

# SEEDS OF REVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT

**BHAGWAN SHREE RAJNEESH**



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*Translated by*

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1

I HAD been to a village where someone was heard saying, "Dharma lies in renunciation and renunciation is a hard and arduous task."

Even as I heard this, I recollected an incident of my early childhood. I had accompanied a picnic party to the bank of a rivulet. On the sandy bank there lay many smooth pebbles of various glittering colours. I felt I had found a treasure. I gathered them. By sunset my collection grew so large that I could not carry it with me. I got ready to return home. Tears welled up in my eyes when I left my cherished treasure against my will. But I was surprised to see that my companions were not at all interested in those pebbles. It seemed they were the sages who were not attached to the objects of worldly pleasures.

As I think of it today, it appears that when we know that a stone is a stone, and not a treasure, the question of renunciation does not arise at all.

Whereas attachment is the result of ignorance, renunciation is the result of knowledge.

Renunciation is not an action; it is a natural result of knowledge or realization. Enjoyment too

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is mechanical, an automatic process. It is not an activity of a doer, but a natural result of ignorance.

It is futile therefore to say that renunciation is a hard and arduous task. First of all, it is no activity at all; activities alone can be difficult and strenuous, but renunciation is only a result. Again, what we apparently give up is worthless, but what we acquire is valuable.

In fact, renunciation as such does not exist at all. For the little we give up fills us with immense riches. Surely we break loose from our fetters and attain liberation; cast away shells but find diamonds; forsake death but obtain immortality; dispel darkness but usher in light, permanent and infinite. Where, then, is renunciation? We give up the worthless but achieve the precious — this is no renunciation at all.

## 2

LAST night a man breathed his last and I saw people mourning at his door.

During those moments I was reminded of an event which occurred when I was a child. It was my first visit to the crematorium. The funeral pyre had been lit; people, who had gathered in small crowds here and there, were conversing with one

another. A village-poet was heard saying, "I am not afraid of death. Death is my friend."

The same assertion has been heard in different forms made by different people. Looking into the eyes of those who assert this, it is easy to observe that it is fear alone that gives rise to these vapid words of fearlessness.

No real change can be effected by lavishing words of praise on death. In fact, it is not death that is dreaded; it is the unknown that is feared. What is not understood and known instils fear in us. It is necessary that we should get acquainted with death. Acquaintance brings in its wake an amount of fearlessness. Why? Because, through this acquaintance it becomes known that "what is" cannot sink into death.

The very individuality, however, which we interpret as our 'I' is shattered. That alone dies, because it does not really exist. Hence it gives way, disintegrates. It is only a combination, a union of a few elements. When this union dissolves, all egoism is scattered. This is death. Hence the idea of death persists as long as the real form is identified with individuality.

We must go deep down from the surface of individuality to the bottom of the real self if it be immortality that we want to achieve. The path of

this journey, the penetration from the surface of individuality to the core of real existence is dharma.

It is in meditation and quietude that we get acquainted with death.

Just as darkness ceases to exist the moment the sun rises, so also the moment samadhi is achieved death dies.

Death can neither be an enemy nor a friend; there is no such thing as death. None should either entertain any fear of it or be fearless in the face of it. We have to realize it. Ignorance of it is fear and acquaintance with it — its perfect knowledge — is fearlessness.

## 3

I HAD been to the sanctuary of a temple. The throng of worshippers was engaged in worshipping the deity. The faithful devotees were bending their heads before the idols. An elderly man who stood by me said, "Now-a-days people appear to have no faith in religion. Very few of them visit the temple."

I said, "Where is dharma in a temple?" How does man deceive himself! He believes that the idols his very hands have fashioned are gods. He

satisfies himself with the belief that the sacred texts — the product of his own mind — are true revelations.

What is shaped by man's hands, what is evolved by man's mind, is not the true dharma. The idols installed in temples are not of gods but of men. What is written in the sacred texts is but a reflection of their authors' own aspirations and conceptions. They cannot be the revelations of the inner core and secrets of truth, for it is impossible to give expression to Truth.

It is impossible to have an idol of Truth for the simple reason that Truth is boundless, infinite, unembodied. It has no form, no name, and no attribute. The moment we give it a shape and a form it disappears.

