be understood as consciousness of Peace. But this is also ‘knowledge in identity’. Therefore the expression ‘consciousness of Peace’ has to be understood to mean ‘Consciousness as Peace’. Thus, Consciousness and Peace are one and the same, intrinsic in the Self.

1364. HOW IS SAMĀDHI BROUGHT ABOUT AND WHAT IS ITS REACTION UPON THE INDIVIDUAL? (32)

acintyaṁ cintamānō ’pi cintā-rūpaṁ bhajaty asau
tyaktvā tad bhāvanaṁ tasmād ēvam ēvā ’ham āsthitaḥ

Aṣṭāvakra-samhitā, 12.7

When you begin to think of the unthinkable, the mind is thrown into a state of nothingness, accompanied by a sensation of peace as pleasurableness. This state is called samādhī, which is nothing but a thought form.

Aṣṭāvakra and all other Jnyānins advise you with one voice to ignore it altogether. According to the Jnyānin, one can never get out of one’s own real nature, whether in samādhī or in the waking activities. Therefore, the Jnyānin is indifferent about both. But the yōgin can never claim to be that Reality, since he has not known it in the right perspective. Therefore, the yōgin is bound as much by samādhī as the ordinary man is by the world.

1365. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ‘OBJECT-SELF’? (33)

When you ask a question, you are the ‘object-self’ in the mental realm. Even an answer to the question from that level does not take you beyond, but keeps you in the same vicious circle. The object-self is always entangled in the whirls of diversity.

In order to extricate you from the object-self, you are told that you are the subject-self; and it is proved that you are, as such, a permanent and conscious principle. Being enabled to stand as that principle, all questions disappear and you find yourself free.

13th March 1958

1366. HOW TO VIEW OUR STATES? (34)

Our so called waking and dream states are in fact only a succession of waking states, all equally real. In the same waking state, we subsequently correct some of our experiences. E.g. the snake in the rope. Similarly, one waking state may be corrected from

another waking state; but we are never to take one state as waking and the other state as a dream.

1367. HOW IS THE SUBJECT CONSTITUTIVE OF THE OBJECT? (35)

It means that the subject goes into the constitution of the object. When you examine the object in the right manner, the subject is also unknowingly being examined. Then both disappear, leaving Awareness alone. The same argument applies to the whole world. Thus the whole world stands explained, as Awareness pure.

If the Awareness is directed to anything apparently different, that other thing becomes Awareness at once.

1368. WHAT DOES MY NAME DENOTE? (36)

Every name represents the Ultimate. The name given to me by my parents at my birth is the only one changeless thing that still continues with me, in the midst of the ever-changing body, senses and mind. Therefore, the name pertains to the real Self in me, and not to the body, senses or mind.

16th March 1958

1369. WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF REASON? (37)

Reason is generally of two distinct kinds. One is *vēdāntic*, and the other intellectual.

Vēdāntic reason is tri-basic in character, having sway over the experiences of all the three states.

Intellectual reason is only mono-basic in character, being applicable only to the experiences of the waking state.

21st March 1958

(A casual statement)

1370. 'WHAT YOU ARE, YOU SEE OUTSIDE.' (38)

Think over this.

1371. HOW DO THE OPPOSITES MEET AND WHERE? (39)

Love and hate are supposed to be opposites, in the phenomenal sense of the terms. Both need the presence of an object outside, in order to be worth the name.

Love, if expanded encompassing the whole universe, ceases to be love, having no external object for its application; and then it stands as the ultimate Truth.

Hate, likewise, if expanded encompassing the whole universe including one's own body, senses and mind, ceases to be 'hate'; and stands again as the same ultimate Truth.

Thus the opposites meet in the background. You must transcend both passivity and activity, in order to understand the Truth. Having first understood the Truth from the Guru, you can again visualize it whenever you want, either by extreme passivity or by

extreme activity. But without first having that understanding, no kind of activity or inactivity can be of any avail to you.

23rd March 1958

1372. A REFLECTION OF OUR OWN STANDARD (40)

Any desire or effort to know the Truth will certainly taint your visualization of Truth, to that extent. An effort amounts to desire. Both of them posit their own standards. The result will only be judged by such limited standards of satisfaction as are directed by the preceding effort or desire.

1373. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE 'I'-NESS AND THE 'THIS'-NESS? (41)

Life is a complex mixture of the 'I'-ness and the 'this'-ness. The 'I'-ness being the real subject is first explained by the Guru to the true aspirant, as the impersonal 'I' or real 'I'-principle or pure Consciousness or the ultimate Truth. Immediately he visualizes it.

The 'this' is something appearing distinct and separate from the 'I'. While the 'I' can exist independently in its own right, the 'this' cannot have a separate existence even for a moment. Therefore, in order to know the content of 'this', you have only to separate the 'this'-ness from the 'this'. It can be done with effort and sometimes without effort. Then the pure 'I' remains over, proving thereby that the 'this' is in essence nothing other than the 'I'. Therefore the world is nothing but the real 'I'.

1374. WHAT IS REAL RENUNCIATION? (42)

Renunciation, as it is usually understood and practised, is only renouncing or discarding distant objects in which you have a genuine interest, in favour of some other objects nearer and dearer to you, namely your own body, senses and mind. This is but a farce, not real renunciation; and it does not help you to approach the Truth.

The goal of renunciation is certainly to get at the Truth. In order to do that, you have to renounce the untruth in full. The apparent world is a mixture of subject and object. Of these, the real subject alone is the Truth; and all else is untruth appearing as objects, gross or subtle, including one's own body, senses and mind.

All worldly experiences can be reduced in terms of 'consciousness of objects' – 'Consciousness' being the real subject and the rest apparent objects. Therefore, in order to get at the Truth (Consciousness), you have only to renounce the 'object' from 'consciousness of an object'. Then Consciousness, the ultimate Truth, remains over in all its glory.

This is one of the accepted prakriyās (modes of approach) in the path of knowledge. If it is adopted under instructions from a Kāraṇa-guru (which rule has no exception), you will visualize the Truth *then and there*.

You are warned in this context that Consciousness should never be associated with the sense of outside or inside, as in the case of the objects.

1375. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUTH AND SACRIFICE? (43)

It is the way of the world to applaud anything that involves the least sacrifice of the comforts of the body, senses or mind. Accordingly, 'courage' in the phenomenal world is applauded because the interests of the body, senses or mind are partially sacrificed for the attainment of a particular goal.

But in the spiritual quest, one's stand is even beyond human courage. The spiritual aspirant knows that he is deathless; and by the mere thought of that fact, he transcends his own body, senses and mind, and stands in Truth. It is well beyond the realm of mind and sacrifice.

From the standpoint of Truth, all sacrifice is unreal. But in the relative level, it helps much to attenuate the ego; and to that extent, of course, sacrifice is welcome.

2nd April 1958

1376. IT IS OFTEN ASSERTED THAT NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING. BUT HOW TO ESTABLISH THIS? (44)

Gurunāthan: Take any example you like.

Disciple: I know I am a man.

G: All right! But before answering the question, don't you think it essential that a clear definition of 'man' has to be agreed upon?

D: Of course.

G: Then please define 'man'.

D: (After a pause) ... I find it very difficult.

G: Then I shall help you. You admit you are a man, he is a man, I am a man, don't you?

D: Yes, I do.

G: But individually, each one of us have different attributes. Still, there must be something in common to all men. That something is clearly attributeless. That is the real 'man'. That is the ultimate Reality. That is the real 'I'-principle. That can never be known and can never be defined, don't you admit?

D: Yes.

G: Then, don't you see that your position is quite untenable?

D: Yes indeed.

G: Therefore nobody knows anything, and all names are only names given to the absolute.

5th April 1958

1377. VISIONS OF THE GURU AND OF THE IṢṬĀ-DĒVA (45)

A disciple asked: The vision of the iṣṭā-dēva gives one ecstatic joy. I know that the Guru is far beyond the iṣṭā-dēva and that he is the only Reality. But why does it not give me the same ecstatic pleasure, each time I see my Guru?

Answer: We are brought up from childhood on a fund of samskāras which extol the personal God, and we have all along nourished an intense desire to visualize him. It is on this background that we get a vision of the iṣṭa-dēva, all in the mental realm. The depth of the desire and the glory of the iṣṭa-dēva, as conceived by the former samskāras, together create the excitement and joy in the mental plane.

But the darshana of the Guru is beyond the realm of the mind and of samskāras. It is spontaneous, and not the result of any long cherished desire or meditation. The darshana of the Guru at once takes you beyond the mental realm; and you experience by identity that ultimate Peace, one's own real nature. Therefore no spectacular joy is expressed there, as in the case of the vision of the iṣṭa-dēva.

3rd May 1958

1378. INSIDE AND OUTSIDE (46)

Question: What is the meaning of inside and outside (in the spiritual context)?

Answer: Refer to *Ātma-nirvṛiti*, chapter 15, verse 1: 'Experience and knowledge are inside. How can their objects be outside?'

What does 'inside' signify?

'Inside' strictly means not separate from the Self. Therefore, '*Experience is the Self.*'

1379. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I PERCEIVE AN OBJECT? (47)

Answer: The 'perception of an object' brings the object nearer and nearer to the Self, through the instrumentality of perception. But perception itself, when examined from the standpoint of the Self or Consciousness, is brought still nearer the Self, without the services of any instrument whatsoever. Just as 'perception' lights up the object, the 'I' in turn lights up 'perception' itself.

Both 'perception of objects' and 'perception itself' do not stop till each has touched me and merged into me, as Consciousness. Just as an object is reduced to perception, so also perception is reduced to Consciousness.

The illustration of the dream state proves this abundantly. If you begin to examine the dream objects disinterestedly – in the strict sense of the term – you unknowingly transcend the dream state and stand beyond.

Similarly, when you start to examine any object in the waking state, you spontaneously and unknowingly stand beyond the waking state.

1380. DISCARDING IDENTIFICATION WITH BODY (48)

Question: What is the difference, in discarding identification with the body, between an ignorant man and a jīvan-mukta?

Answer: In order to discard one's own body, one must first become convinced of the unreality of the body. One cannot be deeply convinced about the unreality of the body without being already conscious of the reality of the Self.

If an ignorant man discards his identification with his present body, he is sure to continue as another space-limited being, identifying himself with a body, gross or

subtle, or with the absence of all bodies as in samādhi. The absence of a body, like the possession of a body, leaves a samskāra behind and is still illusion.

But when a jīvan-mukta discards the body idea, he stands in all his glory in his own real nature, without assuming any other body. He is deeply convinced that it is his own Self – the ultimate Reality – that appears as the body; and so he rests in Truth.

1381. EXPERIENCES OF DEEP SLEEP AND OF SAMĀDHI BY THE IGNORANT MAN (49)

Question: What is the difference between the experiences of deep sleep and of samādhi, by one who does not know the nature of the content of either?

Answer: The experience in ‘deep sleep’, being spontaneous and uncaused, is purely vastu-tantra (creation of Truth itself), and leaves no trace of samskāra behind it.

But ‘samādhi’ is the product of severe effort, and leaves a strong samskāra behind which binds one to the object, viz. samādhi. This is called karṭri-tantra (caused by effort).

Therefore, of the two experiences, the experience of deep sleep is infinitely superior to that of samādhi.

1382. THE REACTION OF TECHNICAL TERMS AND TERMINOLOGIES UPON THE IGNORANT (50)

Question: What is the reaction of technical terms and terminologies upon persons who have not studied the śāstras directly under a Kāraṇa-guru?

Answer: To such persons, they are invariably deceptive. For example, take the phrase ‘aṇōraṇīyān mahato mahīyān’ [‘smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest’ – from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣhad*, 2.20]. Literally, the description is mentally incomprehensible. The real significance can be understood only from the experience of Truth. It really means that the Ultimate is neither small (aṇu) nor big (mahat), but is clearly beyond both concepts. This is Consciousness, the real ‘I’-principle. This, being beyond all concepts, can never be explained by the śāstras, nor understood by the mind.

30th May 1958

1383. SOCIAL SERVICE AND THE SAGE (51)

(Extract of a talk with Shrī A.P. at Bombay in 1950)

Question (A.P.): Why does not the sage do anything to alleviate the misery of the millions in society?

Gurunāthan: You have to establish your data, before calling for an answer to the question. Still, I shall take it up. So you take for granted that there is a society of millions, there is much suffering in society, and that each one should act to alleviate that suffering.

A: Yes.

G: Which society please? Don't you sometimes experience an equally real society in your dream, with even greater sufferings? Do you now do anything to alleviate the suffering there?

A: No.

G: Why not, please?

A: Because it is not real.

G: And this?

A: This we see as real, here and now.

G: And didn't you see that as equally real, then and there in the so called dream?

A: Yes.

G: Is there any difference between the two at the moment when each is experienced?

A: No.

G: Who is legitimately qualified to make any remark on the experiences of each state?

A: Only one who has been consciously present in each state.

G: Can there be any difference between the opinions of the two perceivers, regarding the reality of the realms each perceived?

A: No.

G: Then what is your evidence for saying that one state alone was real?

A: None.

G: Now do you admit that both states are equally unreal?

A: Yes.

G: The Sage, knowing this, does not run after his own shadow, and so appears to be indifferent.

Let us examine the problem from still another standpoint, confining ourselves to the waking state alone. Now what is it that really prompts you to do social service? Examine your heart dispassionately and tell me. You should give me the nearest source of the prompting.

A: I want to see them all happy.

G: Why? What would happen to you if they are not happy?

A: If they are unhappy, I am also unhappy.

G: So that alone makes you happy. Is it not?

A: Yes.

G: Now tell me, is it the prospect of your being happy or of their being happy that really prompts you? Or is it their happiness alone irrespective of its reaction upon you?

A:.. Both!

G: No, no, that cannot be. Suppose the government promulgates an ordinance prohibiting all kinds of social service activities. What would you feel?

A: Certainly, it would make me quite unhappy.

G: Now then tell me, is it your own happiness or the society's happiness that really prompts you?

A: Certainly my own happiness.

G: Now, have you known any instance of one who has attained perfect and permanent happiness through such objective means?

A: No. It is only temporary.

G: Now then, if one (the sage) has attained perfect and permanent happiness through other means, have you any other charge against him from your own standpoint?

A: No. Excuse me for my impertinent question.

G: But I have not finished, and I do not propose to leave you there. Let us look at it from still another standpoint. So you take society as a means or a medium to make you happy. Is it not a fact?

A: Yes.

G: Certainly this medium will often fail you, for different reasons beyond your control.

A: What else can we do to be happy?

G: Supposing you can rest in perfect happiness, without seeking the help of any medium whatsoever. What do you say about the prospect of it?

A: Wonderful! But how is it possible?

G: That exactly is what a Jnyānin does. He is dead not to society alone, as you suppose, but is dead to his own body, senses and mind as well. He is alive to his real nature alone, which is conscious Peace, the abode of Happiness. What more does he need, and what more can he aspire for?

A: Nothing. But a Jnyānin alone can be so.

G: No. Not so. You can also have it now and here, if only you really want it. If your desire to know the Truth is deep and sincere, you have only to take instructions from a Kāraṇa-guru (Sage) and listen to his talks which expound the Truth of one's own real nature. Immediately, you visualize the Truth and become free. Thereafter, for some time more, you have only to ward off the obstacles whenever they appear, clinging on to the Truth you have already visualized. Is it so difficult, if you really want it?

A: No, certainly not.

G: Now let us examine the problem from a still lower and human level. Social service usually functions on two planes.

The first is in the body level, catering to the basic bodily needs of society alone. This is the lowest and the most transitory form of service.

The second and slightly higher type of service is by extending education to the poor, so as to make them self-dependent and capable of acquiring better standards of life and comfort.

But this is also impermanent and uncertain, in the strict sense. Quite a small minority of society will still be dissatisfied even with this. To them remains always open the last and the best resort, the never failing royal road to Peace. This is on a still higher plane, beyond even the mind. There you stand beyond want, beyond pain and pleasure, as absolute Peace or objectless Happiness.

You can also attain this, but only by listening in person to the words from the lips of a Kāraṇa-guru. This is the realm where the sage always rests. He is never satisfied with giving dreamy doles, as social service workers do. He never encourages any propaganda inviting aspirants. He shows nothing spectacular about himself, though he can easily excel any yōgin in the field of powers. Naturally therefore, very few, who really want his help, alone come to him. He leads them to the state of perfect Peace, even in this life, here and now. He cannot give anything less; and when he gives, he gives only to those who really want it.

Now what do you think about your question?

A: Excuse me. I withdraw the question in all humility.

G: A word of clarification may still be desirable. Standing in my real nature, I stand as one with the whole world, and their suffering becomes mine. Is this not infinitely superior to your keeping others separate and trying to sympathize with them, much less to love them? You preach to others to ‘love thy neighbour as thyself’ and never tell them how to do it. Love is a sense of oneness with the object of your love. Is it ever possible to be one with another at the body level or at the mental level, where the sense of separateness persists? *No*. You can, at the most, sympathize with them in their suffering. And what is the result! You succeed in inviting some suffering to yourself also, without alleviating the suffering of others.

All these remedies at the physical and mental levels are adopted without enquiring about the Truth of the suffering, and therefore serve only to hide or cover the so called suffering for the time being.

The ultimate remedy is to examine whether the suffering is real or not. This is what the sage does. He examines it impartially, from the standpoint of Truth, and finds it all a dream, being confined to one state alone. Thus, for the sage, the suffering loses all its pangs. He invites the so called sufferer to wake up from his dream, and to see that the suffering is an illusion. This is the only permanent remedy for all ills.

But I do not deny that your social service activities have one redeeming feature about them. It helps the helper to attenuate his own ego, by giving him an opportunity to sacrifice his own comforts. But, it has to be said, the method is long and arduous, and the pitfalls are innumerable. Of course it helps to prepare the ground, as any other path does; and the aspirant has to take instructions from a Kāraṇa-guru to reach the Ultimate, the earlier the better.

1384. THE BLURTING OF AN INFLATED EGO (52)

A young man X, under the pangs of some phenomenal desperation, once said to his friend Y: ‘It is indeed terrible to live under the shade of a great man.’

To this the friend retorted: ‘Of course, excepting the Guru, in whose luminous presence it is simply marvellous to be living-dead.’

X: How do you say that?

Y: Please listen to me for a moment. If you meekly welcome slavery of any one kind, you cannot help being harassed by innumerable other slaveries from all around. According to your own statement, you admit yourself to be a small and helpless ego, reluctantly subservient to a greater ego. Indeed such a life cannot but be slavery of the first order. But slavery to what? Not to the apparently aggressive great man. But

slavery to your own inflated ego (constituted of a bundle of thoughts and feelings arising out of your wrong identification with your own body and mind). Withdraw first from that servitude and thenceforward slavery shall be a misnomer to you. Slavery is the offspring of duality.

In the presence of the Guru, be it in thought, it is perfect non-duality that obtains. Your ego in that presence is dead, for the time being, and the shadow of your ego continues to serve the Ultimate (the Guru) under all apparent conditions. Thus you are living and dead simultaneously, and your condition is all Happiness and glory of the Ultimate. So please look deep and revise your opinion, and cease to be a slave to anything.

1385. BE A CHILD IN KNOWLEDGE. (53)

What was Lord Kṛiṣṇa? He was a child in knowledge.

It is the absolute Ātmā and Ātmā alone that is the background; and it is Ātmā that seems to express itself and function without functioning. This may seem incomprehensible to the mind. But nobody can help it. Still, it can well be experienced directly. The mind must die in order to know it by identity alone.

Such a child was Lord Kṛiṣṇa, all through his life. An ideal sketch of his apparently phenomenal life, without losing its spiritual significance, is given in the following verse:

īṭatumiriparattunniprapañcaṁ samastaṁ
palatumirī vamikkum vahniyil bhasmamākkum
karumanapalatēvaṁ kāṭṭiyātmavarūpē
śiśutaviśadamākkum vastuvē satyamāvū

Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātmārāmam, 1.42

‘This entire universe, projected out of the left eye, is burnt to ashes by the fire emitting from the right. That alone shall be the ultimate Truth which stands established by such and many other pranks of a like nature, shown in pure childish innocence, never budging an inch from the real nature of Ātmā.’

Thus, he was the embodiment of Truth. But others saw him in diverse ways – according to their own tastes, tendencies and standards. The following verse by Shrī Veda Vyāsa pictures some of those:

mallānām āsanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smarō mūrtimān
gōpānām sva-janō ’satām kṣiti-bhujām śāstā sva-pitrōḥ śiśuḥ
mṛtyur bhōja-patēr virāḍ aviduṣām tattvaṁ paraṁ yōginām
vṛṣṇīnām para-dēvatēti viditō raṅgaṁ gataḥ sāgrajaḥ

Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 10.43.17

mallanmārkkīṭivāl, janattinaracan, mīnāṅkanēṇākṣimārkk-
illattil sakhivallavarkkarikhalarkkannandanōnandanān,
kālan kaṁsan, dēhikaḷkkihavirāṭ, jñānikkutatvaṁparam,
mūlaṁvṛṣṇikulattinennukarutī mālōkarakkaṇṇane

Malayāḷam translation of above, by Shrī Ātmānanda

‘He was the sword of lightning to the ruffian wrestlers, King to the subjects, cupid to the loving feminine folk, comrade to the Gōpas and Gōpīs in their own homes, enemy

to the wicked, son to Nanda, God of death to Kamsa, universal *virāt* to yōgins, ultimate Truth to the Jnyānin, and the source of the Vṛiṣṇi community. Such were the manifold ways in which the world looked, simultaneously, upon the boy Kṛiṣṇa.’ And they were all true – each at its own level. But to Kṛiṣṇa himself, he was a child in knowledge, pure and simple.

The same idea is expressed in the statement: ‘Ātma-bhāvē śiśu-svarūpō ’ham.’ [‘In the play of Ātmā, I am the true nature of the child.’] It was a statement made by Shrī Ātmānanda from the majestic heights of a spiritual mood called the ‘child’s mood’. The word ‘mood’ here should not be confused with anything like the complex modifications of the human mind, be it even the highly applauded state of mind ‘nirvikalpa samādhi’ itself. The word ‘mood’ is simply used for want of a better word in English and to draw your attention to something, and not to make you understand anything about its condition.

Question: And what is the nature of that child’s play?

Answer: The child in knowledge himself said one day. ‘The child’s play is heaven’s pride.’ It explained that immediately in its own language, as follows:

Nearest and immediate expressions of the absolute

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Light and joy, | 2. Love and power, |
| 3. Splendour and majesty, | 4. Beauty and goodness, |
| 5. Harmony and peace, | 6. Rich and full, |
| 7. Grand and noble, | 8. Pure and innocent, |
| 9. Calm and serene, | 10. Sweet and soft, |
| 11. Cheerful and happy. | |

Don’t mistake any of these for the Self. But you can certainly see me, the Absolute, through any of these expressions of myself.

2nd July 1958

1386. IṢṬA-MŪRTI – ITS SCOPE, LIMITATION AND PERFECTION? (54)

God is logically defined as the highest manifestation of the human mind. Similarly, the *iṣṭa-mūrti* [the form of God chosen for worship] is also the creation of one’s own mind. You give to it the form and qualities you like most, and therefore it is called ‘iṣṭa-mūrti’ [literally ‘embodiment of liking’]. It has exactly the same characteristics as an ordinary object, but with this difference – that it is highly magnified.

Let us examine an object. It is not an intrinsic, indivisible whole. It is constituted of three distinct and separate elements, namely:

1. Form (percept) which is the immediate creation of the sense organ concerned;
2. A fund of ideas (concepts) thrown out by the mind to supplement the former percept; and
3. A sense of existence (Reality or permanency) which forms the background upon which the former two can appear.

This last one – permanence or existence – can never be the contribution of either the changing senses or of the changing mind. It is the contribution of Consciousness, beyond even the mind. In order to get at the truth of any object, it has to be analysed

till its generic form is reached, eliminating the changing parts in the process. Then the object gets reduced to its essence or substance.

Neither the individual nor the 'iṣṭa-mūrti' is an exception to this rule. But the 'iṣṭa-mūrti' has one particular advantage over all other objects, in that it has no sensual or perceptual form to begin with. It has only a form of ideas or concepts, with universal qualities like all-knowingness, all-pervasiveness, almightiness etc. attributed to it. In order to understand the iṣṭa-mūrti correctly, one has to eliminate the form made up of ideas and qualities from the background 'existence'.

But this existence which is left over is, for the time-being, recognized by the aspirant only as nothingness or blankness. The meaning and the essence of this blank wall of ignorance still remains a mystery to the mind. The mind can never unravel it, by its own unaided efforts.

This same state is attained by following very many other paths and by exercises like meditation, devotion, chanting of mantras, and yōgas of different types. The aspirant is invariably stranded in this apparently pleasurable state, taking it for the highest or being unable to get beyond or being attracted by the sense of pleasurableness in the state.

In all these instances, the enquiry is made purely objectively, ignoring the subject altogether. It is true that the object is reduced to its most generic form. But the subject still remains as a subject. As long as the least trace of subjectivity remains, objectivity cannot disappear. And until objectivity disappears completely, the real nature of the object can never be visualized. This is the fundamental error committed by science as well as philosophy, both in India and outside, in trying to approach the Truth through the medium of the mind.

Remedy: It is only the 'Kāraṇa-guru', who is established in the ultimate Truth and who is prepared to lead another to it, that can help one out of this darkness. The aspirant has so far been examining things outside himself, from the self-assumed stronghold of the mind. But the 'Kāraṇa-guru', if one is fortunate enough to secure one, draws the attention of the aspirant away from the object, to the subject so far ignored. The truth about the real nature of this 'subject' is then expounded to the aspirant in the most unambiguous terms, in the light of the aspirant's own personal experiences.

He is thus enabled to visualize his own real nature, beyond the shadow of a doubt. He is then asked to review his former problems from his own real and permanent stand, just visualized. But to his utter bewilderment and joy, he finds every problem standing self-solved to perfection and himself free from all bondage. What appeared first as an insurmountable blank wall of ignorance, now appears as the most concrete and self-luminous Truth within.

1387. SOME OF THE PATHS USUALLY ADOPTED (55)

1. *The path of meditation*, as enjoined by the Ācāryas of old, has three distinct and progressive stages:

- a) 'Pratīka-dhyāna' (dhyāna or meditation in strict conformity with the gross model before the disciple): Here, by mere concentration, the aspirant tries to make a mental picture of the gross model in front of him.

