Seeds of Wisdom

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Letters written from 1966 - 1969

Miscellaneous

CHAPTER 1

PREFACE

I too am a farmer and I sowed some seeds. They sprouted and now flowers have come to them. My whole life is filled with the fragrance of these flowers and because of this fragrance now I am in a different world. This fragrance has given me a new birth, and now I am no longer that which is seen by ordinary eyes.

The unseen and the unknown have flung open their closed doors, and I am seeing a world which is not seen through the eyes, and I am hearing music which ears are not capable of hearing. Whatsoever I have found and known is eager to flow just as the mountain waterfalls and springs flow and rush towards the ocean.

Remember, when the clouds are full of water they have to shower. And when the flowers are filled with fragrance they have to give off their fragrance freely to the winds. And when a lamp is lit, the light is

bound to radiate from it.

Something like this has happened and the winds are carrying away some seeds of revolution from me. I have no idea in what fields they will land and who will tend them. I only know that it is from seeds like these that I have attained the flowers of life, immortality, and the divine. And in whatever field they land, the very soil there will turn into the flowers of immortality.

In death is hidden the immortal and in death is life - just as flowers are inherent in the soil. But the potential of the soil can never become realized in the absence of seeds. The seeds make manifest that which was unmanifest and give expression to that which was latent.

Whatever I have, whatever I am, I want to give away as seeds of divine consciousness. What is attained in knowledge - knowing - love gives away in abundance. In knowing one knows God; in love one BECOMES God. Knowledge is the spiritual discipline, love is the fulfillment.

CHAPTER 1.

1

I had been to a village. I heard someone saying there: ”Religion lies in renunciation, and renunciation is a hard and demanding discipline.”

As I heard this, I recollected an incident from my early childhood. I had accompanied a picnic party to the bank of a river. The river was small but with a vast expanse of sand. On the sandy bank there lay many pebbles in luminous colors. I felt I had stumbled on a treasure. By the evening I had collected so many pebbles that it was not possible to bring them home with me. Tears came into my eyes when I had to leave them behind as I left, and I was surprised to see my companions’ lack of interest in those pebbles.

That day they seemed to me to be great renouncers. When I think of it today, I see that there is no question of renunciation once you have known the stones as stones.

Ignorance is indulgence.

Knowing is renunciation.

Renunciation is not a doing; it is not something to be done, it just happens. It is a natural result of knowing. Indulgence is mechanical: that too is not a doing - it is a natural result of ignorance.

Hence, the idea that renunciation is a hard and arduous task is meaningless. In the first place it is not an act - activities alone can be difficult and strenuous - it is an outcome. Secondly, in renunciation what apparently drops is worthless, and what is attained is priceless.

In fact, renunciation as such does not exist, because we gain immensely more than we drop. The reality is that we drop only our bondage, but we gain liberation; we drop only shells but we receive diamonds; we forsake only death but attain immortality; we leave only darkness but attain the light - eternal and infinite.

Where then is the renunciation? Dropping nothing and receiving everything cannot be called renunciation.

2

LAST NIGHT a man breathed his last. Today people mourn at his door.

At such moments a memory of an event in my childhood arises in my mind. It was my first visit to the burning ghats. The funeral pyre had been lit, and the people were chatting in small groups. The village poet said, ”I am not afraid of death. Death is a friend.”

Since then I have heard this same assertion in different forms from different people. I have also looked into the eyes of those who say this and have found that these fearless words arise from fear.

Nothing changes just by giving death beautiful names. In fact, the fear is not of death, the fear is of the unfamiliar. What is unknown creates fear in us. It is necessary to become acquainted with

death. This acquaintance brings one to fearlessness. Why? - because it is through acquaintance that one comes to know that there is no death to what is.

It is only the personality, which we have taken to be our ”I”, that shatters, that dies. It shatters because it is not. It is only a combination, a union of a few elements. As this union disintegrates, the personality shatters. This is what death is. Hence, as long as personality is taken to be one and the same as the true self, there is death.

Move deeper from the personality, and as you arrive at the true self, the deathless is attained.

The path of this journey, the penetration from the surface of personality to the core of the self, is religion.

It is in samadhi, enlightenment, that acquaintance with death happens. Just as darkness ceases to exist the moment the sun rises, so does death when samadhi is attained.

Death is neither an enemy nor a friend, it simply does not exist. One needs neither to fear it nor not fear it. One has only to know it. Ignorance of it is fear, knowing it is fearlessness.

3

ONE DAY I went to a temple. The crowd of worshippers was engaged in worshipping the deity. The devotees were bowing down before the idols. An elderly man who had come with me said, ”Nowadays people do not have faith in religion. So very few people visit the temples.”

I said, ”Where is the religion in a temple? What a self- deceiver man is! He deceives himself by taking as gods the idols created by his own hands. He satisfies himself by taking the scriptures - the product of his own mind - as truth.”

Whatsoever is the creation of man’s own hands and mind is not religion. The idols sitting in the temples are not images of gods but of man himself. And what is written in the scriptures is but a reflection of man’s own desires and thinking, not the truth seen within. It is not possible to express the truth in words.

It is not possible to have an idol of truth, because truth is boundless, infinite and formless. It has no form, no name, no attribute. The moment it is given a form it disappears.

In order to attain it, all idols and all physical conceptions have to be dropped; the whole cobweb of self-fabricated fallacies has to be swept away. That uncreated truth reveals itself only when man’s consciousness is liberated from the prison which his own mind has created .

In fact, rather than building temples in order to reach the truth, we should demolish them; instead of sculpting idols, we should destroy them. We should drop our obsession with the form so that the formless may enter. The moment the manifest leaves our minds, the unmanifest appears.

It was there already, but it was hidden beneath the idols and the tangible. Just as we cannot see the empty space in a room stuffed with things - remove those things and the empty space is revealed; it has always been there.

Truth too is like this. Empty the mind and it is there.

4

I HEARD a discourse this morning. It happened unintentionally. A so-called saint was speaking and I was passing that way when I heard him say, ”The way to be religious is to be God-fearing. Only one who fears God is religious. It is fear that brings one to love God. There is no loving without fear. Love is impossible in the absence of fear.”

Usually, those who are called religious are religious because of fear. Those who are called moral are also bound to fear.

Kant has said, ”Even if there is no God, still it is necessary to accept him.” Perhaps that is because the fear of God makes people good.

When I hear such statements, I cannot help laughing. Perhaps nothing else is so mistaken and untrue.

Religion has nothing to do with fear. Religion is born out of fearlessness.

It is impossible for love to co-exist with fear. How can fear give birth to love? Out of fear, only the pretense of love can be born. And what else but non-love can exist behind a counterfeit love? Love born out of fear is an impossibility.

Hence, religiousness and morality based on fear are false, not true. They weigh down, rather than elevate, the energy of the soul. Religion and love cannot be imposed on oneself, they have to be kindled and aroused within.

Truth is not founded on fear. Fear does not support the truth, it is opposed to it. The foundation-stone of truth is fearlessness.

The true flowers of religion and love can be grown only in the soil of fearlessness. Those planted in the soil of fear can only be artificial.

The realization of God happens only in fearlessness. Or to put it more correctly, the realization of fearless consciousness is the realization of God. The moment all fear disappears from the mind, what happens in that moment is the encounter with truth.

5

THE HEAT of noon is at its peak. The flowers on the palasa tree are glowing like embers.
I walk along a deserted path. Thick bamboo groves line the path and I find their shade very pleasant. A

familiar bird sings a song and accepting its invitation I stop there.

A man who is with me asks,”How to conquer anger? How to conquer sex?”

This is a question so frequently asked nowadays. The mistake lies in asking the question - and I said so to him.

The problem is not to conquer, it is to know. We know neither anger nor sex. This ignorance is what defeats us.

Knowing brings victory. When there is anger, when there is sex, we are not. There is no awareness, hence we are not. What happens in this state of unconsciousness is completely mechanical. When the unconsciousness releases its grip, remorse follows - but that is futile. Because the one who now repents will fall asleep again as soon as sex catches hold of him. If he does not sink into sleep - if he lets consciousness, wakefulness and right remembrance prevail - he will find that there is neither anger nor sex. The mechanicalness is broken and there is nothing to be conquered - the enemy has gone.

You may understand this better through a symbolic story. In the darkness, a rope is taken for a snake. Seeing it, some run away, some get ready to kill it. Both are mistaken because they both take the rope for a snake. Somebody goes near it and finds that there is no snake at all. He does not need to do anything more than approach it.

Man has only to approach himself. Whatever is within him, he must be familiar with it all. He does not have to fight with anything. And I say unto you that victory comes to him without a fight.

Right watchfulness towards one's own mind is the key to victory over life.

6

THE NIGHT is past and the rays of the morning sun are spreading all over the fields. We have just crossed a small stream. Hearing the sound of the train, a flock of white herons flies from the white lilies towards the sun.

Then something happens and the train stops. Halting in this lonely place feels good to me. My unknown fellow passengers are also awake. They boarded at some wayside station in the night. Perhaps taking me for a sannyasin, they come as though to touch my feet. An eagerness to ask something is in their eyes.

Finally one of them speaks: "If it does not inconvenience you, I wish to ask a question. I am interested in God and I have tried hard to reach him, but all to no avail. Does this mean that God does not favor me?"

I say, "Yesterday I went to a garden. Some friends were with me. One of them was thirsty. He lowered a bucket into the well. The well was very deep. It took some effort to pull the bucket up. But when it appeared at the top of the well it was empty. All the others laughed.

"It seemed to me that the bucket was like the mind of a man. It had many cracks and holes. Of course, at first it was filled with water, but every drop ran out through the holes. Our mind too is full of holes. Offer the leaking mind to the existence as persistently as you wish, it will return to you empty. If you repair the bucket beforehand, my friends, it becomes easy to fill it with water. Of

course, the leaking bucket may cause you to undertake many exercises in asceticism, but it will not quench your thirst.

Remember that the existence is neither sympathetic nor unsympathetic. It is your responsibility to keep your bucket intact. The well is always ready to offer you water. It will never deny you."

7

ONE DAY I was standing on the bank of a river. I saw a paper boat sink in the water.
The day before, some children had built castles of wet sand. They too had tumbled down.

Every day, boats sink and castles tumble.

A woman came to me. Her dreams had not been fulfilled. She had lost all interest in life. She had been thinking of committing suicide. Everything seemed futile to her. Her eyes were deeply sunk in their sockets.

I said, "Who ever has his dreams fulfilled? All dreams ultimately bring misery because, even if the paper boats sail, how far can they go? The dreams are not in error: dreams are naturally unrealizable. It is we who are at fault: dreaming, we are asleep. Sleeping, we can achieve nothing. On waking, we see that what we thought we had attained, we have not attained.

"Instead of seeing dreams, see the truth. See what is. This brings liberation. This boat alone is real. This boat alone will carry you to the ultimate fulfillment of your life.

"In dreams is death, in truth is life; dreams mean sleep, and truth means wakefulness. Wake up and realize your self. As long as the mind is dreaming, that which sees the dreams cannot itself be seen. Only the seer is Truth. Only the seer is. As soon as we realize this, we can laugh at the sunken boats and fallen castles."

8

There is a Sufi song:

A lover knocked at the door of his beloved. A voice cried, "Who is there?" The person outside said, "It is I." He heard in reply, "This house has no place for two, 'I' and 'Thou'."

The closed door remained closed. The lover retreated into a forest. There he made penance, observed fasts, and offered prayers. After many years, he returned and again knocked on the closed door. Again the voice asked, "Who is there?"

This time the doors were thrown open, for his reply was, "It is thou."

This reply, "It is thou", is the essence of all religion. On the endlessly flowing river of life, "I" is the only bubble. "I" alienates the individual from existence. The bubble of "I" thinks itself distinct from the river, whereas in reality the bubble has no separate existence. It has no separate center, no

separate life. It is the ocean. The ocean is its life. Its very existence is in and through the ocean. Even the idea of its being separate from the ocean is ignorance. Look into the bubble, and you find the ocean. Look into t he 'I', and you find brahman.

Where 'I' does not exist, 'Thou' too is absent. There is only 'being'. Only existence, pure is-ness is there. To awaken into this pure existence is nirvana.

9

The only light came from an earthenware lamp. But now it too has been blown out. A gust of wind came and extinguished the flame. How far can we rely on lamps? When they are so easily blown out, how long can even a great many flames last? We are drowned in an ocean of darkness.

A young man is sitting with me. He is very much afraid of the darkness. He says his very being is shaken by it, so much so that he can hardly breathe.

I tell him, "Darkness, and darkness alone, envelops this world. And the world has no light to dispel the darkness. Whatever flames there are in the world are fading out. They flicker, but the darkness remains unaffected. The darkness of the world is eternal, and those who rely on these flames are unintelligent, for the flames are not real. Ultimately, they are all overpowered by the darkness.

"But there is another world - a world different from this visible world. If this world is darkness, the other is light. If in this world light is transient and temporary and darkness permanent, in the other one darkness is transient and temporary and light permanent.

"The wonderful thing is that the world of darkness is far away from us, and the world of light is very near.

"Darkness is outside, and light is inside.

"And remember, if you do not awaken to the light within, no other light can dispel your fear. Drop your reliance on mortal lamps, and seek the immortal light. This alone can bring you fearlessness, bliss, and the light which no one can take away from you. This alone is ours and of this we cannot be deprived. Only that which does not come from outside is ours.

"Of course there is darkness outside your eyes. But when you look within your eyes, what do you find there?

"If there were darkness there, how could you recognize the darkness? He who recognizes the darkness cannot himself be darkness.

"Again, if he aspires for light, how can he be darkness? He is light. Hence he aspires for light. He is light, hence he yearns for light. He is light, hence he seeks the light. Light alone can thirst for light. Search the place from which your thirst arises, make that point your goal, and you will find what you thirst for hidden there."

10

I am not God-fearing. Fear does not take one to God. It is only a complete absence of fear which can take you there.

In no sense am I a believer either. Belief is blind. How can blindness take one to the ultimate truth?

Nor am I a follower of any religion, because religion cannot be divided up and categorized. It is one and indivisible.

Yesterday when I said this, someone asked me, ”Then are you an atheist?”

I am neither an atheist nor a theist. These distinctions are superficial, merely intellectual. They have absolutely nothing to do with existence. Existence is not divided into ’is’ and ’is not’. These distinctions are of the mind. Accordingly, both atheism and theism are of the mind. They do not reach the spiritual. The spiritual transcends both positive and negative. That which is lies beyond positive and negative.

In other words, there they are one, and there is no dividing line between them. No concept accepted by the intellect gains access there. In fact, the theist has to drop his theism and the atheist his atheism. Then possibly they may enter the world of truth. Both these ideas are the obsessions of intellect. Obsession is an imposition. We are not asked to decide what truth is, but to recognize it as the moment one opens oneself.

Remember that we do not have to decide about truth: we have to recognize it. He who drops all intellectual decisions, logical conceptions, mental obsessions and assumptions, in that state of mental innocence opens himself to the truth as flowers open themselves to the light. It is in this opening up that seeing becomes possible.

Thus, I call that man religious who is neither a theist nor an atheist. Religiousness is a leap from the notion of many into oneness.

Where there is no thought, but only absence of thought, where there is no choice, only choicelessness, where there are no words, only wordlessness, there we enter religion.

11

I had set out for a walk at night. The village road was rugged and uneven. I had a friend with me who was a sadhu. He had travelled a great deal. There was hardly a place of pilgrimage where he had not been. He sought the path to the divine.

That night he asked me a question: ”What is the path which leads to the divine?”

He had put this question to many others. Slowly slowly he had become conversant with many paths. But the distance between him and the divine remained the same as ever. It was not that he had not attempted those paths. He had done all he could. But treading the path had been the only result. He had reached no goal. But he was not yet weary of traveling, and his search for new paths continued.

I remained silent for some time. Then I said, ”There is no path to attain what I myself am. Paths are for reaching ’the other’ and ’the distant’. What is ’near’ - not only near but what I myself am -

cannot be attained by means of a path. There is no intervening space for a path. Attainment is of that which is lost. But can the divine ever be lost?"

What can be lost cannot be one's own self.

The self can only be forgotten.

Hence one does not have to go anywhere. One has only to remember. Nothing is to be done - only known. And to know is to attain. What we should know is, "Who am I?" To know this is to attain the divine.

One day, when all our efforts seem futile, when no path seems to lead anywhere, then it will become clear that whatever we do will not attain the truth.

No-action will unravel the mystery of the 'I', because all action leads away.

No-action takes us to existence. Where action ceases existence reveals itself.
No-action will give that to us, because that is in existence even before the activities.

There is no path leading 'there', because 'there' is 'here'.

12

One evening, there was a storm on Lake Galilee. A boat was on the verge of sinking. There seemed to be no way of avoiding disaster. Passengers and boatmen were equally helpless. Gusts of violent wind shook everyone to the core of their being. The waves had begun to break into the boat. The shore was far beyond reach. But amid the raging storm, a man was sleeping soundly in a corner of the boat, unruffled and unworried. His companions woke him up. Shadows of imminent death lurked in their eyes.

Waking, the man asked, "Why are you all so frightened?" - as if there were no reason at all to be afraid. His companions stood dumbfounded. They could not utter a word. He asked them again, "Have you no faith?"

On saying this, with calmness and courage he rose and walked slowly to the side of the boat. The storm was lashing and raging in its final attempt to overturn the boat. Addressing the turbulent lake, he said:

"Peace. Be still."

He said, "Be still", as though the storm were a naughty child.

The passengers must have wondered what kind of madness this was. Do storms pay heed to entreaties? But even as they watched, the storm subsided and the lake became as calm as if nothing had happened.

The man had been heard.

The man was Jesus Christ and the incident is two thousand years old. But it seems to me that these events happen every day.

Are we not constantly in the midst of a storm, a restlessness? Is not the shadow of imminent death constantly in our eyes? Is not the inner lake of our mind continuously disturbed? Does not the boat of our life constantly seem to be on the verge of sinking?

So is it not proper that we ask ourselves, ”Why are you so afraid?” and ”Have you no faith?” Should we not go into ourselves and say to the turbulent lake within, ”Peace. Be still?”

I have tested this and found that the storms do subside. It is simply a matter of beginning to feel at peace, and peace descends. We make ourselves restless; we can also make ourselves calm. The attainment of peace is not a matter of practice, it is a matter of ’right-feeling’.

Peace is our nature. Even in the midst of deep restlessness, there is a center where we are at peace. There is a person within us who is calmly asleep in the midst of all our storms. In this peaceful, still, unworried spot is our real existence. The miracle is that, despite its existence, we become restless. There is no miracle in returning there.

If you wish to be at peace, you can be so right now, right here. Practice brings results in the future, right feeling brings results instantly. ’Right-feeling’ is the only real transformation.

13

I used to ask myself, ”Who am I?” It is impossible to count how many days and nights I passed in this query. The intellect gave answers heard from others, or born of conditioning. All of them were borrowed, lifeless. They brought no contentment. They resonated a little at the surface, and then disappeared. The inner being was not touched by them. No echo of them was heard in the depths. There were many answers to the question, but none was correct. And I was untouched by them. They could not rise to the level of the question.

Then I saw that the question came from the center but the replies touched only the periphery. The question was mine, but the answers came from outside; the question arose from my innermost being, the replies were imposed from outside. This insight became a revolution. A new dimension was revealed.

The responses of the intellect were meaningless. They had no relevance to the problem. An illusion had shattered. And what a relief it was!

It seemed as if a closed door had been flung open, filling the darkness with light. The intellect had been providing the answers - that was the mistake. Because of these false answers, the real answer could not arise. Some truth was struggling to surface. In the depths of consciousness some seed was seeking the way to break open the ground in order to reach the light. Intellect was the obstruction.

When this was made plain, the answers began to subside. Knowledge acquired from outside began to evaporate. The question went ever deeper. I did not do anything, only kept on watching.

Something novel was happening. I was speechless. What was there to do? I was, at the most, simply a witness. The reactions of the periphery were fading, perishing, becoming nonexistent. The center now began to resonate more fully.

”Who am I?” My entire being was throbbing with this thirst.

What a violent storm it was! Every breath quaked and trembled in it.

”Who am I?” - like an arrow, the question pierced through everything and moved within.

I remember - what an acute thirst it was! My very life had turned into thirst. Everything was burning. And like a flame of fire the question stood forth, ”Who am I?”

The surprise was that the intellect was completely silent. The incessant flow of thoughts had stopped. What had happened? The periphery was absolutely still. There were no thoughts, no conditionings of the past.

Only I was there - and there was the question too. No, no - I myself was the question.

And then the explosion. In a moment, everything was transformed. The question had dropped. The answer had come from some unknown dimension.
Truth is attained through a sudden explosion, not gradually. It

cannot be compelled to appear. It comes.

Emptiness is the solution, not words. Becoming answerless is the answer.
Someone asked yesterday - and someone or the other asks every day - ”What is the answer?”

I say, ”If I mention it, it is meaningless. Its meaning lies in realizing it oneself.”

I am not a preacher. I do not wish to deliver a sermon or a lesson. I have no desire to instill any thought of mine into your mind. All thoughts are futile. Like particles of dust they cover you up. And then you begin to appear what you are not. And what you do not know appears to be known. This is suicidal.

Ignorance is not dispelled by thought, it is only concealed. In order to awaken knowledge, it is essential to know ignorance in its stark nakedness. For this reason, do not conceal yourself in the garments of thought. Remove all coverings and garments so that you become familiar with your nakedness and hollowness. This will become a bridge to take you beyond ignorance. The acute distress of realizing your ignorance is the starting-point of revolution.