All idols and solid, material conceptions have to be discarded if we wish to achieve Truth. The complex of philosophical systems and metaphysical structures erected by our hallucinations has to be shattered. When man's consciousness is liberated from the prisonhouse built by his own mind, the uncreated Truth reveals itself.

In reality, in order to attain Truth we are not to erect temples but to eschew them; we are not to make idols but to dissolve them. We have to rid ourselves of the obsessions of the shapely and give a free access to the shapeless. If the solid, embodied

image moves away, the unembodied reveals itself there. It has already been there suppressed beneath the idols and the embodied. Vacant space shrinks in size in a room when you convert it into a storehouse and begin to store things in it. Remove those things and the vacant space will reveal itself where it had always been.

Truth, too, is like this — keep the mind void of extraneous objects and lo ! there it is.

## 4

I HEARD a discourse this morning. Since it was delivered so loudly it naturally fell into my ears too. A sage was conducting it. As I was passing that way, I heard it. "The fear of God opens up the path of devotion and piety. He alone who fears God is truly religious and virtuous. It is fear that makes one love God. There cannot be any awakening of devotion without fear. It is impossible."

Usually there is fear lurking in the hearts of the so-called pious and virtuous. Even the ethically upright have their moorings in fear.

Kant has said, "Even if there is no real God, it becomes imperative for us to accept Him." Perhaps this is so because the fear of God makes us good.

When I hear these words, it is impossible for me

to suppress a smile. No other opinion can be so erroneous and fallacious.

Dharma has no relation whatever with fear. It originates in fearlessness.

It is impossible for love to co-exist with fear. How can fear generate true love ? What it does, however, produce is a counterfeit of love — what else except non-love can there be behind that fake thing ? Awakening love by rousing fear is an impossibility.

Hence virtuousness and ethically sound behaviour based on fear are not true. They are superimpositions. They do not elevate the soul-force. Dharma and love cannot be superimposed. They have to be kindled and roused up.

Truth cannot stand on the strength of fear, nor can fear be a support to truth. It can only oppose it. Truth is founded on fearlessness.

The flowers of dharma and love can be grown only in the fertile soil of fearlessness. Those planted with fear are not natural flowers but monstrosities concocted with paper-strips.

The realization of God is achieved in fearlessness. Or to put it more correctly, the sense of fearlessness is itself godliness. The moment the complex tangles of fear in the mind are untied the realization of truth takes place.

IT IS the afternoon. The *palasa* flowers glow in the sun like burning embers of charcoal.

I am treading a deserted path. The thick shades of bamboo bushes seem very agreeable to me.

An unknown bird warbles a sweet, inviting song. Its melody makes me stop there.

One of my companions wants to know how we can conquer anger. "How can we conquer lust?" he says.

This is a question which we very frequently ask. The mistake lies in asking this question. I tell him so.

The problem is not that of conquest, it is merely of knowing it. We do not know either anger or lust. This ignorance is our weakness.

Knowledge and realization constitute our victory. Anger is generated, lust is roused. But then "we" are not there. All awareness is absent. So we are out of the picture. What happens in this state of senselessness is something mechanical, an automatic reaction. When sense returns a feeling of remorse and repentance envelops the mind. But it is futile, for he who repents may go into slumber as soon as lust or anger seizes him again. Let him not sink into slumber — let consciousness, watchfulness and wakefulness be kept roused. Then there is neither

lust nor anger. All automatic reactions cease. Then there is nothing to be conquered. The enemy is no longer seen or present there.

Let this truth be understood through a symbolic story. In twilight or semi-darkness a rope is taken for a snake. At the sight of it some of us run away while others take up sticks to kill it with. Both of them are in the wrong, since both of them take it for a snake. A wise, bold man goes near it and finds that there is no snake at all. He has nothing more to do except that he has to go near it.

Man must go to his own inmost being. Whatever is within him he has to be acquainted with. There is no battle to be fought. I say without any fight victory comes to him.

Wakefulness and alertness in regard to one's own mind constitute the secret of success in life.

THE night is past. The rays of the morning sun are scattered all over the wild fields. Our train has just passed over a small bridge across a stream. A flock of white cranes, on hearing the rumbling sound of the train, quits the white lilies and flies to the rising sun.