- b) ‘Dhyēyānuṣṛita-dhyāna’ (allowing full freedom to the creative and decorative faculties of imagination, without impairing the skeleton of bare fundamentals): Here the gross model is completely dispensed with. The attention is slowly diverted from the dead form to its live features. All kinds of dualistic visions are experienced at this stage. All aspirants guided by ‘kārya-gurus’ (those dealing only with any particular aspect, art or trade) get stranded here, not knowing the way beyond, and satisfied with the limited experiences of happiness accompanying the visions. But the fortunate few, who happen to get a Kāraṇa-guru at least at this stage, slowly enter into the third state.
- c) ‘Aham-griha-dhyāna’ (in consonance with one’s own experience): There is neither gross form nor subtle quality in one’s experience. Experience is knowledge or Peace alone. Therefore, one gives up here the mental part of one’s meditation as well, and one is directed to cling on to the substance (knowledge) behind all appearance. This is possible only if one has already become familiar with the same knowledge or Self behind the mind. The aspirant, under positive instructions from the Guru, visualizes the Self and, by clinging on to it, is gradually established there.

2. *Devotion* is the most popular method adopted all over the world; but unfortunately, for the vast majority of aspirants, it is left incomplete.

It is usually inspired by phenomenal religion, ethics and blind faith; and therefore is inevitably blind in its application. It takes into consideration only the physical and mental aspects of the object of its devotion. These two aspects are transitory and therefore yield only transitory pleasures and transitory powers, though all this is in all humility attributed to the Lord. Most devotees usually get enamoured of this pleasurable state; and being afraid of losing the glamour of it, they stubbornly refuse to examine the content of their experience in the light of right discrimination. Thus they get stranded in that state of empty and fleeting pleasurableness.

Even Shrī Caitanya was no exception to this. His super-mystical experiences were the result of blind devotion, which kept the world spellbound for years, but at last they faded away. For a period of about twelve years, he was immersed in virtual stagnation. He is then reported to have approached a Sage (from a Shrī Shankara order), who initiated him into the ultimate Truth. The path being beautifully prepared and his heart being sublime as a result of his former experiences of selfless devotion, he could imbibe the spirit of vēdāntic instruction and instantly visualize the Ultimate.

This is the one path of liberation open to all devotees, if they earnestly desire to visualize the Truth, which alone can be called real salvation or liberation.

3. *The path of sound* is yet another common approach. Here, the chanting of a ‘mantra’ is the exercise adopted. It is done in four distinct stages.

- a) ‘Vaikharī’: Here the mantra is pronounced repeatedly in clear audible tones, and attention concentrated on the audible sound.
- b) ‘Madhyamā’: Here the gross, audible part of the exercise is given up, and the mantra is chanted silently or mentally. Late in this stage, one gets pleasurable experiences through the realm of sound, by way of ecstatic music, agreeable sounds etc. If the aspirant emphasizes the sound part of the mantra alone, he will be stranded in this harmony of sound. But if he is fortunate enough to secure a Kāraṇa-guru, the attention of the aspirant will immediately be directed to that

which manifests itself as sound. The meaning of the mantra and the source of sound are explained to him, and thus he is lifted up to the next stage.

- c) 'Pashyanti': Here the objectivity completely vanishes, and he visualizes the impersonal Truth which stands as the background of the harmony of sound.
- d) 'Parā': Where the aspirant gets established in this Truth, by clinging on to it.

4. *Yogas* (e.g. *Kuṇḍalinī yōga*): Still another class of aspirants take to the path of meditating on the various nerve centres or ādhāra-cakras – gross as well as subtle – assumed to be situated along the course of the spinal chord. This exercise is supposed to arouse the vital energy called 'kuṇḍalinī' – which lies dormant at the lower extremity of the spinal chord – and to raise it in gradual stages to the crown of the head. The aspirant obtains a variety of phenomenal experiences, as the kuṇḍalinī passes from centre to centre.

The whole process depends upon the concept of the centres; and the centres in turn depend upon the body, even for their very concept. Therefore, this exercise can never be expected to yield anything but relative results in the dual plane. This exercise also falls short of the ultimate goal.

On reaching the crown of the head ('brahma-randhra'), the yōgin finds his progress blocked by a blank wall of ignorance or nothingness. Therefore, he seeks a Kāraṇa-guru, and under his instruction visualizes the ultimate Truth and gets established in it.

Comparing all these so called paths and exercises, we come to the conclusion that they only prepare the ground for the aspirant, by purifying his mind and heart. He can then imbibe the ultimate Truth. The real light can be imparted only by the Kāraṇa-guru, 'in person'. There is no exception to this.

6th July 1958

1388. THE HELPLESS FALLACY IN EXPRESSING IN WORDS A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE (56)

'Spiritual experience' is only one. It is visualizing or knowing the real Self. It is knowing the self in identity, without the least trace of subject-object relationship.

Subsequently, the ego attempts to express that experience in words, without itself ever having been present in the realm of experience at all. In this attempt, the ego miserably caricatures the spiritual experience, in terms of the only standard available to it – the subject-object relationship. Here, name and form must come in. The ego poses itself as the subject, and tries to make the impersonal Self its object, by calling it 'happiness'. Thus the ego says it 'enjoyed happiness'. This statement is nothing short of a veritable lie, since the experience was unique and indivisible.

The ego is a spurious mixture of Reality (the Self) and unreality (body and mind). The presence of Reality, in the ego itself, enables the ego to remember something of the real experience. But the memory gets blurred, by the identification of the real with the unreal, in the ego. It is further distorted in the attempt to express it through the narrow media of mind and language.

Thus the experience, when expressed in words, appears to be what it was not.

8th July 1958

1389. ‘SARVA-JNYA’ (THE ‘ALL-KNOWING’) (57)

‘Sarva-jnya’ is a term often misunderstood and misapplied. Though spiritual in concept, it is more often used in the limited yōgic sense. It has two clear and distinct implications, ‘yōgic’ as well as ‘jnyānic’.

In the yōgic sense, it is invariably used as a personal noun. It presupposes a person as the knower and an ‘all’ (usually excluding his own personal self) as the known. Here, the knowing is purely of the nature of subject-object relationship. The first thing to be considered is whether such a knowledge – regarding the supposed ‘all’ – is humanly possible. The ‘all’ must imply a multiplicity of distinct and separate units or entities. The mind, by the very nature of its constitution, can conceive only any one thing at a time. Then the ‘all’, composed of infinite separate units, can never be the simultaneous object of the mind.

But they say it is objectified. How is this made possible? There is only one solution to the problem. The multiplicity of the composition of the ‘all’ is ignored completely; and the ‘all’, only in name, is conceived as an integral unit. This unit, recognizing no other object by its side, cannot have any of the distinct qualities of a sensual or mental object. Thus the ‘all’ takes the form of generic space, or mere absence of objects. For all practical purposes, this affords sufficient objectivity for the mind to hold on to. Having transcended diversity, there is the agreeable though reflected sense of pleasurable attached to it. The helpless yōgin considers this as the Ultimate and tenaciously clings on to it, giving the artificial state different names and being blissfully ignorant of his own relationship with that state or object.

The problem may also be examined from the standpoint of time. Time appears in its three forms: as the past, present and future. Mental knowledge functions only in the present. Experiences of all kinds also take place in the present. In the same manner, ‘sarva-jnyatva’ is also an experience in the present. It may allude to what you may call the past or future, but your experience is only *in* the present and *of* the present. Therefore, to say that you experienced the past or future, as comprehended by the term ‘all’, is absurd.

If the knower’s identity and the separateness of objects are preserved, the said experience of an ‘all’ is impossible. It may be possible, by dint of exercise, to expand the limits of the mind; so as to comprehend, within the limits of its ‘present’, many things which might legitimately belong to the past or future, according to the standards of others. But this offers no real solution to the problem. It only makes it all the more complicated. You are not enriched by any such experience of the ‘all’, in a yōgic manner.

But a *Jnyānin*’s view of ‘sarva-jnyatva’ is entirely different. The Jnyānin is one who has visualized his own real nature, as nothing but pure Consciousness and Peace. He knows that an object, when known, no longer remains separate, but gets merged in him as knowledge. He knows also that the ego or personality called his own is only one such object. Therefore, to him, the ‘all’ is only another such object; undergoing the very same process of transformation as any other object when known, and thus leaving only himself, not as knower, but as knowledge pure.

Thus to him, *sarva-jnya* means *sarva-jnyāna* or Consciousness pure.

31st July 1958

1390. THE PRESENCE OF A SAGE IS SURCHARGED WITH LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE.
(58)

It may be said to be highly ‘love-active’ or ‘knowledge-active’.

Mr. Bose asked Gurunāthan: I feel attraction and joy when I come near you. But I feel the opposite when I go near some others. Why?

Answer: When you come near me, you are spontaneously taken beyond body, senses and mind; because that is the gist of my teaching to you, and that may be said to be the realm in which I rest. Thus, you unknowingly dive deep into yourself when you see me, and you thereby touch your own background – the ‘Self’.

I am also standing as that background – the ‘Self’. The Self is only one. It is indivisible and is of the nature of Peace. This contact with the background gives you peace, which you call joy from the waking state.

But when you meet others, they are only the objects of your senses and mind, and you yourself remain as the ego in the mental level. Therefore you are always subject to the tribulations of the mind.

4th August 1958

1391. SEEING AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD (59)

Question: How do the ignorant man and the Sage see this world?

Answer: The ignorant man and the Sage both face the world, apparently in the same manner, but with one fundamental and subtle difference.

The ignorant man understands everything – including knowledge – in terms of the object, and experiences objects alone.

But the Sage understands everything in terms of knowledge, his own real nature.

5th August 1958

1392. DEVELOPMENT OF JNYĀNA (60)

Question: What are the progressive stages and their significance, in the development to Jnyāna?

Answer: The path of jnyāna has three distinct and separate stages, in their order of progression. They are:

1. *Sṛiṣṭi-dṛiṣṭi-vāda*: Perception of objects already existing. This is called ‘vyavahāra-pakṣha’ – giving full credence to the world of objects, including God, Māyā etc. All experience in this realm is only indirect (parōkṣha). This is intended only for the ignorant man who is attached deeply to the body and senses. This path only prepares the ground to receive the Truth in the next stage (dṛiṣṭi-sṛiṣṭi-vāda).
2. *Dṛiṣṭi-sṛiṣṭi-vāda* holds that the object appears only when perceived, and that the essence of perception is Consciousness alone (the Real). This is visualized only on listening to the Truth from the lips of a Kāraṇa-guru. Having thus visualized the Truth, you are asked to look back upon the appearances below, from the ultimate stand of the Self. Then you find that the apparent world is all an illusion. This resolution is called ‘ajāta-vāda’.

3. *Ajāta-vāda* holds that nothing other than the real Self (Consciousness) was ever born, ever is, or ever shall be. This is the highest stand of Advaita, in relation to the apparent world.

1393. WHAT IS THE COMPOSITION OF THE WORLD, AND ITS RELATION TO TRUTH?
(61)

Answer: The world appears as a connected chain of Consciousness, perceptions and objects.

When Consciousness functions through the sense organ 'eye', the object of perception is usually called 'form'. In the chain of form, seeing and Consciousness, the 'seeing' is unknown to 'form', because 'form' has to give up its grossness in order to become 'seeing'. Then it ceases to be 'form'. Again, Consciousness is unknown to 'seeing'; because 'seeing' has to give up its objectivity completely in order to stand as Consciousness, and then it is no 'seeing'. But 'seeing' is not unknown to Consciousness and 'form' is not unknown to 'seeing'.

The process of analysing form – and reducing it to seeing – is much facilitated by substituting the word 'sight' in place of 'form', because no explanation is needed to show that sight is not different from 'seeing'.

1394. WHAT IS THE RESULT OF EMPHASIZING CONSCIOUSNESS IN IDEAS OR OBJECTS? (62)

Answer: Consciousness is absolute and is only one.

Consciousness + something = idea.

Emphasizing Consciousness means looking at the idea from the standpoint of Consciousness.

When Consciousness begins to look at the idea, Consciousness being only one and that being already in the idea as its essence, that Consciousness has to stand out of the idea. Then, the idea being divested of its essence 'Consciousness', the idea becomes extinct.

Consciousness is the essence of both the idea and the object. If Consciousness stands as the idea, the object disappears. If Consciousness stands as Consciousness itself, the idea also disappears. Consider the illustration of the figure in the rock.

It can well be said from one standpoint that *Consciousness by itself never illumines ideas or objects, but only kills them*. Let us apply this process in our daily life. You say in the waking state that you remember your past dream. But what exactly is it that you remember? You remember only the 'seeing' of objects in the dream. What else was there in the dream? Nothing. All that appeared as gross object in dream was nothing other than the 'seeing' itself. This fact needs no further proof, when you wake up. This is typical of every so called 'waking' experience also.

Therefore, it is only 'seeing' that appears as object; and similarly, it is Consciousness that appears as 'seeing' in both the states.

1395. WHAT IS SPHURAṆA? (63)

Answer: Sphuraṇa [shining], in whatever level it manifests itself, is the Ultimate. Sphuraṇa in the mental level is understood and is interpreted in terms of subject and object. But in the spiritual context it is viewed only in identity. Therefore all phenomenal illustrations can only mislead one, regarding the significance of *sphuraṇa*.

It may be said to be the objectless manifestation of the light of Consciousness.

1396. WHAT IS THE GOOD OF KNOWING ‘I AM HAPPINESS’, IF I CANNOT ENJOY IT? (64)

Answer: It has been proved already that one’s real nature is objectless happiness, and that one can experience it. It is experienced not through subject-object relationship as in the waking and dream states, but in identity as in deep sleep. In deep sleep, the mind is dead.

The questioner evidently wants to know the happiness, herself standing separate as the knower and to feel the joy of it as the enjoyer. This is possible only in duality, as in the waking or dream states.

Even there, a deeper examination will show that the so called enjoyment of happiness is being one with it. Happiness is never enjoyed. To know that ‘I am Happiness’ is a spiritual experience. Spiritual experience is only one. It is non-duality. Its real nature is pure Happiness itself, and you know it there in identity.

On coming to the waking state, you seem to know it objectively. Immediately, happiness is separated from you as your object – a mere idea. You have actually lost the happiness, by trying to know it or feel it. Therefore, never objectify happiness by trying to separate it from you, in any manner.

31st August 1958

1397. MANTRAS AND THEIR EFFICACY (65)

Mantras are designed by the great seers. They are composed of groups of sounds with an active life principle, capable of producing specific forms and effects when pronounced in the proper *svara* (tune).

Mantras have a double purpose. At the phenomenal level, emphasis is on the audible part of the mantra. The form created by each mantra (called its ‘mantra *dēvatā*’) is possessed of certain particular powers. The mantra *dēvatā*, in exercise of some its powers, confers upon the devotee certain benefits prayed for. But in the course of this process, one has to guard against innumerable possible slips, of commission and omission.

Mantra, if properly utilized, helps one to approach the ultimate Truth. Just before and after every mantra, there is a visible gap into which the sound merges. In this gap, there is nothing other than one’s own Self or Consciousness. Having once visualized before the Guru this nature of the Self, if you pronounce the mantra emphasizing not the audible part but the content of the apparent gaps, you are easily taken to the centre of your visualization – the real Self – and this helps you gradually to get established there.

Though the mantras, in the great majority of cases, are utilized as instruments of action (*pravṛitti*), they can also be utilized for the purpose of liberation (*nivṛitti*) if

handled with sufficient discrimination and insight. In the former, the centre of emphasis is the object; and in the latter, it is the background.

1st September 1958

1398. REPENTANCE (66)

Repentance in the phenomenal level, though recommended by most religions, is in practice a dangerous and colossal blunder.

In doing the wrong, you are prompted by the irresistible craving of the heart. But in the usual expression of repentance, it is an empty intellectual argumentation. The moment you start to repent, you recall the past incidents in all their detail. This provides a fresh opportunity for the heart to enjoy the cherished pleasure, at least in a subtle manner. This amounts practically to a repetition of the wrong, in the subtle form. At last, you express an empty verbal repentance and rest contented with it.

This sort of repentance only aggravates the evil and inflates the ego. Therefore it has to be avoided at all cost, and every attempt must be made to forget the incident altogether. This is the golden rule of progress.

2nd September 1958

1399. WHAT IS THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF ART? (67)

Art is only that which tends to merge the other into yourself.

Mundane is that which separates the other from you.

Therefore real art takes you to the unity of the subject, and so it is really a preparation of the ground for initiation into the ultimate Truth.

1400. WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JĪVA, ĪSHVARA AND JNYĀNIN? (68)

The *jīva* remains a slave to avidyā (ignorance) and helplessly oscillates between pain and pleasure.

Īshvara – possessing a clear preponderance of sattva-guṇa – holds māyā always under his sway.

The *Jnyānin* – being pure sattva alone – remains master of the mind which is of the nature of vidyā (knowledge), and he sometimes allows that mind to function in its own way.

4th September 1958

1401. CAN THERE BE ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MISERY AND HAPPINESS? (69)

Misery as such is purely man-made. It is born and maintained in *dvaita* (duality) alone.

Happiness is *advaita*, and is natural to man.

Duality is never experienced by anyone, because no two things can be experienced simultaneously. Misery is duality, and is therefore an illusion. But non-duality is brought in to enjoy misery.

Consciousness itself appears as ‘perception’. You think of it as separate from Consciousness and give it the different name ‘perception’. But no, it is Consciousness itself. Even this perception – considered independent of the perceiver and the percept – is no perception at all, but Consciousness itself.

This process can be shortened further. The intermediary steps can be dispensed with, and the knower and the object alone taken into consideration. The object can never exist independent of the knower, consciousness; and it is therefore Consciousness itself.

5th September 1958

1402. WHAT IS THE FUNCTION AND THE FATE OF AN OBJECT? (70)

Answer:. An object is there always pointing to the Consciousness of the perceiver, as ‘You, You, You...’, meaning thereby: ‘I am here merely on account of you.’

But the moment you stand as Consciousness and turn back to the object, the object vanishes; in other words, the object commits suicide.

1403. CAN I REMEMBER? (71)

Answer: No. But speaking loosely, we say that we remember past incidents. To remember something exactly as it was perceived, the time which has passed and the past sense perceptions must occur once again in the present here. But they are past and gone. Of all that was then and there, Consciousness alone is here and now. Therefore memory, as ordinarily understood, is a misnomer.

23rd September 1958

1404. HOW IS MISERY RELATED TO LOVE? (72)

Answer: Misery is love itself. But how? Let us examine misery. Take any experience of misery. You say the thought of your departed father creates misery. But does it always do so? If your father, when living, was cruel and inimical to you, the thought of his demise would hardly make you miserable. Therefore it is clear that it was not the thought of the father that was the cause of the misery, but it was the thought of your father’s love that was the real cause.

But love is attributeless and indivisible. It is wrong even to call it father’s love, and it has been proved that the thought of the father was not the cause of misery. Therefore it was love and love alone that was the cause of the misery, if it could ever have had a cause. But you experience only one thing at a time – love or misery – and therefore there can be no causal relationship between the two [as different things].

Hence it is love that expresses itself as misery, and not your father [that causes it, as something different from love]. The father is forgotten in love. To find the source of misery, you must go beyond body and mind. If you emphasize body and mind, you are fixed in the expression of Truth. The substance is beyond.

Misery and happiness are both expressions. Love pure is the background of both. When you cling on to love, objects vanish. But when you cling on to objects, love is not perceived as such.

Where there is no love, there is no misery. So love goes into the make of misery; misery is love itself. It is the illusory concept of time that makes love appear as misery. If you separate love from misery, misery is *not*.

25th September 1958

1405. DOES THE PATH OF PHENOMENAL LOVE TAKE ME ANYWHERE? (73)

Answer: Yes. To the Ultimate, if followed diligently and intelligently.

Love is the feeling of oneness with the object of one's love. Following the path of phenomenal love means expanding the sphere of your love. This course, logically, takes you to a stage where your love becomes universal. In the concept of the universal, the last vestige of the ego, your individuality, is included.

This fact can be perceived and duality transcended only when a Kāraṇa-guru points out the Truth. Then the ego is merged into the universal and universality vanishes, leaving love alone supreme. Here, you may be said to stand in identity (as one) with that love. This love, being all comprehending, is objectless and pure. This is the Ultimate.

But it has to be said that the path is long and arduous, and the pitfalls are many.

1406. HOW TO JUSTIFY SHRĪ RĀMA IN ABANDONING SĪTĀ'? (74)

Question: In the epic of *Rāmāyaṇa*, Shrī Rāma is depicted as an ideal of manhood. But he is found in the end to abandon his innocent wife Sītā alone in the deep forests, even while she was about to have a child. To all existing canons of human justice, this was an ignoble act. But this can never be. How can we justify Rāma, without sacrificing Truth and justice?

Answer: Rāma the individual and Rāma the King were two distinct and separate entities; sometimes their interests clashed. Whenever their interests clashed in this manner, the lower interest (that of the individual) had to be sacrificed and the higher interest maintained. The King has no human wife. His spouse is the country and the people.

Therefore, in the abandonment of Sītā, the interest of the individual Rāma was sacrificed; and the interest of Rāma the King was maintained, by upholding the cause of the country, of the people and of justice. It was an incomparable act of self-sacrifice, on the part of Rāma. Divorce was ordered by Rāma the King, and Rāma the individual suffered the dire consequences – the pangs of separation. Can this be called self-ish?

1407. HOW TO EXAMINE A THING? AND WHY? (75)

A thing is not independent in itself. It is inextricably connected with the rest of the world. Therefore, in order to understand the entire truth about the thing, either the whole world has to be examined, or the thing has to be examined independent of the rest of the world.

The former is literally impossible. Therefore, the only possible course is to examine the thing as representing the whole world. This cannot be done in terms of time, space and causality, which are but the most generic standards accepted by the world. They

are but parts of the world itself, and go into the make of the thing. Such an examination could never yield true results.

The examination therefore has to be conducted, not from the level of the world, but from a level beyond. Such a level can only be that of Consciousness. Taking your stand there and looking at a thing, the thing along with the world no longer appears as such, but stands transformed as Consciousness itself. Therefore, the thing and the world are nothing but Consciousness.

A thing has to be examined, not to find out its composition or potentialities, but to find out its truth value or the changeless in it. The absence of this perspective is the cause of the failure of science, yōga, arts, philosophy etc. to reach the ultimate Truth.

Another approach: The world is a world of perceptions alone. The unit of each perception is composed of perceiving, the perceiver and the percept, all three constituting the so called 'tripuṭī'.

Tripuṭī is supposed to appear simultaneously and also to disappear likewise. This viewpoint is rather vague, and not intended for the uttamādhikāris. Examining the tripuṭī more closely, we find that it is perceiving that produces the perceiver and the perceived. So perceiving is more important than, and even the source of, the other two.

But when perceiving itself is examined more closely, from the standpoint of Consciousness, the perceiving disappears and stands transformed as pure Consciousness. Thus perception is nothing but Consciousness, and so is the world.

12th October 1958

1408. HOW CAN AN OBJECT BE EXAMINED, TO FIND OUT ITS TRUTH? (76)

It can be done in two distinct and separate ways, from two different standpoints. They are:

1. The standpoint of the ego
 2. The standpoint of the real 'I'-principle
1. The ego, in trying to examine an object, first splits the object into its two component parts, the permanent and the impermanent. Then it tries to separate the impermanent parts from the permanent. But in so doing, an unconscious transformation comes over the ego itself. Simultaneously with the shedding of the impermanent parts from the object, the accretions or the impermanent parts of the ego itself drop away.

Finally, the changeless in the object alone remains over, and that is the *sat* aspect of the Reality. Then the ego also stands as that Reality, divorced of all its accretions. Therefore the object is nothing but the Reality – the Self. This argument applies equally to the body also, which can be reduced to the real 'I'-principle. Thus the world stands revealed as the ultimate Reality.

But this examination can never be conducted successfully and in its entirety until you have listened to the Truth from the lips of a Kāraṇa-guru. Because, without visualizing the truth of the Self and without being able to cling on to it, the ego can never shed all its accretions. This is why, at the end of all their enquiries, the yōgins, scientists and philosophers all knock against a blank wall of ignorance.

2. The second examination, from the standpoint of the real ‘I’-principle, is easy. Because, if you examine the object or the world, neither will appear as such, but each stands as one with the Reality – the ‘I’-principle. Thus also, the object world is *not*.

1409. WHAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE ‘HERE’ AND THE ‘THERE’? (77)

Answer: Only that which supports the two. That is *sat* [existence] alone. Similarly, pure Consciousness exists between two mentations and supports the mentations as well.

1410. WHAT IS BHAKTI? (78)

Answer: You cannot have bhakti for something non-existent, nor can you have it towards anything you do not know. Every object of bhakti has two aspects:

1. The impermanent or non-existent form, and
2. The permanent or the real consciousness.

Bhakti should be directed to the latter aspect, and the former can be blissfully ignored when it has fulfilled its legitimate purpose. The purpose of the ‘form’ is only to arrest your attention and to enable you to direct it to Consciousness, which is its background. The Consciousness can never be objectified. That is always the ultimate subject (*viṣayin*). It is in the devotee himself and indivisible.

Therefore, a real devotee can only and need only direct his attention to the Consciousness in him. This is real bhakti; and it immediately yields Peace or *ānanda*, which is Consciousness itself. This is vastu-tantra, the outcome of Truth. Shri Shankara defines real bhakti of the highest order as follows:

mōkṣa-sādhana-sāmagryām bhaktir ēva garīyasī
sva-svarūpā-’nusandhānam bhaktir ity abhidhīyatē

[Among all ways of seeking to be free,
it’s love that is the best, one must agree.
To question one’s own truth, to ask what’s there,
that is the love of those who ask with care.]

Shrī Shankara, Vivēka-cūḍāmaṇī, 31

‘Incessantly clinging onto one’s own real nature is verily termed bhakti.’

Bhakti for anything other than this is really unworthy of the name. It may, at the most, be called a fascination as unreal as the object itself.

1411. CAN DUALISM AND NON-DUALITY EVER REACH A COMPROMISE? (79)

The centre of dualism is an assumption of the separate and independent existence of subject and object. The world of diversity is built upon this concept. Non-duality is the background and support of duality itself. It is the seeing of objects in the right perspective and is never an assumption. It is rightly called in Sanskrit ‘*darshana*’ or visualization of Truth. Therefore, no compromise is possible between the two.

The attitude of non-duality is sāt̥tvic and magnanimous, even towards this hostile duality. Non-duality liberally lends its own light to duality, in order that it may appear and thrive, even to oppose the source of duality itself.

However, there have been of late certain attempts in social circles to effect a compromise between dualists and non-dualists. Poor friends! They have not gone deep into the workings of either party. Society, which is dualist by nature, can only align itself with the dualists, because it knows something about them only. But it is ignorant of the stand of non-dualists.

The non-dualists, on the other hand, know the stand of the dualists quite well; since they were themselves dualists earlier in life. Therefore the non-dualists might even be prepared for a compromise, to the extent that duality is only an appearance.

This does not help the dualist in any way, and to go any further the non-dualists will have to sacrifice the essence of their own stand. The dualists cannot even conceive of non-dualism. Therefore a compromise between the two parties is impossible.

ananyāś cintayantō mām yē janāḥ paryupāsātē .
tēṣāṁ nityā 'bhiyuktānām yōga-kṣēmaṁ vahāmy aham ..