Hence, I wish to expose you, not conceal you. See how many blind faiths, conceptions and fancies you have hidden yourself behind! And you think yourself safe and secure behind these barriers. This is not security but self-deception.

I wish to disturb this sleep of yours. Truth, not dreams, is your sole security.

If you can gain the courage to drop your dreams, you will attain the truth. What a bargain! In order to attain the truth, you have only to drop your dreams, nothing else.

You must break through the unconscious - its thoughts, dreams, fantasies. You must awaken from the seen to that which sees.

”The seer alone is the truth; if you attain it, you have attained life.”

I said this to someone. On hearing it, he fell into reflection. I told him: ”You have become engrossed in thought. But that is the slumber from which I urge you to awaken.”

15

A bullock cart is passing by. I watch its wheels revolving on the axle. The wheels go round and round on what itself is motionless. The motionlessness lies behind all motion. There is inaction behind action. Nothingness dwells within isness.

Similarly, one day I saw a violent dust storm. A huge column of dust was rising, circling upwards to the sky, but its center was calm and motionless.
Is not the basic truth of existence revealed in these symbols?

Does not nothingness dwell behind all isness?

Is there not inaction behind all action?

Nothingness alone is the center and soul of isness. It alone has to be realized. There alone must we be, for that is our real being. We must all become that which, at the center, we already are. We have to go nowhere else other than where we are already.

How is this to be accomplished?

See that which ’sees’ and you descend into nothingness.

We have to proceed from the ’seen’ to the ’seer’. The ’seen’ is form, action and isness. The ’seer’ is formless, inaction, and nothingness. The ’seen’ is the other, the ephemeral, the world, bondage, non liberation, and the cycle of rebirth. The ’seer’ is the self, brahman, liberation, emancipation, nirvana. See; see Him who sees. This is the whole essence of yoga.
This is what I say every day. Or, to put it another way, whatever I am saying contains only this.

16

There is a thirst for true knowledge. What a thirst! I see it in everyone. Something is blazing within which wishes to calm itself. And in how many directions man searches for it! Perhaps this search goes on through infinite lifetimes. Seeking some golden deer, man’s mind keeps on wandering.

But at every step he meets nothing but frustration. No path seems to lead there. There is some movement, but no destination ever appears in sight.

Do paths lead nowhere then?

This question need not be answered. Life itself is the answer. After walking through an infinite number of ways and directions, is not the answer already clear?

Is the answer still not received?

In an intellectual reply, the real answer is lost in smoke. When the intellect is quiet, experience speaks out. When thoughts remain silent, wakeful intelligence arises.

In fact, there are no answers to the basic questions of life. Problems are not solved, they are only dropped. The task is simply to question, and to become empty. The intellect can only ask - it cannot provide the answer. The answer comes only from the void.

'The answer comes from the void - knowing this truth, the revelation of life takes on a new dimension. This state of mind is called samadhi, enlightenment.

Ask and be quiet - utterly quiet. And let the solution come of its own accord, allow it to come to fruition at its own pace. And in this unblinking state of the mind is seen that which is, that which I am.

The thirst for true knowledge is not quenched without knowing the self. To reach the self, it is necessary to abandon all paths. When the mind is on no path at all, it is in the self. And to know the self is true knowledge. Everything else is only information, and information is indirect. Science is not true knowledge. Science does not know the truth, it only knows the applications of truth. Truth can only be known directly. And any existence which can be known directly is the self.

The doors of the infinite are flung open at the moment the mind becomes quiet and still, realizing the futility of search.

Choiceless consciousness attains to the divine. And the ultimate quenching of the thirst for true knowledge is only in the divine.

17

It is past midnight. I have just returned from a gathering where someone said, "Call the name of the Lord! Remember and repeat his name. If you call him incessantly, he is sure to hear."

I was reminded of Kabir, who said, "Has God turned deaf?"

Perhaps Kabir's words have not reached this man.

Then I heard him say, "Ten people are sleeping. Someone calls out: 'Devadutt.' It is only Devadutt who wakes. The same thing is true of the Lord. Call his name, and he will surely hear you."

On hearing his words, I was tempted to laugh. First, it is not the Lord who is sleeping, it is us. He is ever wakeful. It is not he who has to awake, it is us. It is ironic that the sleepers should have to rouse the wakeful!

We should not call him - we should listen for him calling us. This can happen only in silence, only when the mind is completely free of disturbance. When there is no sound in the mind, his resonance is perceived.

Complete silence is the only prayer. Prayer is not action; on the contrary, when the mind is doing nothing, it is in prayer.

Prayer is not an activity but a state of being.

Secondly, the Lord has no name. Nor has he any form. So there is no means of calling him or remembering him. All names, all forms are imaginary. They are all false. We reach the truth by abandoning names and forms, not by relying on them.
He who dares to abandon everything fulfils the condition for attaining the Lord.

18

I have heard:

A fakir was begging. He had grown old, and his eyesight was weak. He stood outside a mosque and called for alms. A passer-by said, ”You had better move on. This is not the house of a man who can give you something.” The fakir asked, ”Who can be the householder who gives nothing to anyone?” The passer-by replied, ”Madman, don’t you know this is a mosque? The owner of this house is the great father, God himself.”

The fakir raised his head and looked at the mosque. His heart filled with a burning thirst. A voice within him spoke. ”But how can I move from this door? This is the ultimate doorway. Where is the door beyond this?” A strong resolution grew within him. Like an immovable rock, his heart declared, ”I will not leave here empty-handed. Whatever they gain afterwards, those willing to leave here empty-handed have gained nothing.”

He sat down near the steps of the mosque. He stretched his empty hands towards the sky. He was thirsty - and thirst itself is prayer.

Days came and went. Months rolled away. The summer passed, the rainy season passed. The winter was almost over. Nearly a year had gone. The old man’s end was near. But in the last moments of his life, people saw him dancing.

His eyes had an otherworldly glow. His old body radiated light.

Before dying, he said to someone, ”He who asks, attains. One need only have the courage to surrender oneself.”

The courage to surrender oneself.

The courage to annihilate oneself.

The courage to become a void.

He who is willing to disappear attains fulfillment. He who is willing to die achieves life.

19

Early one morning, Gautama the Buddha was about to speak. But before he could do so, a bird began to sing at the door. In the peace and stillness of the morning, Buddha remained silent. The morning sun went on weaving the patterns of its rays and the bird kept on singing. Buddha was silent; all were silent. In that silence, in that void, the song had become divine. When the song ended the void became even deeper.

Buddha then arose. That day, he uttered no word. That day, the silence itself became the discourse.

What he conveyed through that silence could never be conveyed through words.

All that is in this life, in this universe, is wholly divine, is entirely godly. In everything there is the imprint and reflection of the divine. He alone is latent in everything; he alone is manifest in everything. All form is his, all sound is his. But as we do not remain silent, we cannot hear. And because our eyes are closed, we cannot see.

Our minds are too present, and so he is absent. If

we are empty, he is here and he is now.

Truth is, but the self is unconscious - just as there is light but our eyes may be shut. We do not awaken the self, but we search for truth; we do not open our eyes, but we seek the light.

Never fall into this mistake. Drop all seeking, and be silent. Quiet your mind and listen. Keep your eyes open and see. If a fish in the water were to ask my advice in its search for the ocean, what would I say to it? I would say, ”Stop searching. Just see: you are already in the ocean.”

Everybody is in the ocean. The task is not to find the ocean - it is to start drinking it.

20

There is a temple in the neighborhood. Every day, soon after nightfall, they begin to sing and chant hymns and prayers. A strong smell of incense fills the sanctuary. The worship and offerings begin. Musical instruments are played, bells are rung, drums are beaten, gongs are sounded. The priest dances and gradually the devotees too join in.

One day I went to the temple to witness this. What I saw was not worship at all but a kind of unconsciousness. It was self-forgetfulness in the name of prayer. If you forget yourself you forget your sorrow. These forms of religion serve the same purpose as drugs and intoxicants.

Who does not wish to forget the pain of his life? That is why intoxicants were created. That is also why intoxicating rituals were created.

Man has concocted many types of wine. But the most dangerous of wines is not in bottles.

Sorrow is not conquered by forgetting it; its seeds are not destroyed by these methods. Rather, its roots are strengthened.

Sorrow must be conquered, not forgotten. Forgetting it is not religion but self-deception.

Just as self-oblivion is the way to forget sorrow, self-remembrance is the way to overcome sorrow.

True religion awakens the self completely. All other forms of religion are false. Self-remembrance is the true path, self-forgetfulness leads away from it. Also remember that the self is not quelled by forgetting the self: its hidden current continues to flow. The self disappears only through self-remembrance.
He who knows the self totally can attain to the whole by realizing the disappearance of the self.

The path to the whole is not through forgetfulness of the self but through its disappearance.

It is a fallacy to try to forget the self by remembering God. The way is to annihilate the self by becoming aware of it.
And, when the self ceases to exist, what remains is God.

God is attained by annihilating the self, not forgetting it.

21

Since evening, it has been stormy and rainy. Gusts of wind have lashed the trees. The electric supply has failed, and the city is plunged into darkness.

In the house, an earthenware lamp has been lit, its flame ascending. The lamp is of the earth, but its flame endlessly mounts to touch the unknown.

Man's consciousness is like this flame. His body is content with the earth but there is something else in him which constantly strives to rise above it. This consciousness, this dancing flame is the life of man. This ceaseless yearning to soar is his soul.

Man is man because he has this flame within him. Without it, he is only earth.

If this flame burns fiercely, a revolution comes into being. If this flame is manifests totally, the earth itself can be transcended.

Man is a lamp. There is earth in him, but there is light too. If he concerns himself only with the earth, his life is wasted: there must be attention to the light also.

Awareness of the light transforms everything and allows man to see God in the earth.

22

The morning is ended. The sun becomes stronger, and my heart wishes to move to the shade.

An elderly schoolteacher is visiting. He has been practicing spiritual disciplines for years. His body is emaciated, skeletal, his eyes dull and sunken. He has been torturing himself, and thought his torture to be spiritual discipline.

The lives of many who are eager to tread the divine path are poisoned by this error. For them, attaining the divine takes the form of denying the world, and saving the soul becomes destroying the body. This negativity destroys them, and they cannot see that rejecting the world is not the same thing as realizing God.

The truth is that those who mortify the body actually have faith in the body; those who condemn the world are subtly obsessed with the world. Asceticism binds one to the world no less than hedonism.

True spiritual discipline does not reject the body and the world - it transcends them.

And that is achieved by neither indulgence nor suppression. This way is different from both; it is a third way, the way of balance. Balance lies at the midpoint of two extremes, and that which is exactly at the midpoint transcends both polarities.

In fact, it is only by way of illustration that it is called the midpoint: it lies beyond both extremities. To be balanced between indulgence and suppression is not to have a little indulgence and a little suppression: it is to have neither. It is not a compromise, it is a balance. At the extreme is imbalance, at the midpoint is balance. At the extreme is destruction, at the midpoint is life.

To be at the extreme is to perish; both indulgence and suppression destroy life. Imbalance is ignorance, darkness and death.

My spiritual discipline is balance and harmony. When the strings of the veena are neither too loose nor too tight, then music arises. Strings which are too loose are as ineffective as those which are too tight. But the strings can be at a point where they are neither too loose nor too tight, and it is this point which gives birth to the melody. This point is the point of balance.

The law of music and the law of balance are identical. Truth is attained through balance.

I mentioned this matter of balance to the schoolteacher and it seems he paid attention. His eyes bear witness to it: their expression is of someone awakening after sleep. He appears to be peaceful and calm, as if some tension has relaxed and some insight has been attained.

At his departure, I told him, ”Drop all your tensions, and then watch. You have dropped enjoyment, drop suppression also. Drop it all, and watch.

”Be natural, and watch. Only by being natural can we become healthy, can we reach the self.”

By way of reply, he said, ”What now remains to be dropped? It is already dropped. I am returning peaceful and free of burden, as if a nightmare had ended. I am very grateful.” His eyes had become very innocent and calm, and his smile was sweet and innocent. Though old, he seemed like a child.

I wish these things could be clear to everyone who seeks God.

23

If you wish to attain truth, then drop the mind. As the mind ceases to exist, truth is revealed, in just the same way as opening the doors allows the sunlight to enter. Like a wall, the mind prevents the truth from entering, and the bricks of the wall consist of thought. Thoughts, thoughts and more thoughts, this chain of thought constitutes the mind. The sage Ramana once said to someone, ”Stop your thoughts, and then tell me where the mind is.”

Where there is no thought, there is no mind. If there are no bricks, how can there be a wall? A

hermit came last night. He asked, ”What shall I do with the mind?”

I said, ”Do not do anything with it. Leave the mind alone and watch. Leave it completely alone and go on watching. Just as one watches the flow of the water while sitting on the bank of the river, go on watching the flow of your thoughts. Do not identify yourself with them, do not attach yourself to them. Just go on watching; just be alert. By your watching, your thoughts will vanish, and your mind will disappear.”

And, as the mind disappears, what is experienced in its vacant place is the soul, is the truth, because that alone is.

24

One dark, cold night, a hermit was staying in a temple. In order to ward off the cold, he was burning a wooden statue of the temple deity but, sensing the blazing fire, the priest awoke.

When he saw the statue burning, he was stunned. Overcome with anger, he could not utter a word, so unthinkable was the act. Then he noticed that the hermit was searching for something in the heap of ashes. The priest asked him, ”Whatever are you doing now?” The hermit replied, ”I am searching for the bones of the deity’s body.” At this, the madness of the hermit became clear to the priest. He said to the hermit, ”Madman, how can there be bones in a wooden statue?” The hermit replied, ”Then please do me the favor of bringing another statue. The night is long and very cold.”

When I think of this story, it appears to me that I myself am that mad hermit.

If only we were free of images so that we could see the imageless! If we persist with the form, we cannot reach the formless. With our eyes fixed on the external, how can we leap into the ocean of the infinite? Can someone who worships something outside himself return into himself? Throw the corporeal to the flames so that only the incorporeal remains. Let the massed clouds of form be scattered so that the formless sky may be attained. Let the form melt, so that the boat may reach the ocean of the formless. He who launches his boat from the shore of the finite certainly reaches the infinite, and becomes one with it.

25

What is prayer? Is it self-forgetfulness? No, it is not self-forgetfulness. All forgetting, sinking and losing oneself is only a form of intoxication. Techniques such as these are not prayer, but an escape. It is possible to lose oneself in words, in melody, to find forgetfulness in the hypnosis of music and the dance. This forgetting and falling away may even be pleasurable, but it is not prayer, it is unconsciousness. Prayer, however, is conscious awareness.

Is prayer an activity? Is doing something a form of prayer?

No, prayer is not an activity but a state of consciousness. Prayer is not something we do, it is something we are. Its essence is inactivity. When all activity ceases, and only a witnessing consciousness remains, that is prayer. The word prayer implies activity, and the word meditation too implies activity; but both these words should be used, not for doing, but rather for a state of consciousness. To be in nothingness, in silence, in wordlessness - this is prayer, this is meditation.

I mentioned this yesterday in a prayer assembly.

Someone asked me later, ”Then what shall we do?”

I said, ”For a while, do nothing. Move into complete relaxation. Let both your body and your mind become quiet. Silently, watch the mind. By itself, it becomes calm and empty. It is in this emptiness that we come close to the truth. It is in this emptiness that that which is both within and without manifests itself. Then ’within’ and ’without’ disappear and pure existence remains. The totality of this pure existence is called God.”

26

Evening has merged into night. Some people have come. They say, ”You teach nothingness. But the thought of nothingness. terrifies us. Is there nothing we can hold on to?”

I tell them that courage is certainly essential for a leap into the void. But those who leap in, do not attain nothingness, they attain wholeness. And those who hold on to something achieve nothing. Can an imaginary handhold really help you?

It is only through emptiness that we can attain truth. And in emptiness, there can be nothing to cling on to.

I tell them a story:

”One dark, moonless night, a traveller passing through unfamiliar mountains slipped and fell into a deep chasm. Catching hold of a bush, he hung in suspense. There was darkness all around. Below him was also impenetrable darkness and the dreadful abyss. For many hours he clung to the bush, and throughout this time he suffered the pangs of imminent death. It was a winter night and gradually his hands became cold and numb. Soon he would have to release his grip, and then he would fall into the abyss. No effort could save him, and already he saw himself in the jaws of death. He fell - but nothing happened. There was no abyss at all. The moment he let go, he found himself standing on the ground.”

This has been my experience also. Falling into emptiness, I discovered that emptiness itself was the ground. By dropping the support of the mind, we attain the support of the divine.

The courage to leap into the void is man's only true courage, and those who cannot summon up the strength to enter the void remain unfulfilled.

27

I was returning home from a morning walk. On the bank of a river I came across a small spring. Sweeping dry leaves from its path, the stream was racing towards the river. I saw its headlong rush, and its blissful merging with the river. Then I saw that the river too was in haste.

And then I perceived that everything was hurrying - to meet the ocean, to be lost in the infinite, to achieve completeness, fulfillment, brushing aside the dry dead leaves from its path.

The drop of water longs to merge with the ocean. This longing is fundamental to life. All of our striving arises from this yearning, and to fulfill it brings true joy. To be finite is to have sorrow; to be incomplete is to have sorrow. It is because of being finite, being incomplete, that life ends in death. In their absence, life is immortal. Because of them it is shattered into pieces. In their absence it becomes an undivided whole.

But man halts as a droplet of the ego, and it is there that he becomes severed from the endless flow of life. Thus, of his own free will abandoning the sunlight, he tries futilely to find fulfillment in the feeble flame of an earthen lamp. But he cannot find contentment, for how can a drop be content to remain only a drop? There is no answer other than becoming an ocean. For the drop, the ocean is the goal - it has to become an ocean. It is essential for the drop to disappear. It is essential to destroy the ego. When the ego can become brahman, then alone is fulfillment possible.

It is only the fulfillment of being the ocean which establishes one in truth. And it is this fulfillment alone which liberates; for how can he who is not fulfilled become liberated?

Jesus Christ has said: "He who tries to save his life loses it and he who loses it attains it."

Let me say the same. This alone is love. Losing oneself is love. Accepting death in love is the way to attain the life of the divine.

This is why I say, "Drops, hurry towards the ocean. The ocean alone is your destination. Gladly accept death in love, for that alone is life. To halt before reaching the ocean is to perish, but to reach the ocean is to transcend death."

28

Once the disciple of a hermit passed away. The hermit went to the disciple's house, where the dead body was lying and people were crying. The hermit approached and asked in a loud voice: "Is this man dead or alive?"

This astonished and perplexed the mourners. Why was the question asked? The dead body lay there. Was any further evidence needed?

For a while there was silence, and then someone asked the hermit, ”Please, sir, can you answer your own question?”

Do you know what the hermit replied? He said:

”That which was dead has died. That which was alive still lives. It is only the link between the two which has given way.”

Life does not die, and death does not live.

Those who do not know life call death the end of life. But birth is not the beginning of life, nor death its end. Life exists within birth and death, and beyond them also. It exists before birth and it lives after death. Birth and death exist within life, but life itself is not born, nor does it die.
I have just returned from a cremation. As the funeral pyre blazed, people said, ”It is all over.” I

said, ”You have no eyes, and so that is the way it appears to you.”

29

I have returned from a journey during which I met many sadhus and sadhvis. Sadhus are everywhere, but there is no sadhana - meditation - in their lives. They are as plentiful and as false as artificial flowers.

Without meditation, religion is impossible. What now goes by the name of religion only strengthens irreligion. On the surface we have religion, but inside there is only irreligion.

And this is only natural. You can push plants without roots into the soil and they will make a beautiful party decoration, but will they grow fruits and flowers?

The roots of religion lie in meditation and yoga. Without yoga, the life of a sadhu can only be either pretence or suppression. Both are valueless.

To pretend good conduct is hypocritical. And suppression too is fatal. Both involve effort and struggle but achieve nothing. What is suppressed does not die: it simply moves down into deeper layers of the being.

At one extreme there are the pangs of sensual enjoyment, the heat and fever of a life scorched in its own flames, and the endless race to slake an unquenchable thirst. At the other extreme, we find the burning flames of suppression and self-torture. Escaping the well of one extreme, we fall into the deep ditch of the other.

Yoga is neither indulgence nor suppression. It is awakening from both. Both extremes of this duality should be avoided. We cannot transcend a duality by choosing only one of its sides. He who chooses and clings to to either of the sides gets himself caught and enslaved by it.

Yoga is not a clinging to anything - it is dropping all clinging. It is not leaving off one thing only to take up something else. Remain aloof, drop all clinging. It is the clinging itself which is the mistake.

It is this which leads one to fall into the well or the ditch. It is this which leads one to extremes, into dualities, into conflicts, while the right path is where there is no extreme, no duality, no struggle.

Do not make choices; instead, move into the consciousness which chooses. Do not fall into duality; instead, move into the state of knowing which perceives the duality. This movement is true wisdom, and it is this wisdom which is the door to light.

That door is near. And those who liberate the flame of their consciousness from the storms of duality attain the key which opens at the door to truth.

30

I see people with such crowded lives that I feel pity for them. There is not even a fraction of space, of empty sky within them. And how can anyone be liberated who has no sky in him? For liberation, what is needed is sky inside, not sky outside. He who has sky inside is at one with the sky outside. And when the inner sky becomes one with the universal sky, that merger, that mingling, that transformation is called liberation. And that is the realization of God.

Hence, I never urge anyone to fill himself with God - rather, I say that you should empty yourself, and then you will find that God has filled you up.