Something has happened. The train has stopped,



which appeals to me in this desolate region. My strange fellow passengers too have stood up in their seats. Perhaps they had got into the train from some wayside station at night. They salute me as they take me for a sannyasin. An irresistible eagerness to put a question lurks in their eyes. In the end one of them says, "If it is not inconvenient to your holiness, I wish to ask something. I am an ardent devotee of God. I have done all I could to realize Him. But all to no purpose. Why is not God sympathetic to me?"

I said, "Yesterday I had been to a garden in the company of some friends. One of them was thirsty. And he dropped the bucket into a well that was very deep. Strenuously he drew it up with the rope but the bucket continued to be empty. Others laughed. It seemed to me that the bucket was like the mind of a man. It had many a crack and hole. Of course, it was filled with water at first but every drop of it oozed out through the holes. Our mind too is full of holes. Throw that porous mind towards the Lord with whatever persistence you may, but it returns to you empty. If you repair the bucket beforehand, O friends, it becomes easy to fill it with water. Of course, the porous bucket may cause you to experience many an exercise in austerities, only your thirst will not be quenched. Please let this be borne in mind that the lord is neither

sympathetic nor unsympathetic. It is your duty to keep your bucket intact. The well is ever ready to offer you plenty of water. It never denies it to you.

ONE day I was standing on the bank of a river. I saw a paper-boat sunk in the water.

Yesterday some children had built toy-houses of wet sand. They too had tumbled down.

Everyday boats sink and houses tumble.

A woman had come there. Her cherished dreams had not been fulfilled. She had lost all interest in life. She had been thinking of committing suicide. Everything seemed to her utterly useless. Her eyes were deeply embedded in their sockets.

I said, "Who has his dreams ever fulfilled? All dreams bring in misery ultimately, for even if the paper-boats sail, how far can they go? The mistake does not lie in dreaming dreams; for all dreams are naturally unrealizable. But it is our own mistake. He who dreams is in deep slumber. He who sleeps cannot have real experience. On waking up, what appeared to have been realized becomes unrealized. Instead of seeing dreams, I say, see the truth. See what really exists. That would give you liberation.

It alone is real. It alone takes you to perfect achievement in life.

“While dream is death, truth is life; dream is sleep and truth is wakefulness. Wake up and realize yourself. As long as the mind hovers round the dream, the soul, the seer of dreams, cannot be seen. That alone is Truth. As soon as we realize it we can laugh, and dismiss the sunken boats and tumbled houses.”

8

THERE is a Sufi song:

Returning after years of separation, when a lover knocked at the door of his beloved, a voice was heard from inside, “Who is there ?” The person who was waiting there said, “It is I”. No sooner had he said this than he heard in reply, “This house cannot hold the duality of ‘I’ and ‘Thou’.”

The closed door remained closed. The lover retreated into a forest. There he performed penance, observed fasts, and offered prayers. After the moon had waxed and waned many a time, the lover returned to the closed door and knocked again. Again the voice asked, “Who is there outside ?”

This time the doors were thrown open, for his reply was, “Thou alone.”

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The reply “Thou alone” is the essence of all religion, the warp and woof of all dharma. In the endless, boundless flowing current of life the knot of ‘I’ constitutes the bondage. The ego alienates the individual from Existence. The bubble ‘I’ erroneously thinks itself different from the flowing current of existence, whereas in reality the bubble has no separate existence. It has no separate centre of activity, no separate life. It is the ocean itself. The ocean alone constitutes its life. Its being and becoming are in and through the ocean. The very conception of its existence as apart and aloof from the ocean is grounded in sheer ignorance. Peep into the bubble, and you meet the very ocean. Peep into the ‘I’, and you find in it the supreme reality.

Where ‘I’ does not exist ‘Thou’ too is absent. Only ‘being’ is to be sought there, being that is existence pure and simple. Waking into this pure existence is Nirvana, the final liberation, salvation.

9

A BRIEF earthen lamp had been burning. But now it has been blown out. A gust of wind came and the light went off. How far can we rely on earthen lamps ? Of what avail is the association of

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these flames which are likely to be blown out by winds ?

Men are now sunk in the ocean of darkness. A young man sitting in isolation, seems to be afraid of darkness. He says his very vitals are shaken by the enveloping darkness and it is very difficult for him even to breathe.