Bhagavad-gītā, 9.22

The verse in the Gītā quoted above is a typical example of the non-dual approach. It means: 'Whoever thinks of Me as none other than "himself", his worldly and spiritual well-being will be safe-guarded and looked after by Me (Ātmā, the Absolute).'

1412. WHAT IS THE SOURCE AND REMEDY OF PASSIONS? (80)

Love is pure, and by nature objectless. It is one with *ānanda* or Peace.

But when mental desires are brought to bear upon love, that love becomes degenerate and objectified as *rāga* [passion] or *kāma* [desire]. Out of *rāga* arise the manifold passions of enmity, anger, avarice etc.; and you groan under their weight. The only way of escape from this malady is to trace back the course to love, by relinquishing desires and their objects. Then *rāga* gets sublimated, passions disappear, pure love shines in all its glory, and you stand as one with it in identity.

12th November 1958

1413. VĒDĀNTIC TRUTH IS NEVER A MEANS TO ANYTHING ELSE. (81)

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of achieving the unification and advancement of mankind?
2. How can vēdāntic truth and teaching be applied to the good of the community, the state and the world at large?

Answer:

1. Mankind always stands united and centred in 'man'. Disunion creeps in only where 'man' is misunderstood or misinterpreted. Therefore, the only means of achieving the goal is to know the real significance of 'man' and to let it be known.
'Man', when dispassionately examined, is found to mean the most generic form of man and comprehends all mankind. Being generic, it is the ultimate Truth itself – the real Self.

Vēdānta alone helps you in this endeavour. Therefore follow Vēdānta, realize your own Self, and save your 'mankind' – if it still remains. But you, for certain, will be saved as a result of such effort.

2. Vēdāntic Truth is only one. It is Consciousness, the nature of the real Self. It has no teachings, so to say. It must first be understood that vēdāntic Truth – being ultimate, beyond all relativity – can never be used as a means to any other end.

The vēdāntic approach is strictly individual and never social or communal. By visualizing the ultimate Truth (the Self) through Vēdānta, the individual realizes his own perfection and automatically transcends society and the world. He finds the world a mere illusion. But he allows the illusory world to continue to exist, merely as a matter of concession. He can undo it by withdrawing his own consciousness from it any moment.

Therefore, so far as the vēdāntin is concerned, the question of improving the world does not arise.

15th November 1958

1414. WHAT IS LIFE? (82)

Answer: Life, thought and feeling are but the expressions of the ultimate Reality, through the respective perspectives of existence, knowledge and peace. Life can never be correctly examined from the standpoint of any of the states, which are but parts of the apparent life itself. It can be examined correctly only from the standpoint of that which is permanent or changeless in life (pure Awareness). This may be done in many ways.

1. Taking for granted that the three states are real, let us examine life. The totality of life consists in the experiences of the three states, together with an Awareness which records the appearance and disappearance of each state. The waking state as such is only a fraction of the totality of life. Therefore no enquiry limited to the waking state experiences alone can be fair; nor can it be expected to yield any reasonable result. Of the totality of life's experiences, the experiences of the three states are each independent of the other two and change or disappear completely.

The only permanent or changeless part of life's experiences is the Awareness which stands as the background of the states and even beyond. This is the real 'I'-principle, the ultimate Truth. Therefore, the essence of life is the Reality itself.

2. Existence appearing limited is life. But the appearance is an illusion. So the essence of life is pure existence or 'being' itself, or the real 'I'-principle. The disappearance of the limitation of existence may be called 'death'. Life and death being both appearances, they cannot exist without a real background. That background is existence itself and that is the essence of both life and death.
3. Existence manifests itself in varying degrees of intensity, from the god-man kingdom down to the mineral kingdom. Every kingdom 'is'. The 'is'-ness alone is the changeless part or essence of each kingdom, and all the rest are mere appearances and therefore unreal. This 'is'-ness is the background of life, and that is the Reality which has neither birth nor death. The term 'life' really comprehends both birth and death, and stands transcending both.

26th November 1958

1415. I KNOW I AM NOT AN IDEAL DISCIPLE. BUT SHOULD I NOT SEE THAT MY ACTIONS DO NOT BRING DISCREDIT TO MY GURU? (83)

Answer: No. You may think that you are not yet an ideal disciple, and even pray to the Guru to help you to reach that goal. But what exactly that goal is, you do not know. It has no test, either mental or ethical. That goal shall always remain unknown, in the sense in which knowledge is used ordinarily. Therefore it is futile to try to verify your progress towards that goal. But what you can do and must do, is to continue to keep incessant contact with the Guru, in whatever manner convenient to you – in the gross, in the subtle or beyond.

28th November 1958

1416. CAN CAUSALITY FUNCTION UNDER ANY CONDITION? (84)

Answer: No. Not even in the same order of time, much less when the order of time also changes. For example, the sun sets and darkness comes. Can the preceding sunshine be said to be the cause of darkness, or vice versa? No. Both are absurd. Therefore, causal relationship cannot be established between such changing states, which have no connection whatsoever between them.

1417. IF I AM THE ULTIMATE TRUTH, HOW DOES AN OBJECT APPEAR? (85)

Gurunāthan: Does the object appear at all? Who says so?

Disciple: It is the ego that says so.

G: What is the ego from your own standpoint as the real 'I'-principle? Is it an object or is it the subject?.

D: Certainly the ego is only an object.

G: Therefore, including the ego also in the category of objects, does the question arise at all?

D: No. It was a stupid question.

30th November 1958

1418. WHAT CAN I DESIRE? (86)

Answer: Nothing.

Desire shows want and that shows your own imperfection. But you are Consciousness which is by nature perfect; and you cannot desire to know anything else, there being nothing else beside Consciousness.

Again, you are Peace or Happiness which is also perfect; and you cannot desire to have any other happiness, there being nothing else beside Happiness – your own real nature.

1419. I KNOW I AM HAPPINESS AND CONSCIOUSNESS; STILL I AM SOMETIMES MISERABLE. WHY? (87)

Gurunāthan: Which 'I' is Consciousness or Peace?

Disciple: The real 'I'-principle, Ātmā.

G: Is that 'I' ever miserable?

D: No. Not at all.

G: If somebody else (for example the usurper 'I') is miserable, why should you, the real 'I', be worried?

Now listen. I will explain your confusion. The ego is sometimes miserable, because it desires to enjoy transitory sensual pleasures and at the same time to avoid their opposite, misery, the inseparable counterpart of pleasure. That is impossible.

Pleasure and pain are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. You cannot choose one side alone. Either you accept both together or reject both together.

1420. HOW CAN WE DISTINGUISH THE SPIRITUAL FROM THE PHENOMENAL? (88)

Answer: The real 'I'-principle (also called Ātmā, Truth, real Self, Consciousness, Peace, etc.) is alone spiritual. Everything else, including even the much applauded nirvikalpa samādhi, is phenomenal.

In other words, the ultimate subject alone is spiritual, and everything with the least trace of objectivity is phenomenal.

1421. VICĀRA-MĀRGA (89)

Vicāra-mārga is an enquiry by the 'being' itself into the experiences of the totality of life.

1st December 1958

1422. WHAT IS VĒDĀNTA? (90)

Answer: Vēdānta is a deep and relentless enquiry into the ultimate Truth. The enquiry is made with the aid of pure discrimination and reason alone. The reason employed for the purpose is tri-basic reason, which is applicable to all the three states. But the reason employed in science, yōga, arts, philosophy etc. is only mono-basic reason – applicable only in the waking state.

1423. TRUTH IS THE ONLY ANTIDOTE FOR ERROR. (91)

1424. MENTATION (COMPREHENDING INTELLECTION AS WELL) IS AN ACTIVITY OF THE MIND. (92)

2nd December 1958

1425. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROCESS OF NEGATION? (93)

Answer: Negation of the objective world gives you a disinterested and tranquil stand from which to start the enquiry. Otherwise, there is the danger of the mind coming in uncalled for, in some form or other, to pollute the enquiry.

15th December 1958

1426. THE QUALIFICATIONS ESSENTIAL FOR AN ASPIRANT TO GET TO THE TRUTH. (94)

They may be roughly classified into four.

1. The aspirant should know for certain that there is ‘something’ beyond the appearance of the world of objects.
2. The aspirant should steadfastly keep away from all personal predilections, notions and information about the object of his enquiry.
3. The aspirant should be free from all kinds of religious hankering.
4. The aspirant should have a firm determination to overcome all obstacles to the Truth.

1427. DEATH – WHAT IS ITS SIGNIFICANCE? (95)

Answer: Death is a misnomer. Death may be examined from the standpoint of life. Life, as such, knows no death. Therefore, from life’s own standpoint, death is a misnomer.

Nobody has ever experienced death, nor can anybody think of his own death. On this account also, death is a misnomer.

To know that there is no death, you have only to refer to the so called dream state, in which you see your own death or that of a relative. But on waking up, you know that the dream persons and their death were both illusions. It is in the same way that we should view death in the waking state.

Therefore, *death is a misnomer.*

1428. CAN DEATH BE COMPARED TO DEEP SLEEP? (96)

Answer: No. It is fallacious to do so. The experiences of death and of deep sleep are both unknown to the waking mind, and so they are wrongly supposed to be identical by the ignorant man. But in fact, they are poles asunder.

Deep sleep is the unique and the independent experience of a whole state. It is the experience of non-duality in identity. But death is only an incident in the waking state.

Therefore they occur in two entirely different planes, and can never be compared one with the other.

2nd January 1959

1429. WHAT IS A PERCEPT? (1)

First answer: No percept really exists – either in the present, the past or the future. A percept is the result of perception and it cannot exist independent of perception. Therefore there cannot be a percept either before or after perception.

Perception goes into the make of the percept itself. Therefore, if you attempt to perceive the percept, the perception part of the percept has to be withdrawn and placed outside it, in order to perceive it. But when the perception part is thus withdrawn, the percept crumbles and disappears. Thus there is no percept during the perception also. It is the perception itself appearing as the percept, for the time being.

Therefore ‘percept’ is a misnomer. There is only perception. And perception being dependent upon Consciousness for its very existence, it is nothing but consciousness.

Similarly, Consciousness itself appears as an idea; and when Consciousness tries to perceive the idea, the idea disappears and Consciousness alone remains over.

Therefore, all is Consciousness.

A shorter approach: A percept is nothing but the object and is representative of the whole world. Perception goes into the make of the percept, and therefore the percept is perception itself.

Consciousness goes into the make of perception, and therefore perception is Consciousness itself.

Similarly, Consciousness goes into the make of the idea, and therefore idea is Consciousness itself.

Therefore the world, gross as well as subtle, is nothing but Consciousness.

4th January 1959

1430. HOW IS AWARENESS DISPASSIONATE? (2)

Answer: Because it has nothing to gain by emphasizing any of the three states.

1431. WHY DOES NOT THE PEACE EXPERIENCED AT THE MOMENT OF LISTENING TO THE TALK OF THE GURU CONTINUE WITH ONE? AND HOW TO RESUME IT, IF LOST FOR THE TIME BEING? (3)

Answer: At the moment of listening, the ego is crushed by the dazzling brilliance of the ultimate Truth which is proved to be your real nature. But as soon as you get out of that presence, the old samskāras of the ego – which were kept away for the time being – make their appearance again, to establish their supremacy over life.

You have only to look straight at them and say, ‘You are only my objects and I am the changeless witness’ or ‘You do not exist without me – pure Awareness – and so you are nothing other than myself’, adducing arguments if necessary for either position. This will at once take you to the same old experience of Consciousness and Peace.

Continue this as often as the ego springs up, to obstruct your perspective. You may stop all such exercises when you feel your position in the ultimate Truth is secure.

23rd January 1959

1432. HOW TO KNOW A THING? (4)

Answer: In the phenomenal sense, we do not know the thing at all. But we know only something about the thing, or in other words we know the appearance alone.

To know the thing, we have to go deeper, even beyond the appearance, into the background; and there all appearances disappear, leaving the background alone. That is the real thing; and that is known by identity alone, there being nothing else beside it.

1433. HOW DOES CAUSALITY FUNCTION? (5)

Answer: Causality is a misnomer, and it never functions. (This is said from the highest level.)

Viewing it from a lower plane: When one object is supposed to produce another, the former is said to be the cause and the latter the effect. But the relationship between cause and effect has to be examined more closely, though from the standpoint of the waking state. There can be only two possible positions, if we adopt this approach.

1. That the cause and effect are entirely different one from the other.
2. That they are not different.

If we accept the first position, causality cannot function, because a cause cannot produce an entirely different effect. And if they are not different, as in the second position, then causality has no meaning. Therefore, in either case, causality is a misnomer.

1434. WHAT IS THE BEARING OF THE WORLD UPON TRUTH? (6)

Answer: The world is a compromise between opposites; life is impossible without reference to opposites. But Truth is beyond opposites and unlike the world in its characteristics.

The characteristics of the world, when strictly analysed and reduced to the generic standards, are found to be: changeability or impermanence, inertness, and misery (*anṛita-jaḍa-duḥkha*). All these terms make unconscious reference to their opposites. But the characteristics of Truth are utterly different; and so they are represented as the opposite of these, viz. Permanence, Consciousness, and Peace or Happiness (*sat-cit-ānanda*).

These by themselves are only lakṣaṇas (pointers) to the Truth, and so have to be transcended, in order to get established in the Absolute. The purpose of the term '*sat-cit-ānanda*' is only to divert your attention away from the phenomenal, to the substance beyond. When the world has disappeared, the characteristics of the Truth – *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* – also vanish; and you stand in the ultimate Reality, originally pointed to by these terms.

25th January 1959

1435. ‘THE EGO ALWAYS RUNS AFTER THINGS ADVENTITIOUS TO IT AND NEVER TURNS TO ITS NATIVE SOIL.’ (7)

3rd February 1959

1436. I KNOW THAT EVERY ACTIVITY IS MADE POSSIBLE ONLY BY CONSCIOUSNESS BEING THERE, BUT HOW DOES THAT KNOWLEDGE PROFIT ME? (8)

Gurunāthan: Profit whom, please?

Disciple: Profit the ego, of course.

Gurunāthan: But that is not the goal of Vēdānta. This is the answer from the highest level. But it may be answered from a slightly lower level also.

Of the three – the object, the activity and your own Awareness of both – you see that the object and the activity are adventitious to you or distinct and separate from you, and that they only come and go, so far as you are concerned. But the Awareness alone never parts with you and is intrinsic in you.

Therefore, you are that Awareness – pure. How can anything else be more profitable to you than yourself? Therefore even from the utilitarian point of view, Awareness is the most profitable of all.

The ego desires to be permanent, and to lord it over everything. But, as the ego has only a fleeting existence, it can never do that. Vēdānta enables even the spurious ego to fulfil its desire, not by satisfying it in its own terms, but by helping it in the light of unassailable reason to shed all its accretions. Thus it stands in its own essence, as Awareness, which is by nature permanent and above everything else.

13th February 1959

1437. WHAT IS AN OBJECT? (9)

Answer: You are told that the object (body) is nothing other than seeing, because the object cannot exist independently of seeing.

Then you are asked to go deeper, meaning thereby ‘deeper into seeing’, because the body as object has been proved to be non-existent.

Going deep down into seeing, you see that there is only Consciousness there, and therefore Consciousness may well be said to be the object of seeing.

22nd February 1959

1438. WHAT IS REALLY PRACTICAL? (10)

Answer: The ‘practical’, in the ordinary sense, is opposed to the ‘theoretical’. Of the two, the latter is considered to be less real than the former and more liable to change.

These terms are applicable only at the relative level. Applying the tests of relative reality and permanency, the proximity to the Self may be said to be the test of practicality. Thus the senses being nearer you than objects, the senses may be said to be more practical than objects. In the same manner, mind (as thoughts and feelings) is more practical than senses and objects.

But all these are only relative and changing. The ultimate test of practicality is permanency, or unchangeability. In this sense, the real 'I' is the only practical thing, being the only changeless Reality.

Of course, this might be diametrically opposed to the concept of the ignorant man. But truth is no respecter of personalities or majorities. It is the smallest of all minorities, being the one without a second. What is 'experiential' is alone real or practical, and whatever is intellectual is only theoretical.

The world consists of four component parts, viz. the three states and an Awareness that gives light to the three states. Of these four parts, that light-giving principle alone can be real or practical, being alone capable of shining in its own light. The other three depend upon that light for their very existence, and are therefore theoretical.

24th February 1959

1439. WHAT IS APPEARANCE? (11)

Answer: The ordinary statements 'I knew the object', 'I thought the idea', 'I felt the pleasure' etc. are all redundant and wrong, in the strict sense of the terms.

Because an object is nothing but perception, idea is nothing but thought-form, and pleasure is nothing but feeling. As such, one and the same thing cannot remain as subject and object simultaneously.

Therefore, all appearance is nothing but an illusion.

1440. WHY DOES THE ORDINARY MAN PREFER FEELING TO KNOWLEDGE? (12)

Answer: The subject-object relationship is the characteristic of perception. This relationship is clearly evident in the case of all mental knowledge; and it is indistinguishable in the case of feeling, though not dead.

One prefers feeling to knowledge because one really wants the subsidence of the subject-object relationship without one's knowing it. It is the deep urge from one's own being. This is partially satisfied in the case of feeling, by the temporary subsidence of the subject-object relationship. But this by itself does not help one. It is no better than the ignorant man preferring deep sleep to the waking state.

But, on the other hand, when you go from knowledge of object to feeling, the subject-object relationship alone should be allowed to fade away, and the knowledge part should be kept alive, in the form of right discrimination or higher reason. The content or significance of feeling should be discovered with the aid of this reason; and the absence of the subject-object relationship in apparent phenomenal knowledge should also be visualized, in order to make one's experience complete.

For the ordinary man, knowledge is represented by the head (or reason) and feeling is represented by the heart. But it is only a harmonious blending of the head and the heart that may be called realization. Therefore, an academic and one-sided development of the head alone makes one a dry pandit, and a similar development of the heart, divorced of the head, makes one an ecstatic devotee or mystic; both being far away from the Truth.

But if one is already directed by a Kāraṇa-guru, the blending of the head and the heart comes spontaneously, without any effort. As regards reason and feeling, the former must always be there to guide the latter.

27th February 1959

1441. HAS PROOF ANY BEARING UPON TRUTH? (13)

Answer: No. Proof can exist only in the relative realm.

Everything phenomenal is recognized as a result of proof offered by the senses or mentations. But there is a unique exception to this general rule. There is an experience of self-consciousness just preceding every perception or mentation, without which an activity would never be possible. This self-consciousness never calls for a proof to establish itself; and its existence in its own right can never be denied, even in thought. It is this that stands as the ground of all relationship, and it is this that is called the *silent witness*.

Therefore, the need for a proof of an object is itself the proof of the unreality of the object.

1442. WHAT IS THE CONCEPT OF YŌGIC MEDITATION? (14)

Answer: The yōgin takes the waking world alone to be real and starts from the waking body, trying to expand and exploit the potentialities of the mind. The method adopted is meditation, and the goal is the merging of the meditator in the meditated. During the meditation, as it is usually practised, the mind never ceases to objectify and duality is never transcended.

1443. (A disciple asked) TRUTH IN ITS PURITY IS UNTHINKABLE. THEN WHAT CAN I DO TO GET ESTABLISHED IN IT? (15)

Gurunāthan: After visualizing the Truth, it is true you are told that you need not think about it. Because you cannot. But it only means that you should not forget it at any time. Can't you undertake that much?

Disciple: Yes, of course.

G: That is the last sādhana you have to do. Do it and be at Peace.

3rd March 1959

1444. HOW IS LIFE A CONNECTED WHOLE? (16)

Answer: Life consists of independent and disconnected appearances – of actions, perceptions and mentations upon Ātmā, the changeless background. Thus it is 'Ātmā' that keeps the continuity of phenomenal life.

8th March 1959

1445. WE GENERALLY SAY 'I AM HAPPY' AND 'I AM CONSCIOUS.' IS IT ULTIMATELY TRUE? (17)

Answer: No. It is only at the moment when you are happy that you are aware of the fact that you are happy. That knowledge is in identity, where 'knowing it' is 'being it'.

But when you say that the happiness is past, the subject-object relationship sets in. It is this kind of knowledge that people want. Because the ordinary man stands as the

empirical subject and is incapable of thinking of anything beyond. Thus, when you say you are happy, you are really *not* happy.

Similarly, when you know Ātmā, you stand as Ātmā or you *are* Ātmā. But when you say so, your stand changes and you cease to identify yourself with Ātmā. Still, Ātmā, as self-awareness, stands as the background of even the saying of this.

Thus, self-awareness is the ground of awareness of objects. Even when objects vanish, Awareness continues. In all the three states, Awareness is the only principle that does not change or die out; and Awareness is indivisible. Therefore it is this self-awareness itself that appears as, or is the ground of, awareness of objects.

11th March 1959

1446. WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES THE DIVERSE WORLD APPEAR AS A HOMOGENEOUS AND MEANINGFUL WHOLE? (18)

Answer: The nature of every little object is the nature of the whole world as well. Therefore, let us take any one object – let us say a book – as representative of the whole world, and examine it. The book consists of chapters, a chapter consists of paragraphs, and a paragraph consists of sentences. What is it that gives meaning to a sentence? The truth of the sentence is applicable to the book as a whole and to the world as well.

Now let us examine a sentence in detail. It consists of several words, each independent and disconnected as such, but connected by something beyond the mind. The word, likewise, consists of several sounds – each in itself being independent, disconnected and meaningless. But these different sounds are also connected by that same principle which connected the different words in the sentence. The sounds themselves appear as sounds as a result of the existence of the connecting and lighting-up principle, and therefore the connecting principle goes into the make of the sound.

Thus, the substance of the sound, and therefore of the world as well, is that connecting and lighting-up principle – the Ātmā, also called self-consciousness. Therefore, whenever you do anything or understand anything, you are standing in your real nature. And when you do not do anything or do not understand anything, then also you are in your real nature. When exactly, then, are you not in your real nature? *Never.* How then can worries torment you?

This truth is beautifully manifested in the chanting of the *praṇava* [the mantra ‘aum’]. During the chanting, the senses and mind are arrested by the sound, which slowly vanishes into the inaudible. Along with the sound, the mind also vanishes into its background, one’s own real nature; and you are left there as Peace. Knowing well this prakriyā (process of enquiry) of sound, even if you pronounce any other sound, you will see that you are left in your real nature. Thus, even in activity, you are in your real nature; and in inactivity also, you cannot be elsewhere.

Ātmā connects and lights up disconnected sounds. But it is the ego that attributes particular meanings and limitations to words and sentences. Therefore, a word is Consciousness to Ātmā, and a mere object to the ego. Thus when you know a thing, you know yourself. In other words, self-awareness is the ground of all knowledge or experience.

1447. WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE? (19)

Answer: Both knowledge and ignorance are supposed to exist as indeterminate, and to manifest themselves as determinate forms in the waking and dream states. The indeterminate being the source of the determinate, the former alone need be considered.

The indeterminate can never be understood through the subject-object relationship, but only in identity. Everything known in identity is the real 'I'-principle, and therefore indeterminate knowledge and indeterminate ignorance are one and the same as the real 'I'.

Moreover, between knowledge and ignorance, knowledge has to be relied upon, even to prove or disprove ignorance. But knowledge never needs the help of anything else to establish itself. It is self-luminous. Therefore knowledge alone is real, and ignorance is unreal. Taking ignorance to be unreal, it would be ununderstandable to say that indeterminate ignorance is real. Therefore it would be better to say that 'indeterminateness' is Reality and 'determinateness' unreality.

Ignorance of a thing appears only in retrospect and never in the present. It is posited in the past, only after perception of the object concerned in the present. Therefore ignorance is never experienced by anyone; and something which has never been experienced can never be considered real.

18th March 1959

1448. WHY CAN'T THERE BE A SUBJECT BEYOND THE 'I' OR THE 'ĀTMĀ'? (20)

Answer: The 'I' or Ātmā – as the ultimate subject – does not know that it knows, or that it is the subject. This 'I' or 'Ātmā' refuses to be objectified under all conditions, and therefore there cannot be another subject knowing this.

28th March 1959

1449. HOW DOES DISCRIMINATION FUNCTION? (21)

Discrimination functions in two ways – through the head, where it is called '*buddhi-vivēka*'; and through the heart, where it is called '*hṛidaya-vivēka*'.

Buddhi-vivēka functions through the medium of the intellect, in the realm of the phenomenal mind. As this function takes place in duality, it is liable to all kinds of uncertainties and interpretations.

Hṛidaya-vivēka functions through the medium of the heart. The heart being nearer the inner being and duality in that realm being indistinguishable, it is capable of overriding *buddhi-vivēka*. It points straight to the beyond and if one had already had the direct experience of non-duality before the Guru, he gets the same experience over again by this. Frequent repetition of the same helps him to establish himself in the real background.

1450. HOW TO VIEW DESIRES, SO AS TO MAKE THEM A HELP TO SPIRITUAL ADVANCEMENT? (22)

Desire is always for an object, and its goal is happiness. Thus an object is only the means, and happiness is the goal. The ignorant man perceives and emphasizes only

the means, namely objects, and awaits happiness as a necessary corollary. One does not get enriched by this sort of enjoyment of happiness.

But the spiritual aspirant takes an entirely different approach. First, he understands from the Guru that Happiness – the goal of all desires – is one's own real nature; and he directs his attention to the goal, even in the case of happiness which appears limited by objects.

He notes with satisfaction that the limited happiness expresses itself not when the desired object is gained, but only after it is lost (or forgotten). Therefore he is not disappointed like a layman, even when the desired object is sometimes not obtained. This practice – of emphasizing the disappearance of the object as the necessary prelude to the expression of happiness – gradually helps him to cling to the goal which is objectless Happiness, his own real nature.

Therefore desire, if viewed in the right perspective, is a great help to one's spiritual advancement. All the trouble creeps in only when the ultimate goal is forgotten and the means itself considered as the goal.

'Desire you may, but only don't forget the goal.'

29th March 1959

1451. HOW TO VIEW THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FORM, EMBELLISHMENTS AND FEATURES OF PERSONAL GODS TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE? (23)

Each item of the above, taken by itself, is distinct and separate from all the rest; and the only connecting link between all these is the permanent living background which is the essence of the deity itself.

If any such verse or description is read, chanted or meditated upon, emphasizing the appearances alone, as is done ordinarily, you are not enriched by that. On the other hand, if you do the same exercise, emphasizing the living background connecting all these, you transcend the appearances and reach the background yourself.

But this is not possible until you have heard the Truth from the Guru and visualized your own background, the real nature. Thus, to the jīvan-mukta, all personal Gods, mythology and even history and sciences are but sparks of the glory of one's own real nature.