During the rains, when the clouds pour forth water, the hills remain dry but the valleys, which had also been dry, are filled. Be like the valleys, not like the hills. Do not fill yourself, empty yourself. The divine is constantly showering on you: he who is empty to receive that shower becomes full.

The value of a pitcher is precisely that it is empty. The more empty it is, the more the ocean can fill it.

A man is also worthy to the extent that he is empty. It is this emptiness that the ocean enters and makes full.

31

When I see spiritual seekers, I find that they are all engaged in disciplining their minds. But truth cannot be attained by disciplining the mind. On the contrary, it is the mind which is the obstacle in realizing the truth. You should drop the mind, not control it. Drop the mind and you find the door. Religion is attained neither in the mind nor through the mind. It is attained in the state of ”no-mind.”

Ma Tzu was a seeker. Living in a solitary hut in the hermitage of his master, he tried day and night to discipline his mind. Even if someone came to visit him, he ignored them.

One day, his master visited Ma Tzu’s hut. Ma Tzu ignored him also, but his master remained there all day, rubbing a brick against a rock. Finally, unable to endure this any longer, Ma Tzu asked, ”What are you doing, sir?” His master replied, ”I have to make a mirror of this brick.”

Ma Tzu said, ”A mirror from the brick? Have you gone mad? Even if you rub the brick for the rest of your life it will never become a mirror.” On hearing this, his master began to laugh and asked Ma Tzu, ”And what are you doing? If a brick cannot become a mirror, can the mind become one?”

In fact, neither the mind nor the brick can become a mirror. The mind actually is the dust which has covered the mirror. Drop it, put it aside; then alone can you realize truth. The mind is a mass of thoughts, dust particles which have to be swept away. What is left when they are swept away is eternally spotless consciousness. In that no-mind state free from thoughts, we see the eternal truth which had been hidden behind a smoke-screen of thoughts.

If there is no smoke of thoughts, the smokeless flame of consciousness alone remains. That is what has to be attained; that is what one has to be. That is the fulfillment of your seeking.

32

First the morning, then the noon-time came and departed. Now the sun is sinking: a beautiful sunset is spreading over the western horizon.

Every day I see the sunrise, the burgeoning of the day and its passing. And I also see that I have not risen, nor passed into afternoon, nor realized sunset.

When I returned from travel yesterday, I perceived this. Travel always brings the same insight: the path changes but not the traveller. Travel itself is a change, but the traveller appears unchanging.

Where was I yesterday and where am I today? What was I then and what am I now?

What I was yesterday, I am today. What I was then, I still am. The body is not the same, the mind is not the same, but I am the same.

In space and time there is change, but there is no change in ’I’.

Everything is a flowing current but this ”I” is not a part of it. The ”I” is with the current, but outside it and beyond it.

This eternal traveller, ever-new, ever-familiar, is the soul. In the changing universe, to awaken to the unchanging is liberation.

33

I see you and also what lies beyond you. Sight which stops with the body does not see. How transparent the body is! No matter how solid, it fails completely to conceal what lies beyond it.

But if there are no eyes to see, then everything changes. Even the sun ceases to exist. The whole game is of the eyes. We do not realize the light through thinking and logic.

There is no alternative to the spiritual eye; it is essential. To see the spirit, we need an inner eye, we need insight. With it, everything is visible to us. Without it, we are blind both to the light and to the divine.

To see existence beyond another’s body, we must first look beyond our own material bodies.

The other body becomes transparent only to the extent to which I see into my own depths. The entire insentient world becomes filled up with consciousness for me only to the extent to which I unfold consciousness in my own unawareness. The world is only that which I am. The day I realize the totality of my consciousness, the world will cease to exist.

Self-ignorance is the world; self-knowledge is liberation.

Each day, I say to everyone, ”Can you not see who resides within you? Who inhabits this body of bones and flesh? Who is imprisoned within your outward appearance ?

”What immensity is present within this insignificant body?

”Who is this consciousness? What is this consciousness?”

Without inquiring into this, without comprehending this, life has no meaning. Even if I understand everything, but do not understand myself, then that understanding is valueless.

The energy which can apprehend the other, can also apprehend the self. How can it not?

It is simply a question of changing direction. From that which is seen, we have to move to that which is seeing. The change of attention from the ’seen’ to the ’seer’ is the key to self-realization.

From the flow of thoughts, awaken to that which witnesses them. And a revolution takes place. Like a great spring of pure water suddenly bursting forth, the current of consciousness sweeps away all unawareness from life.

34

Until last evening, a plant was alive. Its roots were in the ground and there was life in its leaves. It was green and lustrous. Swaying in the breeze, it shed bliss all round. I had passed by it many times and had felt the melody of its life.

Yesterday, someone disturbed it, loosening its roots, and coming to it today I found that the plant had breathed its last. This is what happens when the root is dislodged from the ground. Everything depends on the roots. They are invisible, but they hold the whole secret of life.

Plants have roots. Man too has roots. Plants have a ground; man too has one. When the roots are dislodged from the ground, plants dry up. So too with man.

I was reading a book by Albert Camus. The opening sentence of the book ran, ”Suicide is the only significant problem for philosophy.” Why?-because nowadays man finds no purpose in life. Everything has become meaningless and futile.

What has happened is that our roots have been shaken. We have lost our link with the fountain-head of life, without which life is nothing more than a meaningless story.

We have to give man back his roots. We have to give him back his ground. The roots are the soul, the ground is religion. If this can be done, flowers can bloom once again in humanity.

35

I hadbeen invited into a family's home, and returned only after dusk. A beautiful incident took place at the house. There were many children there and they had built a house with a pack of playing cards, which they took me to see. It was beautiful, and I praised it. But the lady of the house said: "What is there to praise in a house of cards? The gentlest breeze will topple it to the ground."

I began to laugh, and the children asked why. But even as we spoke, the house of cards collapsed. The children became sad, and the lady of the house said, "You see!"

I replied, "Yes, I saw. I have seen other fine houses too, and they all collapse just like this one."

Even palaces of stone are but houses of cards - palaces built by old men just the same as those built by children. . We all build palaces - palaces of fantasy and dreams. And then a gentle breeze tumbles them to the ground. In this sense we are all children. Maturity is a rare phenomenon, and most people die still children.

All houses are houses of cards. Realization of this makes an individual mature. Even then he continues to build them, but by then it is only acting.

To know that being in the world is only acting, is to become free of the world.
Only that which we attain with this understanding will not be destroyed by the first breath of wind.

36

Last night it rained. The weather is wet and just now it has begun to drizzle again. Moist winds were driving the falling leaves as far as the door. It seemed as if the autumn were here, preparing for the arrival of spring. The pathways were covered by dry leaves which made a sweet rustling sound when people stepped on them.

I have been watching those leaves for a long time. That which becomes ripe falls. Though leaves fall continuously from dawn to dusk, it causes the trees no pain.

This demonstrates a wonderful rule of life: to pluck the unripe fruit brings pain, but the ripe fruit falls by itself.

A sannyasin has come. Renunciation has not yet become blissful for him. Rather, it is painful and difficult. Taking sannyas did not come to him naturally, he stretched out for it. The leaves of attachment, ignorance, possession and ego are still unripe. He has applied force: the leaves have fallen but their falling has caused pain. This pain prevents peace from coming. I think I should go this evening and tell him the secret of the falling leaves. Understanding, not renunciation, comes first. When sannyas comes through understanding, the world falls away like dry leaves. Sannyas is not forced, it is found.
After the revolution of the understanding, renunciation becomes a pleasure, not a pain.

37

There are different types of knowledge. There is a kind of knowledge which is the amassing of information, a simply intellectual understanding; and there is a knowledge which is experience, intelligence, and a live perception. One is the accumulation of dead facts, the other is the understanding of living truth. There is a great difference between the two, the difference between earth and sky, darkness and light.

In fact, intellectual knowledge is not knowledge at all: it is the illusion of knowledge. Can a blind man know the light? This is intellectual knowledge.

This illusion of knowledge conceals ignorance, but it is merely a disguise. In the maze of its words and in the smoke-screen of its thoughts, ignorance is forgotten. But to forget ignorance is more deadly than ignorance itself: where ignorance is visible, there comes a desire to rise above it. Where ignorance is invisible, it is impossible to free oneself from it.

The so-called wise men are destroyed in their ignorance.

Knowledge - the true knowledge - does not come from outside. Be aware that what comes from outside is not knowledge, it is information. Be careful not to fall into the illusion of knowledge, for whatever comes from the outside forms an additional layer over the self.

Knowledge awakes from within. It does not come, it awakens. And for this to take place, we have to peel away the layers over the self, not add to them.

Knowledge is not acquired, it is discovered. Acquired knowledge is information, discovered knowledge is experience. Life has to be forced to fit the shape of acquired knowledge. But the fit cannot be exact, and so a conflict arises between that knowledge and life.

But our behavior naturally shapes itself to conform with discovered knowledge. It is impossible to run counter to true knowledge. Such a thing has not yet happened on this earth.

I am reminded of a story. Two sages were travelling along the hazardous paths of a thick forest. Their relationship was that of father and son. The son was in front and the father behind. The path was lonely and frightening. Suddenly they heard the roar of a lion. The father said to the son, ”Come behind me: there is danger ahead.” The son laughed and continued to walk in the lead. Again his father warned him. Suddenly, the lion was facing them. Death was imminent. The son said, ”Since I am not the body, where is the danger? Isn’t this what you always preach?” The father ran away, shouting, ”Mad boy, keep away from the lion.” But the son continued to walk ahead, laughing.

Already, the lion had pounced upon him. Already, he had fallen, but he saw clearly that that which had fallen was not ’I’. He was not the body, and so he could not die. Now he understood what his father used to say. And the difference is immense. His father was sad, the tears welling up in his eyes. But the son had remained a witness, in life as in death. He had no misery, no pain. He remained unmoved, and unattached because whatever was happening to his body was happening outside. He himself was not involved in any way.

This is why I insist that there is a difference between knowledge and knowing.

What is samadhi?

Someone has said, ”The mingling of the drop with the ocean.”

Someone else has said, ”The descent of the ocean into the drop.”

But I say, ”It is the disappearance of both the drop and the ocean. Where there is neither the drop nor the ocean, there is samadhi. Where there is neither one nor many, there is samadhi. Where there is neither the finite nor the infinite, there is samadhi.”

Samadhi is oneness with existence.

Samadhi is truth, samadhi is consciousness, samadhi is peace.
’I’ is not present in samadhi. Rather, what remains when ’I’ ceases to exist is samadhi.

And perhaps this ’I’ which is not ’I’ is the real ’I’.

’I’ has two existences: the ’ego’ and the ’Brahman’. I am not the ego, but I seem to be. I am the brahman but I seem not to be.

Consciousness, pure consciousness is brahman.

I am pure witnessing consciousness, but because I identify with the stream of my thoughts, I do not see this. Thought itself is not consciousness. Consciousness comprehends thought. Consciousness is the witness of thought. Thought is the object and consciousness is the subject. To identify the subject with the object is to be unconscious. This is the opposite of samadhi. This is sleep.

What remains in the absence of thought is consciousness. To be in what remains is samadhi.

Awakening into thoughtlessness opens the door to existence. Existence means that which is. Awaken into it - this is the essence of the message of all the enlightened ones.

39

I see the gardener sowing seeds. He then puts manure in the soil, waters it and waits for the flowers to blossom. Flowers cannot be compelled to bloom. They need patience.

Love and patience.

The seeds of the divine should be sown in the same way. And similarly, we need patience to await the blooming of the flowers of the divine life.

Prayer and patience.

To resist this, to be impatient, leads nowhere. Impatience does not foster growth.

If one waits peacefully, patiently and lovingly, one fine morning the flowers bloom and their fragrance fills the courtyard of one's life.

For the flowers of the infinite to bloom, infinite patience is essential. But remember that if you are prepared for so much patience, your awakening can come in an instant.

Infinite patience is the only condition for realizing the infinite. The moment this condition is fulfilled, attainment is realized. It does not come from outside; it grows from within. It is already present, but because of our impatience and restlessness, we are unable to see it.

40

Man's mind is wonderful. It holds the mystery of the world and of liberation. Sin and virtue, bondage and liberation, hell and heaven reside within it. Darkness and light are its own creation. Birth is in it and death too is in it. It alone is the door to the external world, it alone is the ladder to the internal being. When it ceases to exist, we transcend both worlds. The mind is everything. Everything is its own imaginative creation. If it disappears, all imagining ceases to exist.

Yesterday I said this somewhere. Someone came forward to ask, "The mind is very unstable and fickle. How to lose it? The mind is polluted. How can it be made pure?"

Then I told a story.

After Buddha had become old, one afternoon he stopped to rest at the foot of a tree in the forest. He felt thirsty, and Ananda went to a nearby mountain stream to fetch water. But just before, some carts had crossed the stream, and the water had turned muddy. Rotting leaves and scum had begun to float on the surface. Ananda returned without water, and said to Buddha, "The water in the stream is not clean; I shall go back to the river and bring water from there." The river was very far off, and Buddha asked him to fetch water from the stream. After a short while Ananda returned again empty-handed: the water did not appear to him fit to bring.

But Buddha made him go back once more. On the third occasion that Ananda reached the stream, he was amazed. The stream had now become completely clear and unpolluted. The mud had settled and the water had become pure.

I find the story very interesting. The state of the human mind is just the same. The traffic of life comes and stirs it up. But if one goes on watching it, sitting in silence and patience, the impurities settle and a natural clarity returns. In this clarity of mind, life renews itself. It is only a matter of patience, silent awaiting, and without doing anything the impurities of the mind settle.

One has only to become a witness and the mind becomes pure. Our task is not to make it pure. All difficulty arises because of doing. Simply watch it, just sitting on the bank - then see what happens!

41

In the stillness of the night someone is playing on the flute. The moonlight appears to have frozen. This cold, solitary night, and the notes of the flute coming from far away sweet as a dream - all this is unbelievably beautiful.

How much nectar can a hollow bamboo reed shower!

Life is also like a flute - empty and void in itself but at the same time having a limitless capacity for melodious notes.

But all depends on the player. Life becomes what one makes it; it is one's own creation. It is merely an opportunity. What type of song one wants to sing is entirely one's own decision. This is the dignity of man, that he is free to sing songs of both heaven and hell.

Everyone can create divine notes on his flute; it is only a matter of practicing a bit with the fingers. A little practice and the attainment is immense. The empire of infinite bliss is attained without doing anything.

I wish to say to each and every heart, "Take up your flute. The time is going fast, see that the opportunity to sing the song does not slip by. Before the curtain falls you have to sing your life's song."

42

It is essential to know what is the seed and what is the fruit on the spiritual path. It is necessary to recognize the beginning and the end. One who moves ahead without recognizing the cause and effect makes mistakes. Just walking is not enough; no one reaches the goal just by walking. The direction and the mode of spiritual endeavor must also be right.

On the spiritual path there is one thing central and there are things which are peripheral also. If the effort is made at the center the periphery will be taken care of on its own. There is no reason to take care of it separately. It is only the manifestation of the center; it is only the extended center. Hence efforts on the circumference prove futile. There is a saying "To beat about the bush." To get worked up at the circumference is just like that.

What is the center, what is the periphery?

Knowing is the center and humbleness the periphery. Knowing is the beginning and humbleness the outcome. Knowing is the seed, humility is the fruit. But generally people start in the opposite direction: proceeding from humbleness they want to reach knowledge. They want to transform modesty into knowledge.

But humility cannot be cultivated in ignorance. In fact, humility cannot be cultivated at all. Cultivated humbleness is not humbleness; it is a false covering beneath which the lack of humbleness is suppressed. Practiced humility is a deception.

Darkness is not to be suppressed or concealed, it has to be eliminated. Paper flowers of humility are not to be pasted on to cover the lack of it. It has to be eradicated. When it is not there, what comes out is humility.

A forced humility cultivated in ignorance is dangerous, because in it what is not appears to be, and thus what has to be brought about vanishes from sight altogether.

In ignorance there is simply no way of bringing about humbleness directly, because the manifestation of ignorance is in itself the absence of humbleness. The lack of humility is nothing but ignorance. A buddha has said, ”What can he do who is in ignorance?”

It is not humility but knowing that has to be brought about. Knowing itself becomes humility.

Knowing illuminates everything. Only when it arises do ignorance and delusion disappear. It is only through knowing that infatuation and hatred are eliminated. It is only through knowing oneself that the state of liberation is attained.

43

I received a letter in the morning. Someone has asked, ”Life is full of misery, yet you talk continuously of bliss? If one looks at what is, all talk of bliss seems to be just fantasy.”

Certainly we are surrounded by misery, life is full of it, but that which is surrounded is not misery. As long as we go on looking at that which surrounds us, only misery seems to be there, but the moment we begin to look at that which is surrounded, misery becomes untrue and bliss true.

The whole thing is only a matter of perspective. The seeing which manifests the seer is the only seeing. Everything else is blindness. The moment the seer becomes manifest everything turns into bliss, because bliss is its true nature. The world still remains but it becomes entirely different. What appeared to be thorns because of self-ignorance, no longer appears so.

The existence of misery is not real because it is shattered by the later experience. Just as the dream becomes unreal on waking up, so does misery after self-realization.

Bliss is truth because it is the self.

44

Yesterday I gave a talk at a certain place.

I said, ”I want to make you discontent. That a spiritual thirst, a divine discontent may be born in all - this is my desire. For man to be satisfied with what he is, is death. Man is not the end-point of evolution; he also is only a rung on the ladder of evolution. What is manifest in him is nothing in comparison to what is unmanifest in him. What he is is almost nothing in comparison with what he can be.

Religion wants to awaken everyone from the death of contentment to the life of discontent, because it is only through this discontent that one can reach to the point of real contentment.

Man has to transcend his humanness.

It is this transcendence that gives him access to divinity.

How will this transcendence take place?
Let one definition be understood, then the process of transcendence is also understood:

Animality - pre-thinking state.

Humanity - thinking state.

Divinity - state beyond thinking.
If we go beyond the boundaries of thought, consciousness reaches divinity. To

transcend thought is to transcend humanness.

45

I see God in nature itself. I am experiencing him each moment, each minute. Not a single breath passes without meeting him. Wherever my eyes fall I see he is present. Whatever my ears hear I find that his melody is being sung.

He is everywhere - it is only a matter of our ability to see. He is but we need the eyes that can see him. When the eye is ready he manifests himself everywhere, every moment.

At night, when the sky is filled with stars, do not think about them but see them. And when the waves dance on the vast expanse of the ocean, do not think about them but see them. And when a bud is opening into a blossom see it, just see it. When there is no thought but only seeing, a great secret is revealed and access is gained through the door of nature into that mystery which is God. Nature is nothing more than a veil over God, and only those who know how to lift that veil become familiar with the truth of life.

A young seeker of truth went to a master. Arriving he asked, ”I want to know truth, I want to know religion. Kindly tell me where to start?”
The master said, ”Do you hear the sound of the waterfall from the nearby mountain?”

The youth replied, ”I hear it clearly.”

The master said, ”Then start from there, enter from there. There is the door.”

Really the entrance is so near - in the waterfalls descending from the mountains, in the leaves of trees swaying in the wind, in the sunrays dancing and sparkling on the vast ocean. But there is a curtain at every door and it is not lifted unless we ourselves lift it. In fact the screen is not on the entrance but over our vision. Thus a single curtain has covered an infinite number of doors.

46

The moon is coming up. Passing through the trees, its soft light has begun to spread on the pathway. The wind is full of the fragrance of the mango-blossoms.

I have just returned from a symposium. Most of those present there were young people - influenced by modern trends and excitable. It is as if no-faith was their only faith and negation the only positivity.

One of them said, ”I do not accept God. I am free and independent.”

This statement reflects only the mood of the time we live in. This whole era is under the shadow of this freedom, without knowing that this freedom is suicidal.
Why is it suicidal? - because without denying oneself it is impossible to deny God. I

told them a story:

There was a grapevine spread out in the palace garden of God. It was tired of expanding and expanding, growing and growing, obeying and obeying. It was fed up with dependence and one day it had the desire to be free. It shouted at the top of its voice so that the whole sky would hear it: ”Now I will not grow! I will not grow! I will not grow!”

This rebellion was certainly strange, because it was against the true nature of the grapevine itself.

God looked and said, ”Do not grow - what is the need for growth?” The grapevine was glad; the rebellion had succeeded. It became occupied with efforts not to grow. But the growth did not stop, it never stopped. It busied itself in not growing and it went on growing and growing. And God knew it beforehand.

This is the situation. God is our true nature; he is our inner law, one cannot go away from it. There is no other way except to be it. However much we may deny it, however much we want to be free of it, there is no liberation from it because it is our very self. In fact, only it is; we are imaginary. This is why I say: liberation is not from it but in it.

47

A king had imprisoned a man of sound health and balanced mind. He wanted to study the effect of aloneness on man. The prisoner continued to shout and scream for some time and to cry and beat his head in his desperation to get out. After all, his entire existence was outside; his whole life was tied up with ’the other’. Within himself he was nothing; to him, to be alone was like not being at all.

Slowly he began to break down. Something within him began to disappear and a quietness overtook him. Crying ceased, tears dried up. His gaze became stony. Even while seeing he would appear to be not seeing.

Days went by, months passed, and finally a year elapsed. All arrangements had been made for his happiness and comfort. What he did not have even while outside was now available to him in the prison. After all it was royal hospitality!

But by the end of the year, the specialists declared that he had gone mad. Externally he was the same as before, perhaps healthier, but inside? Inside he had already in a sense died.

I ask: Can aloneness drive a man mad? How can aloneness make one mad? In fact, madness is already there. The outside relationships keep it concealed, aloneness only uncovers it. The restlessness of man to lose himself in a crowd is only to avoid seeing it.