I tell him, "Darkness and darkness alone envelops this world where there is no light to dispel the darkness out and out. Whatever flames there are in the world are gradually dying out. Verily are the flames coming in and going out, but the darkness remains unaffected. The darkness of the world is a permanent thing. Those who rely on its flames are stupid, since these flames have no existence whatsoever. Ultimately they are overpowered by darkness.

But, there is another world — a world distinguished from this visible world. If this world is full of darkness, the other one is light itself. If light is transient and temporary and darkness permanent in this world, in the other one darkness is transient and temporary and light permanent.

There is something wonderful about this. The world of darkness is far away but the world of light is very near.

Darkness is without and light is within.

Let it not be forgotten that as long as vigilance

is not kept on the light within, no flame can afford any consolation. Rely not on earthen lamps. Seek the flame of Perfect Wisdom which alone can bring you fearlessness, bliss, and light never to be snatched away. That alone is ours and of this we cannot be deprived. That alone is ours which is not extraneous to us.

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

If there were darkness there, it could not have been realized ? He who realizes darkness cannot be darkness himself.

Again, if he aspires for light how can he be darkness ? He is light. Hence he aspires for light. He is light. Hence he craves for light. Light alone can thirst for light. Search where thirst is seen arising — make that centre your aim and you will realize that that which you thirst for is hidden there alone.

I DO not profess to be God-fearing. Fear can take none to God. A complete absence of fear alone can take you there.

In a sense I am not a believer too. Belief by

itself is blind. How can blindness take us to the ultimate reality ?

I am not a follower of any religion, because religion cannot be divided into several compartments. It is one and indivisible.

Yesterday when I had said this, a person asked me a question, "Then, are you an atheist ?"

I am neither an atheist nor a theist. This distinction is superficial, merely intellectual. The two have no bearing on Existence. Existence is not split into 'is' and 'is not'. That distinction is mental. Therefore atheism and theism are both mental. They do not come as far as the soul-seeker who goes beyond affirmation and negation. What 'exists' is outside the reach of affirmation and negation.

Or again, both of them come on the same plane without any line of demarcation in between. No concept accepted by the intellect gains access to it. In fact the theist has to cast off his theism and the atheist his atheism. Then, possibly they may enter the plane of truth. These two are the obsessions of intellect. Obsession is forcible superimposition. We do not have to decide what truth is, but we have only to keep our perceptive organs open and see Truth as it is.

Bear this in mind that we do not have to take a decision about truth but to attain and realize it. He who eschews intellectual decisions, logical

conceptions, mental obsessions and wrong inferences, in that mental state free from defects he keeps himself open to truth even as flowers do to the light. In this opening up we can have the vision as well.

Hence by the appellation 'dharmika' (pious) I mean a person who is neither a theist nor an atheist. True religiosity is a leap from the notion of many into oneness.

Where there is no deliberation and no discussion, where there are no conflicting alternatives, where there are no words but only emptiness (a complete absence of things) there one has access to Dharma.

## 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 saint. He had travelled much. Hardly was there a place of pilgrimage where he had not been. He was in search of the path leading to the Lord.

On that night he had put me a question: "What is the path which leads to the Lord ?"

He had put this very question to several people. Gradually he had become conversant with many paths. But the distance separating him and the

Lord remained the same as ever. It was not a case of his not traversing those paths. He had exerted his utmost. But trekking and treading alone had been the result. No goal was reached. Still he was not tired of travelling nor averse to the paths. The search for new paths continued.

I had been silent for some time. Then I said, "There is no path leading to what I am myself. Paths are for reaching 'others' and for covering 'distances'. What is 'near'—not only near but what I am myself—cannot be attained by means of a path. Where is the intervening space there for a path to fit in? Again, that which is attained is lost. Is it possible to lose the Lord?"

What is likely to be lost cannot be one's own real form.

The Lord is only forgotten.

Hence one does not have to go anywhere. One has only to remember Him. There is nothing else to be done. He is just to be known. Knowing is reaching. What is to be known is, "Who am I?" This knowledge, this realization itself is the attainment of the Lord.

One day, when all our efforts fail, when no path seems to lead us anywhere, it then becomes clear that whatever I can do does not take me to Truth.