Even a hypothetical assumption of the existence of such a background, and the direction of the attention to that background, would take one a long way towards obtaining a Kāraṇa-guru.

Some spiritual statements of Shrī Ātmānanda

A statement of the Guru helps you not when you take it, but when you leave it.
(from note 529)

*Related
to
note
number:*

1. Deep sleep is the key to the ultimate Truth.
Sleep knowingly.
2. Remembrance is forgetting.
3. I see Me where the ‘where’ is not
I see Me when the ‘when’ is not
I see Me when ‘I see me not.’
8. The absence of any objective perception, thought or feeling – which is wrongly called ‘nothingness’ – is the svarūpa [true nature] of real, unconditioned Happiness.
The ajnyāna [ignorance] of Truth is the jnyāna [knowledge] of objects.
9. Deep sleep is the touchstone of one’s real nature.
10. Mind as mind knows no peace, and mind at peace is no mind at all.
13. To become a Jnyānin [Sage] means to become aware of what you are already.
14. One should be equally alive in samādhi as well as in worldly activity.
15. You realize the moment you hear the Truth from the Guru.
16. That which was called ‘unknown’ is in the known as well and is still unknown.
It is the Reality itself.
18. All activities of the mind and body of the Sage are but expressions of the Absolute, and therefore purposeless in themselves; while the activity of the worldly man is purposeful as a means of enjoyment.
19. You cannot express the Truth by word of mouth, by thought or feeling. But the Truth expresses itself, in all these varied activities.
20. All the world is my object, and I am the changeless subject.
21. Diversity is only in objects. Consciousness, which perceives them all, is one and the same.
22. You come to real experience only by reducing either the subject or the object into the ‘I’-principle.

25. Knowing or loving an object really means absorbing the object into your own Self, thereby destroying all illusion and separateness.
27. You cannot be liberated by knowing your *sat* [existence] aspect alone; but your *cit* [consciousness] and *ānanda* [happiness] aspects have also to be known.
Reality can be expressed only by negative import, because it is nameless and attributeless. But it expresses itself in all names and forms.
28. To have deep peace and not to be disturbed from it, even for a moment, is the end and aim of life.
29. You are always in perfect dispassion, and that in the most natural and effortless manner.
30. Ātma-tattva [truth of self] is not something to be imported or acquired; but it already *is*, as the real 'I'-principle.
36. Realization is only here and now. Only know it and hold on to it, till it becomes your natural state.
40. That alone is the real experience which never changes in all the three states – waking, dream and deep sleep states, or the physical, mental and transcendental states.
42. In every experience, the expression is the objective part, which is changing; and the background is the subjective part, which is the changeless Reality.
The test of every experience is to see whether it is strictly subjective or objective.
43. The 'I'-principle alone really lives and knows no death.
The Jnyānin alone really lives and knows he lives. His advice to every man is: 'Die, in order to live.'
46. Water does not flow.
47. Knowledge can know only knowledge.
54. Every man is a jīvan-mukta [free within, while living as a person in the world]; but he has only to know it.
55. The world and Ātmā [Self] are only apparent contradictions. Whatever you assume yourself to be, so you will see outside you.
56. Wealth without right discrimination may be an obstacle to spiritual progress; but not otherwise.
66. Going beyond the existence and the non-existence of anātmā [objects], one reaches the Absolute.
67. Karma-sannyāsa [renunciation] is the perfection of the supposed passive principle in man; and karma-yōga (the usual path of the householder) is the perfec-

- tion of the active principle in man. But realization is beyond both passivity and activity.
75. If you want misery, be a worldly man. If you want happiness, be a spiritual man, understanding that happiness is in misery as well.
 76. Unity is the cause of diversity and not the other way about. The ‘thing in itself’, the Reality, is beyond both diversity and unity.
 77. The ‘present’ is only a mere word representing an agreement – so to say – between the past and the future, to provide a common meeting ground for them.
 78. After realization you may live apparently exactly as before; but you will never be able to resist the reaction of the subjective transformation you have undergone.
 79. Knowledge that dawns on the subsidence of the ego can never cease to be.
 84. Realization consists in becoming deeply aware of the fact that you have never been in bondage. Because realization can never happen: it can never occur in time. To the question: ‘When shall I realize?’, the answer can only be: ‘When the “*when*” dies.’
 85. Realization is not a case of understanding at all, but of being one with the Truth.
 87. He who wants to get to the Truth does not crave for the fulfilment of individual desires.
 88. God remaining as God, creation as ordinarily conceived is impossible.
 89. Repentance is no road to progress.
 92. The best way for the best living is to cling on to the living alone, forgetting the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of it completely.
 96. In every question, you forget your real Self.
Every question brings with it its own answer.
 98. You love your Guru for your true death, allowing your body and mind to continue.
 99. When Shiva is visualized as the ultimate Truth, the world is reduced to a mere appearance – making Shiva’s title of destroyership literally significant.
 102. All names denote the right Absolute.
 103. Science wants to establish oneness outside in objects perceived. But Vēdānta wants to establish oneness inside, outside and everywhere.
 106. When the thought that you are Ātmā, the Reality, becomes as strong as your present thought that you are the body, then alone are you free.

107. Worldly knowledge is nothing other than giving a name to the unknown and dismissing it immediately from your mind.
112. Self-luminosity is the particular prerogative of consciousness alone. Consciousness is the light of lights. Therefore Consciousness is self-luminous.
If memory leaves you, you become an idiot in ignorance. But become an idiot in the beyond and you are blessed.
Sleep away the whole world, clinging on to consciousness.
116. It is only when you consider things just as they appear, that any problem arises.
117. It is he who has the ego present in him that does or does not do. He who has destroyed the ego in him knows neither doing nor non-doing.
120. You should never try to know that you are the knower. Your knowership is objectless and can never be objectified.
Witnessing is silent awareness. Do not try to make it active in any way.
121. Space begets objects, and objects beget space.
125. The disinterested witness alone enjoys the picture exhibited for sale. Neither the vendor nor the vendee enjoys it.
134. Spirituality replaces the object by the subject.
142. No amount of effort, taken on your own part, can ever take you to the Absolute.
144. The basic error is the false identification of the 'I'-principle with the body, senses or mind – each at a different time. This is the pivot round which our worldly life revolves.
158. Diversity can be diversity only through Me, the 'One'.
168. Personality rests with body, senses and mind. If you think you are impersonal, if you feel you are impersonal and if you act knowing that you are impersonal, you *are* impersonal.
182. Advaitic philosophy does not talk in terms of opposites. It always means only what it says. When it says 'It is not active', that does not mean 'It is inactive.'
197. Negatives can never subsist independently, by themselves. They want a positive something, as their background.
202. Desirelessness is the goal of all desires.
203. Beware of happiness in samādhi. Enjoy it if it comes unsought. But never desire that happiness or court samādhi for that.
205. Ethics has always unselfishness as its goal. But witnesshood takes you even further, and makes you selfless or egoless.
208. Visualization is there when the effect that is produced in seeing is produced by depth of understanding.

219. The body does not exist, either when you stand separate from the body, or when you think about the body.
226. Science starts upon the basic error of giving independent existence to the world of objects, leaving the subject and the thing nearest to it – the mind – to themselves. Science examines only remoter things.
227. The sage has both worldly and spiritual activities. To him both are recreations each in relation to the other (on an equal footing).
233. When you know a thing, the thing is covered by knowledge.
When you say you perceived an object, the object is not there and you are not elsewhere.
243. The world is the manyness of the one. [Caṭṭampi-svāmi]
251. A disciple need never bother himself about what the Guru is doing for him. A disciple can never conceive or understand it, in its real significance. You need only know that the Guru takes you from the phenomenal to the Absolute.
255. Love becomes divine when personality is not emphasized.
259. In deep sleep, ‘I am I’; and I can never come out of it.
266. Mind and senses are but names of functions. *Sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* – when manifested – become life, thought and feeling.
272. Action proceeds from inaction and inaction proceeds from action. So both are non-existent as such. ‘All the world is relative. I am the only Absolute.’
275. The past is past only in the present.
277. In your childhood you were a child in ignorance; but on listening to the Truth from the lips of the Guru, you become a ‘child in knowledge’. So only a Sage can really be said to have a second childhood.
282. Realization is the harmonious blending of the head and the heart, in Peace.
288. Only if your knowledge of your own Self is correct, can you hope to know anything else correctly.
Sat [existence] is that which is incapable of being even thought of as non-existent. ‘I’ alone am the one such.
307. On listening to the Guru you realize the Truth, now and here. You have only to cling on to it, in order to take it to then and there.
308. A dream is no dream to the dreamer.
315. A Sage who has left his mortal coil can never be a Guru to a new aspirant.
317. A thought about the Guru, just before any activity, brings the living presence of the Guru to preside over the activity or to illuminate the experience that follows.

319. If you can see the entire world – including your own body – as only *drishya* or the ‘see-able’, you are free; and you have accomplished what has to be accomplished.
- For the ignorant man ‘ignorance of consciousness’ covers up the object. But, for the Sage, ‘Knowledge’ covers it up.
320. It is in and through Me that all activities take place. But the mistake is made in the attempt to objectify that non-doer self and its experiences.
323. Beauty is personalized when you perceive it. But, in itself, ‘beauty’ is an expression of the Absolute. It is harmony itself and is not perceivable.
- Knowledge (in the relative sphere) is becoming one with another with one’s intellect.
- Love is becoming one with another with one’s whole being. So love is relatively deeper. Deeper knowledge is love.
- Direct perception is silent knowing.
327. Man alone, of all living beings, exists and knows he exists.
329. From inactivity (even of *nirvikalpa samādhi*) you cannot get to the beyond without something active coming to your help. But from the active sphere (the waking state), you can rise straight to the Ultimate, merely by understanding it aright.
335. You can be really good only on reaching the ultimate Truth, when even the ‘good’ loses its ‘goodness’ and becomes transformed into that ultimate Truth.
336. Children have to be educated at School on ‘*avidyā*’ [‘false learning’] relating to varied subjects, and at home on ‘*vidyā*’ [‘true learning’] regarding the ‘I’-principle, the permanent background of all that is taught at school.
337. Memory is double edged. It is a thought like any other thought, and it is a cheat, outright.
339. Misunderstanding cannot know understanding. But, on the contrary, understanding alone can know misunderstanding. When understanding begins to know misunderstanding, misunderstanding becomes understanding itself.
342. Each sense organ perceives only itself. Knowledge knows only knowledge. And love loves only love. In short, the instrument utilized is itself perceived by the instrument. So also, you see only yourself in others.
348. As long as you attach an attribute to God, He remains only as a mental concept; and together with the attribute it becomes a percept.
357. Language is the art of concealing thought, and thought is the art of concealing Truth. Transcending or giving up language and thought together with their *samskāras*, you reach the Truth direct.

Bondage is the conviction that the object remains over, after every experience of knowledge or Peace. Liberation is the conviction that not even a trace of the object remains over, after every such experience.

- 362. 'I am' is the source and the end of all experiences, devoid of the experiencer and the experienced.
- 363. Every activity is recorded in knowledge, your real nature, before another activity commences.
- 364. Vital energy (prāṇa), seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, thinking etc. are all verbal nouns.
- 367. The vēdāntin alone is the real communist. He clings to his ideal steadfastly, and establishes it unquestionably in the ultimate Reality, the 'I'-principle.
- 374. A thing can prove the existence of nothing other than itself. Sensations can prove the existence of sensations alone. So you also can prove only yourself.
- 377. The general can well be said to be in the particular; but the particular can never be in the general.
- 378. The deluge [pralaya – cosmic dissolution into unmanifested causal potency] is the last refuge after the misguided search, through the cosmological path; for the cause of the objective world.
- 379. Mantra is a harmonious sound or group of sounds, with or without an intelligible surface meaning, but capable of creating and applying some definite and potential energy if properly uttered.
- 391. If, when you think of consciousness, the 'I'-thought comes in spontaneously and vice versa, then you are free. And if, when you think of the body, the 'I'-thought comes in spontaneously and vice versa, then you are bound.
- 396. Real art is that which sets its expression in perfect tune with the external harmony in diversity, without doing the slightest violence to the inner harmony which is the absolute Reality itself.
- 404. Vēdānta dispossesses one completely of his phenomenal address.
- 408. The 'I'-principle is the only concrete thing, and all else is but illusion.
- 410. Jīva [the personal ego] is he who thinks or feels; and Ātmā [the real self] is he who knows both these activities (and is no 'he' in fact).
- 413. To get to perfection, the ignorant man has to reverse completely his perspective of the world.
- 419. Realization is nothing but tinging the centre of gravity or emphasis from the object to the subject in every perception.
- 420. You have to give up all that you deem to possess, before you are let into the ultimate Truth.

426. You have to gain liberation only from the appendages: namely body, senses and mind. The officer is an appendage of the man, who is relatively the witness of the officer.
441. Renunciation, instead of proving the unreality of the world of objects, makes it more real and frightful; though you may gain temporary relief by being kept away from parts of it.
444. A ‘smile’ has the aroma of consciousness in it, and therefore it naturally turns the attention of the aspirant towards the impersonal.
450. If only you observe and recognize impartially and without prejudice all that you do as a layman, you shall stand established in your centre by that and that alone.
451. In the ‘you’, the ‘I’ is always present. But in the ‘I’, the ‘you’ is not present.
452. A householder Sage is inwardly a perfect sannyāsin [renouncer], and outwardly a man of the world.
The Sage has renounced his life completely, but has kindly permitted ‘life’ to cling to Truth for the time being, to be dismissed without notice whenever he chooses.
The Sage is always *in* the world, but not *of* it. You should also learn to live in the same manner.
458. The best way to do charity is to do it and forget all about it immediately.
459. Worship of God ensures the pleasures of heaven (dṛiṣṭa-phala-sādhya). But worship of the Guru ensures permanent happiness (including the former if desired, though in fact they are never desired – dṛiṣṭādṛiṣṭa-phala-sādhya).
464. The ultimate ideal is not ‘*not* to see’ when objects appear, but to be deeply convinced that the Reality is far beyond both seeing and not-seeing by the senses.
470. Vēdānta is verily a spiritual ‘atom bomb’; and it is no wonder that the intellectuals cautiously avoid it, for fear of blundering into the Right.
You are the only noumenon, everything else – from the intellect down to the body – being the phenomenon.
477. Reality alone has the right to come into your mind unbidden; because that is the subject and the Reality.
481. If you lose yourself in any action, that action will be the most successful.
486. ‘One in the one is not one.’ An individual who has reached the Ultimate no longer remains an individual.
488. God, as he is ordinarily conceived, is the highest manifestation of the human mind.

493. The best time for meditation (if necessary) is at waking from deep sleep, but before becoming fully awake to the world.
494. Nature works normally and regularly. Your sādhanā should never be pitched against or contrary to the current of nature.
495. The ignorant man and the vēdāntin each consider the other a lunatic. But the vēdāntin's so called lunacy is the real Truth and the greatest boon to this world.
499. When the world is shining, 'I am I-ing.'
501. When it is seen that diversity springs from Me (the indefinable one), no diversity remains and therefore it cannot affect Me.
517. I am static and dynamic simultaneously. Or better still, I transcend them both.
522. Absorption is the process by which the subject and the object become one in the 'I'-principle.
The real grace of the Absolute is in having endowed us with the two simple instruments of consciousness and happiness, for the specific purpose of absorbing everything into ourselves by knowledge and love.
524. Since the world proves you, the world may well be said to be a witness.
526. You have a physical life and a mental life, but you rarely know you have a Self life or an ātmic life.
529. A statement of mine helps you not when you take it but when you leave it.
531. Orders of the Guru, as originating from the ultimate Reality itself, are imperative commands and have to be obeyed literally.
536. The establishment of the disciple in the ultimate Truth is the greatest, the fittest and the only dakṣhiṇa (offering) one can humbly place at the feet of one's Guru for the invaluable services rendered by him.
540. There was no violence in Lord Kṛiṣṇa's advice to Arjuna to fight; because Arjuna was already deprived of his sense of enjoyership and doership, which alone make action binding.
544. I am the world not by my becoming the world, but by the world becoming myself.
546. Truth is transmitted neither through language nor through samādhi [meditative absorption]. Both of them only destroy variety and point to the Truth. Between the two, language is preferable by far, because it retains the power of initiative and discrimination which are lost to the one in samādhi. Discrimination alone can lead you beyond.
556. The one thought which is the permanent background of all thoughts is: 'I am.' Usually this background thought is forgotten, and immediately a plurality of thoughts come in. This plurality is what is called 'time'.

557. The effect is the cause of the cause.
561. When anything other than consciousness is added on to the real 'I'-principle, you become the personal or jīva.
562. Visualization by mere thought is possible only with regard to Ātmā, the Reality. With regard to nothing else is it possible.
567. The non-existence of the non-existent is existence itself. The existence of the non-existent disproves non-existence.
569. Self-forgetfulness is the cause of the creation of the world, and self-remembrance or withdrawal to the Self is the destruction of the world.
571. All paradoxes are dissolved in the Sage.
576. When you are asked what you are, if the answer comes spontaneously to your mind 'I am pure Consciousness', you may be said to have reached the natural state.
577. Religions teach you to love others at the physical and mental levels. But Vēdānta teaches you to become that love, pure and impersonal, beyond the mind's level.
580. Let the one who has the complaint come forward. Why should you voice forth others' complaints and worry about it?
If you want to know anything subjective, you must never refer to anything in the objective world.
582. You had been enamoured of the pot. The Guru has been showing you that it is nothing but earth, without doing the least violence to the pot.
583. A jīvan-mukta who is established in the Absolute does not seek to be conspicuous in any phase of his apparent life. Jīvan-muktas of the traditional path even dread such recognition.
584. We see harmony in this world only on rare occasions and that only superficially. But the Sage sees the same harmony always and everywhere, nay even in apparent misery and discord.
590. Memory merges the past into the present; and the present, when examined minutely, disappears altogether.
591. It is not you who see the world. It is the illusion of the apparent 'I' seeing the illusion of the world. What does it matter to you?
593. Misery depends upon diversity or objects for its very existence, and very often it bursts out into vociferous violence.
599. *Sleep involuntarily* and you will be taken to the ignorant man's deep sleep. *Sleep voluntarily* and you will be taken to nirvikalpa samādhi. *Sleep knowingly* and you will be taken right to your real nature (your natural state) beyond all samādhi.

604. Be unqualified and you are free.
605. What is not conceivable, not knowable and about which you are deeply convinced, that is the Reality. That you are.
612. The ting of emphasis from the objective to the subjective part of your activities is alone necessary to establish you in the Reality.
622. Tears of soft divine emotion are the panacea for all yōgic ills.
629. Admitting that shāstras came from jnyāna [knowledge] and not the other way about, the shāstras can well be dispensed with, if a personification of jnyāna as a Kāraṇa-guru is available to lead you.
638. You need not and cannot know the Guru. If you know the Guru or if you do not know the Guru, in either case you cannot become a disciple. So you had better accept him when you feel you must.
640. Sense objects tie you down to the world. But when you come into ‘contact’ with a Sage, you get tied down to the Ultimate. You can be relieved from the former bondage; but there is no escape from the latter.
641. Looking at the Guru’s body is like trying to catch the figure on a silver screen. All your preconceived standards and expectations regarding it fail.
643. Memory is the last link in the life of an individual, binding him to the world.
If you have seen, you cannot remember; because the rememberer is different from the see-er.
645. When personality comes into the impersonal it is bondage. When personality merges in the impersonal it is liberation.
648. Time is the fourth dimension, according to the vēdāntin.
650. In the world, every question only multiplies diversity.
653. Time strives hard in this world not to connect events, but to disintegrate them and to establish diversity.
654. Knowledge uninterrupted is Consciousness, and Happiness uninterrupted is Peace. Happiness is the first ebullition or sensation of Peace.
655. Liberation is not an escape from bondage. Both are expressions of the real freedom, the former discovering and the latter covering your real nature.
657. It is only the expressed in the expression that makes you covet the expression.
658. Neither the question nor the answer really enriches you. But the level at which both of them emerge is beyond the relative. Be there and you are free.
661. True religion is that which binds you to the background, the Reality. ‘Re’ = background, and ‘lega’ = binds.

664. Suicide is prompted by misery and desperation, along with your want of boldness to face and overcome them.
665. 'A sincere atheist is much nearer the Truth than a superstitious and indifferent bhakta [devotee].'
669. Let the mind be asleep to the whole world and wakeful to the real 'I'.
671. The personal in man usurping what really belongs to the impersonal is called 'spiritual larceny'.
674. 'That which spoke to you will always be there to help you, and that which spoke to you should always be loved.'
679. Spirituality is not the monopoly of any nation or country. In my opinion, Shakespeare was a 'realized soul' (in the language of the West), or a 'jīvan-mukta' (in the language of India).
687. Sages as well as sādhakas of all types radiate around them the flavour of their experiences.
690. The result can be perfect only if the Perfect is engaged in it.
691. The impersonal is not connected with the personal; but the personal is connected with the impersonal.
692. The path to the Ultimate lies from the changing, through the changeless, to the beyond.
697. You become a true disciple only at the highest level, when your personality vanishes and you stand as the impersonal Truth. Then there is no duality of any kind, like the Guru or disciple or relationship.
When you say, see or think that you are a disciple, you are a witness to the discipleship and not a disciple.
699. Your slavery to the body, senses and mind is dissolved only in the alchemy of your love for the free – the Guru.
Freedom is the surrender of slavery at the feet of the Guru – the Absolute.
705. The easiest way to understand the Sage is to direct your mind to your deep sleep. The Sage is there.
The Sage is deep sleep as it is rightly understood.
713. So far as the disciple is concerned the Guru is the light that first lights up even the Reality.
714. You realize not by renouncing the world, nor by allowing the world to be; but by taking note of the fact that you are always standing as that Truth.
717. Liberation is complete only when you are liberated from liberation as well.

721. The only clue given to us by the unseen, to understand one's own real nature, is the 'deep sleep state'. That alone is ours in fact.
738. Human effort consists in creating bondage for oneself, clinging fast to it, and wanting to become free without giving up bondage itself.
745. In talking about the Truth, you (the ego) must cease to talk, and allow Truth (the real Self) to talk or express itself in its own language.
752. Deep sleep is the most important part of your life; and it saves you from going mad.
756. Knowledge without object is wisdom.
761. To the individual soul (the ego), everything is outside. To God, everything is inside. To the Sage or Jnyānin, there is neither inside nor outside. He is beyond both.
765. The intellect is given to man only to measure the variety in the world.
766. 'I am Peace; because my Guru has said so', says Shrī Shankara.
778. If happiness assumes the form of riches, it gives rise to bondage.
If riches assume the form of happiness, it results in liberation.
781. You may delightfully say anything, but not take delight in saying anything.
788. Your revilers are your real friends and your flatterers your enemies.
796. Everything other than your real nature, the Self, is a dream,
800. Real sannyāsa [renunciation] is the surrender of your sense of separateness from the Reality, to that Reality itself.
803. Work is a hindrance to spirituality if the ego is present, and a help if the ego is absent.
805. By standing as the witness, you establish yourself in the unity in diversity.
806. See to it that both ends of your sleep are saturated with the thought of your real nature, your native home.
815. The mind and intellect only cleanse the road and pave the way for the royal procession of the heart to the Ultimate.
816. The mind is the father of all illusion.
817. When a Sage remembers, the memory is non-responsible and purely objective, while in the case of the ordinary man it is all subjective.
818. Law deals with logic. So one who takes to law has a good chance of rising to higher logic, leading to the Truth. The Truth is sublime logic or higher reason itself.

820. Death is liberation, provided it is the ultimate death, even of the samskāras [personal conditionings].
Real death is a t of your centre from the ego to the witness.
821. Attributing reality to the body is the most meaningless of all acts, and the conception of society is only an offshoot of this error. Take your stand in the ultimate subject before examining any object.
822. Liberation is not merely going beyond birth and death, but it is going beyond the delusion of birth and death.
823. When I am there as the object, I am not here in the body.
830. It is the 'living-ness' you transmit to an instrument that really makes it work.
832. Words speak in a child; ideas speak in a man; and Truth speaks in a Sage.
833. It is not happiness from objects or happiness in passivity that is to be shunned, but it is only the wrong notion about one's own real nature that is to be really shunned and destroyed.
The enjoyership does not die even in samādhi.
834. Learning is darkness, and knowledge is light. Learning, pertaining only to objects of ignorance, of course sharpens the intellect and accumulates information; but you do not get a ray of light from all that.
In the light of knowledge, all learning disappears as illusion.
837. When you stand as body, you are a jīva [a personal ego]. When you stand as mind, you are God. When you stand as Truth, beyond both body and mind, you are a jīvan-mukta (the Absolute).
You throw away the body by simply becoming aware of it.
838. Samskāras [conditioned habits] are the only impediments to spirituality. Arguments are used only to expel samskāras. Otherwise the samskāras safely lurk at the back and create havoc.
839. The root cause of all misunderstanding is the misuse of the generic name for the particular.
841. Purity is getting away from all that is extraneous to your real nature.
842. Unless you see inwardly, you cannot see outwardly either. The one is a corollary of the other.
844. Association with objects makes one bad. Association with the 'I'-principle makes one good.
845. Realization is becoming alive to the fact that one is free.
849. Consciousness illumines objects at a distance. It destroys objects on contact.

853. Duality is the parent of fear; and the witness thought is the surest panacea for all ills.
865. The ego never sees the light, though he always uses light. The Sage sees that light alone (the most vital part) in every perception.
No human being has ever reached the Ultimate.
866. Art is an attempt to express the inner harmony of the ultimate Reality, through the outer harmony created by the senses and the mind.
868. The goal of all activity is to make you lonely.
There is fear only when there is duality.
874. Samskāras are habit-channels of thought, or dormant tendencies.
877. You begin to love your Guru only when that which was given by the Guru is accepted wholly by you.
879. Not seeing the Reality, or forgetting the Self, is sleep. Seeing the Reality, or visualizing the Self, is real waking. To be really awake is not to be awake with sense organs and mind, but with Consciousness. The present waking state is verily a sleep or a dream.
881. The mind becomes pure only by its own death. The attempt to purify the mind by any amount of other effort is futile.
882. The sahaja state is the state where you maintain that certainty or deep-rooted conviction that you never leave your real nature of Consciousness and Peace.
884. Knowing, becoming and being the Reality are the three distinct stages in the course of progress to the Ultimate.
886. The purpose of life is to know the Truth and to be it. You can never be happy; you can only be happiness.
888. The Sage is the principle upon which all opposites and paradoxes appear and disappear.
889. If you really love another, you lose yourself in the other.
895. Your life-eternal is ego's death – eternal. True life begins when the ego dies and Consciousness dawns.
896. Things, both by their presence and by their absence, affect you and hide the Truth from you.
902. A means, which is an illusion, is first adopted from the relative sphere which is all illusion. But reaching the goal when you look back you find that the 'world illusion' has disappeared and the 'means-illusion' along with it, leaving you all alone in your own glory.
904. Recognition is an acceptance of the fact of Truth. Repetition of it makes recognition deeper and deeper.