This is why everybody is escaping from himself. But this escape cannot be called healthy. Not to see reality is not to be free from it. One who is not healthy and mentally balanced in utter aloneness is in a deception. Sometime or other this self-deception is bound to be shattered. And one will have to know that which is within in its stark nakedness. If this happens unintentionally and suddenly, the personality shatters and goes insane. That which is suppressed sooner or later comes to an explosion.

Religion is the science of descending into this aloneness on one's own. On uncovering layer by layer, an amazing truth is encountered: slowly, slowly it becomes known that really we are alone. In the depth, at the innermost center, everyone is alone. And it is because of not being familiar with that aloneness that fear is felt.

Ignorance and unfamiliarity cause fear. Once familiarity is there fear is replaced by fearlessness and bliss. In the realm of aloneness, satchidananda - truth, consciousness, bliss - itself is present.

The divine is attained on descending into oneself. Hence I say: Do not run away from aloneness, from yourself, but dive into yourself. Only by diving in the ocean are pearls found.

48

It rained in the night. The roads are wet, the wind is damp and the sky is overcast with clouds. It seems the sun will not rise. The morning feels very gloomy.

A young man has come. He is well-read and educated - appears to be so. His words smell of books and nothing but books. How boring is this smell!

I listen to him although he had come to listen to me. He has been speaking for an hour, but whatsoever he has been saying is not his own. This is the kind of mechanical mind that our system of education today is producing. It is not creative. It gives birth to memory, not to the faculty of thinking. Thoughts are gathered, but the ability to think is not attained. This is a fatal situation. Through it, no growth happens to the individuality and the ability to think, to one's capacity for self-experience. The person only repeats other people's words like a machine.

That which only fills the memory system is not real education. Such an education is only an appearance of education. Education must give birth to that insight which is itself capable of looking into the problems. The problems are mine - how can the solutions provided by others help me? And then every problem is so new that no old solution can be a solution for it.

The latent energy within us, the genius must awaken through education. We should not be stuffed with those thoughts which we have neither lived ourselves nor known ourselves, and which are utterly dead for us and can only increase our burden. Beneath this dead weight the awakening of the genius becomes impossible.

Every day I see such people all around me who are getting crushed under the burden of those thoughts which they have not known themselves but rather accepted from others. The thought that has not been known by oneself inevitably becomes a burden.

Education should not be a passive acceptance of thoughts. Only when education is based on active understanding and creative knowing is it meaningful.

I am forgetting that young man in all these digressions. When he stopped after expressing his thoughts - which are not his at all - he proudly looked around in a gesture that said, ”I also know.”

How arduous is knowing but how easy is the ego of knowledge! Knowing is not attained but ego certainly takes over. And remember that the two are polar opposite dimensions. Knowing is the death of ego, and where ego is present it can be inferred that knowing has not happened. It is enough indication of the absence of knowing.

Knowing brings egolessness. The more deeply a person knows the deeper his realization of knowing nothing. Knowing does not demystify existence, it only reveals. And at that moment when one is face to face with the whole mystery of the universe and of the self - at that boiling point the person becomes empty and all his ’I-ness’ disappears. Ego was the product of the darkness of ignorance; in the light of knowing it dies.

I kept quiet for a while and then said to him, ”I wanted to listen to you but you do not say anything. What you have just said - nothing of it is yours, it is all is borrowed. And no richness comes from others’ wealth. It may conceal poverty but it cannot eradicate it.

In the case of truth only one’s own experience is true and alive. If that is there, a revolution takes place in one’s life. Otherwise, by carrying the burden of dead alien thoughts about truth nothing comes to pass. It only increases the burden, and the possibility of self-experience recedes.

Knowledge that is not one’s own becomes a hindrance in the arising of that knowing which can only be one’s own.

49

The evening seems to have come to a standstill. The westbound sun has long since gone behind the clouds, but the night has not set in yet. There is solitude outside as well as inside. I am alone - neither is there anybody outside, nor inside.

At this time I am nowhere, or rather I am there where there is emptiness. And when the mind is empty it is not.

This mind is amazing. It comes to be experienced like an onion. One day, seeing an onion, I was reminded of this resemblance. I was peeling the onion; I went on peeling layer after layer, and finally nothing remained of it. First thick rough layers, then soft smooth layers, and then nothing.

Thus is the mind also. You go on peeling off, first gross layers, then subtle layers, and then remains an emptiness. Thoughts, passions and ego, and then nothing at all, just emptiness. It is the

uncovering of this emptiness that I call meditation. This emptiness is our true self. That which ultimately remains is the self-form. Call it the self, call it the no-self, words do not mean anything. Where there is no thought, passion, or ego, is that which is.

Hume has said, ”Whenever I dive into myself I do not meet any ’I’ there. I come across either some thought or some passion or some memory, but never across myself.” This is right - but Hume turns back from the layers only, and that is the mistake. Had he gone a little deeper he would have reached the place where there is nothing to come across, and that is the true self. Where there remains nothing to come across is that which I am. Everything is based in that emptiness. But if somebody turns back from the very surface, no acquaintance with it takes place.

On the surface is the world, at the center is the self. On the surface is everything, at the center is nothing-ness, the void.

50

I have just returned from a walk in the sun. How pleasant the warm sunshine of the winter feels. The sun rose not long ago and the warmth of its rays is gradually increasing.

A man was with me. I was silent all the way but he kept on talking. As I listened, I noticed how often we use the word ’I’. Everything is tied up with the center of this ’I’. After birth it is probably the awareness of ’I’ that arises first of all, and at the time of death it is the last to leave. In between these two points is the expanse of the same ’I’.

How familiar this ’I’ is and yet how unknown too! There is no other word more mysterious than this in human language. Life passes but the mystery of ’I’ is rarely uncovered.

What is this ’I’? It is not possible to deny it either - even in negation it gets proposed. Even in saying ”I am not” it is present. In human realization this ’I’ is the most certain decisive and undoubtable entity.

”I am” - this awareness is there, but WHO I am is not an inborn knowing. To know that is only possible through spiritual endeavor. All spiritual endeavor is the endeavor to know this ’I’. All religions, all philosophies are answers to this single question.

”Who am I?” This question is to be asked by everyone of himself. Let everything else drop and this single question remain. Let this quest alone remain resounding in the whole being remain. Thus this question descends into the unconscious part of the mind. As the question moves deeper, the superficial identifications start dissolving. It begins to be seen that I am not the body. It begins to be seen that I am not the mind. It begins to be seen that I am that which sees everything - I am the seer, I am the witness. This experience becomes the realization of the true nature of the ’I’. The pure, enlightened witnessing consciousness is revealed with the arising of this true knowledge. The door to the mystery of life opens. Becoming acquainted with ourselves we become acquainted with the whole mystery of the universe. Knowledge of the ’I’ becomes the knowledge of God.

This is why I say this ’I’ is precious. To descend to its ultimate depth is to realize everything.

51

The city is asleep in the stillness of the night. I have returned from my walk with a guest. A lot of talking has happened on the way. The guest is a hylotheist. A well-read scholar. He has accumulated lots of arguments. I heard all that with peaceful silence and then asked only one thing, that through all these thoughts is he in peace and bliss or not?

At this he felt a little embarrassed and was not able to come up with an answer.

Argument is not a touchstone of truth, nor is thought; only the experience of bliss is the touchstone of truth. If the mindfulness is right, life is filled with bliss-consciousness as a consequence. Mind is there only for the purpose of coming to this point, and the mindfulness that does not bring one here is more of an un-mindfulness. ”Hence”, I said to him, ”I do not oppose your statements at all, I only request you to put this question to yourself.”

Religion is not thought, it is only a science for attaining to divine consciousness. Its test is not in argumentation but in experimentation. It is not an analysis of truth, it is the endeavor for truth and its attainment.

52

I am sitting in a hut. Through the holes in the thatched roof sunlight is falling in circular patches on the floor. Dust particles are visible floating in the beam of the light. They are not part of the light but they have made the light impure. They cannot even touch the light because they are in every way different and foreign, and because of them the light is seen as impure. The light is still the light, there is no change in its self-nature, but its body - its appearance - has become impure. Because of these foreign bodies the host itself has a different appearance.

A similar thing has happened with the soul of man. There also many particles of dust have become guests and man’s true nature is covered by them. It is as though the host is lost in the crowd of guests beyond recognition - something similar has happened.

But for those who want to be know the meaning of life and encounter truth, it is necessary to recognize in the crowd the one who is not the guest but the host. Without knowing this host life is just a somnambulism. Wakefulness begins with the recognition of the host. That recognition is self-realization. Through that recognition happens the acquaintance with that which is eternal - pure buddha-nature.

The light does not become impure because of the dust particles - nor does the soul. The light becomes dull, the soul becomes forgotten.

What kind of dust particles are there on the light of the soul? All that has come into me from the outside is that dust. What is in me other than that is my buddha-nature. All that has been attained and accumulated by the sense-organs is dust.

What is there in me which has not been attained by the sense-organs? Form, taste, smell, touch, sound - apart from these what else is there in me? That which has not been attained by the sense-organs - consciousness - only that is truth. It has not come from the sense-organs, rather it is behind them.

This consciousness alone is my true nature. Everything else is alien, dust. This alone is my host - all the rest are guests. This consciousness alone is to be known and uncovered. Only in this consciousness is attained that wealth which is imperishable.

53

The last star of the dawn is disappearing in the mist. The morning is about to be born, and rosiness has spread all over the eastern sky.

A friend has just given me the news of the death of some beloved relative; this very night he left his body. After a short silence he began to talk on death. He said many things and then in the end he asked, ”Death is an everyday happening, yet everyone lives in such a way as if he has never to die. It simply does not enter one’s mind that he also will die. How come there is such faith in non-dying amidst so many deaths?”

This faith is very meaningful. It is so because the one who exists in the mortal body is not mortal. The circumference is of death, but at the center there is no death.

The one who is seeing - the seer of the body and the mind - knows that he is separate from the body and the mind. That seer of the mortal is not mortal. He knows, ”There is no death to me; death is only a change of the body. I am eternal. Even while passing through death, I, the deathless, remain.”

But this knowing is unconscious. To make it conscious is to become liberated. Death is seen directly, the comprehension of the deathless is indirect. One who makes that also direct comes to know that which has neither birth nor death.

To attain to that life which is beyond life and death is liberation. This is present within everyone, it has only to be realized.

Someone asked a sage, ”What is death and what is life? I have come to you to know this.”

What the sage said in response is wonderful. He said, ”Then go somewhere else. Where I am there exists neither death nor life.”

54

Yesterday I said, ”Dirt becomes a flower, filth and rubbish become manure and turn into fragrance. The passions and emotions of man are also like this. They are energies. What seems animalistic in man, on changing its direction the same attains divinity.”

Hence even the mundane is divine in seed form. Then, in fact, there is nothing unholy. The whole of existence is divine. Everything is divine. The differences are only in the manifestations of that divinity.

Seen in this manner nothing remains despicable. What is animal at one end is divine at the other. There is no contradiction between animality and divinity, but a growth. In such a context, repression

and self-torture are meaningless. That kind of struggle is unscientific. Splitting oneself in two, no one can ever attain to peace and self-realization.

A part of what I myself am cannot be eliminated. It may be suppressed, but what is suppressed has to be continuously suppressed. What has been overcome has to be overcome again and again. Victory can never be achieved through that path.

The right path is entirely different. It is not of suppression but of knowing. It is not of discarding the filth and the rubbish - because I am that filth and rubbish too. It is that of transforming it into manure. This is what has been referred to in ancient alchemy as transforming baser metal into gold.

55

Mahavira has asked, ”O seekers, what is fear to living beings?”

Yesterday someone was asking me the same. And whether one asks it or not, the same question lurks in the eyes of everyone. Perhaps this is the only eternal question and perhaps this is the only question worth asking.

Everyone is afraid. In the known, in the unknown, fear is creeping in us. Sitting or standing, sleeping or waking, the fear continues. There is fear in all our behavior, in every thought and deed. There is fear in love, in hate, in virtue, in sin - in everything. It is as if our whole consciousness is created of fear. What else are our beliefs, concepts, religions and Gods other than fear?

What is this fear? There are many forms of fear but the fear is only one - the fear of death. That is the basic fear. At the root of all fear is the possibility of being destroyed, annihilated. Fear means the apprehension of not being, of disappearing. Effort goes on the whole life to escape from this anxiety. All efforts are to avoid this basic insecurity.

But even after racing through one’s entire life, ’being’ does not become assured. The race comes to an end but the insecurity remains the same. Life is completed but death could not be avoided. On the contrary, what appeared to be life turns into death on its completion. Then one comes to know it is as if there was no life at all, only death was growing. It is as if life and death were the two polarities of death itself.

Why this fear of death? Death is unknown, death is unfamiliar - how can it be feared? What connection can there be with something that is not known?

In reality, what we call the fear of death is not the fear of death, it is the fear of losing what we know as life. It is the fear of losing what is known. We have identified ourselves with what is known. That alone has become our ’being’, that alone has become our existence. My body, my wealth, my prestige, my relationships, my conditionings, my beliefs, my thoughts - all these have become the life of my ’I’, have become my ’I’. Death will take away this ’I’, that is the fear. All these are being accumulated in order to avoid fear, to gain security, but just the opposite happens - the very apprehension of losing these becomes the fear.

On the whole, whatever man does turns against the very goal for which it has been done. All steps taken in ignorance for attaining bliss take one to misery. The path taken for reaching fearlessness

leads one to fear. What appears to be the attainment of the self is not the self. If one is able to wake up to this truth - if I can know that I am not what I have understood as 'I', and even in this moment I am different and separate from my identifications, the fear disappears. Only that which is 'other' is lost in death.

In order to know this truth, no ritual, no technique is to be followed. One has only to know, only to become awake to everything I understand to be 'I', and with which one has become identified. Waking up breaks the identification. Waking up separates the self and the other. The identification of the self and the other is fear, and the realization of their separateness is freedom from fear, is fearlessness.

56

A sage sent out the residents of his hermitage for to travel in order to learn from the vast school of the world. When the set time was over, all of them except one returned. The sage was delighted on seeing their achievements and accumulation of knowledge. They had come back with much learning.

Eventually the other young student also returned. The sage said to him, "You have returned last of all; certainly you must have learnt more than all the rest."

The young man replied, "I have returned without learning anything. On the contrary, I have forgotten even that which you taught me." What could have been a more disappointing answer?

Then one day the same young man was massaging the body of the sage. Rubbing his back, he murmured to himself, "The temple is very beautiful, but inside it there is no image of the divine." The sage heard it; he was outraged. Certainly these words were said to him. Certainly it is his beautiful body that has been described as a temple. And seeing the anger of the sage the young man started laughing. This was like adding fuel to the burning fire. The sage turned him out of the hermitage.

And then one morning when the sage was reading his scriptures, the young man casually stepped in from somewhere and sat near him. He sat there as the sage continued to read. At this very moment a wild honeybee flew in the room and started searching for an exit. The door was open - the very door through which it had entered, but becoming utterly blind it was making futile efforts to go through the closed window. Its humming sound began to echo in the stillness of the temple. Standing up the young man said aloud to the bee, "Stupid, there is no door there, it is a wall! Stop and look behind you. There only is the door by which you have entered."

It was not the bee but the 'master' who heard these words - and he found the door. He looked into the eyes of the young man for the first time. This was not the youth who had left to go traveling. These eyes were different. Now the master knew that what the young man had learned was no ordinary learning. He had returned after knowing something, not after learning something.

The master said to him, "Today I have come to know that my temple is empty of the divine, and that until now I have been hitting my head only against the wall and I haven't found the door. Now what shall I do to find the door? What shall I do so that my temple does not remain empty of the divine?"

The young man said, ”If you wish for the divine, be empty of yourself. Only he who is full of himself is empty of the divine. He who becomes empty of himself finds that he has been full with the divine forever. And if you wish to find the door to this truth, do the same that this honeybee is doing now ”

The master saw that the bee was doing nothing now; it was sitting on the wall, just sitting. He understood. He woke up. He realized as though a sudden flash of lightning happened in the darkness. He also saw that the bee was now going out through the door.

This story is my whole message. This is what I am saying. Nothing has to be done to attain the divine; rather, dropping all doing one has just to see. When the mind becomes quiet and looks the door is found. The peaceful and empty mind is the door.

My invitation to you all is towards that emptiness. That invitation is of religion itself. To accept that invitation is to become religious.

57

The warmth of the sun has begun to spread beneath the blue sky. The cold air is thick and the dewdrops on the grass are icy cold. Dewdrops are also dripping from the flowers. The night queen has gone to sleep after diffusing its fragrance the whole night long.

A cock crows which is then answered by the crows in the distance. The trees are shaking gently in the mild breeze and the songs of the birds seem endless. The morning makes its mark on everything. The whole world suddenly proclaims that the day has dawned.

Seated I watch the path that disappears among the distant trees. Slowly, slowly the path is becoming busy and people pass by. They are walking but they seem to be sleepy. Some inner slumber is gripping them all. They do not seem to be awake to these blissful moments of the morning, as if they have no idea that that which is behind the universe manifests itself during these moments effortlessly.

How much melody there is in life - and how deaf is man!

How much beauty there is in life - and how blind is man!

How much bliss there is in life - and how insensitive is man!

That day I had been to the hills. We stayed in those mountain ranges for a long time, but those who had come with me were deeply engrossed in the small talk of the routine life - talk which has no significance, whose presence or absence in life matters not. The clouds of this talk had deprived them of the beauty of that mountain twilight.

Thus enveloped in the insignificant we remain unacquainted with the infinite, and what is so close becomes far off by our own doing.

I wish to say to mankind: You have nothing to lose except your own blindness, and you have everything to gain. O self-made beggar, open your eyes! The entire kingdom of heaven and earth is yours.

58

Yesterday noon we were in a valley beneath a small mountain. Among the expanses of light and shade we spent many a pleasant hour. There was a pond nearby and powerful gusts of wind kept it restless. Waves rose, fell and lay shattered. Everything in it was agitated.

Then the wind subsided and the pond was lulled to sleep!

I said, ”See, one who is restless can also become peaceful. Restlessness has peace hidden within itself. The pond is peaceful now, then also it was peaceful. The waves were only on the surface; inside there was peace earlier also.”

Man too is restless only on the surface. The waves are only on the surface; inside, in the depths, a deep silence. As we move away from the winds of thoughts, the peaceful pond begins to be seen. This pond can be found now and here. There is no question of time at all, because time exists only as far as thoughts are. Meditation is beyond time.

Jesus has said, ”And there shall be time no longer.”

In time is misery. Time is misery. To be beyond time is to be in bliss. To be beyond time is to be bliss.

Come, friend, let us go beyond time - for that is where we really are. What appears within time is really beyond it. Knowing this much is the going. The moment one knows, the winds stop and the pond becomes peaceful.

59

I see man surrounded by words. But scriptures and words are futile. That way one can know about the truth, but it is not the way to know truth.

Isness is not realized through words. The door to isness is emptiness. The very courage to take the jump from words to wordlessness is religiousness.

Thought is the means to know the other; it does not reveal the self because the self is even behind it. ’Self’ is above everything. It is through the self that we are connected to isness. That too is other. When even that is not, then only ’that which is’ really is. Before it I am ego, in it I am Brahman.

In truth, in isness, ’self’ and ’other’ are eradicated. That difference too was only in thought and of thought.

Consciousness has three aspects: 1. Outer unconscious - inner unconscious; 2. Outer conscious - inner unconscious; and 3. Outer conscious - inner conscious.

The first aspect, unconscious, is that of non-consciousness. It is insentience. It is the pre-thought stage. The second aspect, half-unconscious, is that of half-consciousness. It is between the insentient and the sentient. This is the thought stage. The third aspect, non-unconsciousness, perfect consciousness. This stage is perfectly conscious and is beyond thought.

In order to know the truth one has to attain not just to thoughtlessness. That leads only to insentience, to unconsciousness. Many of the techniques prevalent in the name of religion take one only to unconsciousness. Wine, sex and music too lead only to unconsciousness. In unconsciousness is escapism. It is not an attainment.

To attain to the truth one has to attain to both thoughtlessness and consciousness. This state is called samadhi, enlightenment.

60

It is full-moon night but the sky is overcast with clouds. I have just come along a pathway. Some children were playing on a sand-mound there. They had built a few sand-castles and a dispute arose among them. All disputes arise only over sand-castles. They were, after all, children, but shortly even those joined in who were not children. In the quarrel of the children their elders too had joined.

I stood by the roadside and thought how artificial the division is between children and the elders! Age does not in fact bring about any difference, and maturity has no connection whatsoever with it.

Most of us die as children. There is a story about Lao Tzu that he was born an old man. This seems very unnatural. But is not this phenomenon even more unnatural - that one may not attain to maturity till the very end of one's life? The body grows but the mind remains stagnant at one spot. That is how it is possible that there should be quarrels over sand-castles and man reveals himself, putting aside the pretense of humanity and proving thus that all talk of evolution is meaningless. And who says that man has descended from animals - because he still is nothing but an animal.

Is man not yet born?

The answer that comes after looking deeply into man is not in the affirmative. Diogenes used to carry a burning lantern even in the broad daylight and would say, "I am searching for Man." When he became very old, someone asked him if he still hoped to find Man.

He said, "Yes - because I still have the burning lantern with me."

I was standing there and a big crowd gathered near the sand-mound, and people were deeply and with fascination enjoying the insults, threats and browbeatings of the participants. There seems to a peculiar shine in the eyes of even those who are fighting. Some animalistic pleasure is certainly flowing in their eyes and actions.