No activity will unravel the mystery of the 'I' because all activities lead us out.

No activity takes us to Existence. Where activity ceases Existence reveals itself.

No activity will offer that to us because that is in existence even before the activities.

There is no path leading 'there' since that is 'here'.

ONCE upon a time at sunset a storm had broken out upon the famous lake, Galilee. A boat, caught in the storm, was on the verge of being sunk. There seemed to be no way of averting the disaster. The passengers and boatmen were equally bewildered. Gusts of violent wind shook everyone and everything. Water had begun to rush into the boat. The banks were far beyond the sailors' reach. But even as the storm raged thus, a man was sleeping soundly in a corner of the boat, unruffled and unworried. The fellow-passengers woke him up. Shadows of imminent death lurked in their eyes.

The man stood up slowly and said, "Why are you all so scared?" To him there was nothing to be afraid of. The fellow-passengers stood dumb-founded. They could not utter a word. He asked

them again, "Haven't you all faith in yourselves?" Speaking thus with calmness and fortitude, he walked slowly to the edge of the boat. The storm was lashing and raging in its final bid to upset the boat. Addressing the turbulent lake, he said :

"Peace. Be still."

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

The passengers might have thought that it was sheer madness. Do storms pay heed to entreaties? Can they be curbed with rebukes? But even as they looked on, the storm subsided and the lake became as calm as before as if nothing had happened.

The quiet man's entreaties had been listened to.

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

Are we not harassed and surrounded by a continuous storm, a perpetual restlessness? Does not a shadow of imminent death darken our eyes endlessly? Is not our inner mind's lake agitated continuously? Don't we feel ever and anon that the boat of our worldly life is every moment on the verge of being sunk?

Is it not then proper on our part to ask ourselves, "Why are we so terrified?" and "Haven't

we faith in ourselves?" Should we not address the turbulent lakes of our own minds and say, "Peace. Be still?"

I have employed these means and found the storms subside. The moment we are emotionally tuned up and determined to be calm, peace blesses us. Emotionally everyone is restless. Emotionally everyone can also be quiet and peaceful. Attainment of peace is not a matter of practice or repeated exercise. Sublimation of the emotional set-up is enough. Peace and tranquillity is our nature. In the midst of dense disquietude too there is a spot within us wherein we are calm and quiet. There is a person within us who is quietly asleep in the midst of this storm. This quiet, unruffled, unworried spot houses our real being. It is surprising that despite its existence we could be agitated. There is no wonder at all in regaining composure.

If you wish to be calm you can be so at this very moment and at this very spot. Practice brings in results later but sublimation instantaneously in the present itself. Sublimation is the only real transformation.

I USED to say to myself, "Who am I ?" It is impossible to count how many days and nights passed in this query. The intellect used to give answers often heard before or born of repeated previous impressions. All those words were borrowed and lifeless. I was not satisfied with them. Just booming at the outer level they used to vanish and subside. The inner soul was not touched by them. None of their sounds was heard from the depths. There were many replies, but none of them was correct. And I was untouched by them. They were unable to come up to the level of the question.

Then it seemed to me that the question concerned the centre but the replies touched only the circumference. The question was mine, its replies came from outside; the question woke up from the inner self, its replies were superimposed from outside.

This idea turned into a revolution.

A new direction was opened up.

The replies of the intellect were of no avail. They had no concern with the problem. An illusion, a myth had exploded. What a relief it was !

It appeared as if a closed door was flung open or as if a flood of light was spread suddenly amid darkness. The mistake was that the intellect was

replying. Because of the so-called replies, that real reply was not forthcoming. Some Truth was struggling to come up. In the depths of consciousness some seed was waiting to break open the ground in order to see the light. But the intellect was an obstruction.

When this came in sight the replies began to fall off. Knowledge that was acquired from without began slowly to evaporate. The question became denser and deeper. I did not do anything, only kept on watching.

Some sort of vanity was taking shape. I was speechless. What was there to do ? I was, as it were, only a witness. The reactions of the outer line were dropping down, perishing, becoming non-existent. The centre now had begun to clink and tinkle fully.

"Who am I ?" With this single thirst the entire individuality was throbbing.