Recognition, remembrance and hope are the three props that maintain the continuity of individual life.

906. It is not the witness as such that matters, but it is only that which appeared as the witness that really matters.
907. You see diversity, because you are diversity yourself.
909. You are given a name to show that you yourself are a changeless principle.
913. You are in the right line of thinking if it takes you to the witness direct.
The real test of the right line of thinking is whether it takes you to the witness.
914. The ignorant man does not experience anything other than the body and is blissfully ignorant of the 'I'-principle. The Sage does not experience anything other than the 'I'-principle and knows the body to be only an illusion.
The ordinary man does not experience anything except as a body, and the Sage does not experience anything except as the 'I'-principle.
917. The vanishing of subject-object relationship is the experience of love.
'Love all' is a glorious ideal accepted by the world and the v̥dāntin alike; but their implementations differ. The humanitarian worker emphasizes the 'all', and misses the happiness. But the v̥dāntin emphasizes love (happiness) – his own nature – and misses the 'all', which is but an empty word and an illusion.
918. The thought that certain things are obstacles to spirituality is itself the first obstacle.
922. All rules of conduct on the spiritual path lead you to the Sage (Truth), and automatically get dissolved in his presence. So rules humbly follow the Sage and never dare to overtake him.
931. Time is the arch-deceiver of all. You rely upon him to establish the world and its religions.
932. By 'liberation', you seek your own individuality, which is that changeless principle in you.
933. The 'I'-principle has no activity, because it has neither organs nor mind. But it is not dead either. It is ever-present and it is from it that everything else gets light.
935. The witness perceives only the material part of the activity, and never its consciousness part.
936. Your search for the Truth should always be a descent from Ātmā to the world.
937. If the ego does not come in to interfere, indolence is the Reality itself.
940. Desire for liberation or Truth is not the function of the ego, but is the expression of the 'being' in you.

- If one says sincerely that he takes a delight in being bound, surely he is liberated.
944. The word of the Guru is the highest proof to a disciple. ‘I am not the jīva. By the word of my Guru, I am Peace ultimate.’ (Shrī Shankara)
946. If deep sleep loses its sense of objectivity and becomes subjective, you are free.
948. A percept is that which is perceived. If you emphasize the ‘that’ part of it, the percept becomes ‘that’ and ceases to be a percept.
952. Aristotle says that man is a social animal and abhors solitude. But I say: ‘Man is always in solitude and can never be otherwise.’
- Witnessing is disinterested perception.
955. Your real nature is renunciation itself.
- Real renunciation is the renunciation of doership and enjoyership from all your activities.
962. Reality is that principle which denies everything else, but cannot deny existence to itself.
963. The jīvan-mukta is a living commentary of the Truth you have visualized.
964. Nobody worships the idol, and nobody worships without an idol.
967. Variety is madness. See the unity (witness) behind the variety and you transcend madness. Be the knower and you are sane and free.
971. It is said that a devotee goes *into* samādhi with tears in his eyes and that a Jnyānin comes *out of* samādhi with tears in his eyes. But I say that this is not yet the whole truth. One can very well both go into and come out of samādhi with tears in his eyes. This is definitely higher than the former experiences.
972. It is only the ignorant man, who had not the good fortune to be blessed by a living Sage (Guru), that usually takes to the shāstras somewhat helplessly.
- The ultimate purpose of all shāstras is only to give an indirect idea about the Truth, and above all to impress upon the aspirant the supreme necessity of the help of a Kāraṇa-guru for the attainment of the Truth.
979. Pleasure is a sigh of relief after a course of pain, and is a prelude to the state of Peace. But it is often mistaken for Peace itself.
980. The body is the cell in which both the Sage and the ignorant man seem to rest – one feeling free, and the other bound.
991. You know yourself when there is neither something nor nothing to be known.
996. Worldly knowledge expires in enjoyment; enjoyment expires in becoming; and becoming expires in being.
1004. Ahankāra [ego] is the sense of one’s separateness from everything else.

1009. In all phenomenal teaching, it is the ‘his’ that is transmitted and that only in parts. But in spiritual teaching it is always the ‘he’ that is transmitted in full.
The Guru’s form is the only object in the world which, if deeply contemplated upon, takes you directly to the real subject – the Reality.
1017. The higher reason comes into play when you want to know something beyond the experience of body, senses and mind.
1020. Phenomenal knowledge is the inherent ‘knowingness’ within you, coming out occasionally through the mind or senses.
1027. The light in the mentation knowledge is itself the witness.
1029. Of course the witness, as such, has a small taint which is neither detrimental nor instrumental to the visualization of the Truth. But the Reality can easily be visualized through the method of the witness.
1032. The world of forms is never the cause of bondage. It is the world of names alone that binds you.
1037. The only moment I really live is when I direct my attention to my real nature, the right Absolute.
1042. Consciousness is in greater evidence in the absence of the object than in the presence of the same.
1053. The higher reason is a supra-rational instrument of thought, and its function cannot rightly be called thinking.
1056. ‘I am realizing myself in all of you, when I am talking to you about the Truth; and you are realizing yourself in me, when you are understanding what I say.’
1058. When the heart is full, the tongue refuses to speak.
Beyond subject-object relationship, *to know is to be*.
1059. That alone is the real sādhanā which removes the ills of all the three states.
1061. The Guru is addressing the Guru in the disciple. But you should never contemplate oneness with the Guru, in any manner.
Truth, feeling that it is not the Truth (the disciple), is taught by the Truth which knows that it is the Truth (the Guru).
1069. To forget oneself completely, in knowing the Truth, is to know it with one’s whole being.
1071. Any knowledge apparently limited, if understood without reference to the object, is knowledge absolute (Truth itself).
1076. If you want to remove the suffering alone and retain the sufferer, it is never possible; because the suffering and the sufferer always appear and disappear simultaneously.

1080. There cannot be degrees in Reality.
1090. Surrender is no surrender, in the strict sense of the term, if you happen even to remember the fact that you have surrendered.
1093. The state of complete identity with non-dual Ātmā, as a result of discrimination and negation of phenomena, is the v̥dāntic concept of samādhī.
1099. Vidyā-vṛitti [higher reason] is the fire that burns the forest of illusions (ignorance).
1103. When you come to real poetry, it transcends imagination and all ideation. That is the Reality.
1108. A life of placid enjoyment is inimical to you, if you are given to serious thinking on any serious subject, and much more so when that thinking is spiritual.
1110. ‘The exercise of discrimination and reason alone can destroy your saṃskāras [conditioned tendencies] and take you to the Truth. But the method of using them is to be obtained from the Guru.’ [Shrī Gauḍapāda]
The exercise of the higher reason alone can destroy one’s innate tendencies and lead one to the Goal.
1114. An ornament is an ornament only by convention; but actually it is only gold.
The object of V̥dānta is not to help you ‘not to perceive the appearance’; but to help you to see the essence, even when perceiving the appearance through the senses.
1119. V̥dānta is the unfoldment of one’s own real nature (the Truth), from the lowest level to the highest.
Reality is positive in form but negative in meaning. When I say, ‘It is existence’, I mean only that it is not non-existence.
1120. Higher reason is that supra-intellectual organon present in all human beings, which begins to function only when the aspirant tries to understand something beyond the mind.
1121. The devotee of the Guru should never forget that objects or persons of whatever relationship to the Guru should be utilized only to draw his attention to the Guru. Otherwise, they should be dismissed summarily.
1127. Truth is the text; and the world, senses and mind are the commentaries thereof.
1128. If I claim to be anything, that must be with me wherever I go.
1131. The teacher and the disciple both stand depersonalized when the Truth is expounded by the teacher and understood by the disciple.
1134. The world ties you down by its presence here. The world ties you down by its non-existence or absence in samādhī. You must transcend both in order to reach the Truth.

1135. The teacher shows the disciple that he too is perfect, and there the teaching ends.
1139. The only sādhanā that the higher jnyāna śāstras ask the earnest aspirant to undertake is: ‘Listen, listen, listen to the words of the Guru, and contemplate nothing.’
1142. Realization is seeing things in the right perspective, knowing yourself first.
1144. Ferrier, the French Philosopher, has said: ‘Apprehension of the perception of matter is the subject of metaphysics.’ But I say it is not the subject, but only the beginning of metaphysics.
1147. The states [of waking, dream and deep sleep] are the key to the Reality, as expounded by Vēdānta.
1152. Causality as a law has the advantage of taking you from diversity to unity, but not beyond.
1153. The certitude that you are that changeless, self-luminous principle is liberation; and that conviction that you are bound is bondage.
1158. There is no perception either in deep ignorance or in pure Consciousness, either in darkness or in dazzling light. In dim light alone, objects seem to appear.
1159. If you achieve that degree of identification with the light of knowledge as you had with body in the waking state, there is nothing more to be achieved.
1167. The ‘is’-ness goes beyond life and death and lights up both. It is from this ‘is’-ness that all life flows.
1169. You must give up freedom in order to be really free.
1170. The ‘is’ is nearer the Truth than that which is.
1172. Sleep is neither an action nor non-action. There is no ego in sleeping, and there can never be a sleeper.
1176. It is often a sweet recreation and delight for an established Sage to expatiate upon Truth with arguments and illustrations, or to talk with tears about devotees and their personal gods.
1177. The disciples, from their own standpoint, have a Guru. But the Guru, from his own standpoint, has no disciples. He is beyond duality and unity.
1179. It may generally be said that one gets enlightened through the head, and gets established in the Truth through the heart.
1183. That by which you consider deep sleep to be a state of unconsciousness, while Consciousness reigns in all its purity there, is avaraṇa [obscuring].
1184. Waking is reality to both the ignorant man and a Sage. To the ignorant man, waking means waking to the gross world; and to the Sage, waking is waking to his own real nature.

1190. You are thought or feeling, devoid of the characteristics of thought or feeling.
1196. If you can bring something from the deep sleep to bear upon the waking state, certainly the pains of the waking state will be relieved considerably here itself.
1209. It is not the vital experience itself that really enlightens one, but it is the correct understanding of its significance.
A wrong and an objective interpretation, even of nirvikalpa samādhi, after the event, posits the ego there retrospectively.
1225. Appearance can never merge in anything else. The non-existent snake can never be said to merge in the rope. [Shrī Gauḍapāda]
1230. All religions serve human tastes and ignorantly multiply differences. But Vēdānta alone serves the changeless Truth and reconciles all differences, without exception.
Where no two religions, mystics, yōgins, scientists or philosophers agree in their own spheres, no two Sages have ever disagreed about the nature of the ultimate Truth.
1231. Awareness cognizes ideas and co-ordinates the states.
1235. There is no bridge between the relative world and the Absolute; because they are in two distinct and separate planes or levels. (But still, the disciple of a Kāraṇa-guru can never deny his own experience that the apparent person of the Guru serves as the safest and the surest bridge to the Truth.)
1244. Rely upon your own higher reason (discrimination) in the light of changelessness and self-luminosity to establish the ultimate Truth. (Shrī Gauḍapāda and Shrī Shankara both assert that it is a ‘slave mentality’ to rely upon any scripture or other authority for the purpose.)
1245. It is best to see the pot to be nothing but earth, even when the pot remains as pot. It can also be seen to be only earth by destroying the pot as such. But the second method is rather crude and childish.
1251. A jīvan-mukta does not destroy the states, but only illumines them and understands them to be nothing other than the real Self.
1259. To the intellectual the Guru is always an ‘enigma’.
1261. One goes to a Guru to get beyond the ‘why’, and then the question disappears.
1263. Man is both the spectator and the actor in the drama of life. The spectator is real, but the actor is unreal.
1264. The so-called unconditionedness is also a limitation and this is called ‘samādhi’. Truth is still beyond.
1265. Knowing and loving come in as a result of your not wanting to be separated from the ‘thing’.

1266. With the change of state, the field of reference changes completely.
1267. It is appearance that goes into the make of disappearance. So disappearance appears.
1268. Ordinary illusions have at least a momentary existence in the mental level. But the ego has not even that.
You stray away from knowledge, to the object known; and that is the ego.
1271. Truth is of the nature of differencelessness, and is only one and self-luminous.
1276. If the ego takes leave of you in the course of an activity, it takes you straight to pure love.
1277. 'Being' is being and is independent of its opposite, non-being. Non-being can exist only on being. But being can exist all alone.
1281. Vicāra-mārga (the direct path) is removal of untruth by arguments, leaving over the Truth absolute as the real Self.
1282. You are not a man, when you know that you are a man.
It is wrong to say that you know pain.
1285. In the relative level, the ego loses itself in the object; but in the absolute level, you make the object lose itself in you.
1286. The deep sleep state is always in the past.
1287. Indeterminate ignorance is also the Reality.
1288. It is thought and speech alone that obscure the Reality.
Do not try to objectify Reality. The yōgin tries to objectify what refuses to be objectified.
1289. The knowing act is the last act or link in the chain of any activity. There is nothing else to know it.
The last knowing act, without itself being known, is non-empirical and is the ultimate Reality.
1290. In deep sleep, the concept of general ignorance is destroyed, in order to show your real nature.
Ignorant knowledge is giving reality to objects, forgetting its essence – knowledge.
Here, in the waking state, your ignorant knowledge is destroyed by the Guru, to show that you are the transcendental.
1291. The 'all' (in all-knowingness) is only one object, just like any other object.
1295. The right form of Guru-thought is that 'The Guru is in me.' By this thought, the Ultimate will gradually devour the 'me' and leave one as the ultimate Truth.

The wrong form is that 'I am the Guru.' This thought is strictly forbidden; because, by that, the Ultimate is lost sight of and the apparent 'I' (the ego) gains in strength.

1297. You separate yourself from thought or feeling, and that is life.
Whenever the mind functions, you are spatializing the Absolute.
1300. The very mention of one's age proves that one is changeless, at that period of time. Therefore one is changeless through all time.
That which appears on 'Me' is life.
That which gets separated from 'Me' is death.
Looked at from a deeper level, even death forms part of life.
1301. Every mentation is egoless, at the moment it occurs.
1302. 'If you but open your mouth, advaita [non-duality] is gone.'
1303. Memory is past, and memory is about the past.
1304. You need only to allow Truth to come in uncalled, whenever you happen to forget Truth in the midst of activities.
1306. Objectivity, in any form, is the only obstacle to Truth.
The object is an object on account of you.
1307. A real Sage disowns everything, while most great men own some things if not many.
1310. God is only a concept, though the highest the human mind can make. But *you* are not a concept.
1311. Beware of promises, pleasures and powers achieved or anticipated. All these seduce you from the Truth.
1313. It is only the snake [illusion] that gets transformed into the rope [reality], and not the other way round.
1316. One can be said to be perfectly healthy in body and mind only if no part of the body or mind makes itself felt. You know that you have a head only when it aches.
When you really know a thing, you stand identified with that thing. But when you *say* you know, actually you do not know.
1319. The 'I'-principle or Awareness is the real revelation – the revelation of the three states.
The subject is constitutive of the object.
The moment you perceive and know the object, the object abolishes itself (disappears by self-sacrifice) and reveals the Awareness.

- The very word ‘appears’ signifies Awareness and that Awareness is my real nature.
- To become aware of the fact that I am birthless and deathless is real liberation.
- To get established in that certitude is jīvan-mukti.
1322. Religion, scholasticism, yōga, devotion etc. can never by themselves take you to the Truth.
- The totality of one’s experiences consists in the three states, together with the most important factor – ‘Awareness’ – standing out of the states.
- The Awareness is the witness or knower of the appearance and disappearance of the states and also of the content of each state.
1323. *Theory* is speculative thought or mere supposition existing only in the realm of the mind, in order to explain something in the phenomenal.
- Practice* is that which brings thoughts to the body level. Truth is beyond theory and practice.
- If you begin to theorize or practise Truth, it ceases to be the Truth as such. Is ‘I am’ a theory?
- Even thinking or meditation distances the ‘I’ from you. So you are asked only to repeat what you are, and not to think or meditate.
- The knowledge of the ‘I’-principle is experiential knowledge, and even ‘Consciousness’ may be called theory.
1324. Without the ‘I’ (aham) being there, there can never be the ‘this’ (idam).
- So the ‘this’ is nothing other than the Truth (the svarūpa of the ‘I’).
- The ‘I’ is known only in identity.
- The generic of anything is neither space-limited nor time-limited.
- The known, when it is known, ceases to be known, abolishing itself as known.
1325. The Sage elevates his disciples not through tattvōpadēsha alone, but by a variety of activities and inactivity.
1327. The last of a series of acts, without itself being known, is the subject.
1328. Even in the so-called phenomenal knowledge, it is knowledge in identity that obtains.
1333. Knowledge unites, in being or in identity.
- Thinking separates, in subject-object relationship.
1335. Satisfaction is personal or private, and creates the many.
- Truth is impersonal or public, and destroys diversity.
1336. Dispense with memory, and you are at once beyond all states and in Truth.
1337. The yōgin’s artificial states are all great obstacles to the smooth visualization of Truth.

1341. Truth cannot be understood from anything other than Truth. Everything other than the Truth is untruth. So also is a book an untruth.
1342. The ordinary man's life is a swing between a tear and a smile.
1343. The lesson of deep sleep is that I get to my real nature of Peace and Consciousness when I transcend body, senses and mind.
The lesson of dream and waking states is that it is the one Consciousness – my real nature – that divides itself into the subject series and object series, and that I am witness to all mentations.
1344. Bondage is identification with body, senses and mind. Liberation is the giving up of that identification, by visualizing what you are.
1351. 'Seeing' is the verb form of 'form', and 'consciousness' is the noun form of 'seeing'.
1358. The 'I' and the 'this' are the only two asylums for anyone.
1360. 'Happiness can never be unintelligent.'
1361. Vicāra is a relentless enquiry into the Truth of the Self and the world, utilizing only higher reason and right discrimination.
1367. If Awareness is directed to anything apparently different, that other thing becomes Awareness at once.
1369. Vēdāntic reason is tri-basic in character, having sway over the experiences of all the three states [waking, dream and sleep].
Intellectual reason is only mono-basic in character, being applicable only to the experiences of the waking state.
1383. The Sage cannot stoop to split himself into the helper and the helped, in order to serve humanity with doles.
1391. The ignorant man and the Sage both face the world, apparently in the same manner. The ignorant man understands everything, including knowledge, in terms of object experiencing object alone. But the Sage understands everything in terms of knowledge, his own real nature.
1394. Consciousness by itself never illumines ideas or objects, but only kills them.
1399. Art is that which tends to merge the other into yourself. The mundane is that which separates the other from you.
1401. Misery, as such, is purely man-made, and is born and maintained in duality alone. Happiness is advaita [non-duality], and is natural to man.
1403. Of all that was then and there, Consciousness alone is now and here. Therefore memory is not.
1435. The ego always runs after things adventitious to it, and never turns to its native soil.

1447. Indeterminateness is Reality, and determinateness is unreality.

1450. Desire you may, but only don't forget the goal.

Further statements (numbered with preceding asterisk)

- *1. Possessorship is the only sentiment that binds man to the world of objects.
- *2. If the existent becomes non-existent, or if the non-existent becomes existent, in either case bondage results.
If the non-existent becomes non-existent, or if the existent becomes existent, in either case liberation results.
- *3. In the word 'impersonal', the 'personal' lurks. So you are beyond both.
- *4. Vēdānta deals with the movement of states, or in other words the movement of life.
Science and philosophy deal with the movement of objects, and the movement of the thoughts of objects.
- *5. Truth is realized only when the Awareness is equated with the 'I'-principle.
- *6. The objective world is always changing. Changes can be perceived only by something changeless and self-luminous. That principle is the one indubitable Reality, the Self.
- *7. You, as the ego, are the basic lie.
- *8. There is ignorance only when you stand in ignorance.
- *9. Lower reason is only the measure of variety.
Higher reason is the destroyer of variety, and it helps one to visualize the ultimate Truth.
- *10. Language is the language of duality alone. Non-duality has no language of its own.
- *11. The many can never be made into one, either in time or in space.
- *12. All lower shāstras take advantage of and exploit the common human weakness based on wrong knowledge and wrong habits of the waking state.
- *13. Higher reason destroys diversity and establishes Reality, while lower reason multiplies diversity still more.
- *14. The most effective of sanctions for the moral progress of man all over the world had been religion. But the bloodiest of wars and the cruellest of tortures and inhumanity have also been perpetrated, all in the name of God and religion.
- *15. In every perception of an object, the permanence, continuity and reality belong to your own Self.

- *16. Mind must work, and cease to work when Truth dawns.
- *17. So long as one thinks that he enjoyed happiness in deep sleep or in nirvikalpa samādhi, he is not enriched at all, and still remains a jīva.
- *18. The measure is always in the subject, and not in the object.
- *19. We are space-ridden, time-ridden and ego-ridden beings. So the best way to liberation is to retreat and retreat beyond all these to the real 'I'.
- *20. 'Brahman' [the all-including] is the self of God, and 'kūṭastha' [the true individuality] is the self of jīva [the seeming person], in the shāstraic sense.
- *21. Be a man and nothing more. Then you are free.
- *22. I do not want to possess anything, and so am the possessor of all. The ego possesses nothing, and so wants to possess all.
- *23. There is absolutely nothing in the mind to help you, except your own samskāras [conditioned tendencies].
- *24. It is wrong to say that Consciousness limits itself and appears as the world; but it is you who limit Consciousness to form the world.
- *25. If the '-ness' is eliminated from all your mental experiences, your stand is in your real nature.
- *26. Remembering is the only 'sin'; and that alone has to be destroyed.
- *27. Truth has no standpoint of its own.
- *28. Whatever is upādhi (medium) to the jīva [personal ego] becomes upādhi to the witness in the jīvan-mukta.
- *29. You have to reverse the order of language, if you want to express Truth as it is.
- *30. You may utilize objects to rise to the witness, but never utilize the witness to establish objects.
- *31. If at the end of a single activity you go to peace, where else could you go at the end of all activity (death)?
- *32. You must be living the Truth, and not merely thinking or contemplating it.
- *33. Fasting the body, senses and mind and directing your attention to the Guru is a spiritual feast.
- *34. After realization, see your parents as Ātmā itself.
- *35. When consigned to the past and reduced to mere ideas, the waking and dream experiences become one, and are cognized by Awareness.
- *36. 'Be in Consciousness without knowing that you are in Consciousness.' (This was the last of Shrī Ātmānanda's spiritual messages to his disciples.)

Life sketch of Shrī Kṛishṇa Mēnōn (Shrī Ātmānanda)

Birth and parentage

Shrī Ātmānanda came of an illustrious matriarchal Nair family by name Cherukulam in the village of Peringara in Tiruvalla Tālūk in Central Travancore. He was born in the closing hours of Friday the 23rd of Kārttika in the year 1059 M.E. (corresponding to Saturday the 8th December 1883 – the day is counted from sunrise in India, not from midnight as abroad), his natal star being Pūruruttāti.

His father was Brahmashrī Gōvindan Nambūdiri, a vēdic Brahmin of the influential Mūviḍattu Maṭham and a descendant of the late ‘Pattillam’ Brahmin oligarchy of Tiruvalla. The father was engaged in teaching the Vedas to the Brahmin children of the locality. Shrī Kṛishṇa Mēnōn had several uncles, a brother and two sisters who were all poets and scholars. His infancy and childhood were quiet and happy.

He evinced however, even from his childhood, instinctive symptoms of deep religiousness and indrawingness. He had a peculiar aversion for food, till he was about ten years of age. At the age of ten, a great and reputed sannyāsin who visited Tiruvalla happened to meet him in his house, and gave him a mantrōpadēsha by way of preliminary initiation.

He was put to school at a very early age, and by the time he was twelve he reached the high school. His parents, elders, neighbours and teachers all noted the boy’s capacity for studies, his exemplary honesty and fearlessness. He started writing poetry at the age of fourteen and soon outshone his uncles and brother. He grew up to be an athlete of unusual prowess and some of his physical feats have surprised even the professional circus troupes of his time. Swimming was a favourite recreation for him.

Once when he was in his teens, he was the only survivor in a country boat disaster in a thunderstorm at midnight in the dangerous backwaters of Quilon, just above their junction with the sea. The other eleven passengers were drowned. Providence seems to have been very particular in sparing him for the mission he was to fulfil later in life.

Education

His educational career was exemplary. He stood first in his class in all subjects and was loved both by his teachers and by his companions. Very often he served as a tutor to many of his classmates, particularly in Malayalam in which he was already a poet and a litterateur. Clarity, precision and conciseness were the qualities in which he excelled, even from his boyhood. He finished answering his examination papers long before the time set and still did very well.

The reader will be surprised to learn that such a brilliant student was declared to have failed at the matriculation examination for which he appeared at the age of 14. He was granted special permission to appear for the examination, even though he was underaged, at the instance of his teachers who loved him no less than his own parents. Strangely enough, he had failed in Malayalam, in which he usually excelled. He accepted his fate calmly.

But a month later, he received a telegram from the Registrar of Madras University, informing him that he had really passed and that he was placed in the first class. Simultaneous orders were also issued to the college authorities to grant him all con-

cessions in attendance and the like, with retrospective effect from the date of reopening of the college. The humour of the incident is in the fact that a simple zero was unfortunately omitted in the university mark list, so instead of 90 percent his marks were entered as 9 percent in the Malayalam paper and no wonder he failed. The mistake was detected only a month later. He made frequent references to this simple incident in his spiritual talks, to prove the unreasonableness of causality.

Marriage and graduation

After passing the matriculation examination, he was anxious to continue higher studies at the university. It was the bane of the matriarchal system that the maternal uncles, who were the legitimate guardians of the family, were not sufficiently interested in the education of their nephews. So Shrī Ātmānanda did not get from them the financial help he needed to prosecute further studies. Therefore he worked as a school teacher in a private school, and saved some money from his meagre income. With that money, he joined a college and passed his first examination in Arts. Again he took up his work as a teacher in schools; and with the money he could save, he appeared for the B.A. as a private candidate and secured a creditable pass.

Before graduation, he was married in the year 1910 to Saubhāgyavati Pārukkuttī Amma, who belonged to the distinguished and aristocratic Nair family of Kollaka Bungalow at Karuṇāgappalli. Since the age of sixteen, his former religious enthusiasm had subsided and a spirit of atheism had taken possession of him. At this stage, he was responsible for shaking the blind religious faith of many of his well-meaning neighbours and friends. But in spite of all this, he continued to observe, at least nominally but regularly, the simple instructions given him by the sannyāsin.