Gibran has written, "One day I asked a scarecrow standing in the middle of the field: 'Do you not get bored standing still in this field?' It replied, 'Oh! the pleasure of scaring the birds is so much that I am not at all aware how and when the time passes!' After a moment of contemplation I said: 'This is true because I also have the experience of this pleasure.' The scarecrow said, 'Yes, only those whose body is stuffed with straw and grass can be familiar with this pleasure!'"

But everybody seems to be familiar with this pleasure. Is not straw and grass stuffed inside all of us too? Are not we also false men standing in the field?

This is the pleasure after witnessing which I have just returned. Is not the same pleasure going on over the mound of this whole earth?

I ask this to myself and weep. I weep for that man who can be born but has not been born; who is within everyone but is hidden as the embers are hidden in the ashes.

In reality the body is no more than a heap of straw and grass, and for anyone who stops at that it would have been better if he were in some field because then at least he would have served the purpose of saving the crop from the birds. Man is not even that useful!

No one becomes really man without knowing that which is beyond the body; no one becomes man without knowing the soul. To be born in the form of man is one thing and to BE Man is entirely different.

Man has to give birth to himself within himself. It is not like garments with which one can cover oneself. No one becomes man just by covering himself with the garments of man, because they keep him man only so long as the actual necessity for being Man does not arise. As the necessity arises, one does not even know when the garment falls off!

Just as a seed becomes a sprout by transforming its being - not by wearing any garments - similarly man also has to transmute his entire life source into a totally new dimension. Only then is he born, only then the transformation.

Then his pleasure does not lie in scattering or sowing thorns but is transformed into picking the thorns and scattering flowers. It is at this moment that it becomes evident that he is no longer straw and grass now, he is man; he is not the body, he is the soul.

Gurdjieff has said, ”Drop this illusion that everyone has a soul.” How does it matter whether he who is actually asleep has a soul or not? Only that is real which actually is. The soul is a possibility for all, but the one who makes it an actuality alone attains it.

61

I find the entire consciousness of man revolving around three small words. What are these three words? They are: wakeful intelligence, intellect, and instinct.

The most excellent beings move according to their wakeful intelligence. The mediocres move according to their intellect. The lowest state of consciousness is instinct. Instinct is animal, intellect is human, wakeful intelligence is divine.

Instinct is natural and blind. It is slumber. It is the world of the unconscious. Nothing is good or bad, there is no discrimination; hence there is no inner struggle either. It is the natural flow of blind passions.

Intellect is neither slumber nor wakefulness. It is semi-consciousness. It is the transitory stage between instinct and wakeful intelligence. It is a corridor. A part of it has become conscious, but the rest is unconscious. Hence there is the awareness of difference - the birth of good and bad. There is passion as well as thought.

Wakeful intelligence is total wakefulness. It is pure consciousness. It is only light. Here also is no struggle. This is natural. It is the natural flow of the good, of the true, of the beautiful.

Instinct is natural, wakeful intelligence also is natural: instinct is blind naturalness, wakeful intelligence is awake naturalness. Only the intellect is unnatural. In intellect, towards the back is instinct and towards the front is wakeful intelligence - the flame of its crest is towards wakeful intelligence, and the roots of its base are in instinct. The surface is one thing, the root is another. This is the tension. The temptation to drown into the animal, the challenge to rise to the divine, both co-exist in intellect.

Afraid of this challenge, those who try to drown in the animal are under a delusion. The part that has become conscious cannot revert to the unconscious. In the scheme of the universe there is no path of reversion.

Accepting the challenge, those who begin to choose on the surface between good and bad are also under a delusion. That sort of choosing and change of conduct cannot be natural. It is merely an effort in acting - and that which is an effort is not good either. The problem lies in the roots, not at the surface. That which is asleep there has to be awakened - not that the bad has to be dropped but unconsciousness. The lamp has to be lit in the darkness.

This is my message for today.

62

The stillness of the noon. The bright sunlight and drowsy trees. I have come and sat upon the grass in the shade of a roseapple tree. Now and then leaves fall on me - they seem to be the last, old leaves.

New leaves have come on all the trees. And along with the new leaves, countless numbers of new birds have also arrived. There seems to be no end to their songs. How many varieties of melodious sounds are giving music to this noon! I listen, I go on listening, and then I too slip into a unique world of music.

The world of the self is also the world of music.

This music is present in everyone, it does not have to be produced. In order to let it be audible, one has only to become silent.

The moment one is silent, a veil seems to be lifted! What was always there is heard and for the first time we realize that we are not poor. We gain the re-inheritance of an infinite wealth. How much does one laugh then - the one whom we sought was already seated within!

63

It rained during the night. The dampness still lingers and a fragrance emanates from the earth. The sun has come up high and a herd of cows is moving out to the forest. The wooden bells round their necks sound sweetly. For a while I have been listening to them. Now the cows have gone very far and only a faint echo of the tinkling bells remains.

In the meantime a few people have come to see me. They are asking, ”What is death?”

I say, ”We do not know life, hence there is death. Self-forgetfulness is death; otherwise there is no death, only a change.”

Not knowing the self we have created an illusory self, and that is our ’I’, the ego. It is not there, it only appears to be there. It is only this false entity that shatters. Its shattering creates misery because we identified with it.

To realize this falsehood while living is to be saved from death. Know life, and death comes to an end. What is is immortal. To know it is to attain the eternal, permanent life.

Yesterday I have the same in a meeting:

”Self-knowledge is life.
Self-forgetfulness is death.”

64

There is a schoolmaster who is very much interested in religion. He has spent his life in the study of religious scriptures. If one mentions of the topic of religion, there is no end to the flow of his thoughts. Like an endless string, his thoughts go on uncoiling. It is difficult to say how much he can quote and how many aphorisms he has learned by heart. No one remains unimpressed by him. He is a walking encyclopedia, or is reputed to be so. Many times I have heard his thoughts and have remained silent.

Once he asked me my opinion about him. I said only the truth. I said in accumulating thoughts about God, he had lost God. Certainly he appeared to be shocked. Later he came again to question further in this connection. Coming to me he said, ”It is only by study and contemplation that truth can be attained. There is no other way. Knowledge of course is everything.” How many people do not have this false notion?

I ask only one question to all such people. I asked the same to him: ”What is study and what happens within you thereby? Does a dimension of new vision take birth in you? Does consciousness rise to new heights and levels? Does any revolution take place in your being? Do you become different from what you are now? Or do you remain the same with only a few more thoughts and bits of information becoming part of your memory?

Through study only the memory is trained, and on the surface of the mind more dust of thought settles. Nothing more happens, nor can happen through it. No change happens at the center through it. The consciousness remains the same. The dimensions of experience remain the same.

To know something about truth and to know truth are two totally different things. ’To know about truth’ pertains to intellect, ’to know truth’ pertains to consciousness.

In order to know truth - a total awakening of consciousness - absence of the unconscious is essential. By training memory, and so-called knowledge, this cannot happen.

What has not been known by oneself is not knowledge.

The intellectual information about truth, the unknown truth, is only an appearance of knowledge. It is false and is an obstacle on the path of right knowledge.

There is no path through the known to know what is in fact unknownable. It is totally new, it is such as has never been known before; hence memory is not capable of delivering it, or even of recognizing it. Memory can deliver or recognize only that which has been known before. It is only repetition of the known.

But for the arrival of the new - the entirely new, unknown and unfamiliar - the memory has to stand aside. The memory and all known thoughts will have to stand aside so that the new may be born; so that 'what is' may be known exactly as it is. All conceptions and prejudices of men have to stand aside for its arrival. Only the mind devoid of thoughts, memories and conceptions is consciousness, is awakening. Only with an empty mind does the transformation at the center take place, and the door to truth opens up. Before this, everything is mere wandering and waste of life.

65

A hermit was saying yesterday, "I have dropped all worldly desires. Now my interest is only in liberation, and this alone is freedom. Interest in the world is abstention from liberation; interest in liberation is abstention from the world."

How true and full of wisdom the statement seems to be. There seems to be no flaw in it anywhere and it appeals totally to the intellect and logic, but it is equally meaningless. In such word games so many people remain deceived. As far as spiritual life is concerned, intellect and logic do not seem to take one anywhere.

I said to him, "You are entangled in words. 'Worldly desires' does not mean anything. Actually desire itself is the world, towards what makes no difference. Its very existence is the world, and whether it is towards the world or liberation, its nature is the same.

Desire takes man away from his own self. It is passion, it is greed for some gain, it is a yearning and a race to become something. 'A' desires to become 'B', this is its nature. And as long as there is a desire to become something, 'that which is' is not revealed. The revelation of this 'isness' is liberation.

Liberation is not a thing which has to be achieved, it is not an object of desire, hence there can be no longing towards it. It happens when all longings cease - even those for liberation. Then 'what is', is called liberation. So liberation is not to be attained. In fact, all attaining has to be dropped and then... THEN liberation is 'attained'.

66

What man calls the universe is not the limit of existence; it is only the limit of man's senses. Beyond these senses is the limitless expanse. This limitless expanse can never be wholly attained through the senses, because the senses perceive only a fragment, only a part. And what is limitless, infinite,

cannot be subjected to fragmentation and division. No limited means can measure that which is limitless. What is limitless can be grasped only through the limitless.

And those who have known it have not known it through their senses or their intellect, they have known it by becoming limitless themselves.

This is possible because in the apparently insignificant and limited man, the limitless too is present. Man does not end at the senses, nor is he only senses. He is spread in dimensions beyond the senses. What is seen is the point of his beginning, and not his end-limit. He is invisible. The invisible is seated within the circumference of the visible.

If a man realizes the invisible within himself, he realizes the entire universe, because all divisions and fragments are related to the visible. The invisible is unfragmented - the one and the many are the same. And this is why in attaining the one the all is attained. Mahavira has said, ”One who has known one, has known all.” That one is within. That one is the seer, not the seen. Hence, the eye is not the means for attaining it, closing the eye is the way.

’Closing the eye’ means freedom from the visible. If the visible flows even before the closed eye, know that the eye is as good as open. If the visible is not in sight, the eye may be open, but it is as good as closed. When there is no seen and only the seeing remains, the seer appears.

The seeing in which the seer is seen is right-seeing. Without right-seeing, man is blind. Having eyes he has no sight. Sight is attained through right-seeing - the real eye, the eye that is beyond the senses. Then boundaries disappear, the lines of division are no more, and that which is - the beginningless and the endless expanse, Brahman - is attained.

This attainment is liberation, because every limitation is a bondage, every limitation is dependence. To go beyond limitation is to become free.

67

I heard a discourse yesterday. Its essence was: self-suppression. This is the popular tradition, it is thought that one has to love everybody but hate oneself; one has to create enemity with oneself, then possibly the self-conquest happens. But this thought is as incorrect as it is popular. On this path one’s personality splits into two, and violence with oneself begins. And violence makes everything ugly.

Man does not have to suppress his passions in this way, neither it is possible - the path of violence is not the path of religion. So many ways of torturing the body have developed as a consequence. The torture appears to be penance, but in reality it is the sadistic pleasure of violence, suppression and resistance.

This is not penance, this is self-deception.
Man has not to fight with himself, he has to know himself.

But the knowing begins with loving oneself.

One has to love oneself in a right manner. The man who blindly folloes the passions does not love himself nor does the man who blindly fights with them. They both are blind. The second blindness is born in reaction to the first one. One man ruins himself in the passions, the other in fighting with them. They both are full of hatred towards themselves.

Knowledge begins with loving oneself. Whatever I am is to be accepted, is to be loved. It is only in this acceptance and love that the light is attained through which all is transformed naturally and a fresh beauty arises in the individual - a music, a peace, a bliss. The integrated effect of all these is called spiritual life.

68

Some discussion on truth is going on when I arrive. I listen to it. The people who are talking are studious. They are conversant with schools of philosophy - how many thought systems there are, how many viewpoints - it all seems to be known to them. Their minds are full, not with the truth but with what others have said about the truth. As if truth can be known on the basis of what others have said, as if truth is a viewpoint, a thought, or some intellectual, logical conclusion! Their debate is deepening and now no one is in a state to listen to anybody. Everyone is speaking, but no one is listening.

I am silent. Then someone remembers me, and they all want to know my opinion too. I have no opinion. I see that where there is opinion, there is no truth. Truth begins where thought ends.

What shall I say! They are eager to hear. I tell them a story:

”There was a mystic, Bodhidharma. In the sixth century A.D., he went to China. He stayed there for some years. Then he wished to return home and he gathered all his disciples. He wanted to know how far they had progressed in the realm of truth.

In reply to his query a disciple said, ”In my opinion, truth is beyond acceptance and non-acceptance. Neither can it be said that it is, nor can it be said that it is not - because such is its nature.”

Bodhidharma said, ”It is my skin that you have.”

The second disciple said, ”As I see it, truth is an insight. Once attained it is attained forever. It cannot be lost.”

Bodhidharma said, ”It is my flesh that you have.”

The third disciple said, ”I consider that the five great elements are void and the five skandhas - forms of mundane consciousness - are unreal. This very emptiness is truth.”

Bodhidharma said, ”It is my bones that you have.”

Ultimately he who knew rose up, he put his head at the feet of his master and remained silent. He was quiet and his eyes were empty.

Bodhidharma said, ”It is my marrow, my soul, that you have.”

And this story itself is my answer.

69

I went to a temple to give a talk. After my talk, a young man said, ”Can I ask a question? I have asked this question to many, but the answers I received do not satisfy me. All systems of philosophy say, ”Know thyself.” I too want to know myself. And this alone is my question: ’Who am I?’ I desire an answer for this very question.”

I said, ”You haven’t yet asked the question, how could you have received an answer? Asking the question is not so easy.”

For a moment the young man looked at me in amazement. It was clear that he had not understood the implications of my statement. He said, ”What is this you say that I haven’t asked the question yet?”

I told him, ”Come to me at night.” He came to me that night. He might have thought I would give him some answer. I did give him an answer, but the answer I gave he would never have thought of.

He came. As soon as he sat, I put off the light. He said, ”What are you doing? Do you give answers in darkness?”

I said, ”I do not give an answer, I only teach you how to ask the question. Regarding spiritual life and truth, there is no answer outside. Knowledge is not an external fact, it is not an information, hence it cannot be put into you from outside. It has to be drawn out from within, even as water is drawn out from a well. It is eternal, it is ever-present; we have only to open our vessel to it. The only thing to be remembered in this process is that the vessel is empty. If the vessel is empty, it comes back filled up, and one has attained.”

In the darkness, a little time passed in quiet. Then he said, ”Now what shall I do?”

I said, ”Empty the vessel, be quiet and ask: ’Who am I?’ Ask once, twice, thrice, ask with total force: ’Who am I?’ Let the question ring and echo through your entire being and then remain quiet and silent, waiting thoughtlessly. Question and then silence, an empty awaiting. This is the procedure.

He said after a short while, ”But I am not able to remain quiet. I have asked the question, but a silent waiting is impossible, and now I am able to see that I had never actually asked the question till today.”

70

I am reading a discourse, it is from some saint. He has urged people to abandon anger, to abandon attachment, to abandon passions - as if these were things which could be abandoned! As if one wished to shake them off and then just abandoned them. Reading and hearing create this impression however.

Looking at such sermons one comes to realize how dense is our ignorance and how little we know about the human mind!

I said to a child one day, ”Why don’t you drop your illness?” The boy began to laugh and said, ”Is it within my power to drop the illness?”

Every person wants to drop illness and evil. But it is necessary to dive deep to the roots of the evil, it is necessary to go to the very pit of the unconscious from where they emerge. One cannot become free of them merely by making a resolution in the conscious mind.

Freud has narrated an interesting event. A villager was staying at a city hotel. In the night he tried to put out the light in his room, but he did not succeed. He tried to blow out the light again and again, but the light shone without even a flicker. Next morning he made a complaint about it. In answer to the complaint, he came to find out that the light was not a conventional lamp that could be blown out, it was an electric light.

And I say that it is a wrong procedure to ask people to blow out their evil emotions and feelings. They are not earthen lamps; they are electric lamps. The process of extinguishing them lies hidden in the unconscious.

All resolutions of the conscious mind are futile, like an attempt to blow out the electric lamp. Only by descending into the unconscious through some suitable medium can their roots be cut.

71

Tick... tick... tick... the clock has started running again. In fact, it has been running all along, for me only had it stopped. Or, better to say, I myself had become closed to the space where this running exists.

I had moved into another realm of time. I was sitting with eyes closed, looking within, and went on looking - it was altogether a different realm of time. Then contact with this realm was broken.

How blissful it is to slip out of time! Pictures on the mind stop. Their existence is time. As they cease, time ceases and then only the pure present remains. The present is part of time only in language. In reality, it is outside the realm of time, beyond of it. To be in it is to be in the self. I have returned from that world now. How peaceful everything is! In the distance some bird is singing, a child is crying in the neighborhood and a cock is crowing.

How blissful it is to live! And now I know that death too is blissful, because life does not end with it. It is only a state of life - life is before it and after it also.

72

What is God?

In how many minds does this question reside? Yesterday a young man was asking me - and this question is asked as if God is a thing, separate and different from the seeker, and as if it can be obtained like other things. The very idea of attaining God is futile - and also the idea to understand him - because he is in every cell of me. I am in him. To say it more correctly: ’I’ am not, only he is.

God is the name of 'that which is'. He is not something within isness, he himself is that which is. He does not possess existence, rather the very existence is in him. He is the name of that which is, of existence, of the nameless.

Hence he is not sought, because the seeker himself is in him.

One can only get lost in him.

And to get lost is to attain him.

There is a tale. A fish was fed up with hearing the name of the ocean again and again. One day she asked the queen of fishes: "I have been hearing the name of the ocean for so long, but what is this ocean? And where is it?"

The queen said, "In the ocean is your birth, your life, your very world. The ocean is your very 'isness'. The ocean is within you and without you. You are made of ocean and in ocean is your end. The ocean surrounds you every moment."

God surrounds everyone each moment, but we are unconscious - hence he is not seen.

Unconsciousness is the world, consciousness is God.

73

An ascetic came, he has been a sannyasin for years. I asked him, "Why did you take sannyas?" He said, "I desired peace."

This made me think, "Can even peace be desired? Are not peace and desire contradictory to each other?" I said so to him.

He looked a little puzzled. He said, "What shall I do then?"

I began to laugh. I said, "Is not desire hidden in doing too?"

The question is not of doing something. Nothing can be done for peace. It is not a part of desire, it is futile to desire it. In fact, it is necessary to understand unrest. What is unrest? This has to be known - not through scriptures but for oneself. It is because of going into the scriptures that the desire for peace arises, and so the question 'what should be done' arises.

The ascetic said, "Unrest is due to passions, due to desires. If the desire ceases, there is peace."

I said, "This answer is from the scriptures, not your own; otherwise it would not have been possible to say, 'I desire peace.' If desire is unrest, how then can peace be desired? Just know the unrest, wake up to it through self-experience, understand it through an innocent, unbiased mind. This understanding will bring the roots of unrest in front of you. Passion is the root of unrest - this will be seen by you. And this very seeing becomes the disappearance of unrest.

Becoming aware of the unrest is its death. Its life is possible only in darkness and in blindness. The moment the light of knowing enters, it ceases to exist. What remains with the disappearence of unrest is peace.

Peace is not desired as against unrest. Peace is not the opposite of unrest, it is the absence of unrest. Hence one is not to seek peace, one is only to know unrest. Borrowed knowledge from scriptures becomes an obstacle to this knowing of unrest, because readymade answers fill the mind with borrowed conclusions before one can ever experience. No transformation happens through these borrowed conclusions; self-experience is the path. In his spiritual life, every individual has to tread the path for himself after unloading the burden of borrowed knowledge.

74

What has happened to man?

I get up in the morning - I see the squirrels running about, I see the flowers opening up in the rays of the sun, I see nature overflowing with harmonious melody. I go to bed at night - I see the silence showering from the stars, I see the blissful sleep encompassing the entire creation. And then I begin to ask myself ”What has happened to man?”

Everything is vibrating with bliss except man. Everything is resonating with music except man. Everything is settled in divine peace except man.

Is man not a participant in all this? Is man an outsider, a stranger? This strangeness has been fashioned by his own hands. This rupture he has created with his own hands.

I am reminded of the biblical story. After eating the ’fruit of knowledge’ man is driven out from the paradise. How true this story is! Knowledge, intellect, the mind have torn man apart from life. Remaining in existence, he has fallen out of it.

No sooner than one drops knowledge, no sooner than one drops mind, then a new world unfolds. In it, we become one with nature. Nothing is separate there, nothing is different. Everything begins to throb in a melodious music of peace.

This experience alone is ’God’.

God is not a person, God is not experienced. Rather an experience itself is called God. God is not seen face to face, rather seeing directly itself is called God.

In this direct seeing man becomes healthy and whole. In this experience he comes home. In this light he becomes a participant of the natural bliss of the plants and the flowers. In all this, he diappears at one end and attains to isness at the other. This is his death as well as his rebirth.

75

Someone was asking, ”How to attain to atman, the soul? How to attain to Brahman?”

As far as I can see, the very idea of attaining the soul is wrong. It is not something yet to be attained, it is already eternally attained. It is not a thing that has to be brought in, it is not an aim which has to be realized, it is not in the future that one has to reach up to it - it is. It is the name 'that which is'. It is present, eternally present. There is no past or future in it. There is no 'becoming' in it, neither it is possible to lose it; nor has the idea of attaining it any meaning. It is the pure, eternal existence.

Then on what level has this losing taken place? Or, from where has come this appearance of losing and the thirst for attaining?