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 ! All the vital airs had turned into thirst. Everything was blazing. And like a flame of fire the question stood up within, "Who am I ?"

What a wonder ! The intellect was quite silent.

The flow of incessant thoughts had stopped. What was it that had happened ? The outer circle was quite motionless. There was no thought, no previous impression.

I was there and there was the question too. No, No; I myself was the question.

And then there was an explosion. Within a trice, everything was altered. The question had dropped. The reply came from some unknown extent.

Truth is known through a sudden explosion; not gradually.

It cannot be induced to appear. It comes.

Voidness is the reply, not words. To be replyless is the reply.

Someone asked yesterday and someone or the other asks every day — “What is that reply ?”

I say, “If I mention it, it is meaningless. Its purpose lies in realizing it oneself.

I AM not a preacher. I do not wish to give advice or deliver a sermon. I am not keen on instilling my thoughts into your mind. All thoughts are futile. Like particles of dust do 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 fatal to the soul.

Through discussions ignorance does not perish, it only gets concealed. In order to awaken knowledge, it is essential to know ignorance in its stark nakedness. Do not therefore cover yourself up in the garments of thoughts and discussions. Remove all covers and garments so that you may get acquainted with your nakedness and hollowness. That acquaintance will become a bridge over ignorance. The acute distress of understanding ignorance itself is the point of revolution.

In this way I wish to open you up, not cover you. Just see — behind how many blind faiths, conceptions and fancies have you concealed yourself ! And you are considering yourself well-guarded with these false means of security ! This is not security but self-deception.

I wish to break off this slumber. It is only Truth, and not the dream, which is the sole security.

If you can be bold enough to eschew dreams, you will become entitled to the realization of Truth. What a cheap bargain ! In order to realize Truth it is the dreams that you have to abandon, nothing else.

You have to plug the inflow and insensibility of fanciful pictures of thoughts, dreams. Through



that which appears you have to wake up to that which sees.

“That seer alone is Truth; if you realize it, know that you have realized, achieved, and understood life.”

I was talking thus to a person. On hearing this he fell into reflection. I told him : “You have become engrossed in thought. That is why I urge you to wake up. That is but slumber.”

15

A BULLOCK cart is being driven. I watch its wheels revolve round the axis. The wheels go round and round on what is fixed and motionless. There is inactivity behind activity, like void residing at the core of existence.

Similarly one day I saw a violent dust storm arise. A huge ball of dust was rising up in a circular motion but in the middle there was a point where everything was quiet and steady.

Is not the radical Truth of the world manifest through these symbols ?

Is not Voidness seated at the very core of entire existence ?

Is there no inactivity behind all action ?

Void alone is the centre and vital breath of existence. It alone has to be known. We have to be

in it because it alone is our real being. Whatever individual centre one has, one has to be that. We do not have to go anywhere else, but to that which we are.

How is this to be accomplished ?

See that which “sees” and you descend into the void.

We have to proceed from the ‘seen’ to the ‘seer’. ‘The seen’ is form, action and existence. ‘The seer’ is formless, actionless, and void. ‘The seen’ is the other, the unstable worldly bondage, non-liberation, and transmigration. ‘The seer’ is oneself, stable, Brahma, liberation, salvation, emancipation. See; see Him who sees. This is the essence of yoga.

This alone have I been saying every day. This alone exists in whatever I am saying.

16

THERE is thirst for true wisdom. What a thirst ! I see it in everyone. Something is blazing within, and that wishes to becalm itself. And in how many directions does man search for it ! Perhaps this search goes on through many lives. His mind seeking some golden deer keeps on wandering. But at every step he meets with nothing but frustration. No way seems to be leading thereto. There is some

movement but the goal does not appear to be in sight. Why, why don't the ways lead anywhere ?

This question need not be answered. Life itself is the answer. Is not the answer received after walking through infinite number of ways and directions ?

Is the answer not really obtained ?

In seeking an intellectual reply, the real answer is lost in smoke.

If the intellect keeps quiet, experience speaks out. If thought keeps silent, discrimination wakes up.

In fact, there are no answers to the basic questions of life. Problems are not solved, they only fall off. The matter concerns enquiring as to how one can become void. The intellect can only ask but cannot provide the answer. The answer comes only from the void.