Government appointment and spiritual thirst

After graduation, he accepted an appointment in the High Court at Trivandrum. At the same time, he joined the Law College. In the meanwhile, in spite of the fact that he was physically smaller than the police standard, something in him so favourably impressed the Commissioner of Police that he was recruited to the department as a Senior Inspector. He left the Law course and served as Inspector of Police, in various places. Riding horses was a pleasant hobby for him during this period. While thus in service, he took some months' study leave to complete the law course and took his degree in Law (B.L.) with distinction. He was immediately appointed prosecuting Inspector.

The atheistic tendencies which began to appear at the age of sixteen continued their sway over him till about the time he came as prosecuting Inspector to Padmanābhapuram, the former capital of Travancore. Then, spiritual questions began to engage his serious attention once again. He sought answers through books. This was the only avenue open to him, but nothing satisfied him. As a result of his efforts, however, he was deeply convinced that a Kārana-guru (a Sage who is prepared to lead an aspirant to the goal) could alone take him to the Truth.

He also knew that he was incompetent to choose the right Guru. Therefore he took the safe course of praying to the personal God to bless him with the right Guru. This prayer went deeper and deeper day by day, and he spent several sleepless nights all drenched in tears. His mental agony was intolerable. His official duties, however, were carried on as before.

In that state, one day at Padmanābhapuram, he met a naked avadhūta sannyāsin by the road side. The sannyāsin was bruised all over with stones pelted by mischievous urchins on the street; yet he only smiled. Immediately, Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn recognized in the avadhūta the old sannyāsin whom he had met at the age of ten. The svāmi embraced him and consoled him and told him that a great and real Mahātma would shortly meet him, to guide him to his spiritual goal. This consoled him, but only for a little while. The old mental agony reappeared after some days, and he began to pray again with redoubled earnestness for a real Guru.

Attainment of Sat-guru

Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn had developed a natural aversion towards sannyāsins as a class, as he had found from his frequent discussions with them that their grasp of the Truth was feeble. At last, one evening in the year 1919, he happened to meet, by the roadside not far from the Police Station at Takkalai, a sannyāsin – visibly great – wearing flowing ochre robes and a big Bengali turban. The sannyāsin looked at him with an enchanting smile. The svāmijī, seated on a culvert, beckoned him to his side and spoke to him in clear and exquisite English, as though he had long known him. Indeed he had, and the sannyāsin alone knew it. He was attracted by the sannyāsin from the first sight of him, and was fascinated by his charming manners, gait and talk. Being invited by him for a short walk, Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn could no longer resist the temptation to accompany him. So they walked together silently, for about a mile, till they reached an old, unoccupied house at the western gate of Padmanābhapuram Fort.

Vehement opposition and ultimate surrender

The sun had set, but darkness did not shroud the earth as usual, since the bright moon had already risen. In that cool and gentle moonlight, they entered the house and sat in the front room. A frank and lively conversation on spiritual topics was started. Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn, as every sincere aspirant is expected to do, asked many shrewd and taxing questions, which under any other circumstances would have seemed to offend against ordinary politeness. But the svāmijī – overflowing with love and inwardly enjoying the earnestness, sincerity and shrewdness of the aspirant – answered the questions most satisfactorily, gently and unostentatiously – covering even those in the mind of the aspirant to which he had not yet given expression.

Much more than the unassailable logic and applicability of the answers, it was the extreme humility of the great svāmijī that captivated the heart of the aspirant and enslaved him at last. The ego being thus paralysed, Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn immediately prostrated at the feet of the svāmijī, literally washing his feet with his tears. After some moments when he could barely speak, he got up and prayed for instructions to enable him to reach the Ultimate, if he was considered worthy. The svāmijī, who was only waiting for that moment of genuine surrender, replied with a smile of love and joy: ‘It is for that and that alone that I have come all the way from Calcutta. I have no other interest in Travancore. I knew of your yearnings even from that distance.’

(Note: A word of caution may not be out of place here, about this and other such incidents. Please do not stoop to examine, from a purely mental plane, the possibility or reasonableness of this and other instances that might follow in the course of this sketch. Suffice it to say that they are quite possible, perfectly reasonable and definitely more real than the mental experiences of the waking state. They appear in a

state or plane which virtually governs the waking state of one who had the good fortune to reach such a state.)

Initiation, and departure of the Guru

They talked in that room the whole night through. Before daybreak, all instruction needed for the whole of the disciple's spiritual career had been imparted by the svāmijī and imbibed by the disciple. The instructions covered the path of devotion to the personal God Kṛṣṇa (as Ātma-mūrti and not as Bhāgavata Kṛṣṇa), and also different paths of yōga like raja-yōga, Shiva-rāja-yōga, prāṇava-yōga, etc. They ended with the path of jnyāna (following the direct perception method – strict vicāra-mārga – adopting the separation process, as distinguished from the method of meditation adopting the absorption process).

The svāmijī shrewdly discovered a lack of enthusiasm on the part of his disciple to take to the paths of devotion and yōga as directed. So the svāmijī said gently: 'I appreciate your reluctance to take to the preliminary courses of devotion and yōga, and I admit you are quite right. For mere realization of the ultimate Truth, the last course – namely the jnyāna path – is alone necessary. But I want you to be something more, which you will understand only later on. Therefore, please undertake them first. It won't take you long to finish them both. Evidently, the svāmijī had already decided to crown him as an Ācārya; and to be an ideal Ācārya, one has to be familiar with all the intricate experiences along all the different paths.

Before sunrise, the svāmijī got up, satisfied with the fulfilment of his mission. It was only then that Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn thought of the impending departure of his Guru. The day had not dawned, and his home was somewhat far away. It was not possible for him to offer his Guru the hospitality of his household or even a conventional 'dakṣhiṇa'. The svāmijī at once discerned his thoughts and feelings and said with a smile: 'There is no obligation in spirituality, there being no personality involved. Follow my instructions faithfully and you shall attain perfection soon. That alone, and nothing else, is the real dakṣhiṇa to the Guru. Therefore don't worry.' So saying, the svāmijī took his leave and returned straight to Calcutta via Nagercoil.

This was the first and the last meeting, in flesh and blood, between the Guru and the disciple.

A note about Guru-svāmi

The svāmijī was no ordinary sannyāsin. He was a great yōgin and a jnyānin, by name Yōgānanda, the like of whom the world has rarely seen. He was a great scholar and had mastery over many languages including English. He came of a princely family in Rājaputāna. He became a sannyāsin at the age of twelve, and became a jnyānin well established in the Absolute in his early teens. From Rājasthān he came to Calcutta, where he lived in a small āshram with four sannyāsin disciples – all of whom lived with him.

It was in the year 1919 that Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn was pining in Travancore for a real Guru. When his agony was deep, it touched a tender chord in the svāmijī, then resting in Calcutta. The Guru-disciple relationship is believed to be predestined and not accidental. No amount of intellectual reasoning can explain it. The Guru-disciple relationship is outside the ken of human understanding. Otherwise, how could we explain the experience of Shrī Ātmānanda himself? The spiritual pangs of an earnest

aspirant in Travancore were transmitted over a thousand miles straight to Calcutta. They were received there by that great sannyāsin alone, while they missed the notice of all other sages and yōgins then living all over India, both far and near.

As soon as the svāmijī heard the call, he said to his chief sannyāsin disciple: ‘My child is crying for help in Travancore. I am going there to console him.’ So saying, he started by the next train, at his own expense, to Trivandrum and thence to Padmanābhapuram, where he sat on the culvert. He knew full well that Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn would come that way, and so he did.

Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn was the last disciple of Svāmi Yōgānanda. He was also the only gṛihasta (householder) disciple of the svāmijī.

Spiritual sādhana and realization

The very day the svāmijī left him, Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn started an intense practice of his spiritual exercises, beginning with the path of devotion, in strict conformity with the instructions given to him. He rose steadily in the line of devotion till he took up Rādhā-hṛidaya-bhāvana (meditation on the heart of Rādhā), the highest exercise of personal devotion to the iṣṭa-dēva. Thus he went through all the thrilling and intoxicating experiences of selfless love, culminating in its own samādhi. It did not take him more than six months to cover all this. It was towards the end of this period that he composed his classic work, *Rādhā-mādhavam*, of 48 verses in Malayalam.

Next, he went through the hardest grind of yōgic exercises, following the paths of different yōgas in order. In the course of his yōgic exercises once, his body was paralysed. This happens to all yōgins when they transcend a particular ādhāra-cakra (nerve centre). It is only a simple yōgic reaction on the strained human constitution, and it disappears in due course without leaving any adverse effects. But the family of Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn was terribly upset, and so they turned to all kinds of medical treatments which were of no avail.

At last the news reached the ears of a great yōgin and jnyānin called Shrī Caṭṭampi Svāmikaḷ, who was then in his old age, living at Trivandrum. He said that it was no disease, that it would have no adverse results, and that no doctor’s medicine would have any effect on his body which was then in a hyper-sensitive state. It was then about a fortnight since the malady had become acute. Anyhow, Shrī Svāmikaḷ took compassion upon the anxious condition of the family of Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn and so prescribed a simple herbal preparation to be applied to the soles of his feet. It was applied at about 5 p.m. that day. In a few minutes, he fell into an unusually long and deep sleep, till 8 a.m. next morning. When he awoke, he was normal. The herbal application was continued for two more days, as directed by the svāmijī.

Some months later, Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn paid Shrī Caṭṭampi Svāmikaḷ a courtesy visit. It was then that the svāmijī revealed to him that it was not at his own instance that he had administered the antidote for the yōgic ailment, but because it was desired by the great Yōgānanda himself, who had requested him through the subtle sphere to do so. He declared that otherwise no spiritual man would ever interfere in the sādhana of a Kāraṇa-guru’s disciple and nothing untoward would ever happen to the sādhaḥ.

A few more months of intense yōgic practices took Shrī Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn to the highest experiences in the line of yōga. Long and deep nirvikalpa samādhi he enjoyed often and at will. But it failed to satisfy him, because it was time limited and caused

as a result of intense effort. According to him, Truth is uncaused, permanent and self-luminous.

Therefore, he had to seek for the ultimate Truth by other means. Then he took to regular jnyāna-sādhana with great ease and fortitude, and visualized the ultimate Truth in a very short time.

The period of his spiritual practices, covering all the three paths, did not last for more than four years (till about 1923). All necessary instructions were clearly and regularly imparted to him by his Guru, appearing before him in lively vision during his sādhana. He was given the spiritual name Ātmānanda by his own Guru, and he has been known by that name ever since.

Inclination towards sannyāsa and confirmation in grihastāshrama (householdership)

Towards the end of his spiritual sādhana, he felt a strong urge to take to sannyāsa and live with his Guru for the rest of his life. With this idea, he made all arrangements to go to Calcutta towards the end of May. A few months' leave was also sanctioned by Government, and he intended to resign his job towards the end of the leave. He chose not to disclose his whole intention, even to his wife, but said only that he desired to be with his Guru for some time. With all her characteristic love and devotion to him she readily agreed to what he so earnestly longed for.

But Guru-svāmi saw through all this plan and found that the new move would thwart his own purpose. He had marked out his only grihasta disciple for a great mission. Therefore, towards the end of May, a day before Shrī Ātmānanda was to leave for Calcutta, Guru-svāmi appeared before him in a vision and told him that he should not start as he had planned. He was to continue as a householder for life, guarding the spiritual and phenomenal well-being of his own wife and children and many others yet to come. Continuing, svāmijī said: 'If you start, you shall miss me. I shall have entered into mahāsamādhi on the 1st of June.'

The last part of the information upset Shrī Ātmānanda completely. The slightest hint or suggestion from the Guru was a peremptory order for him. Immediately, he cancelled his leave and waited, hoping against Truth that the latter part of the revelation would not be correct. This was how Shrī Ātmānanda was confirmed in his grihastāshrama. Exactly as he had been told, the great svāmijī left his mortal coil and entered into mahāsamādhi precisely at 9 a.m. on the 1st of June.

Services of his devoted wife

Shrīmatī Pārūkuṭṭi Amma, the wife of Shrī Mēnōn, was extremely loving and devoted to him. She was the ideal of Indian womanhood in all respects. During the four long years of his spiritual sādhana, she devoted herself to her own rigorous sādhana, which was to serve her husband in every way and make it possible for him to devote all his time and energy for his spiritual pursuit.

His sādhana was intense, one pointed and continuous. Hers was also intense, but multifarious and disconnected. She had taken upon herself the responsibility of the entire household. They were blessed already with three children, the youngest one being only an infant. She looked after her husband's physical needs with clock-like regularity and devotion. That had the first priority over all her domestic duties. He had rarely to ask her for anything he needed. She successfully anticipated all his needs.

Very often, she had to bathe him and feed him with her own hands, as if he were a child, during those periods when he was in the transcendental plane and had very little body consciousness left. Even during the four short hours of rest that Shrī Ātmānanda took in the middle of the night, she could not always sleep; because her domestic labours were not always finished before his retirement at night. She had to start again before he woke at 3 a.m. for the next day's sādhanā.

Her sleepless service and devotion to him for years remind us of the mythological services of Shrī Lakṣhmaṇa to Shrī Rāma for fourteen years in the forest without sleep or rest. It also reminds us that the age old ideal of Indian womanhood is not yet extinct. The marriage mantra of the Hindus enjoins: 'Thou shalt not part even after death'. This is no exaggeration, but the simple truth. It suggests that both the husband and wife stand as that principle which survives even death. It can never be the body, senses or mind which we see disintegrating here in front of us. It can only be that permanent, self-luminous, non-dual principle in man, transcending body, senses and mind. That is Ātmā, the ultimate Truth which knows no death. The married couple is asked to stand as that. What greater upadēsha does one need?

The practical implementation of this noble ideal was worked out by the great women of ancient India, by their unrivalled observance of the ideal of pati-vratya. Mythology abounds in instances of the most wonderful powers resulting from the sweet practice of this wonderful 'devotional yōga'. The woman, though apparently ignorant, considers her husband as her God incarnate and as such gives him all her love and devotion. Phenomenal love is only an expression of the knowledge of oneness, and the goal of love is that oneness itself.

That oneness was gradually experienced by such women as a result of their simple but sincere tapasya. This experience bestowed on them the mysterious powers of Īshvara-bhāva, in varying degrees, even without their knowing or desiring them. The powers danced before them as their slaves. Even when the husbands had not reached any high spiritual level, their wives by such sincere tapasya were able to acquire many such powers. But when a woman gets the rare privilege of doing such tapasya towards the husband who is well established in the ultimate Truth, she is indeed enviable. That feeling of oneness or identification with the husband at all levels makes her a rightful partner in all his attainments.

So it was with Shrī Ātmānanda's devoted wife Shrīmatī Pārūkkutṭi Amma – Swarūpānanda being her spiritual name.

First disciples

Of the five disciples of Swami Yōgānanda, Shrī Ātmānanda (the only householder disciple) was alone permitted to take the role of a Kārana-guru to accept disciples and guide them. Accordingly, he accepted his first few disciples during the period 1923-24. He was Prosecuting Inspector of Police at Padmanābhapuram throughout the period of his spiritual sādhanā and for some years more. Though he could not spare much time for his official preparations at home, his official work never suffered in any way on that account. Government proceedings gave him glowing tributes for his masterly prosecution of cases even during the period of his sādhanā. This has proved to the reasonable observer that legitimate phenomenal duties are never a hindrance to an earnest spiritual aspirant.

Police department and spirituality

Many years later (in 1949), Sir S. Rādhākṛiṣṇan interviewed Shrī Ātmānanda, at the latter's residence, Pārvati Vilāsam, in Trivandrum. During this interview, Sir Rādhākṛiṣṇan asked out of curiosity: 'Well Sir, is it a fact that you had all your spiritual sādhana while serving in the Police Department?'

Shrī Ātmānanda replied firmly: 'Yes, it is perfectly true. And I am quite serious when I say that if anybody sought my advice regarding the vocation or profession most helpful towards spiritual advancement, I would always recommend either the police or the military. Because they offer the maximum obstacles and temptations. Success obtained under such conditions is final and irrevocable.'

His service and government appreciation

From Padmanābhapuram, he was transferred in succession to Trivandrum, Kottayam, Nagercoil, Chengannur, Alwaye, and again to Kottayam, Trivandrum and Quilon – as Prosecuting Inspector, Station Inspector, Assistant Superintendent of Police and District Superintendent of Police. For over a year, he was deputed on special duty to codify and prepare the long neglected Police Manual of the state. He retired from service in 1939, while serving as District Superintendent of Police at Quilon.

He was the terror of advocates who opposed him, because of his mastery over the law. Several heads of the Government under whom he served have recorded their high appreciation of his integrity, resourcefulness, intelligence, deep respect for the law and above all his unquestionable efficiency. In service as well as in phenomenal life, he always upheld established law, high moral standards and humane justice. He fought stubbornly against his own superiors in service and even against Government, for principle and justice. His retirement a few months before superannuation was precipitated by such a fight against Government for principle and justice. He neither let down his erring subordinates, nor gave them up to the mercy of his superiors. He always punished them himself leniently and they in return loved him unreservedly and obeyed him, to the envy of even his superiors. He never made use of the services of his official subordinates except for strictly official purposes.

He had around him always a host of disciples waiting to do any service of love, unasked. He loved to have them around him and he enjoyed their services more than those of his official subordinates. A constable was very rarely seen in his house, except when he brought some urgent message from Government. He was in his element and freedom when surrounded by his disciples. Even during long tours on foot over hills and forests for days together, he was followed by dozens of his devoted disciples.

Of course when he went on any official business, he was formally escorted by the police force.

Need of a Guru (and danger of more than one)

He asserted most emphatically that no aspirant, however great, could ever attain liberation without the help of a Kāraṇa-guru *in person*.

Accepting more than one guru at a time is even more dangerous than having none at all. It will keep the aspirant pinned to the phenomenal and in bondage. This assertion is expressed by him in the most unambiguous terms, in a letter in his own hand in

Malayalam dated 11-10-1104 M.E. (May 1929 A.D.) from Kottayam, sent to one of his earliest lady disciples, Nityānanda (Ponnu, as he used to call her). She was then but a girl of 13, and already doing sādhanā (devotion to her personal God Kṛṣṇa as Ātma-mūrti). A photostat of the letter is given at the beginning of this book with an English translation facing it. [The photostat is omitted in this second edition – the translation is the same as below.] Since she was in the infancy of her spiritual career, the letter is most skilfully clothed in language designed to appeal to her sentiments at that age and yet not deviating in the least from the path to the ultimate Truth. The letter may be of help to some seekers as it has already been to many others. It runs thus:

Kottayam, 11-10-1104
(24th May 1929)

To Ponnu

Peace thou be,

Letter received. The *unconditioned love towards one's own Guru* is the only ladder to the goal of Truth. That prēma-bhakti is *not something which could be shared*. No other kind of love or devotion should be capable of bearing comparison to it. A disciple should never bow allegiance to two Gurus at the same time.

May the Lord Bhagavān who is the embodiment of sat-cit-ānanda abide in Ponnu for ever.

With love and blessings

(signed)

P. Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn

He held that liberation is a change of perspective: from the basic error of 'knowledge by subject-object relationship', to 'the experiential Truth or knowledge in identity'. The latter is neither a result nor an evolution of the former. The former has to die, in order that the latter might dawn. At the point of the death of the former perspective, there must be some agency transcending the phenomenal, to direct the aspirant's attention to his own being or real nature. This agency is the Guru. He is the ultimate Truth itself, though he appears as a person to the naked eye. This Kāraṇa-guru in person is indispensable for Self-realization, though in some very mature cases of uttamādhikāris the contact might be only for a few seconds, by a word or a touch or even a look.

Wider spiritual activities and the increase of Indian disciples

When he was transferred to Kottayam in the year 1927, he had only a handful of Malayali disciples. At Kottayam, the clarity, simplicity and directness of his approach to the Truth, sweetened by his temperament of deep devotion to Truth without form or with form, attracted the admiration of a large number of persons, many of whom gradually sought and accepted his discipleship. Their numbers began to swell; and in the course of about seven years there were about three hundred, many of them being women. Among them were graduates, lawyers, teachers, officers high and low, landlords, feudal chiefs and men of diverse professions. The disciples in those days used to visit him periodically and stay around him for days and weeks, listening to his discourse.

Once in the year 1934, late at night, he was talking in chaste and simple Malayalam about the significance of the concept of ‘Atma-mūrti’. Some of us – then in the prime of our youth – felt drowsy and began to yawn. He noted this and at the end of the talk said: ‘After a few years, streams of foreign disciples from far off continents will flock to hear me, and then you will long to hear me talk in Malayalam. Therefore beware. Don’t waste your opportunity now.’ Our experience of later years proved this warning to be literally true.

He did not need more than three hours a day to dispose of his official papers most satisfactorily. He needed less than five hours for his night’s rest. The rest of his day was devoted to discoursing with the disciples on spiritual matters in Malayalam, expatiating mostly on real bhakti and jnyāna.

Though he was himself a great yōgin, he did not choose to guide any of his disciples through the path of yōga. He had, however, two disciples who came to him as yōgins and who under his direction through the jnyāna path became perfect jnyānins. One of them, a centenarian avadhūta sage [Kumaḷi-svāmi, described in the next section], is still living in the high ranges of Travancore. The other was a schoolmaster at Eraniel called Narayana Pillai. After listening for some months to Shrī Ātmānanda during the year 1922(?), Mr. Narayana Pillai one day succeeded in securing a mantrōpadēsha from him. Immediately, he resigned his job, took the sannyāsin’s robe which he got sanctified by placing it in front of Shrī Ātmānanda’s photograph, and went straight off to the Himalayas. There at the foot of the Himalayas he began his sādhana with all earnestness and sincerity, guided by the mantrōpadēsha alone. Complete directions from his Guru were available in the subtle sphere, whenever he needed them. In the course of a few years, he became a great jnyānin, revered and worshipped by the sannyāsins of Haridvār and Hṛīṣhikēsh. In the year 1948, he appeared before his Guru Shrī Ātmānanda at Trivandrum in the subtle sphere, took his permission to leave his mortal coil and immediately entered into mahāsamādhi at Hṛīṣhikēsh.

The enlightening of Kumaḷi-svāmi

One morning in 1932 at Kottayam, where Shrī Ātmānanda was then the Assistant Superintendent of Police, he felt an unusual urge to go to the eastern hills of Kumaḷi in the High Ranges. Immediately, he started on a surprise inspection tour of the police hill stations around Kumaḷi. He was already in a semi-transcendental mood. Alighting at the Police Station, he found the Inspector was out on his usual round. Sending word to him to come up soon, Shrī Ātmānanda, without an escort of any kind, began to climb the hill on the left, in response to the urge which was getting stronger within him as he proceeded.

There, at the top of the hill, he met an old avadhūta yōgin, stark naked. He was evidently waiting for him. On coming closer, he recognized in the avadhūta the old sannyāsin who had given him a mantra in his tenth year in his own home and whom he had met later on two occasions. The yōgin had reached the highest state of yōgic development and was habitually immersed in long and deep nirvikalpa samādhi for days together. There were very brief intervals when he woke out of this state. Fortunately, that was a time when he was awake.

In the waking state, this yōgin had his own doubts that he had not reached the ultimate Truth. Shrī Ātmānanda, who was also of the same opinion, wished to give him a lift. They talked frankly and openly about the actual state of the yōgin in his samādhi.

His mind was so pure and sāttvic that Shrī Ātmānanda had no difficulty in convincing him of the basic error which he had not yet transcended. In the next few minutes the ultimate Truth of his own real nature was clearly expounded to him, in very few words. The great yōgin visualized the ultimate Truth then and there, and fell down in a deep nirvikalpa samādhi. This time it was not his usual nirvikalpa samādhi, where he was accustomed to stand as the witness of the samādhi. But now he transcended even the witnesshood, and stood as one with the ultimate Reality itself. This is Self-realization, pure and simple.

He had to be brought back to body consciousness by some effort on the part of Shrī Ātmānanda himself, because he could not be left in that state. If he were, he might continue indefinitely. Shrī Ātmānanda's official duty was waiting for him at the Police Station. Thus forced back to the waking state after two hours, the great yōgin got up and prostrated before Shrī Ātmānanda, as a regular disciple. This was Shrī Ātmānanda's second yōgin disciple. We call him from that day the Kumāḷi-svāmi, since no other name of his is known to us.

He had known for several years that Shrī Ātmānanda was to be his Kāraṇa-guru and was waiting anxiously for that long desired opportunity. Ever since 1930, he used his yōgic powers to go to Shrī Ātmānanda's house at Kottayam in subtle form and kept in touch with the activities there. Through this form of contact, the svāmi had studied by heart many of the verses and songs composed by Shrī Ātmānanda and which were frequently sung at his house. Some of these verses were, incidentally, repeated by the svāmi to Shrī Ātmānanda, during their meeting at the hill top.

They parted soon after the svāmi woke up, and met only once again in the gross plane. But the svāmi occasionally met his Guru and paid his respects in the subtle sphere. This was more frequent just before Shrī Ātmānanda's passing away. Of course the svāmi had sensed the disaster as soon as Shrī Ātmānanda had made his last decision. Kumāḷi-svāmi is now a hundred years old and is living deep in the Kumāḷi forests. His avadhūta samskāras were so deep-rooted in him that it was impossible for him to gather enough body consciousness to lead a restricted life in society.

Enlightening his own household

It has to be mentioned that Shrī Ātmānanda imparted regular tattvōpadēsha to his own wife and children, to his own mother, sister, uncle and father-in-law, absorbing them into him the Ultimate, along with his other disciples.

The advent of European disciples

The influx of his European disciples, though predicted by him as early as 1934, began to take effect only about 1937. It was in 1937 that Mr. Thompson – a young English writer and poet from London, with very strong spiritual samskāras – happened to meet him. He had been for some time with Shrī Ramaṇa Maharṣhi. After a few day's lively discussion with Shrī Ātmānanda, he begged to be accepted as a regular disciple and to be initiated into the ultimate Truth. But Shrī Ātmānanda replied, with his usual courtesy, that he must first get the formal permission of the Maharṣhi himself for that purpose. So Mr. Thompson went straight to Ramaṇāshramam, got the glad permission and blessings of the Maharṣhi, and came back to Quilon. But Shrī Ātmānanda had already known of this in the subtle sphere; and so, without even asking Mr. Thompson any more about it, accepted him as a regular disciple and continued the discussions. It

was only many days later that Mr. Thompson himself gave an account of his last visit to the Maharshi. Mr. Thompson was the first of Shrī Ātmānanda's European disciples.

He was followed in 1941 by Miss Ella Maillart, a well-known journalist and explorer from Switzerland, and Mr. John Levy from London, a wealthy aristocrat, composer, musician and architect, deeply interested in the enquiry after Truth.

Though a Jew by birth, Mr. John Levy had pushed his enquiry through different faiths. Being dissatisfied with all of them, he roamed all over India, meeting various spiritual leaders of repute.