If one understands the 'I', than the losing of the soul - which really cannot be lost - can be understood. 'I' is not the soul. Neither the 'self' nor the 'other' is the soul. This duality is of thought, this duality is of the mind.

Mind is an apparent entity. It is never in the present. It is either in the past or in the future, and neither of the two have any existence. The one has already become nonexistent, the other has not yet come into existence. The one is in our memory, the other in our imagination, but both are nonexistent. Out of this nonexistence the 'I' is born.

The 'I' is the product of thought. Time too is the product of thought. Because of thought, because of the 'I' the soul is covered. It is, but it appears to have been lost. Then this very 'I', this very thought-stream, sets out to search for this so-called lost soul. This search is impossible because through this search the 'I' becomes more and more nourished and strengthened.

Searching for the soul through the 'I' is like searching for awakening through dream. One has to attain it not through the 'I', but through the disappearence of the 'I'. When the dream disappears, awakening is. When the 'I' disappears, soul is.

The soul is nothingness because it is wholeness. There is no 'self' or 'other' in it. It is non-dual, it is beyond time. The moment thought ceases, and the mind disappears, it is discovered that the soul has never been lost.

Hence it is not to be sought.

The seeking is to be dropped and the one who seeks is to be dropped. When seeking and the seeker cease, the search is complete. It is attained by losing the 'I'.

76

What is holiness?

The question arises in the minds of many. If holiness had anything to do with the clothing and external appearance, the very question would not have arisen. Certainly holiness is not an external reality, it is some internal reality. What is this internal reality?

Holiness is being in oneself. Ordinarily man is outside himself, not even for a moment is he in himself. He is with everyone, but not with himself. This very separation from the self is the unholiness. Coming back to the self, being rooted in one's own self, becoming healthy, is holiness. Spiritual unhealth is unholiness, spiritual health is holiness.

If I am outside myself, I am asleep. The external is the 'other', is unconsciousness. Mahavira has said, "He who sleeps is the non-sage. To wake up from the dependence of the 'other' into the freedom of the 'self' is to be holy."

How is this holiness recognized?

This holiness is recognized by the peace, by the bliss, by the wholeness.

There was a saint - Saint Francis. He was on a pilgrimage with his disciple Leo. They were on their way to San Marino when they were caught up in a rainstorm. They got completely soaked and covered with mud. Night was setting in, and the day-long hunger and travel-weariness had overwhelmed them. The village was still far off and it was not possible to reach there before midnight. Suddenly Saint Francis said "Leo, who is the real sage? Not he who can give eyes to the blind, who can give health to the sick and can even raise up the dead - he is not the real saint."

There was silence for a while. Then Francis spoke again: "Leo, the real sage is not the one who can understand the language of the animals, trees, stones and rocks. Not even he who has acquired the knowledge of the whole world is a real saint."

There was silence again for a while. They kept on moving in the middle of the rainstorm. Now the lights of San Marino were visible. Saint Francis spoke again: "... Nor is the one who has renounced all a real sage."

Now Leo could not remain silent anymore. He asked, "Then who is the true sage?"

Saint Francis replied, "We are about to reach San Marino and will knock at the outer door of the inn. The watchman will ask, 'Who is there?' We will reply, 'Your own two brothers - two ascetics.' If he were to say then, 'You beggars, wretched mendicants, lazy parasites-away, get away! There is no place for you here!' and if he refuses to open the door, and hungry, tired, covered with mud we continue to stay in the middle of the night out there in the open, and we knock at the door again if at this time he were to come out, hit us with a baton and say, 'You scoundrels, do not disturb us!', if nothing moves within us on this occasion too, if everything within remains peaceful, calm and empty, and in that innkeeper we continue to see nothing but the divine - then this is real holiness."

Certainly, to attain to the state of undisturbed peace, simplicity and equanimity under all circumstances is holiness.

77

Last night a young man asked, "I am fighting against my mind, but I am unable to attain peace. What shall I do with the mind so that I may attain peace?"

I said, "No one can do anything with darkness; it simply does not exist. It is only the absence of light; hence fighting against it is ignorance. So is the mind. That too does not exist. That too does not have any existence of its own. It is the absence of self-realization; it is the absence of meditation; hence nothing can be done with it too directly. If darkness is to be removed, one has to bring light in. Similarly, if the mind is to be removed, meditation has to be brought in. The mind is not to be

controlled - but it is to be realized that mind simply does not exist! The moment this is realized, one is free of it.

He asked, ”How to realize this?”

”This realization happens through witnessing consciousness. Be the witness of the mind. Be the witness of what is - drop the worry of how it should be. What is, as it is - awaken to it, be alert to it. Do not judge, do not control, do not fall in any struggle, just watch silently. This watching... this witness itself becomes the liberation.”

The moment one becomes the witness, consciousness leaves the seen and settles on the seer. In this state is attained the unwavering flame of wisdom. And this very flame is liberation.

78

I have found an old mirror lying in a corner. Dust has completely covered it. It does not appear to be still a mirror which would be able to catch reflections, because the dust has covered everything, and the mirror has become almost hidden. It appears that only the dust is and the mirror is not. But in getting covered by the dust, is the mirror really destroyed? The mirror is still a mirror, nothing has changed in it. The dust is on the mirror and not in it. The dust has become a screen, a cover, it does not destroy. A screen only covers, it does not destroy, and as soon as this screen is removed, that which is becomes manifest again.

I said this to someone that man’s consciousness is also like this mirror; the dust of passions is spread over it. There is a screen of emotions over it, there are layers of thoughts over it, but nothing has changed in the nature of the consciousness. It is the same. It is always the same. Whether there is a screen or not, there is no change in it. All screens are only on the surface, hence pulling them aside and removing them is not a difficult thing. Removing dust from consciousness is not any more difficult than removing dust from a mirror.

It is easy to attain to the soul because there is no other obstacle in between except a thin screen of dust. And as the screen is removed, it is immediately realized that the soul itself is God.

79

I have returned from a movie show. It is surprising to see how much the light and shade photos projected on the screen captivate people. Where there is really nothing, everything happens! I watched the audience there and it felt as if they had forgotten themselves, as if they were not there, but the flow of electrically projected pictures was everything.

A blank screen is in front and from the back the pictures are being projected. Those who are watching it have their eyes fixed in front, and no one is aware of what is happening behind their backs.

This is how leela, the play, is born.

This is what happens within and without.

There is a projector at the back of the human mind. Psychology calls this back side the unconscious. The longings, the passions, the conditionings accumulated in this unconscious are being continuously projected onto the mind's screen. This flow of mental projections goes on every moment, non-stop.

The consciousness is a seer, a witness, and it forgets itself in this flow of the pictures of desires. This forgetfulness is ignorance. This ignorance is the root cause of maya, illusions, and the endless cycle of birth and death. Waking up from this ignorance happens in the cessation of the mind. When the mind is devoid of thoughts, when the flow of pictures on the screen stops, only then the onlooker remembers himself and returns to his home.

Patanjali calls this cessation of the activities of the mind Yoga. If this is achieved, all is achieved.

80

Yesterday I was standing at the door of a temple. Incense was burning and the whole atmosphere was fragrant. Then the bells of worship started ringing and the lamp of propitiation was being waved in front of the idol. Some devotees were there. The entire arrangement was beautiful and was producing a pleasant trance, but all these rituals have nothing to do with religion.

No temple, no mosque, no church, no form of worship, no form of prayer has anything to do with religion. All the idols are stones and all the prayers are nothing but empty words addressed to the walls.

But some happiness seems to be coming from all this - and that is the danger, because it is due to this that a great deception begins and crystalizes. It is in this illusion of happiness that an appearance of truth is born. This happiness is derived through unconsciousness - forgetfulness of the self and escape from the reality of the self. The happiness of intoxicants also comes from such an escape. All acts of unconsciousness in the name of religion bring only a false happiness, like that of intoxicants. Happiness is not religion, because it is only the forgetfulness of sorrow, not its end.

What, then, is religion?

Religion is not an escape from the self, it is an awakening towards the self. This awakening has no connection with any external arrangements. It is related to moving inwards and attaining consciousness.

That I wake up and become a witness - that I become conscious of that which is - religion is related only with this. Religion is non-unconsciousness and non-unconsciousness is bliss.

81

There is a story.

An unmarried girl became pregnant. Her relatives were at their wits' end. They asked her about the person who was responsible for it. She said that the ascetic staying outside the village had raped

her. The infuriated relatives surrounded the ascetic and berated him. The ascetic calmly listened to their outbursts and said simply, ”Is that so?” He spoke only this much and then volunteered to take on the responsibility of the child’s upbringing.

On returning home, the girl felt a deep remorse and she confessed the truth. She said she had never even seen the ascetic and that she had lied only to protect the real father of the child. Her relatives felt a deep remorse too and they went, apologized to the ascetic and asked for his forgiveness. The ascetic listened to the whole thing calmly and said, ”Is that so?”

When peace descends in one’s life, this entire world and its events remain nothing more than acting. I become a mere actor. The story goes on moving on the outside, and the inside remains shrouded in a nothingness. Only after attaining to this state, the liberation from slavery to the world happens.

I am a slave if I am agitated by whatever comes from outside - if anybody from outside can affect and alter my inside. In this way I am dependent. If I become liberated from the outside - no matter what happens on the outside, I remain the same - it marks the beginning of self and freedom.

This liberation begins with the attainment of nothingness.

We have to become a zero.

We have to experience the emptiness.

Walking or sleeping, sitting or getting up, one has to know ”I am a emptiness,” and keep remembrance of it. By keeping remembrance of the emptiness one becomes a empty. The emptiness fills your every single breath. When the emptiness comes within, simplicity comes on the outside. Emptiness itself is godliness.

82

I was sitting with my eyes closed. Seeing always with the eyes open, man is forgetting the art of seeing with closed eyes. What is seen with open eyes is nothing compared to what is seen with the eyes closed. The tiny eyelid separates and joins two worlds.

I was sitting with eyes closed when a person came; he asked me what I was doing. When I said I was seeing something, he became almost perplexed. Perhaps he would have thought, ”Can seeing with closed eyes be called seeing?”

When I open my eyes I arrive in the finite. When I close my eyes, the doors of the infinite open. On one side is seen the seen and on the other the seer.

There was a mystic woman, Rabiya. On a beautiful morning somebody had said to her, ”Rabiya, what are you doing inside the hut? Come out! See here, what a beautiful morning the Lord has created!”

Rabiya replied from inside the hut, ”Inside here I am seeing the creator of the morning you are seeing outside. Friend, you had better come in. No external beauty has any meaning before the

beauty that is here." But how many people remain outside even after closing their eyes? The eyes are not closed just by shutting them. The eyes are closed, but the external pictures are still forming. The eyelids are shut, but the external scenes are still descending. This is not the closing of the eyes.

The closing of the eyes means emptiness, freedom from dreams and thoughts. When thoughts and scenes disappear, the eyes are closed. What then manifests is the eternal consciousness. That is truth, that is consciousness, that is bliss. The whole game is of the eyes. The eye transformed, everything is transformed.

83

A year has passed since I sowed some seeds. Now flowers have come. How much I desired for the flowers to come directly, but they do not come out that way. If one wants flowers, one has to sow seeds, one has to look after the plants and then in the end one sees the long awaited. This process is true not only about flowers but also about life.

Nonviolence, nonpossession of gifts, nonstealing, truth and celibacy - these are the flowers born of right living. Nobody can bring them directly. In order to bring them we have to sow the seed of self-realization. As soon as that comes, all these follow on their own.

Self-realization is the root; all the rest are its outcome. Ugliness in the external behaviour is a symbol of internal decay, while beauty is the echo of the inner life and its music. Hence nothing can be attained by changing the symptoms. The change has to be effected where the roots of evil basically are.

Ignorance of the self is the root of evil. "Who am I?" - this is to be known. The moment this is known fearlessness and nonduality are attained. The realization of nonduality - the awareness that the other is the same as I am burns up all violence from its very roots and as a result of this nonviolence appears.

Knowing the other as 'other' is violence. Seeing the self in the other is nonviolence, and nonviolence is the soul of religion.

84

It rained last night and I came in. The windows were all shut and there was a feeling of suffocation. Then I opened the windows and a freshness blew in with the freshly-bathed gusts of the wind. When I sank into deep sleep I know not.

In the morning a gentleman came to visit. Seeing him I was reminded of the suffocation of the previous night. It felt as if all the windows and all the doors of his mind were closed, he had not left even a single window open from where fresh air and light might enter. Everything in him was closed. I was talking to him and feeling as if I was talking to the walls! Then it came to me that the majority of people are similarly closed and are deprived of the beauty, freshness and the newness of life.

Man turns himself into a prison on his own. He feels the suffocation and frustration of the imprisonment but he is unable to figure out its root cause - the original source of boredom and

anxiety. His whole life passes away like this. One who could have had the ecstasy of a flight in the open sky, dies shut in a parrot-cage.

On demolishing the walls of the mind, the open sky is attained. And this open sky is life. Everybody can attain this liberation, and everybody has to attain this liberation.

I am saying this every day, but perhaps my words do not reach everybody. Their walls are strong - but howsoever strong the walls, they basically are weak and painful. The only glimmer of hope is that they are painful, and what is painful cannot be sustained for long. Only bliss can be eternal.

85

The domes of the temples are shining in the sunlight. The sky is clear and the throng of people on the road is getting thicker and thicker. I see the people walking on the road, and I don't know why they do not appear to be alive. How can one be called alive if one is not aware of life, of existence? Life begins and comes to an end, but it seems we do not notice it. Generally we become aware of life when the moment of death arrives.

I have read a story:

There was a person who was incurably forgetful - he had forgotten that he was alive. One morning he got up and realized that he was dead, then he realized that he was once alive too.

There is a great truth in this story. I am reminded of this story, and I have a hearty laugh over the fact that somebody had realized through death that he was once alive. But my laughter slowly turns into sadness over this pitiful situation.

I am thinking all this when some visitors arrive. I look at them, I listen to their words and I look into their eyes. There is no life anywhere in them. They are like shadows.

The whole world has become filled with shadows. The majority of people are living in a world of ghosts they themselves have created. And there is live fire, there is life in these shadows, but they are not aware of that. There is real life within this shadow-life, and there is true life beyond this ghost-life, which can be attained right now and right here.

How small is the condition for attaining this!

How easy is the means of attaining this!

As I said yesterday: "The seeing is to be directed within."

86

A young man came and said, "I have become an atheist." I look at him. I know him from before. His thirst for knowing the truth of life is acute. He wants to experience the truth at any cost. He has a sharp genius, and superficial faiths do not satisfy him. Conditionings, traditions and conventions are unable to offer him anything. He is covered in doubts and suspicions, all mental props and convictions have shattered and he has sunk into deep negativity from all this.

I am silent. He speaks once again, ”My faith in God has gone. There is no God. I have become irreligious.”

I ask him, ”Please, don’t say so. Becoming an atheist is not becoming irreligious. One has to pass through a phase of negation to attain to real theism. It is the beginning of becoming really religious and not of becoming irreligious. Theism, inherited through conditionings, education and thoughts, is no theism at all - he who is content with it is in delusion. Had he been brought up in the midst of some opposite school of thought, his mind would have been shaped in the opposite way and he then would have been content with that alone.

”Conditionings of the mind are a phenomenon at the circumference, at the surface. It is a dead layer. It is a borrowed and stale state. A person really thirsty for spiritual life cannot quench his thirst with this imaginary water. In this sense that person is blessed, because the search for the real water begins with this unquenched thirst. Thank God that you do not agree with the concept of God, because this disagreement can lead you to the truth of God.”

I now see a glow spreading across the face of that youth. A peace, an assurance has descended in his eyes. While he takes leave of me I tell him, ”Remember this much, that atheism is the beginning of a religious life. It is not an end, it is a background, but one has not to halt there. It is a dark night, one has not to be drowned in it. It is after this, through this, that the dawn appears.”

87

Last night, away from the city, we were sitting in a mango grove. There were some clouds in the sky and the moon played hide-and-seek among them. In this play of light and shadow, some people were there silently with me for a long time.

How difficult it becomes to speak sometimes! When the atmosphere is thick with a melody, a music, one is afraid to speak lest it should be disrupted. So it happened last night. We returned back home very late. On the way, someone remarked, ”This is the first time in my life that I have experienced silence. I had heard that silence is a wonderful bliss, but I realized it only today. Today it has happened effortlessly - but how will it happen again?”

I said, ”What has happened effortlessly happens only effortlessly, it does not happen with effort.”

Effort itself is unrest. Effort means something different from what is, is being wished for. This state is of tension. Only tension is born out of tension. Anything done in unrest brings only unrest. Unrest does not turn into peace.

Peace is a different state of consciousness.

When unrest is not, peace is.

Do not do anything, do not make any effort; drop all doing and remain just watching. Then it is found that a new consciousness, a new light, is descending slowly, slowly.

What is found in this new world is what really is.

The revelation that what is, is bliss - this is liberation.

This cosmic immensity does not arrive through our tiny efforts, through our 'I', but rather it comes when there are no efforts, when 'I' am not.

Whatever is attained in the world is attained through doing, through actions. Effort is the means, 'I' is the center. Hence every attainment strengthens the 'I'. In fact, the happiness in attainment is that of strengthening and expanding the 'I'. But this 'I' is never wholly filled, it is insatiable by its very nature. Hence happiness only appears to be there, it never is in fact achieved. Hence those who knew said that there is nothing but sorrow in the world.

What we do in the world, the same we do for liberation also. We get busy in achieving liberation, and that is where the error is. It is not to be attained; rather one is to lose oneself. As one loses oneself, it is attained.

88

Last night, I was on the riverbank for a long time. The river, shining like a silver tape, wound its way far into the distance. A fisherman had come rowing his small boat and the aquatic birds had become quiet hearing his sounds.

A friend was with me. He had sung a devotional song and then the conversation had moved to the topic of God. The theme of the song was also the quest for God. Many years of the singer's life had gone into the search for God. I had met him only yesterday. He has a bachelor's degree in science; and then one day the quest for God had seized him. Many years have gone in the quest since then, but nothing has been attained.

After listening to the devotional song I was quiet. His voice was sweet and touched the heart; and his heart was behind the song, so the song had become alive. Its echo was reverberating in my heart. But disrupting the silence he had spontaneously asked if the quest for God was only a delusion. "I was full of hope in the beginning," he said, "but slowly, slowly I have become disillusioned."

I still kept quiet for a while and then said, "The quest for god is an illusion because the very question of search does not arise. He is everpresent, but we do not have the eyes that can see him. So the real search is for attaining the right vision."

There was a blind man. He went out in search of the sun. His quest was wrong. The sun is already there, it is the eyes that are to be sought. As one attains the eyes, the sun is attained. Usually the seeker of god engages himself in seeking god directly. He does not give even a single thought about his eyes. This basic mistake brings disappointment as the outcome.

My seeing is just the opposite.

I see that the real question is about me and is of my transformation. As I am, as my eyes are - that alone is the limit of my knowledge and the limit of my seeing. If I change, if my eyes change, if my consciousness changes, then what is invisible that too becomes visible; and then god is attained in the depths of the very things we are seeing now; the god is attained in the world itself. That is why

I say: religion is not a science of attaining god but of attaining a new vision, a new conscciousness. The god already is, we are rooted in him alone, we are living in him alone; we do not have the eyes so the sun is not visible to us. One has not to seek the sun but for eyes.

89

Gautam Buddha has propounded four noble truths: Suffering, the cause of suffering, the elimination of suffering, and the path to the elimination of suffering. There is suffering in life, there is the cause of suffering; this suffering can be eliminated, and there is a path to eliminate it.

I see a fifth noble truth also which exists prior to the four. These four exist because the fifth one exists. But for its prior existence, the four too could not have been there.

What is that fifth - or rather the first - noble truth?

That truth is our unconsciousness of our suffering. There is suffering but we are unconscious of it. It is because of this unconsciousness that we live in suffering but it does not distress us. The whole of our life passes by in this foggy unconsciousness, in this drowsiness, and the suffering is thus endured.

In this unconsciousness, 'what is' does not come to our eyes and the dreams of what is not continue. There is a blindness towards the present and the eyes are focused on the future. In the intoxication of the pleasant dreams of the future, the suffering of the present lies submerged. With this method the suffering is not seen, and the very question of going beyond it does not arise.

If a prisoner does not realize his chains and the walls of the jail, where is the source of yearning for freedom in him? Hence I call this truth the first noble truth - the truth that we are unconscious to suffering.

The truth that life is suffering is not in our consciousness. The other four follow this. They are seen as I wake up to suffering.

90

I say only a few things; they can be counted on the fingers.

One: the mind has to be known - the mind that is so close and yet so unknown.

Two: the mind has to be transformed - the mind that is so stubborn and yet so eager to be transformed!

Three: the mind has to be liberated - the mind that is wholly in bondage but which can be liberated here and now.

These things are three only in name. Really, only one thing is to be done, and that is to know the mind. The other two are accomplished on their own when this first is accomplished. Knowing is the only transformation, knowing is the only liberation.

I was saying this yesterday when someone asked, ”How is this knowing to happen?”

This knowing happens through waking up. Our activities of both body and mind are unconscious. It is necessary to wake up to each activity - whether one is walking or sitting or lying down, one should have right remembrance of it. ’I wish to sit’ - one has to wake up to this wish, to this feeling as well. Whether there is anger in the mind or not - one has to watch this state too. If thoughts are moving or not - one has to become a witness to that too.

This waking up cannot be attained through suppression or struggle - no judgement, no choosing between good and bad. Only waking up, just waking up! As soon as one wakes up, the mystery of the mind is revealed - the mind is known. And just by knowing the transformation comes. By complete knowing the liberation happens.