At last Miss Ella Maillart, followed by Mr. John Levy, came to Shrī Ātmānanda. Shrī Ātmānanda's rational and non-technical approach to the ultimate Truth, and the simple logic which he pursued in his discussions, appealed to them immensely. They listened to the discourses for only a few days and then they found that their questions were all exhausted and that they were intellectually satisfied. They also begged Shrī Ātmānanda to show them the way to the ultimate Truth, and were accepted as his disciples.

They were followed in course of time by many others. To mention only a few: Messrs. M. Arnold Mayer and M. Robert Ceresole from Switzerland, Dr. Roger Godel and Alice Godel from France, His Excellency Moyine Al Arab from Cairo, Mr. Kamal D. Joumblatte the leader of Lebanon, Mr. Max Yergan and Dr. Leena Yergan from USA, and Mr. Freddy Guthmann and Mr. Leon Michel from Argentina.

As time passed, disciples and pilgrims, some of them notable figures, came in larger and larger numbers from these and many other countries as well. It is indeed pleasing to note that nearly half of them were ladies. The biggest complement of foreign disciples came from Argentina in South America and the rest from France, United States of America, Switzerland and England, and a few also came from Egypt, Lebanon, Italy, Greece, Germany, Netherlands, Israel, Latin America, etc. Many came from different parts of India, chiefly from Bombay and Hyderabad, and a small number from Ceylon. Most of these disciples used to come from their homes in distant continents to meet him periodically and to be near him, listening to his discourses as long as their time and resources would permit.

Those of the disciples who were chosen by him were given the final course of regular tattvōpadēsha, when the whole Truth was expounded by him in a connected manner. Each time, it was particularly addressed to a few disciples, who were thus enabled by unassailable logic and argument to direct their attention wholly to the real being in them, beyond body, senses and mind. At this point, in spite of all their resistance, a mysterious force (the force of Truth) emanated from the Guru and encompassed each of them in a sense of oneness with the Guru. This enabled them to stand consciously as that ultimate principle whose characteristics were already expounded in unambiguous language.

This non-dual experience of one's own real nature is called 'realization' or 'visualization' of the Truth, then and there. They [the disciples] were then asked simply to cling on to that experience, and to make themselves more and more familiar with it, by trying to transcend body, senses and mind as often as possible, automatically experiencing the ultimate Truth every time. This they did and gradually got themselves established in the ultimate Truth, in response to their own earnestness, sincerity and effort.

In March 1959, the number of his disciples, from India and abroad, amounted to several hundreds. Many more had received substantial spiritual help from him, though

not in the form of direct Guru-disciple relationship. He has often said: ‘Don’t think that all those who move around me most of the time are my disciples. I accept only those in whom I find the proper attitude of surrender or true devotion to Truth.’ Of course, the others also have certainly profited by the contact, though not to the extent of ultimate liberation.

Other spiritual activities and aversion to publicity

Besides the usual discourse, he used to grant interviews to numerous spiritual seekers from all parts of India and abroad. Dr. and Mrs. Julian Huxley, Sir S. Rādhākṛiṣṇan, Dr. Mukerjee, Raymond Mortimer, the famous English critic, were a few amongst them. Mr. Paul Brunton, who was with Shrī Ramaṇa Maharṣhi for a long time, was allowed to listen to Shrī Ātmānanda’s discourses as an observer for a period of three months in the year 1952, on the understanding that nothing direct or indirect about the topics (as discussed by Shrī Ātmānanda) would be published by him, without the previous approval of Shrī Ātmānanda himself. This was only a precaution against possible misrepresentation, since a mind – however pure and well intentioned – is incapable of imbibing the ultimate Truth.

Shrī Ātmānanda was by nature averse to publicity of any kind, and he avoided publicists and journalists as far as possible; because he asserted that even the rudiments of spirituality and Truth could be imparted only by personal contact and never through any other medium. In obedience to his desire, we have with great difficulty refrained from publishing anything regarding his life and activities. This was indeed unusual. Very often persons of international repute stayed in Trivandrum for weeks and months, listening to his daily discourses. Naturally, press men came to us for information regarding such persons and their activities. But we could reveal to them no more than the personal identity of the visitors and the general purpose of their stay.

Retirement from service and his sojourns abroad

After retirement from Government service in 1939, he began to devote all his time to his disciples. He fixed his residence with his family at his old country house, Ānandawādi, at Mālakkara, near Chengannur, on the left bank of the sacred river Pampa. But from the year 1943, his wife’s health began to deteriorate and therefore he ted his residence to Trivandrum, for convenience of medical aid.

In the year 1945, the then ruling Prince, Raja Rameswara Rao of Vanaparti, who was one of his disciples, invited him with family and retinue for a visit to his state. So he went with his family and some disciples and stayed at the royal palace at Vanaparti and later at Hyderabad for some weeks as his highness’s guest.

At the request of his European disciples, headed by Mr. John Levy of London, he flew to Europe in June 1950, through Bombay and Cairo. He spent a fortnight in Paris, another fortnight in Switzerland and about ten days in Egypt, giving spiritual discourses almost every day to groups of his disciples and select persons in each place.

He discussed the Truth with visitors following different paths, in terms of the path followed by each. He did not discredit any particular path, but only pointed out the wrong emphasis in the application of instructions, if there were any, and advised each to follow his own chosen path with right discrimination and deep earnestness. Many yōgins and bhaktas from different parts of India, and some even from abroad, who

had been victims of various ailments and disorders as a result of slips in their instructions or wrong emphasis in their exercises, came often to seek his help. He listened to them compassionately and helped most of them by proper explanation, interpretation or correction.

He always insisted that the ground should never be cut off from under the feet of a spiritual sādḥaka, without giving him something better instead.

His view of social obligations

He was very particular about following strictly all healthy customs and conventions, religious as well as social. He held that they played a very important part in moulding character and maintaining the healthy life of an aspirant. Simply because we do not grasp the real purpose and significance of social restrictions introduced by wiser persons, it is foolish and sometimes even disastrous to ignore or discard them, allowing ourselves at the same time to continue as social beings.

In the course of Shrī Ātmānanda's more casual remarks recorded herein, he has thrown light upon several such customs which are unfortunately being discarded by the younger generation. It might be interesting to note in this connection the manner in which he himself acted.

In the year 1932, his own mother passed away in a most dynamic manner without any ailment whatsoever, roaring out at the last breath: 'I am sat-cit-ānanda. Sat-cit-ānanda am I.' After her demise, Shrī Ātmānanda (though established in the ultimate Truth) burned camphor before the dead body of the mother and prostrated before it in tears, like a devoted son. Further, he performed all the rites, rituals and ceremonials under the instructions of the village priest, in strict conformity with existing social customs and conventions.

Again, when his own wife passed away in 1953, he advised his own children to perform the rituals likewise, and he enjoined them to follow the same course when he would leave his body some years hence. Of course they did everything as ordered. He asserted that all this was phenomenal, and had therefore to be guided by phenomenal laws and customs.

His own indisposition, the passing away of Mother and after

On the first of January 1952, we had startling news of faint premonitions of some impending catastrophe to him. Shrī Ātmānanda suddenly developed an occasional inner weakness and indrawingness. There was no physical ailment whatsoever. This weakness grew so alarming, before the 3rd of January 1952, that it puzzled the doctors and we almost feared we had lost him. He recovered suddenly and completely on the evening of the 3rd of January, but with a clear premonition that it would recur after two months. Thanks to the premonition, much was done by the disciples, including his wife and children, to ward off the impending calamity two months hence. Exactly as was foreboded, the trouble reappeared on the 1st of March, with more serious developments. But fortunately, on the 4th of March, he was again kindly spared to us.

In the meanwhile, his wife's health began to worsen. She was in bed for a whole year, under his personal supervision and nursing. She peacefully left her mortal coil on the 4th of March 1953, under the soothing hand of Shrī Ātmānanda, her Guru and husband, and in the presence of most of her children and many of Shrī Ātmānanda's devoted disciples. Her body was cremated in the characteristic Hindu style, with

plenty of sandalwood, camphor and incense, on the grounds of his country house at Mālakkara. The rites, rituals and ceremonials were conducted in strict conformity with the local social practice.

Immediately on the conclusion of all the ceremonial rites, which lasted for 12 days, Shrī Ātmānanda returned to his residence at Trivandrum. After a stay of three weeks in Trivandrum, carrying out a heavy spiritual programme, he returned to Mālakkara in the second week of April. On the 41st day after the passing away of Swarūp-ānandāmba, a beautiful samādhi monument in black granite was installed in the heart of Ānandawāḍi in the presence of Shrī Ātmānanda himself, and her mortal remains deposited with due ceremonial rites in a vault inside it. After the ceremony, he told his children and disciples gathered around him to construct a similar structure close to the south of it, to preserve his own mortal remains when he passed away – probably six years hence.

How he faced her passing away

It might be interesting to record the way in which Shrī Ātmānanda faced the passing away of his own wife, and the manner in which he assisted at the after rites. The depth of their mutual love and regard when they lived was classical and proverbial. A minute scrutiny of his conduct during the few days before and after her demise will disclose both the man and the sage in him. He was sleeplessly awake to her physical needs and calls, tending her day and night, ever since the 4th of March 1952, and his own health suffered severely on that account. He knew quite well that she was passing away, and had hinted to those nearest him to be there positively on the 4th morning [of March 1953]. But some of the unfortunate few still missed being present at the last moment.

When she was about to pass away, he sat close by, and passing his hand along with her ascending prāṇa helped her to be tranquil and conscious of her real nature – the Truth. At the last moment, when the life principle was about to leave her body, in the right yōgic fashion, he pressed his forehead against hers and helped her life principle to merge in Him – the Ultimate. Immediately he got up, and in less than five seconds came out of the room, collected and composed, and announced her passing away in one word to the European and Indian disciples anxiously waiting: ‘Finished.’ How sharp, short and significant this announcement was, need not be commented upon.

Left alone as the head of the family, he had to make all the arrangements for cremation and after rites. Of course, he had to follow the body to Mālakkara and stay there for about a fortnight. We were surprised to see him personally making all the necessary arrangements. He packed his own suitcase as though nothing had happened, and without a tear or a gloom. Some of the European lady disciples, who happened to be present on the occasion, remarked that it was because he was a Sage he was so unconcerned about phenomenal incidents.

The cremation was over at night and the rituals of the next morning were completed before 9 a.m. Then Shrī Ātmānanda was resting on his cot surrounded by his children and disciples, and talking about our departed ‘Mother’ (as we used to call her). Then he talked to us with visible emotion about her genuine nobility and recounted to us innumerable incidents of love and self-sacrifice during her life. He then wept and shed tears in torrents. The disciples and relatives also wept profusely. Shrī Ātmānanda’s weeping did not abate, and we began to be frightened over the turn it might take next.

Restraint of and indulgence in emotions

At this moment Shrī Kallor Narayana Pillai – an old friend and classmate of Shrī Ātmānanda – came to offer his condolences, and a disciple took the message to him. In less than a minute, Shrī Ātmānanda stopped weeping, wiped his eyes, washed his face and went into the drawing room. There the old friends met and exchanged a few preliminary words about the disease and departure of the wife. It is to be remembered that both of them were writers and poets from their boyhood. In a few minutes the conversation drifted to literature and poetry. A verse composed by the visitor more than forty years ago happened to be quoted by the author himself, but he could not remember the latter half. At once Shrī Ātmānanda repeated it from his own memory which was even then so crystal clear, and they laughed and made themselves merry over it, as if they had forgotten that this was a condolence visit.

After talking for about three quarters of an hour, the friend left, and Shrī Ātmānanda returned to the disciples and relatives inside, who had with difficulty just composed themselves. He took up the trend where he had left it and began to talk of our departed Mother again. Then he began to weep and shed tears in profusion, as before. This conduct surprised us all the more, but we did not dare to ask him anything about it just then. After some days we asked him the meaning of it all.

Then he calmly replied: ‘It is the yōgin in one that restrains the feelings and keeps oneself composed, by dint of effort. It is the bhakta in one that indulges in soft emotions profusely, and that also by dint of effort. Both these are only mental expressions, and therefore artificial. The one who restrains cannot indulge, and the one who indulges cannot restrain feelings as he chooses. It is the real Sage alone that can do both as he chooses.

‘He does so, not by effort, but spontaneously. Feelings never come to him uninvited. If he thinks that it is the time to act with discretion, feelings respectfully keep at a distance. But the moment he invites them, they rush in like torrents. Again, the moment he puts on the brake, by a mere thought, they disappear. This was what you were witnessing in me in those days.

‘It is wrong to attribute either composure or indulgence to the Sage. He is the conscious background of both. The human element as man will be clear on the surface of all his activities; but the ātmic element will be even more clear to the discerning few, behind the apparent activities of the Sage.’

Visits to health resorts in the hot months

After the conclusion of the ceremony on the 41st day, our first concern was to see that he recouped his already shattered health. With this object in view, we prevailed upon him to take a change of air to some health resort. Therefore we took him to Cape Commorin, escorted by some of the closest disciples and a few servants. In a fortnight’s time his health had improved considerably, and encouraged by this we stayed on for another fortnight. He delighted in the daily dip in the open sea and in the traditionally sāttvic atmosphere of Cape Commorin.

Thereafter, every year during the hot season, he went for a pleasant change with chosen disciples and servants, sometimes accompanied by some relatives, to health resorts like Bangalore, Varkalai and Kodaikanal, besides Cape Commorin. Of all these places, he liked Cape Commorin the most and chose to go there for three alternate summers since 1953, the last being in April 1959.

His domestic life

This was indeed ideal, in all respects. From their marriage in 1910 till Mother's passing away in 1953, there was not even a single instance of their having done or said anything against the wish of either. The wonderful secret of it all was the fact that he had no individual wish of his own in any phenomenal matter, and in spiritual matters she knew her place and would never interfere. There was no necessity for him to advise his disciples how they should conduct themselves in their own homes; because his own domestic life was always a glowing example before them.

How he utilized music

He loved music, and was a musician himself. According to him, spiritual realization was a harmonious blending of the head and the heart in Peace. He asserted that music was a 'mōkṣha-kalā' which, if utilized with right discrimination, would take one smoothly to the ultimate Truth.

One of his closest lady disciples, Nityānanda, who came to him in 1927 at the age of twelve and who became a musician of repute in her youth, was guided by Shrī Ātmānanda through music in the latter stages of her spiritual course. She began by singing songs extolling Lord Kṛṣṇa – her personal God. She grew along with her God and her music to the ultimate Truth. She now spends her days completely engrossed in singing the glories of the Guru – the ultimate Truth.

The singing of devotional songs which spoke of the ultimate Truth aroused in him soft and sāt̥tvic emotions of a high order. This was the one thing which he always enjoyed and appreciated. Nityānanda, who had dedicated her life to the Guru (the Ultimate), had the envious privilege of singing in his presence for over thirty years; and for the last fifteen years of his life, she did this every day. This was the real sād̥hana she did for herself. He enjoyed these songs so much that they often threw him into deep moods for hours together. He used to say that it was only his own spiritual talks and the few hours of listening to the spiritual songs that really sustained his life.

His own proficiency in music is evident from the fact that he had himself taught her several rare rāgas like Duhkha-khaṇḍāra, Dvijavanti, Gōpikavasant etc. (some of them not much current in modern Karnatic music). He had not made a formal study of music. But in the days of his saḡuṇa sād̥hana, there was a period when for days and weeks together he was drowned in divine music from within himself, as though from the flute of Lord Kṛṣṇa, throughout the waking state. Many of his friends and eminent musicians during that period had the pleasure of enjoying it and forgetting themselves for the time being, by putting their ears close to Shrī Ātmānanda's. This flood of divine music had left in him such an indelible samskāra as to enable him to give lessons in music to Nityānanda.

His hobbies (kathakaḷi and chess)

The peculiar art of kathakaḷi is a harmonious mixture of classical poetry, exquisite rhythmic dancing with emphasis on the display of emotions, and classical Indian music particularly adapted to Kerala (and called the sōpānam path of music). It was the one art he used to enjoy throughout his life. So much so that he used to have the kathakaḷi dance dramas enacted in his own home very often. Of course, he himself would select the stories, which would be of high spiritual, devotional and literary

excellence. He deplored the fact that the professional kathakali singers had, many of them, become prosaic and unemotional in their usual performances. This was because of over-exertion and under-payment. It may be mentioned that kathakali had been accepted as a permanent feature of his birthday celebrations from 1954 onwards.

In the year 1955, Shrī Ātmānanda ordered Nityānanda to make up for the deficiency in music by herself singing to the dancers on the kathakali stage during the important scenes. Though kathakali music on the stage was considered an exclusively masculine job, she gladly undertook the task. It must be remembered in this context that the singer has always the first place of honour on the kathakali stage. She was conscious of her own incompetency. It had been her supreme experience, how a 'mere word' from her Guru had in a moment dashed her across the invincible ocean of samsāra 'worldliness' and landed her safely in permanent Peace in which she was still resting contented. But here it was much more. It was not a 'mere word' as before. It was his sacred wish and peremptory order. She had only to start and stop not. She did so on the birthday, leading the best dancers of Kerala on the kathakali stage, with her Guru reclining in front of her, freeing her of all her diffidence. She did her job wonderfully well, to the highest approbation of the dancers and the audience, and her Guru blessed her profusely. Shrī Ātmānanda enjoyed the performance so much that he desired its continuance in succeeding years. She obeyed and led the kathakali with her songs on the three succeeding years, with increasing success every year, till the last birthday on the 20th November 1958.

One other recreation in which he evinced great interest throughout life was the game of chess, in which he was the champion of his days. He used to play chess very often with two of his disciples, till his indisposition towards the end of April 1959. He has often stated that he utilized even the game of chess to speed up the spiritual progress of those who played with him.

His habits and daily life

Even though he had been an athlete in his youth, he took no physical exercise during the last thirty years of his life. The purity of his system (kāya-shuddhi) obtained by his intense yōgic sādhanā had made him immune in many ways. His control over breath was so perfect that by a mere thought he could use this control in such a manner that it served the same purpose as physical exercise would.

He was brought up in pure sātṭvic brahmanic samskāras, and was a strict vegetarian throughout his life. He would wake up regularly before 4 a.m. and finish all his ablutions and bath before daybreak. His food was the usual Kerala brahmin vegetarian food – composed of rice, vegetables, milk and milk products. The quantity he consumed every day was incredibly small. Considering that he talked incessantly for anything from 6 to 12 hours a day and considering the deficiency of calories in his usual food, it was a puzzle to the doctors how he managed to live.

He chewed fresh Jaffna tobacco of the strongest variety available, to the extent of about four to five pounds a month. He would stop doing so completely, sometimes for days, perhaps to show that he was not enslaved either by this or any other habit. He took to smoking sweet and mildly flavoured cigarettes when he went to Europe in 1950 and gave up the habit completely in September 1958.

He insisted vehemently that no trace should ever be left behind after any activity, and observed it to the very letter all through his life. He held that any trace left behind

by an activity was the pernicious seed of its samskāra. Procrastination was unknown to him. Whenever he decided upon any specific programme he was obstinate like a child and did not rest until it was completed. He proved by practice and precept alike his cherished ideal that everyone should live by the sweat of his brow. He held that the slavery of the body was but a prelude to the slavery of the soul.

His independence and his integrity

Ever since his wife passed away in 1953, though he continued to live in the house, Pārvati Vilāsam, which was given in partition to his only daughter, he was looked after exclusively by his devoted disciples – of course at his own expense. He detested being under any obligation, financial or otherwise, to anybody, including his children and relatives.

On different occasions, the disciples – and the children as disciples – used to offer presents at his feet, of different kinds. Of course he accepted them all with pleasure. But whenever anything was offered to him in any capacity other than that of a genuine disciple, he managed to reciprocate in kind with princely generosity and absolved himself from all obligations. There was no question of any obligation to disciples who did everything only to make themselves happy by making him comfortable; they had already surrendered themselves to him.

He was always the custodian of his privy purse. His wife always looked after the financial side of the household, till she passed away. After that, he took one of his devoted disciples into confidence, to help him in keeping house. Nobody else had any insight into his financial affairs, except from what was casually announced by Shrī Ātmānanda himself with regard to his occasional plans and suggestions.

His strict punctuality

Though he stood for the absolute Truth beyond time, he was strict and punctual to the minute, in all his activities. One day, having previously decided to go with his family at 8 a.m. to participate in a domestic ceremony elsewhere, he got into the car precisely at 8 and waited for five minutes for his wife. She had not completed her domestic arrangements and wanted a few minutes more. This was mercilessly denied and she had to start forthwith, leaving her arrangements incomplete. Ever since then, she was always ready at least some minutes before him.

Once a guest of the ruling Mahārāja of the State had fixed an appointment to interview Shrī Ātmānanda at 4.30 p.m. The guest, because of some delay in the palace, could not turn up in time. Shrī Ātmānanda waited patiently till 5 p.m., then cancelled the engagement and informed the palace office about it. In the meanwhile, the guest had started and reached Pārvati Vilāsam only at 5.10 p.m. He was politely informed that the engagement was cancelled after half an hour's waiting and that a fresh appointment had to be fixed for another day, if the guest wanted to see him. The guest returned to the palace sorely disappointed. Many little men around were frightened that His Highness might get terribly cross with Shrī Ātmānanda. When the guest returned to the palace disappointed, his highness sympathized with him in his misfortune, and applauded the manner in which Shrī Ātmānanda upheld the dignity of the ultimate Truth, of Vēdānta and of the state, by his simple conduct.

His love of beauty and his hospitality

Scenes of natural beauty, majesty and grandeur – like beautiful landscapes, majestic rivers, grand waterfalls, great mountains and the raging sea – threw him into long and deep moods – often beyond the mental level.

His heart was tender out of all proportion, and in charity and hospitality he was princely. Devotees and sannyāsins were always welcome to partake of his hospitality. His wife and he took pleasure in standing and watching dozens of children below the age of twelve being sumptuously fed at his home on frequent festive occasions.

His family

The matriarchal system of family and inheritance still prevails in Kerala State. Shrī Ātmānanda's maternal family has become extinct with his generation, as though nature has responded to a standing tradition that the family of a sage shall terminate with him.

Shrī Ātmānanda has three children, the eldest son being a graduate and landlord. The second one, the only daughter, was married to a well known doctor and a professor of the Trivandrum Medical College. She passed away in her 48th year in March 1962, leaving an only daughter. The last son is a business man. They have all been married, blessed with children and well provided for in life. They have also been given regular instructions for spiritual progress.

His ban on institutionalization in spirituality

He enjoined his disciples, including his children, to continue to live like a homogeneous family, never forgetting the fact that the spiritual relationship of each one is directly with his or her Guru alone. He forbade them in the clearest terms from converting their sacred spiritual household into an institution in any manner and therefore he openly declared his refusal to nominate any successor to himself, in spite of requests from different quarters.

He was against institutions of any kind for Vēdānta, and has discussed his views at length in the course of his talks recorded in this book.

His correspondence and personal activities

With the steady increase in the number of his foreign disciples, his correspondence also swelled proportionately. From the year 1949, the author [of this book] was personally ordered by Shrī Ātmānanda himself to officiate as his private secretary – to attend to his correspondence, official as well as domestic, run errands and make engagements. After the demise of his wife in 1953, the author was entrusted with the additional responsibility of attending more closely upon his person and personal affairs.

His last days and mahāsamādhi

Shrī Ātmānanda's 75th birthday was celebrated by his disciples on an unprecedented and magnificent scale at Pārvasi Vilāsam on the 20th November 1958. For the next three months, he was busy with frequent spiritual talks and two regular courses of tattvōpadēsha. By the end of February 1959, the city of Trivandrum grew sultry and a

change to some health resort became inevitable. Shrī Ātmānanda preferred to go to Cape Commorin.

Therefore we started on the 7th of April 1959, with a few of his servants and the closest disciples who used to attend upon his person. We reached the Cape the same evening, and he started his bath in the open sea immediately. Many dozens of his devoted disciples, including his eldest son, accompanied him and established themselves independently, in separate quarters very near where he stayed. He recouped much of his lost health and vigour in the course of the week. It was a regular spiritual feast for all the disciples, for more than twelve hours every day, in the form of incessant discourses, spiritual songs and interviews. This continued unabated till the end of the third week of April.

On the 22nd of April 1959 (the star day of Mother's demise), the occasional fits of weakness he once had now reappeared, and he began to lose appetite by slow degrees. Medical aid did not have the desired effect. Therefore we took him back to Trivandrum on the 2nd of May. At Trivandrum, he was given all available medical aid by expert doctors. The weakness only grew deeper. Still, he did not give up his daily bath or break his routine till the twelfth evening. We could see that he was drawing more and more inward, and that his outward activities were all mechanical. His physical condition seemed to get still worse on the morning of the 13th of May. By the evening of that day, we lost all hope in any further medical aid.

During the night of the 13th, Nityānanda, who was always attending by his side, sang in despair, with the utmost force of her voice and devotion, some of the songs and verses he always used to enjoy. His immediate response was clear and agreeable. His face, which was apparently fading, began to blush and bloom. The whole body got ruddy, even the few wrinkles disappeared, and his expression showed an emphatic and loving response to the songs sung.

Precisely at ten minutes past seven o'clock in the morning of Thursday the fourteenth May 1959, he peacefully left his mortal coil, in the presence of his grieving family, disciples and relatives. But the bloom and the radiance the body had assumed the night before never left him.

Thus he left us physically and entered into mahāsamadhi as he had himself decided and arranged. He had given us innumerable hints regarding the intended mahāsamādhi; but we failed to take them with the gravity and seriousness they demanded. He had given us all instructions regarding the disposal of his mortal remains once he entered into mahāsamādhi. Some days before mother passed away in March 1953, he had promised us, in her presence, that he would continue in his body for six years more. He kept the promise literally and left us in 1959. Nature had skilfully arranged all the environment needed to make his leaving his own body appear natural. He made use of the opportunity in time, and passed away normally.

As directed by himself when he was living, his body was taken to his country house, Ānandawāḍi, at Mālakkara in Chengannūr, on the banks of the sacred river Pampa. After all the usual rites and rituals prescribed by society, his body was lifted jointly by his children and his disciples, and placed over the decorated funeral pyre. The sacred body was thus cremated in piles of sandalwood, camphor and incense sticks, together with the customary mango wood. All the after rites, ceremonials and conventions of society were strictly observed. The mortal remains, religiously and devoutly collected from the sacred ashes, were carefully preserved for a year, with solemn rites and austere observances.

On the first anniversary day (the 3rd of May 1960), the mortal remains were devoutly deposited inside a vault, in a beautiful granite monument, constructed beside that of his own wife, on the spot pointed out by him in 1953. The two samādhi monuments are now covered by a combined roof; and they are preserved, revered and worshipped by his devoted disciples, both in India and abroad. Many of them meet there on the anniversary day every year, and solemnly observe the memory of their revered Guru. The local public co-operate with zeal in all these ceremonials, considering it as much their own concern as of the sons and disciples of Shrī Ātmānanda.

Perpetuation of the samādhi installations

The children and disciples of Gurunāthan [Shrī Ātmānanda] were anxious to perpetuate the sacred samādhis in a manner fitting a Sage. Therefore, with the unstinted help and co-operation of the devout disciples, both far and near, his children were able to clear the ground of all its encumbrances; so as to ensure, for the whole family of disciples, full and free opportunity of worship at the samādhis, for all time.

The eldest son, who is in possession of the whole estate, is devoutly looking after the routine and maintenance of the samādhis, on behalf of the family and all the disciples. Further, the foundation stone has also been laid most auspiciously, at 8:30 a.m. on the 26th November 1963 (being the eightieth birthday of Shrī Ātmānanda), for a magnificent superstructure housing the two samādhis, beaming their full sāttvic radiance and bestowing spiritual consolation, for all posterity.

Bibliography

Shrī Ātmānanda was in the habit of writing books even from his early youth. Of his earlier writings, the only book that happened to be published was a novel in Malayalam, called *Tārāvati* (reprinted in 1958). The manuscripts of another long novel and a book in verse form were lost. They were stolen by pretentious and deceitful friends. The book in verse has appeared subsequently in print, in a mutilated form.

His writings of a strictly spiritual nature begin with *Rādhā-mādhavam*. These are written in simple and elegant Malayalam verse. They have all been published and preserved intact. His spiritual books are an index of a clear, continuous and progressive development of an ideal aspirant – from devotion, which appears only on the surface to be in the plane of duality, to the realization of and establishment in the ultimate Truth.

1. The first of the series was the classical and devotional treatise called *Rādhā-mādhavam*, already mentioned above. It was composed in the year 1919, describing the personal experiences of the author on the path of devotion to his personal God, Lord Kṛṣṇa, without losing sight of the real nature of God himself. The text was circulated in manuscript form for many years and consequently was much mutilated. It was finally corrected and approved by the author himself, and published by me in 1958 through S.R. Press, Trivandrum. It is a small book, of only 48 verses, of very high poetic musical and literary excellence.

Each verse, without exception, was the spontaneous outcome of an experience in samādhi. The divine harmony (gross as well as subtle) overflowing from it has earned for the book a sacred place in thousands of Hindu and even non-Hindu homes, as the favourite text for bhajana and chanting in the mornings and eve-

nings. Having flowed out of samādhi, where the expression of the divine harmony was perfect, each verse has all the potentialities of a virtual mantra. (Several tān- trics have already discovered this secret and are successfully utilizing many of its verses for the purpose of exorcizing ghosts and spirits.)

The depth of sublime emotion that it arouses takes the earnest singer to the very brink of the phenomenal. This work is of immense service to persons who have taken to devotional exercises with the ultimate Reality as their goal.

2. The next book called *Ātmārāmam* ('The flower garden of Ātmā', published in 1935 by the author from Shrī Rama Vilasom Press, Quilon) is a continuation of *Rādhā-mādhavam* in the ladder of spiritual progress. It consists of only 69 verses, and though small is more serious and concise. It does not have a continuous theme, but is a collection of individual verses or groups of verses composed at different times for different purposes, all pointing to the ultimate Truth from varying stand- points. Some of these compositions do not represent his own chosen path of direct approach to the ultimate Truth. They were composed for the benefit of different persons following different paths in different orders and yet pointing to the right Absolute.
3. The next and the most important book is the first half of *Ātmānandōpaniṣhad* – separately called *Ātma-darshanam* – in Malayalam, published by the author in 1945 through Reddiar Press, Trivandrum, and the second edition published in 1958 by Vedanta Publishers, Trivandrum through the same press.

In this volume, he expounds the ultimate Truth in the simplest language, using only direct discrimination and reason, and relying upon nothing other than the Self, the inmost core of one's being, which is the only thing that can never be de- nied or even thought of to be unreal. He expounds the Truth from various stand- points, in the course of twenty distinct chapters of only 155 verses in all, most of them being in the briefest metre in the language.

A close study of this book, even by an ordinary aspirant, enables him to have an indirect knowledge of Ātmā, the Self. This indirect knowledge of the Truth in turn intensifies his earnestness and sincerity to know the Truth directly, and thus trans- forms him into a genuine jījnyāsu or a true aspirant, thereby guaranteeing the at- tainment of a Kāraṇa-guru and liberation.

An English rendering of the book by the author himself, in prose, under the same name *Atma-Darshan* (translated as 'At the Ultimate'), was published in 1946 by the disciples through the Shrī Vidya Samiti, Tiruvannamalai, and offered to Shrī Ātmānanda on his birthday on the 2nd of December, 1946.

4. The next and the last of his books is the second half of *Ātmānandōpaniṣhad*, separately called *Ātma-nirvṛiti*. It was published in Malayalam in 1951 by the author direct through the Reddiar Press, Trivandrum. The English rendering by the author himself, in prose, under the same name *Atma-Nirvṛiti* (translated as 'Free- dom and felicity in the Self') was published in 1952 by the Vedanta Publishers, Trivandrum, through the Government Central Press, Trivandrum.

In the course of the twenty-three short chapters of this book, comprising in all of only 122 simple verses, he expounds the same Truth from different angles of vi- sion. The author himself says about the book: 'In many places the book goes be- yond "Atma Darshan" and expounds the Truth from a higher level. A study of this book will be of considerable help to those who have gained Knowledge of the

Truth from “Atma Darshan”, to make that Knowledge steady and thereby obtain lasting peace.’

Besides these verses, there are three short articles added at the end of this book, on the two vital problems of man and their solution . These articles are by themselves of immense help to the new aspirant; because in them his need, the goal and the means to be adopted for his spiritual enquiry are properly analysed and clarified. This is the first prerequisite for any successful enquiry.

A Sanskrit translation by Shrī Ravi Varma Thampan, of the two books *Ātma-darshanam* and *Ātma-nirvṛiti*, has also been published by the Vedanta Publishers, Trivandrum, in the year 1955.

The true monument

A word about the future to my dear co-disciples seems indispensable, merely as a presentation of my humble views to them, for what they are worth. A craze for monuments and memorials has seized the society. As soon as some great personality passes away, institutions and mute structures spring up, all over the world. In view of the extraordinary services of self-sacrifice performed in the phenomenal sphere by such heroes and the noble ideals and principles they stood for, such monuments and memorials, being also phenomenal, have a significance and attract the emulation of the younger generation to similar fields of worldly activity. Nothing phenomenal is ever perfect, and therefore progress is towards an ideal and effort is always a necessity.

But in the case of a Sage like Shrī Ātmānanda, who is the ultimate Truth itself and ever perfect and not a personality which is never perfect, the conditions and terms of reference are quite different. No phenomenal monument or memorial can successfully represent the Truth he was and the Truth he lived. But there is only one way out. That is to create living monuments to perpetuate his memory.

He has often repeated to us: ‘I am Atma the indivisible. I am there in the heart of everyone of you, in my fullness. You have only to recognize it, and never to forget it.’ We do recognize it, no doubt. But unfortunately, we often forget it, in moments of weakness. This has to be overcome by strenuous effort on our part, to remember as often as we can that Truth we already recognize, and thus get established in the ultimate Reality, the Guru. Thus we ourselves become perfect.

The perfect alone can be a monument to the perfect. So let each of the true disciples of Shrī Ātmānanda become a living monument of the Guru as Shrī Ātmānanda was of Shrī Yōgānanda and as Shrī Vivēkānanda was of Shrī Rāmakṛishṇa.

By this I do not mean that everything else about him may be forgotten. No, not in the least. He has left a sacred heritage to humanity in the form of his books and his discourses enshrining the Truth he stood for and advocated. Both these have to be preserved, in all their pristine purity and grandeur. Ways and means may wisely be designed to achieve this purpose.

Added to this, if at least one or more of his devout disciples succeed in establishing themselves in the ultimate Truth, and are able to live the Truth as shown by Shrī Ātmānanda himself in his life, nothing else can be a more fitting monument to the great Shrī Ātmānanda Guru.

(Nitya Tripta)

Glossary

PRELIMINARY

Ātmika (spiritual). Whatever directs one's attention to, or brings one nearer to Ātmā, the impersonal Self within, is alone spiritual.

Ātmā, 'I'-principle, consciousness, awareness, peace, Truth, Reality, experience, advaita, svarūpa, rasa, anubhava, the being, the Absolute, the Ultimate, the changeless, the self-luminous, ultimate subject, ultimate background, ultimate knowledge, ultimate love, ultimate knower, ultimate perceiver, etc. are all synonyms.

Vidyā-vṛitti, functioning consciousness, higher reason, higher logic, mahā-buddhi, shuddha sattva, etc. are also another set of synonyms.

Truth, in its essence, is absolute and unconditioned, its essential characteristics being changelessness, self-luminosity and peace. It is in this sense that 'Truth' is discussed here. Truth can only be experienced and can never be expressed in words, language being designed for worldly traffic alone. At the most, language can only direct one's attention to the Truth and remove some of the impediments.

Gradation of spiritual advancement:

A *disciple* is a person who longs with sincerity and earnestness to know his own real nature, the ultimate Truth, and thus surrenders his ego unconditionally to a Kāraṇa-guru and takes instructions from him.

A *jīvan-mukta* is the mature disciple who listens to the Truth from the lips of the Guru and visualizes the ultimate Truth then and there.

A *Sage* is a jīvan-mukta who has by continued effort established himself in the ultimate Truth.

A *Guru* is a Sage who, out of compassion for the ignorant, voluntarily undertakes to guide the earnest and sincere aspirants who come to him to the ultimate Truth. He does it as easily and effortlessly as holding a stolen bull by the horn and showing it to the owner for identification or recognition. Such a one is alone said to be a Kāraṇa-guru.

An *Ācārya* is such of the Kāraṇa-gurus who is proficient in all the paths of devotion, yōga and jnyāna, and who has the highest experiences in all the three paths. All these Gurus are usually addressed as Guru-nātha, Guru-dēva, Guru-svāmi and by many other such names showing the highest veneration and endearment.

ALPHABETICAL LIST

Ācārya is the highest class of Kāraṇa-gurus (ultimate teachers), proficient in all the paths of devotion, yōga and jnyāna. (See note 565.)

Ādhāra-cakras are the vital nerve-centres along the spinal chord, chosen for the purpose of yōgic concentration. (See note 1387.)

Adhikāris: Spiritual aspirants of different grades of understanding.

Aham is the ‘I’-principle.

Ahankāra [ego] is the sense of one’s separateness from everything else. It is also the identification with body, senses and mind. (See note 1004.)

Ahimsa: In the worldly sense, it means ‘non-injury’. Spiritually, it means not prompted by anything of the lower self. (See note 545.)

Ajāta-vāda is the vēdāntic perspective emphasizing that nothing other than the real Self (Consciousness) was ever born, ever is, or ever shall be. (See note 1392.)

Ajnyāna: Wrong knowledge.

Anasūyā was the wife of the renowned Sage Aṭṛi, and an established pati-vratā herself. (See note 507.)

Anātmā: Everything other than Ātmā.

Aphorism (mahāvākya) is usually a short and pointed expression emphasizing the identity of jīva, the life principle, with the Reality. It is intended for the contemplation of the spiritual aspirants under instructions from their Guru. (See note 560.)

Arjuna was the third of the Pāṇḍavas and the greatest archer of the Mahābhārata.

Asambhāvana is the firm belief that an ultimate principle called ‘Ātmā’ is non-existent.

Asvabhāva is the opposite of one’s own real nature. (See note 24.)

Ātmā: The real Self.

Ātma-mūrti is the form of any personal God conceived by the mind, on the background of Ātmā itself.

Ātma-tattva: The truth of the ‘I’-principle.

Avadhūtas are a class of spiritual aspirants who practice self-mortification and cultivate aversion to the body, acquiring some yōgic powers on the way. (See note 409.)

Avidyā: Wrong knowledge.

Bhāgavatam is the story of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s life, graphically described by Shrī Veda-vyāsa.

Bhagavad-gītā is one leg of the tripod of Indian philosophy. It expounds Karma-yōga in particular. It is supposed to be the instructions of Lord Kṛṣṇa to his friend and disciple Arjuna on the battlefield.

Bhakta is the aspirant who follows the path of devotion to a personal God.

Bhāva is one’s own real nature.

Bhīṣhma was a great prince, who in his boyhood renounced the rights to his kingdom for the sake of his father, and took to the spiritual quest. He became a great yōgin, respected by all alike.

Buddhi: Intellect.

Buddhi-vivēka: Discrimination functioning through the phenomenal intellect. (See note 1449.)

Caitanya was a reputed devotional saint of North India.

Cārvaka was a great intellectual genius of ancient India, who held that there was nothing beyond the apparent world. He was honoured as a ṛṣhi (saint) for his stubborn earnestness and sincerity in his enquiry. (See note 1253.)

Dakṣhiṇa: Something of phenomenal value placed as a mark of respect and devotion at the feet of the Guru, usually at the termination of a course of study.

Darshana: (1) Ultimate experiences of the Truth recorded by Sages and accepted as vēdāntic authority, like the Upaniṣhads, both ancient and modern. (2) Any objective vision of a personal God (in the mental level).

‘*Dēshikōktya*’: ‘By the word of my Guru.’

Dharma: Quality [literally, that which is held or supported].

Dharmi: The qualified [the holder or supporter of qualities, which is itself unaffected by the qualities that depend on its support].

Dhyāna: Meditation upon any model or ideal.

Disciple: A spiritual aspirant striving to visualize the ultimate Truth, under instructions from a Kāraṇa-guru.

Drishya: That which is perceived.

Gāṇḍīva is the divine bow presented by the God of fire to Arjuna.

Gauḍapāda was a great Sage, who was Shrī Shankara’s Guru’s Guru.

Jijnyāsu: A true aspirant.

Himsa, in the phenomenal sense, means causing injury or pain to another jīva [living creature]. According to Vēdānta, it means any action prompted by the interest of the lower self.

Hṛdaya-vivēka: Discrimination functioning through the heart. (See note 1449.)

Ignorance: Wrong notion.

Iṣṭa-dēva: A personal God adopted for the purpose of cultivating devotion.

Īshvara [God], as it existed before creation, is the ultimate Truth itself. But after creation, it is the supposed creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe.

Īshvara-bhāva: The powers of Īshvara, or God in parts.

Jīvan-mukta: A spiritual aspirant who is liberated from bondage during his life itself, by visualizing the ultimate Truth under instructions from a Kāraṇa-guru.

Kailāsa is supposed to be the abode of Lord Shiva on the heights of the Himalayas.

Kāraṇa-brahman: The ultimate Reality viewed as the ultimate cause of the world.

Kāraṇa-guru: A Sage who is established in the ultimate Truth and undertakes to guide spiritual aspirants to the same goal.

Karma: Action of any kind by the body, senses or mind. *Akarma* is actionlessness. (See note 574.)

Karma-sannyāsa is the perfection of the passive principle in man, usually through the path of renunciation and sannyāsa.

Karma-yōga: Doing action disinterestedly. It is the perfection of the active principle in man, and is the theme of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Karmattha(?) is one who believes that liberation can be achieved only by the performance of karmas (actions) strictly as ordained in the scriptures.

Kārya-brahman: The impersonal conceived with name and form for any purpose (*iṣṭa-dēva*).

Kārya-guru is a teacher who, having not reached the Ultimate, guides students in the study of anything below the ultimate Truth.

Kūṭastha is the witness of the individual *jīva* or life principle.

Kṣhaṇika-vijnyāni is one of a class who believe that knowledge is momentary or time-limited.

Kuṇḍalinī is the vital energy located at the lower end of the spinal chord. (See note 1387.)

Lakṣhaṇa: Pointer.

Līla: Play.

Mahābhārata: One of the great epics of the Hindus, describing the story of the rivalry between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas – the rival claimants to the same kingdom.

Mahākāsha is the unconditioned space.

Māṇḍūkya-kārikā is a commentary of the *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* by Shri Gauḍapāda.

Mantra is a harmonious sound or group of sounds, capable of creating or applying some definite and potential energy, if properly uttered. (See note 379.)

Mantra-dēvata is the deity created by the energy generated by the proper chanting of a mantra.

Mārgas (paths): (1) The *cosmological* path is an objective enquiry into the source of the world and the individual, finally striking an identity between the backgrounds of both. (2) The *direct* path is a subjective enquiry into the changeless principle in the individual, on reaching which you find the world only an appearance on that principle.

Māyā is the illusion which shows the ultimate Reality as the manifested universe.

Mōkṣha-kalā: An art that is conducive to liberation.

Mūla-prakṛiti is the cause and source of the apparent universe.

Nalla-taṇṇaḷ is an old drama full of deep pathos from start to finish.

Nārada is the famous mythological Sage supposed to be traversing the world incessantly in his subtle body, rendering spiritual help to the godly-minded devotees in distress.

Nirguṇa-brahman: The attributeless Reality, which is the background of the individual as well as of the cosmos.

Nirvikalpa-samādhi is the state in which the mind becomes merged in consciousness for a while and there is deep Peace, so long as the state lasts.

Nivṛitti: Liberation.

Padmapāda was one of the devoted disciples of Shrī Shankara.

Pāncālī (Draupadī) was the wife of the Pāṇḍavas and the daughter of the king of Pāncāla.

Pāṇḍavas were the five sons of King Pāṇḍu, who were sāt̥tvic devotees of Lord Kṛiṣṇa. They came out victorious in the battle of the *Mahābhārata*.

Parōkṣha, is indirect or formal.

Pati-vratās were the celebrated ladies of ancient India who, by the practice of simple pati-vratya (husband worship), acquired wonderful yōgic powers and purity of heart, to vie even with the great Gods of the supreme trinity.

Pati-vratya was a process of sweet devotional yōga, through which the ideal housewife of ancient India practised chastity and devotion to her husband, considering him as her visible God.

Pauruṣha: The quality of being a puruṣha, the inmost core of one's Self. (See note 281.)

Pitṛis are the subtle thought-forms of departed souls which are supposed to linger in their subtle bodies, awaiting another physical body on rebirth.

Prakarāṇa: Original and independent expression of one's own views regarding the ultimate Truth and its visualization.

Prakṛiti is the active principle in man [as opposed to puruṣha, the passive principle].

Prakriyā is any regular process of analysing the individual or the cosmos and eliminating the changing aspects from the changeless.

Praṇava is the harmonious group of sounds 'a', 'u' and 'mm...' merging into the inaudible, thus representing the ultimate Reality.

Praṇava-yōga is a process of yōgic concentration on the sound 'aum', merging in the inaudible and thus representing its goal, the ultimate Reality.

Prārabdha-karmas are the mature karmas [chains of action] for the fulfilment of which this body and life have been particularly designed.

Prasthānatraya is the tripod of Indian philosophy, comprising of (1) the *Brahma-sūtras*, (2) the *Dashōpaniṣads*, and (3) the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Pratyakṣha (*aparōkṣha*) literally means perceivable by the sense organs. Spiritually, it means direct or subject to the ultimate experience, and that is the real 'I'-principle.

Puruṣha is the passive principle in man [as opposed to prakṛiti, the active principle].

Rādhā-mādhavam is the story of the divine love of Rādhā for Lord Kṛiṣṇa, and the progress of this love through different stages.

Rāga is the attraction born out of desire for phenomenal pleasure.

Rākṣhasa: A wicked-minded person of very great powers, harassing the sāt̥tvic and the virtuous ones.

Rāma is supposed to be an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. He was the king of Ayōdhya and was the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic.

Rāvaṇa was the mythological demon king of Lanka, who was killed by Rāma in battle.

Ṛiṣhi is an extremely holy person – in particular, the composer of a sacred mantra, the one who first visualized its deity.

Sādhaka is one who is undergoing any course of regular training.

Sādhana is the process of such training.

Sage is one who has visualized the ultimate Truth and is firmly established in it.

Saguṇa-brahman (the same as *kārya-brahman*) is usually the form of one's *Iṣṭa-dēva*, visualized on the background of the impersonal for the mere convenience of doing devotion to it.

Sahaja state: The natural state.

Sākṣhāt-kāraṇa: The ultimate cause. (See note 1237.)

Samādhi is the pleasurable experience either on the vision of a personal God or during the state of stillness of mind obtained by effort after prolonged *yōgic* exercises.

Samsāra: The phenomenal experiences of the mind within the circle of birth and death.

Samskāras are the tendencies of past experiences.

Sankalpa: A thought about the future, with or without using the will-power.

Sāṅkhya philosophy was first founded by *Shrī Kapilācārya*. It was later on perfected into the *Advaita* philosophy by other Sages.

Sārasāyana(?): The bed of arrows on which *Shrī Bhīṣhma* rested, awaiting the auspicious day for leaving his mortal coil.

Sarva-jnyatva is knowing for certain that the essence of everything is one's own real self – the *Ātmā*. (See note 1389.)

Sāttvika-dēva is the *iṣṭa-deva* visualized by an aspirant whose goal is ultimate liberation. (See note 348.)

Sāyujya is the state of temporary merger in and complete identification with one's *iṣṭa-dēva*. (See note 1137.)

Shravaṇa: Listening to the Truth from the lips of the Guru. (See note 1237.)

Siddha-dēva is the *iṣṭa-dēva* visualized by an aspirant whose goal is any thing short of ultimate liberation. (See note 348.)

Siddhis are powers acquired by the mind as a result of devotion, *yōga* or *jnyāna* – the former two being temporary and the latter permanent.

Sphuraṇa is the subjective, self-luminous manifestation of 'I am', without any specific object.

Svabhāva: One's own real nature.

Svadharmā: A profession one is accustomed to, either hereditarily or by long practice.

Svarūpa: Real nature.

Svarūpānanda, means one who takes delight in one's own real nature. (It is also one of the many spiritual names given to a disciple on his visualization of the Truth.)

Sva-sthiti: Natural state.

Shyāmantapanca is a sacred bathing ghat where Lord Kṛṣṇa went on a holy pilgrimage, together with the Gōpīs, Gōpas, the Pāṇḍavas and his own family. It was there that the Gōpīs, the chosen disciples of Lord Kṛṣṇa, were given the final tattvōpadēsha.

Taoism: A religious system founded by the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tsu in the seventh century BC. Their philosophy comes close to Advaita.

Tapas: Austere penance and practice of meditation and such other exercises.

Tattvarāyar was a jīvan-mukta of Tamilnāḍ who was deeply samādhi-minded. Samādhi was an obstacle for him in getting established in the ultimate Truth. So his Guru, Shrī Svarūpānanda, had to apply something like a spiritual shock treatment, to wean him away from his samādhi mania to deep discrimination .

Tattvas: Different aspects of the Truth.

Tattvōpadēsha is the final expounding of the ultimate Truth in the regular order, to the disciple, by the Guru in person.

Tila-havana: Offering of gingelly [sesame] seeds to the holy fire, in propitiation of the pitṛis (thought-forms) of the departed souls.

Triguṇas: The fundamental qualities of (1) *tamas* (inclination to sloth, sleep and sluggishness), (2) *rajas* (inclination to activity and emotions), and (3) *sattva* (balancing the former two, leading the way to peace and Truth).

Trimūrtis: The three broad concepts of Hinduism, namely Brahma as the creator, Viṣṇu as the preserver, and Shiva as the destroyer of the world.

Tripuṭī: Perceiver, perception and the perceived in every activity.

Turīya is the state of pleasurable stillness of the mind attained by a long course of yōgic exercises and intense effort.

Upādhis: Mediums.

Upaṇiṣhads, also called shrutis, are recordings of the spiritual experiences of the great Sages of India, both ancient and modern, and recognized as authorities on the ultimate Truth.

Upāsana: Practice of regular devotional exercises to a personal God (iṣṭa-dēva).

Uttara Rāma Caritam is the story of Shrī Rama after his coronation as king of Ayōdhyā.

Vaikuṇṭha: The world and the seat of Lord Viṣṇu.

Vairāgya is dispassion towards objects, primarily towards one's own body, senses and mind.

Vāsanās: Tendencies of past activities.

Vastu-tantra: Outcome of the ultimate Reality alone.

Vaṭivīshvarattamma was an illiterate lady from a village called Vaṭivīshvaram, on the way to Cape Commorin. She became a renowned Sage of great esteem, by her deep devotion alone to her Guru, without taking to any other kind of sādhana whatsoever. She did not even care to listen to her Guru's spiritual talks; because she was engaged in cooking his food and doing other personal services to her Guru, which she rightly considered by far superior to every other sādhana.

Vendee: Buyer.

Vendor: Seller.

Vicāra-mārga is the path of subjective analysis of the Self – eliminating the non-self, and getting established in the real Self.

Vidyā: Right knowledge.

Vikṣhēpa: Restlessness of the mind.

Viparīta-bhāvana is the thought that you are anything other than Ātmā, the ultimate Reality.

Virāt is an all-comprehensive vision of the whole manifested universe.

Vishīṣṭādvaita: Qualified non-dualism.

Vishva-rūpa: Same as ‘virāt’ above.

Vivēka is discrimination, which may function either through the intellect (buddhi) or through the heart (hṛdaya).

Vṛindāvana is the grazing meadow where Lord Kṛṣṇa spent his childhood and boyhood, grazing the cows and playing his divine līlas with the Gōpas and Gōpīs of the village.

Yōga: Any process by which the mind is sought to be controlled or expanded.

Yōga-samādhi is the samādhi (state of stillness of the mind) acquired by dint of long yōgic practices, or by its deep samskāra inherited from previous life.

Yōga-vāsiṣṭha is the text describing the discourses of Sage Vasiṣṭha (the Guru) to Shṛī Rāma (his disciple) for eighteen days, expounding the ultimate Truth from different standpoints. Here, yōga means jnyāna-yōga.

TERMS IN GROUPS OF THREE OR FOUR

Bhakta, *yōgin* and *jnyānin* are the three important types of spiritual personalities. The former two are only striving to purify or expand their minds to qualify themselves to take to jnyāna sādhana and to become jnyānins.

Dvaita, *Vishīṣṭādvaita*, and *Advaita* are the three recognized approaches to the ultimate Truth. The former two are only preparation courses, to be crowned with Self-realization through Advaita alone.

Shruti, *yukti* and *anubhava* are the three regular stages through which one rises to the visualization of the ultimate Truth. (See note 1199.)

Shravaṇa, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*: According to the traditional or cosmological method, these are the three progressive stages of understanding the Truth. (See note 1019.)

Sṛiṣṭi-dṛiṣṭi, *dṛiṣṭi-sṛiṣṭi* and *ajāta-vāda* are the three distinct methods of explaining the world from three different levels of understanding, namely from the standpoints of variety, unity and non-duality respectively. (See note 1392.)

Shruti, *Smṛiti*, *Purāṇa* and *Itihāsa*: Shrutis (Upaniṣhads) are the authorities on the ultimate Truth and its realization. The latter three classes are subsequent periodical

commentaries and explanations in different forms, justifying the assertions of the shrutis.

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