Hence I say that liberation from the disease of the mind is easy, because the diagnosis is itself the remedy.

91

The afternoon is almost gone. The sky was clear, but strong winds came and it is getting covered with thick black clouds. The sun has gone down. There is a slight chill in the air.

A fakir has come to the door, there is a parrot on his hand. There is no cage, but it seems the parrot has forgotten how to fly. On their arrival it is the parrot that speaks, not the fakir: ”Ram! Ram! Chant the name Ram, chant the name Ram!” I said, ”The parrot speaks well!” The fakir said, ”Sir, this parrot is a great pundit!” On hearing this I laughed. I said, ”It must be so, because all pundits are nothing but parrots.”

I see it very clearly, that knowledge is not attained through learning and what is attained through learning is not knowledge. Knowledge is not an achievement of the intellect. The intellect is only a memory system, and knowledge is not attained through memory but through discarding the memory. What comes through learning makes one only a parrot. This parrot-talk is called learnedness. There is no bigger obstacle than this on the path of knowledge.

Scholarship is an accumulation of dead facts. All these facts are borrowed ones - they do not have any roots in experience. A mind covered with these dead facts is unable to see that which is. These facts become a curtain.
The unknown is revealed as this curtain is removed.

This seeing is knowledge.

Seeing, not learning, is knowledge.

Truthful seeing - not the scriptures, not facts - is the way to attainment. When the truth is seen, one finds that the knowledge was already there, only we had no eyes to see it. And the eyes could not have been attained through an accumulation of scholarship. At the most that could have created a self-deception, nothing else. Without really knowing, one could have derived ego-fulfillment - that

he knows. This is why it is said that to know that ”I know” is ignorance. Why?-because upon knowing it is found that ”I am not”, only knowing is - neither the knower is there, nor the known.
This seeing of the nondual happens when - discarding everything - I become empty.

92

The dusk has descended and the fragrance of the evening flowers has begun to spread. A cuckoo has been calling the whole afternoon and now she has become quiet. When she was singing, she was not so much in my attention, but now becoming quiet she has entered my attention. I am waiting for her to call again when a monk arrives. He is a celibate with a withered, lean and sickly body. His face is pallid and glowless, his eyes are parched and dry. Seeing him I feel pity; he has ill-treated his body. I say this to him and he is almost shocked. He believes this to be the only renunciation - as if ill-health is spiritual, as if ugliness and disfiguration is Yoga practice! As if disciplining something repulsive is the spiritual discipline.

Count Kaiserling has written somewhere, ”Health is an anti-spiritual ideal.” In this line is an echo of the same ignorance. This thought is born out of reaction. There are people who are interested only in the body; the physical body is all for them. This is one extreme. Then as a reaction to this the other extreme is born. But both the extremes are materialistic.

Neither has one to go on indulging one’s body all over the place, nor has one to go on crippling it. On the whole it is but a dwelling. It is essential that it is healthy and well.

Spiritual life is not antagonistic to health. In fact it is total health. It is synonymous with a state of harmonious and melodious beauty.

Suppression of the body is not spirituality; it is only hedonism doing a headstand. It is only a reaction to a life of indulgence. There is no knowledge in it, but only ignorance and self-torture. It is a violent tendency. No one reaches anywhere through it. One is not to suppress the body; is only an innocent intrument and a follower. It adapts to wherever I am in desires and passions, it keeps me company there. If I move into spiritual discipline, it becomes a companion there. It follows me. Transformation is not to be wrought in it, but in the one who it follows.

93

I am talking of peace, bliss and liberation. This alone is the central quest of life. If it is not realized, life is wasted. Yesterday I was saying this when a young man asked, ”Can everybody attain liberation? And if everybody can, why then it is not simply attained?”

I told him a story.

One morning someone had asked this same question to Gautam Buddha. Buddha had asked him to go round the city and come back after inquiring who wants what in life. The man went from door to door and returned by the evening utterly exhausted but with a complete list. Somebody wanted fame, somebody wanted position, somebody wanted health, prosperity and affluence, but not a single person had wanted liberation. Buddha said, ”Tell me now, ask me now the question!

Everybody can attain liberation, it already is there, but can you at least look at it even once? We are standing with our back turned to it."

This is my answer too. Everybody can attain liberation, just as every seed can become a plant. It is our potential, our possibility, but this potential has to be turned into actuality. This much I know - the act of a seed turning into a plant is not difficult. It is very easy. The seed has only to be ready to die and the sprout comes out the same moment. If I am ready to die, liberation comes instantly. The 'I' is the bondage. As it goes, the liberation is.
With the 'I', I am in the world; without the 'I', I myself am the liberation.

94

A year has passed. During the last rainy season I had sown the seeds of gultevari flowers. As the rainy season was over, flowers also disappeared. Then I removed the dried-up plants. This year I am seeing that with the coming of the rains so many gultevari plants are sprouting on their own. They have begun to appear from the ground in so many places. The seeds left in the ground from the previous season have waited for a year, and it is blissful coming to life now. In the darkness underground, in winter and summer, they have been waiting there. Now somehow they have the opportunity of seeing the light again. With this comes the feeling of an auspicious and festive music emanating from those newly born plants, and I experience it.

Centuries ago, some nectar-sweet-throat sang: Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya - who does not have the desire to move from darkness to light!

Are not such seeds lying hidden in every man, in every living being, wanting to attain to light? Is there not also since many many lifetimes a waiting and praying for this opportunity?

These seeds are lying hidden within everyone and it is only from these seeds that the thirst arises for becoming complete. These flames are lying hidden in every one, and these flames want to reach out to the sun! No one becomes fulfilled without transforming these seeds into plants. There is no other way than to become whole. One has to become whole, because intrinsically every seed is whole.

95
A new morning.

A new sun.

A new sunshine.

New flowers.

I have got up from sleep. Everything is new and fresh; there is nothing old and stale in the world.

Many hundreds of years ago Heraclitus in Greece said, "It is impossible to step into the same river twice."

Everything is new, but man becomes outdated. Man simply does not live in the new, hence he becomes outdated. Man lives in memory, in the past, in the dead. This is mere living, but not life. This is half-death, and taking this half-death for life one day we pass away.

Life is neither in the past nor in the future.

Life is ever in the present.

That life is attained through yoga, because yoga makes one awake into everlasting freshness, it makes one wake up into the eternal new. Yoga makes one wake up into the eternal present.

One has to wake up into 'that which is'. What was is no more, what will be, is not yet. And what is is revealed only when man's mind is free from the burden of memory and imagination.

Memory is an accumulation of the dead past - life cannot be attained through it. Imagination is also only the offshoot of memory, it is only its echo and projection. All that is only wandering about in the known. The doors of the unknown do not open through it.
Let the known go, so that the unknown may manifest.

Let the dead go so that the living may manifest.

This alone is the essence of yoga.

96

The night is deepening. There are only a few stars in the sky and a not yet full moon is hanging in the west. The jasmine has blossomed, and its fragrance is floating in the air.

I have just seen a lady to the door and returned. I do not know her. Some suffering has engulfed her mind, its darkness has formed an aura all around her. I felt this aura of suffering as she came in. Without wasting time, she asked me at once, "Can suffering be destroyed?" I looked at her. She appeared to be a living monument of suffering.

Slowly, slowly people are all becoming such monuments. They all want to destroy suffering but are unable to do so because their diagnosis of suffering is not correct.

Suffering exists in a certain state of consciousness, it is the characteristic feature of that state. Within that state there is no freedom from suffering, because that state itself is the suffering. In it, if you remove one sorrow, another takes its place; this chain continues. You may free yourself from this sorrow or that sorrow, but freedom from suffering as such does not happen. The suffering remains-only the causes change.

The elimination of suffering, the freedom from suffering happens in changing the state of consciousness, not in becoming free of individual sorrow.

On a dark night a young man approached Gautam Buddha. He was sad, worried and anguished. He said, "What a suffering the world is! What a torment it is!" Gautam Buddha said, "Come where I am; there is no suffering there, there is no anguish there."

There is a state of consciousness in which there is no suffering. It was to indicate towards this consciousness that Buddha had used the term: ”Where I am.”

There are two states of human consciousness: one of ignorance, the other of knowing - one of identification with the other, and the other of self-realization. As long as I identify myself with the other, there is suffering. This bondage with the other is suffering. Becoming free from the other, realization of the self, being in the self - is the elimination of suffering. I am not yet ’I’, hence the suffering. When I actually become ’I’ suffering ceases.

97

Tonight the sky is not studded with stars. It is overcast with dark clouds which drizzle now and then.

The flowers of the night queen have bloomed, burdening the winds with their fragrance.

I am almost as though I am not.

And in this not being the being has become.

There is a world where death is life, and where to be lost is to find. Once I used to think that the drop is to be submerged into the ocean; now I find that the ocean itself has fallen into the drop.

For man, to ’be’ is his bondage, to be empty is his liberation. This tension of ’being’ makes one wander off unnecessarily. And the fear of becoming empty stops one from becoming the whole. As long as there is no readiness to become ’nothing’ one remains nothing. As long as there is no courage to move into death, one has to move around in death. But the one who becomes ready to receive death finds that there is no death, and the one who becomes ready to be annihilated finds that there is something in him which cannot be annihilated.

This paradox is the law of life. To know this law is yoga. And to know it well is to be out of it. It is the ignorance of this law that makes one wander off. By knowing it, all our wandering ceases and that is attained which is the end of the journey, not just an overnight stay.

98

One full-moon night, a few people from the pub went to the river for boating. They rowed continuouslyfrom midnight to dawn. When the cold morning wind blew and the sun rose, their drunkenness began to fade. They thought it was time to return, and they came down on the bank to see how far they had travelled. But there was no end to their amazement when they discovered that the boat stood exactly where they had found it last night! In the night they had quite forgotten that only rowing the boat was not enough; the boat needs to be unanchored also.

I told this tale in the evening. An old gentleman had come to see me. He said, ”I have been walking my whole life, but now at the end it feels as if I have not reached anywhere.” It is to him I had to tell this story.

Man is not conscious. Ignorance of his self is his unconsciousness. In this unconsciousness all his actions are mechanical. He moves in this unintelligent state as if in sleep and he reaches nowhere.

As the chains of that boat remained tied to some post on the bank, similarily in this state he too remains tied somewhere.

Religion has called this bondage desire. Man tied to his desires remains under the delusion of coming closer and closer to bliss, but one day this whole hurry proves to be a mirage. No matter how much he rows, his boat just would not leave the shore of unfulfilment. He leaves life empty and unfulfilled.

Desire by its nature is insatiable. Life runs out, and the life in which the other shore could have been attained - the life in which the journey could have been completed - is wasted, and it is discovered that the boat has not moved at all.

Every sailor knows that before launching the boat into the ocean it has to be unanchored from the shore. Every man should also know that before launching his life's boat into the ocean of bliss, fulfillment and light, the chains of desire have to be disconnected from the shore. After that, perhaps even rowing is not needed.

Ramakrishna has said, "You take up the anchor, you set the sails; the winds of the divine are eager each moment to carry you."

99

A hermit came to me yesterday. We talked about the discipline of meditation. It is very surprising to hear the mistaken and false ideas that prevail regarding the nature of mind. If we begin the discipline with the assumption that the mind is our enemy, the entire discipline goes wrong. Neither is the mind our enemy, nor the body. They are mere instruments and are helpful. Consciousness can use them just as it likes. The attitude of enmity and conflict creates suppression from the very onset, and as a result the whole of life gets poisoned.

The human mind by its very nature is inclined to bliss, and there is nothing wrong in it. It is nothing but its attraction towards self-nature. If it were not there, man could never move toward the spiritual life. The mind seeks for bliss first in the world, and when it does not find it there, it turns inwards.

Bliss is the center - both of the world and of liberation. It is on the axis of this bliss that the whole worldly and the otherworldly life revolves.

The glimpse of bliss is seen outside; hence the race outside. Through meditation the real source of this bliss becomes visible, so the direction turns towards the source, but the mind is not to be forcibly turned inwards. It is because of suppression that mind starts appearing like an enemy.

No, a new dimension of bliss is to be opened. As soon as that dimension is opened, the mind is found to be moving withinwards on its own. Its inclination is towards bliss, and where there is bliss, it has a natural access there.

Bliss is the goal of life. Bliss, unending bliss, is the purpose of life. In the world comes the glimpse - the reflection. Its original source is in liberation. Outside is its projection, inside the roots. On the circumference is its shadow, the center its life. Hence, the world is not in contradiction to liberation, the outside is not the enemy of the inside. The whole existence is a symphony.

The moment this truth is seen, man falls out of bondage.

100

In the early morning hours a young man came. He looked sad and it seemed as if some loneliness was enveloping him from within, as if he had lost something and his eyes seemed to be searching for it. He has been visiting me for nearly a year now, and this this too I knew well, that one day he would come like this. Before this, there was an imaginary bliss in him which has now gradually disappeared.

For a while there is silence. The young man closed his eyes and seemed to be thinking about something. Then he spoke openly: ”I have lost my trust. I lived in dreams, which have been shattered now. I used to feel God to be with me; now I am left alone and I feel puzzled. Never before was I so helpless. I want to go back, but that too does not seem possible now. That bridge is ruined.”

I tell him, only that which was not can be taken away. It is not possible to take away that which is. Loneliness only gets suppressed in the unconsciousness - not destroyed - through the companion of dream and imagination. The bliss attained through imagination and the mental projection of God is not real. It is a delusion, not a support. And the sooner one gets rid of delusions the better.

To really attain to God, one has to renounce all mental concepts - and the concept of God is not an exception, that too has to be renounced. This is the only renunciation and this is the only asceticism... because there is no greater hardship than renouncing dreams.

At the point of disappearance of imaginations, dreams and concepts, manifests ’that which is’; the sleep shatters and wakefulness comes. The attainment thereafter is the real attainment, because nobody can take it away. And it is not disrupted by any other experience, because it is one’s own experience, not an experience of the other. It is not the seeing of any scene, it is a realization of the pure seer himself. It is not a thought about God, it is being in God.

Do not panic if the imaginary concept of God, and trust in God have disappeared. This can only be good. Give up all concepts and then see.

What is seen then is God.

101

A friend has presented some paper flowers to me. I look at these flowers - there is nothing in them beyond that which is visible to the eyes. Everything in them is visible, there is nothing invisible. Outside in the flowerbeds roses are in bloom, and beyond the visible there is something invisible in them, and this invisible is their very breath itself.

Modern civilization is analogous to paper flowers. It ends at the visible, with the seen, and hence is lifeless. It has lost its link with the unknown, the invisible. And this is why man is so cut off, so separated from his own roots as never before.

The tree, its leaves, its flowers, its fruits, are all visible but the roots are under the earth. The roots are in the unknown and invisible. The roots that can be seen are not the end of all roots - there are other roots that cannot be seen. The center where life is linked with the universal life is not only unknown, but is also unknowable.

A man connected with the unknowable attains to the real roots.

The unknowable cannot be attained through thoughts. The limit of thought ends at the knowable and visible - thought itself is knowable and visible. And that which is visible cannot become the medium for knowing the invisible.

Isness is beyond thoughts, existence is transcendental to thoughts.

Hence, one does not know existence but one becomes existence. One is not to become acquainted with it as an onlooker, separate from it; rather one has to become one with it.

Dropping thoughts, becoming calm and empty, and so comes that nonduality which puts one into truth, into isness. If one has to see paper flowers they can be seen from a distance, one can become a seer to them. If the real flowers are to be seen, one has to become the flower.

102

A girl is crying. Her doll is broken. And now I think: Is not all our weeping a weeping over broken dolls?

Last evening an old man came to see me. What he had wished for in his life could not happen. He was sad and sorrowful. Today I met a lady who every now and then wiped off her tears as she talked to me. She had dreams and they did not come true.

And now this girl is weeping. Is there not a basic reflection of all tears in the tears of this girl? Has not the root cause of all tears taken form in the broken doll lying in front of her? Somebody is consoling her that after all it is only a toy, and what is there to weep for? Hearing it, I could not help laughing. If man were to realize this truth would not all his sorrows come to an end? How difficult it is to understand that a doll is merely a doll!

Man hardly matures to the extent that he can understand this. The maturing of man's body is one thing, man himself maturing is quite another. What is maturity?

Man's maturity is in becoming free of the mind. As long as the mind is there it goes on creating toys. Freedom from toys happens as soon as one is free of the mind.

103

"I am a seeker. I am engaged in spiritual disciplines and I am making progress. One day the attainment is also going to happen." Once a hermit said this to me. In his words I felt more the ring of desire than of spiritual discipline. Such spiritual disciplines are themselves obstacles.

What is there to practice to attain that which already is? It is not even to be attained! Only to recognize that it has never been lost. And the whole undertaking of the so-called spiritual practice hides this truth. At the root of this is one's sensual desire, and a wish to attain something, to change something: I am to change from what I am. A is to be changed into B. This duality, this conflict, lies at the root of all sensual desires. This duality is the world and sorrow.

I say: If you desire to be even slightly different from what you are, you are going against what is. And what is is the path. The moment one wakes up to what is, one's life is filled with a naturalness and beauty, a freedom and liberation permeates one's every breath. This beauty is never available to the so-called practitioner. A violence, a suppression and a kind of lust for becoming destroys that naturalness. Hence there is an ugliness found in all the so-called aspiring ascetics.

Then what shall we do? Nothing. Not to do, not to do anything, is meditation. The self is neither in doing nor in thoughts. It is discovered the moment actions and thoughts are dispelled.

Drop everything, let go of everything, let everything disappear. And then what is seen in this nothingness, in this emptiness, is everything.

104

There is a parable:

Once a youth asked a hermit, ”What is the method to attain liberation?” The hermit replied, ”Who has bound you?” The youth paused for a moment and then said, ”Nobody has bound me.”

Then the hermit asked, ”Then why do you search for liberation?”

”Why do you search for liberation?” This is what I also asked one person yesterday. This is what every person has to himself: ”Where is the bondage?”

Wake up to what is! Stop bothering about changing that which is - don't run after ideals. You are what is in the present, not what is in the future. And there is no bondage in the present. The moment one wakes up to the present, bondages are not found anywhere.

Desire... in the very desire to become something and attain something is the bondage. A desire is always in the future, always in the tomorrow. And that is the bondage, that is the tension, that is the race, that is the world. It is the desire itself that creates the idea of liberation. And if bondage is at the roots, how can liberation be the outcome?

The beginning of liberation has to be in freedom. Liberation is not just the end, it is the beginning as well.

It is not that liberation has to be attained, rather it has to be seen that ”I am already exist in liberation.” The realization that ”I am liberated” is attained effortlessly in a calm, wakeful consciousness. Everybody is already liberated - it is only a matter of waking up to this reality.

The moment I drop all racing, the moment the race for becoming something goes away, I become. And this 'becoming' in its full sense is liberation.

The so-called religious person does not attain to this becoming because he is in a race for attaining liberation, for attaining the soul, for attaining to God. And the one who is in a race, whatever the form of that race, is not in himself. To be religious is not a matter of faith, of effort or of doing. To be religious is a matter of being in oneself. And this liberation can come in a moment.

The moment one becomes aware of the truth that bondage is in desiring, in racing, in ideals, the darkness disappears and no bondage is found in what is then seen.

Truth brings revolution in a moment.

105

It is a winter morning, the sun has just risen. There were cold winds in the night, and earlier in the morning the grass was covered with dewdrops. Now the rays have absorbed them, and the sunlight has become warmer.

A pleasant morning has heralded the day. How meaningful even the meaningless songs of birds seem to be! But perhaps life has no meaning and the imagination of meaning is man's own idea. There is no meaning - perhaps that is why there is infinite depth and vastness in life. Meaning is a limitation.

Life, existence, is limitless; hence there is no meaning in it at all. He who makes himself limitless by his merger with the meaningless, he who becomes meaningless in this vast meaninglessness, attains to 'that which is' - attains to existence.

All meaning is petty and is of the petty. All meaning has been given by the ego. Ego is the center of all these meanings. The world that is seen through it is not the real world. Whatsoever is related to 'I' is not real.

Truth is an indivisible whole, it is not divided into 'I' and 'not-I'. All meaning is from the 'I'; hence the indivisible, the one which is beyond 'I' and 'not-I' is without meaning - it has neither meaning nor 'no-meaning'. It is wrong to give it any name, even to call it God is wrong! God too is in reference to the 'I', God too is a concept of the I.

Let us say that whatever is meaningful is really meaningless. To go beyond the limit of meaningfulness is to become spiritual.

Someone asked Bodhidharma, "Please say something about the sacred nirvana." Bodhidharma replied, "There is nothing sacred in it, just emptyness and only emptyness."

106

A cock is crowing - I listen.

A cart is passing on the path - I watch.

There is hearing, there is seeing, but no word in between. Words seperate one from existence. Words are about the truth, they are not themselves the truth. One reaches the truth by dropping words, not through them. And to be wordless is samadhi, is enlightenment.

But only being wordless is not samadhi - words are absent in unconsciousness and in sleep too. Being wordless and yet remaining wakeful, conscious and alert is samadhi.

I am saying this to a hermit. He believed absorption and senselessness to be samadhi. Many have carried this fallacy. This fallacy is very dangerous. It is because of this fallacy that worship, devotion and many such methods of becoming unconscious have become prevalent. All these methods are nothing but escape, and their utility is nothing different from that of intoxicants. In them, a person forgets himself. Due to this forgetfulness, due to this self-forgetfulness, an illusion of bliss is created. But meditation requires complete self-remembrance, not self-forgetfulness.

When one is fully awake one IS. , I am completely in my self. This awakening happens from becoming free of words, thoughts and the mind. In this wordless consciousness the 'I' disappears. But I do not disappear; rather, on disappearance of the 'I', on disappearance of the sense of ego, I become fully myself.

107

The dark no-moon night is descending. The birds have returned to their nests and in the gathering darkness there is great chirping on the trees before they retire. The lamps are being lit in the city. In a short while, the sky is going to be studded with stars and the earth glittering with lamps.

Two tiny dark patches of clouds are floating in the eastern sky. There is no companion with me - I am all alone. There is no thought, I am just sitting. How blissful it is just to sit! The sky and the galaxy of stars seem to have submerged me.

When there are no thoughts, the individual existence merges with the universal existence. There is only a small curtain; otherwise everybody is the existence himself.

There is a thin veil on our eyes, and it is hiding existence. This thin veil itself has become the world. The moment its cover is removed the doors to the kingdom of infinite bliss are thrown open.

Jesus Christ has said, "Knock and the doors shall open." I say, "Just take a look - the doors are already open."

One man was running towards the setting sun. He asked another man, "Where is the east?" The reply came, "You just turn around and you will have the east right before your eyes."

All is present - what one needs is to turn one's eyes in the right direction.

This statement has to be declared to the whole world. Even to have rightly listened to it is to have attained a lot. The trust in the divinity of oneself is half the attainment.

Just today I said to a friend who had come to see me, "The treasure is already within you, you have simply forgotten about it. Awaken the right remembrance, recollect your own divinity, know who you are. Ask yourself - and ask yourself to the extent that only this inquiry remains, resounding through your entire mind and being. Then its arrow moves directly to your unconscious, and a mystical rsponse comes right in front of you on its own accord. To know this is to know everything."

108

The night has not yey given way to the dawn, and the sky is still studded with departing stars. The river looks like a thin stream of silver. The sand is cool with dewdrops, and the winds is bitter with cold. A deep stillness prevails, and the sound of birds every now and then only deepens it.

Taking a friend with me, I have come to this solitary place rather early. The friend says that he feels fear in solitude, and the stillness feels biting. If he keeps himself occupied somehow then it is fine; otherwise a strange kind of anguish and sadness overtakes him.

This anguish comes to everybody. Nobody wants to face himself. Looking within oneself, one feels puzzled. And because solitude leaves one alone with oneself, it is frightening. If you are entangled in the other, the self is forgotten. That is a kind of unconsciousness and an escape. Man keeps himself busy his whole life in this escape. But this escape is temporary. There is no way man can escape from his own self! All his efforts to escape are futile, because he himself is the one from whom he is trying to escape. How can one escape from oneself, and how can one run away from oneself? We can run away from everything but not from our own selves. Having run throughout our whole life we will find that we have not reached anywhere. Hence those who are intelligent do not run away from their own self; rather they face it.

If man looks inward he experiences an emptiness. There is an infinite nothingness within. Hence, becoming puzzled, he runs outwards. He makes endless efforts to fill this emptiness. He wants to fill it up this in the world, in relationships. But it cannot be filled in any way - it is impossible to fill it up - and this is his anguish and the failure of his life. Death shows this anguish very clearly. Death throws him into this very emptiness from which he has been escaping his whole life. And that is why the fear of death is uppermost.

I say, fleeing from one's emptiness is ignorance. It is through facing it, entering it, that life is attained. Reaching to this nothingness, we realize our nature.

Religion is an entry into the emptiness. What man experiences in himself in utter aloneness is religiousness.

109

"What is the ideal of life?" - a youth has asked me.

The night has deepened and the sky is full of stars. The wind is cold, somebody said there had been a hailstorm in the region. The path is desolate and there is dense darkness under the trees.

How blissful it is to live in this calm, solitary night. Just to be is such bliss! But we have forgotten how to be.

How blissful this life is! But we do not want to 'just live', we want to live for some ideal. We want to turn life - which is itself the end - into a means. This race for ideals poisons everything. This tension about ideals disrupts all the music of life.

Once Akbar asked Tansen, ”How is it that you do not sing so well as your master does? There is some divinity of the beyond in his singing.” Tansen replied, ”My master sings only for the sake of singing, while I sing for some purpose.”

Some time try just living. Just live - do not struggle with life, do not force life. Quietly watch things happening. Let what happens happen. Allow ’that which is’ just to be. Drop all tensions from your side and let life flow, let life happen. And what will happen, I assure you, liberates.

The illusion of ideals is one of the blind faiths cherished through the ages. Life is just for living - not for someone else, not for something else. One who lives for some reason does not really live. One who just lives, really lives; and he alone attains to that which is worth attaining. It is he who also attains to the ideal.

I look at the young man. An amazing peace has descended on his face. He does not say a word but he says everything. He goes after sitting silently and peacefully for an hour, a transformed man. He said at the time of his leaving, ”I go from here a different person.”

110

It is morning. The sun is behind the clouds and it is drizzling. The rain has created a feeling of wetness all around. A hermit, soaking wet, has come to see me. Some fifteen or twenty years back he had renounced his home to attain self-realization. The renunciation took place, but the attainment did not happen. Because of this he is sad. Society and relationships are considered obstacles in the way of self-attainment. Such a belief has unnecessarily cut people off from life.

I told him a story:

There was a mad woman. She was fully convinced that her body was not physical and that she had a divine body. She used to say that there was no other body on the earth more beautiful than her body. One day she was brought face to face with a full length mirror. She saw her body in the mirror and she was enraged. She threw a chair at the mirror, and the mirror broke into pieces. She breathed a sigh of relief. When she was asked about the reason for breaking the mirror she said, ”The mirror makes my body look physical. It distorts my beauty.”

Society and relationships are no more than mirrors, they only reflect what is within me. As meaningless as it is to break a mirror, so it is to renounce relationships. It is the self, not the mirror, that is to be transformed. And this transformation can take place exactly where one is. This revolution begins from the center. To work on the periphery is to waste time unnecessarily.

One has to start work on the self directly.
Society and relationships are not obstacles in any way.

Obstaclse, if any, are in oneself.

111

”Is there a God?” We don’t know.

”Is there a soul?” We don’t know.

”Is there life after death?” We don’t know.

”Is there a meaning in life?” We don’t know.

”We don’t know” is the whole philosophy of life today. In these three words is contained our whole knowledge. There is no end to our race as far as knowing about matter, about the other is concerned, but about the self, about consciousness, we go on drowning in more and more darkness every day.

The outside seems to be in light, but the inside is in pitch darkness. There is knowledge on the circumference and ignorance at the center. And the surprising thing is that not even an effort is needed to illumine the center. Just as your sight falls there all is illuminated. We have only to turn our eye inside and see everything there illumined.

If our eye is not on the other, it opens upon the self. If it has no base available on the outside, it finds a base in the inner self.

Self-based consciousness is samadhi, enlightenment.

Samadhi is the door to truth.

In it one does not find the answer; rather all the questions drop. And the disappearing of all questions is the real answer. Where there are no questions but only consciousness, pure consciousness, there is the answer, the knowing.
Without attaining this knowing, life is a sheer waste.

112

’One night a traveller was staying at an inn. When he arrived there a few other travellers were just departing. Next morning when he was ready to depart, he saw some other travellers checking in. The guests at the inn would come and go but the host always remained there. A hermit used saw this and asked if the same phenomenon was not happening with man every day?

I also ask the same, and say that there is nothing greater in life than recognizing the guest and the host.

The body-mind is an inn. The guests of thoughts, sensual passions and desires are visiting it. But something separate from the guests is also there - the host is also there. But who is this host? How to know this host?

Buddha has said, ”Stop!” And this stopping itself is knowing it. Buddha’s full statement is: ”This mad mind does not stop. If it can stop that itself is enlightenment, that itself is nirvana.”

As the mind stops, the host reveals himself. It is pure, eternal, wakeful consciousness. It is never born, it never dies. Neither is it bound nor is it liberated. It only is. And its isness is supreme bliss.

113

Life - what we understand as life - what is it? Last night somebody put this question to me. I told him a story:

Once a young man and an old man were sitting on easy chairs in a waiting room. The old man had his eyes shut but he would smile from time to time. And sometimes he would make gestures with his hands and face as if he was trying to keep something away from himself.

The young man could not help asking him, ”What is there in this ugly waiting room which brings a smile to you?” The old man said, ” I am telling stories to myself, and some of these make me laugh.”

The young man then asked, ”And what is it which you try to keep away with the gestures of hands and face?” The old man started laughing and he said, ”It is those stories which I have heard too many times.”

The young man said, ”What to say, you are consoling yourself with stories!” In reply the old man said, ”My son, one day you will understand that the whole of life is nothing but consoling oneself with stories.”

Certainly, life as we know it is nothing but a tale. And to console oneself with tales is what our life is. What we understand as life is not life but a dream. It is on waking up that we realize that our hands are empty - what was was not really there, it only appeared to be there.

But it is possible to awaken from this dream-life to the real life. The sleep can be dropped, the one who is sleeping can wake up. In the very possibility of sleeping is also the possibility to awaken.

114

It is about midnight. After many days the sky is clear today. Everything looks freshly showered and the half moon is sinking into the western horizon.

This evening I spoke at the prison. There were many prisoners present. How simple do they become, what a purity starts emanating from their eyes as one talks to them - all this is coming to my memory.

I said there: ”There is no sinner in the eyes of God as there is no darkness in the presence of light. Hence I do not ask you to drop anything. I do not ask you to drop the dirt, I only ask you to attain the diamonds. You attain the diamonds and the dirt drops away on its own accord. Those who ask you to renounce something are stupid. The world exists solely for the purpose of attainment. When one attains a new rung of the ladder, the previous one is renounced on its own. Renunciation is negative. It has pain, sorrow and suppression in it. Attainment is positive; it has bliss in it. The act of renunciation appears to be the first step, but in fact it is attainment that comes first. Before the first rung is renounced, the second rung has already been attained. It is only after attaining it, after realizing that it has been attained, that the first rung is dropped. Hence, if you attain to the divine then what appears like sin goes away without any effort on your part.

”Indeed, in attaining that one, all is attained. The moment that truth comes to us, all dreams disappear on their own accord. Dreams are not to be renounced but to be known. One who engages himself in renouncing the dreams has already accepted their reality. We don’t believe in their reality. This is why we can say, aham brahmasmi - I am Brahman.” For those who proclaimed this, darkness has no existence whatsoever.

”Friends, know this! Awaken the light within yourself and call out. Experience the divine within yourself. Awaken to your own truth, and then it is found that darkness is nowhere. Our own unconsciousness is darkness, our own awakening becomes the light.”

I said this to those prisoners, but then I felt this has to be said to everyone, because who is there anyone who is not a prisoner?

115

Today I was present in a seminar. 1 was present but my presence was almost like a non-presence. I was not a participant, I was only an audience. What I heard there was ordinary, but what I saw there was certainly extraordinary.

There was argumentation on every single idea. I heard it all, but what came to light was something else. I saw that the argumentation was about the ’I’, not about the ideas and issues. Nobody was interested in proving anything but his own ’I’.

The basic root of all discussions is in the ’I’. No matter where its center may appear to be on the surface, indirectly it is always there in the ’I’.

Roots are always indirect, they are invisible. What is visible is not the root, what is visible as the flowers and leaves is secondary. If one stops at the visible there is no solution, because the problem itself is not there. The solution is at the same place where the problem is. Discussions reach nowhere. And the reason? We don’t even pay any attention to seeing where the roots are.

This too is can be seen, that where there is a discussion nobody in fact speaks to the other, everybody talks to himself. It only appears that some talk is going on. But where there is ’I’ there is a wall which makes it difficult to reach the other. It is impossible to have a dialogue carrying one’s ’I’ with oneself.

Most of the people in the world thus spend their lives in holding dialogues with themselves.

I have read about an incident in a lunatic asylum. Two lunatics were engaged in a conversation. Their doctor was surprised to observe one thing, that they certainly were having a dialogue - while one would speak, the other would remain silent. But there was no connection, no relevance between what the two said. He asked them, ”When you have only to babble your things, how is it that one remains silent when the other speaks?” They said, ”We know the rules of conversation: while one speaks it is necessary for the other to remain silent - according to the rules.”

This statement is very true - and true not only about lunatics but about everybody. We observe the rules of conversation, but still everybody is talking to himself.

Without dropping the 'I' there is no way of communicating with the other. And the 'I' disappears only in love, hence dialogue happens only in love. Other than that, everything is argumentation - and argumentation is insanity, because in it everything is being said by oneself to oneself.

When I was leaving from that seminar someone said to me, "Sir, you did not speak." I replied, "Nobody has spoken there."

116

I just awakened from a dream. On awakening one truth was seen: In the dream I was a participant as well as a watcher. As long as I had been in the dream the watcher was forgotten, only the participant remained. Now that I am awake I see that only the watcher was there, the participant was just a projection.

The dream and the world are both alike. The watcher - the consciousness alone - is the truth. All else is imaginary. What we have known as 'I' is not real; the one who knows this 'I' alone is real.

The watcher of everything is independent of all and is beyond all. Neither has it ever done anything, nor has anything happened through it; it only is.

When the unreal 'I' - the dream 'I' - ceases to exist, then 'that which is' manifests. To realize this is liberation.

117

A hermit once told me, "I have renounced everything for the God and now I have nothing left."

I see that truly he has nothing left, but I tell him that he still possesses that which he should have renounced, that which is the only thing that could have been renounced.

He looks all around. He really has no possessions - what he has is inside him. It is in his eyes, it is in his renunciation, it is in his sannyas. It is his 'I'. To renounce that is the only renunciation, for everything else can be taken away, and finally death takes away everything. It is only the 'I' which none can take away - not even death. It cannot be taken away, it can only be dropped, it can only be renounced. And the renunciation of that which cannot be taken away is the only real renunciation.

Hence, man has nothing but the 'I' which is worth offering up. Every other renunciation is only an illusion, because that which he renounced did not belong to him in the first place. On the contrary, all the other renunciations only intensify and crystallize his ego. Even if one offers his life from the center of the 'I' it is no offering at all. Except for giving away the 'I' no other giving is a giving.

'I' is the only possession.

'I' is the only world.
He alone who drops it is a non-possessor, a sannyasin. 'I'

is the world.

The absence of 'I' is sannyas.

To give away the 'I' is the real spiritual revolution and transformation, because it is in the empty space left by this 'I' where that arrives which is not my 'I' but that of the whole.

I love one statement of Simone Weil in which she says that only God has the right to call himself 'I'.

Indeed, only he who is the center of the whole existence has the right to call himself 'I'. But he has no reason to call himself 'I' because all and everything is 'I' for him. The one who has the right to do so has no reason; the one who has the reason to do so has no right.

But man can drop this no-right status and can attain the right. As he drops becoming the 'I' he can be 'I'. Dropping the illusion of his center, he can attain the true center. The moment he decentralizes his own center, he instantly attains to the center.

Man's 'I' is not real. It is a composite, it has no existence of its own; it is an accumulation. The illusion of truth that arises out of this accumulation is ignorance. But for one who looks into this accumulation and searches for the truth, the illusion is shattered and all the flowers in the garden of 'I' are scattered. Then is attained that thread which is real, and around which were strung the flowers, and which was covered by these flowers.

On removing these flowers, on shattering the cover formed by them, it is discovered that their base, the thread, is not only my base; it is in all just as in me, and it passes through the whole of existence.

One who does not pass through this death of the 'I' remains deprived of the fulfillment of being a god. The death of the 'I' is the death of our distance and separation from God, from truth, from existence, as well as the distance that keeps us separate from ourselves. Blessed is the person who attains to this death before his physical death.

118

He who longs for truth should know that he has not to accept any imagination, any concept of truth, because if he does, his spiritual endeavor commits suicide.

In order to attain to truth one should have the courage to discard all temptations held out by the mind. None of the alternatives provided by the mind are to be accepted. Only then arises a state beyond alternatives, which reveals oneself to oneself.

Before that blessed moment of direct and pure knowing becomes evident, one comes across much that is not the truth. And one who entangles himself in that will come to know anything but himself. The self is never known as an object of knowing. Hence, as long as there remains any trace of an object of knowing, know well that what you have encountered is 'the other', not the self. What remains when there is no object of knowing is the knowledge, is the self, is the truth.

Rinzai has said, "If, on the path towards enlightenment, you come across God himself, remove him from your path."

I also say the same. When the path to enlightenment is solitary, and when there is no object of knowing in the stream of knowledge, and when there remains nothing to be seen, only then is found and known that which is the truth.

Another master once said the same. One of his disciples heard this and went to his hut, broke all the statues and burnt all his scriptures. Then he returned to the master and said, ”I have come from destroying all that is a hindrance to the arrival of the truth.”

Hearing this the master laughed and said, ”You foolish boy! Burn those books that are inside you and break those idols which have become installed in your mind.”

A similar thing happened here today. Inspired by my ideas, one young man destroyed his place of worship and threw his statues in a well before coming here. I told him, ”Instead of throwing away the statues, throw away your mind which creates the statues. And of what avail is it to destroy the place of worship as long as this mind is actively creating new places of worship and new images every moment?”

119

Somebody was asking me about religion. I told him: ”Religion has nothing to do with what you believe or do not believe. It is meaningful only if it becomes your breathing, not your faith. It is something which you either do or you do not do, which you either are or you are not. Religion is action, not a mere talk.

”And religion manifests in your actions only when it has become your essence first. Our actions become our being first. Before releasing the fragrance, it is essential to become a flower. Like the cultivation of flowers, the soul also needs to be cultivated.

And for the flowers to arise in the soul it is not necessary to go to the mountains. They can be cultivated wherever you are, because you can be in the mountains while remaining exactly where you are. There are mountains and forests in the inner solitude of one’s self.”

This is so - truth and beauty are seen only in complete solitude. And whatever is great in life is attained by those who have the courage to to be alone. The deeper secrets of life open their doors only in solitude, and the soul attains to love and light. Only when all is calm and quiet will those seeds sprout which are lying deep in the soil of our being, containing all our bliss in them. The growth happens from inside towards outside and only in solitude. Remember, truth grows from inside. Artificial flowers can be imposed from outside but as far as the real flowers are concerned, they grow from within.

For this inner growth it is not necessary to go to the outer mountains or forests, but it is necessary to be in that inner space. The path leading there is within everybody.

Take a few moments away from the hustle and bustle of your everyday racy rush, and forget the concepts of place and time around you, and your so-called personality, and the ’I’ that is born out of it. Empty your mind of all that keeps it constantly full. Whatsoever comes to your mind, know well that you are not it and throw it out. Drop it all - everything - your name, your country, your family. Let all of it disappear from your memory and remain like a blank sheet of paper.

This very path is the path to our inner aloneness and solitude. It is through this that the inner sannyas finally happens.

When your mind drops all clinging, breaks all barriers of name and form, only then that remains in you which is your real being.
In that moment you are alone, in solitariness.

What is known at that time is not of this world.

It is in this knowing that the flowers of religiousness bloom and life is filled with the fragrance of the divine.

What is known in these few moments - the silence, the beauty, the truth - it gives you strength to live simultaneously on two planes. Then you are in the world, yet you are not of the world. Then there is no bondage, and life is liberated. You are in water, yet the water does not touch you.
In this very experience is the fulfillment of life, and the attainment of religiousness.

120

He alone who has taken leave of all dogmas is on the path of truth. One who has some preferences, some dogmas to support, to him truth cannot come. All preferences are the creation of man's mind. Truth is impartial. Hence, he who is unprejudiced, without a preference, becomes possessed by truth as well as its possessor.

So do not look for some preference, do not seek for some cult, do not seek some school of thought. Rather let your mind reach the stage where all preferences are absent. It is only at that point that thoughts cease to exist, and 'seeing' begins. When the eyes become unprejudiced, then they are able to see 'that which is'.

A truly religious person is he who has taken leave of all religions, who has no religion of his own. Thus dropping religions he becomes religious.

People ask me what religion I belong to. I answer, "I am religious but I do not belong to any religion." That there can be many religions I simply do not understand! Thoughts create differences, but it is not thoughts that lead one to religion. It is no-thought that leads one into religion, and there are no differences in no-thought.

Enlightenment is one, and the truth that is known in that state is also one. Truth is one, though doctrines are many. He who chooses one out of the diversity of doctrines closes the doors against truth with his own hands. Set the doctrines free, and be free of them! open the door for truth. This alone is my teaching.

East or West, the taste of the ocean is the same everywhere; the law of evaporation does not differ in different countries. The law of birth and death is the same for all - how then can our inner being be governed by different laws and truths?

There is no geography in the world of the soul; hence there are no differences of direction, and there are no borders. Differences as such originate in the mind, and he who is divided in differences of the mind cannot attain to the indivisibility of the soul.

While returning from my morning walk I saw a bird in a cage. It reminded me of people imprisoned in prejudices. Prejudices are also cages, very subtle and self-created. We ourselves create them, nobody else - they are self-created prisons. First we create them; then becoming imprisoned in them we lose all capacity to fly in the open sky of truth.

And just now I see a kite flying in the sky. What a freedom, what a liberation in its flight! One is a bird in a cage, the other a bird in flight in the open sky. Are not the two birds symbolic of two different states of our mind?

A bird flying in the sky does not leave any footprints, nor is any path created behind it. So it is with the sky of truth. Those who are liberated fly in it, but neither are any footprints left behind them, nor is any path created.

So remember that it is futile to search for any readymade path towards truth. There is no such path. And it is good that it is so, because readymade paths can lead you only to some kind of bondage - how can they liberate? Really, everybody has to create his own path to truth.