Yes, the answer comes from the void. Immediately on knowing this, the opening up of life through a new vista begins. This state of mind is called trance.

Ask and be quiet, wholly quiet. And let the answer come of its own accord. Allow it to swell up and bloom. And in this waveless situation of the mind, the vision of what exists takes place, "What I am."

The thirst for true knowledge is not quenched without knowing the self.

The self has to be reached after eschewing all ways. When the mind is in none of the paths it is in the self. Knowing the self is true knowledge. Everything else is the means to it, and all means are indirect. Intellectual or scientific knowledge is not true knowledge. It is not knowing truth but knowing the utility of truth. Truth can be known only through direct perception. The same is true of the self, which can be directly known.

The doors of the infinite are flung open only at the moment when the mind becomes quiet and steady after realizing the futility of search.

Consciousness devoid of directions is centred in the Lord. And the ultimate quenching of the thirst remains only with the Lord.

MIDNIGHT is past. I have just returned from a meeting where I heard a person declare, "Call the Lord ! Remember and repeat His name. If you call Him incessantly He is sure to hear."

I was reminded of Kabir, "Has God turned deaf ?" Perhaps Kabir's words have not reached his ears.

Then I heard him say, "Ten persons are asleep. Someone calls out Devadutt. Then Devadutt gets

up and comes. The same thing is true of the Lord. Call Him by His name. He certainly hears."

On hearing his words I was tempted to laugh. First, it is not the Lord who has fallen asleep but we. He is ever wakeful. It is not He who has to get up. It is quite funny that the sleepers should rouse the wakeful! We need not summon Him, but listen to His call. This can be only in silence, with a perfectly waveless mind. When there is no sound in the mind His resonance is perceived.

Complete silence alone is prayer, prayer is not the performance of any action, but when the mind is not in action it is in prayer.

Prayer is not an activity but a state.

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. Truth has to be reached not through them but by eschewing them.

He who dares to eschew everything fulfils all the conditions of realizing Him.

I HAVE heard this ancient tale.

A fakir went a-begging. He was pretty old and his vision was blurred. He stood outside a mosque

and shouted. A person standing close to him said, "Go ahead. This is not the house of a man who can give you anything." The Fakir replied, "By the way, what is the name of the owner of this house, who does not give anyone anything?" The man said, "Mad man, don't you know this is a mosque? The owner of this house is the great father God, the supreme soul."

The Fakir raised his head and cast a glance at the mosque. His heart became filled with a burning thirst. His inmost voice spoke. Alas, it is painful indeed to go away from this door. This is the final doorway. Where is another door beyond this?" He made up a strong resolution. Like an immovable rock his heart burst out, "I will not return empty-handed from here. What is the value of even the full hands of those who return empty from here?"

He halted near those steps. He stretched his empty hands in the direction of the sky. He was thirsty, and thirst is prayer.

Days passed on. Months rolled away. The summer passed. The rains set in and passed off. The winter too passed off. It was nearly a year now. The old man's life too came to a close. But in the last moments of his life, the people had seen him dancing.

His eyes were full of unearthly lustre. His old

emaciated body was radiating a sort of ineffable brilliance.

Before his death he had said to someone, "He who begs attains. One must only have the courage to dedicate oneself."

The courage to dedicate oneself.

The courage to destroy oneself.

The courage to become a void.

He who is willing to perish attains completion.

He who is willing to die achieves life.

## 19

ONE morning Gautama Buddha was to have broken his silence. But before he would do so a bird started singing at the door. In that peaceful, still morning he continued to observe silence. The morning sun went on weaving the nets of his 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 deeper. Buddha got up. He did not utter anything that day. Well, on that day, the silence itself became the discourse.

What he conveyed through that silence had never been mentioned through any word.

Whatever is in this life, in this universe, is

wholly divine, is entirely lordly. In everything there is the stamp and reflection of the immense cosmic being. He alone is latent in everything; He alone is manifest in everything. He alone has the form. He alone has the sound. But as we do not remain silent we cannot hear it. And our eyes are not vacant, hence we cannot see it.

We regard ourselves as superior, hence He is not within our reach.

If we are not pre-occupied, He is just now amongst us.

Truth exists but the self is in trance, just as there is light but the eyes are shut. We do not rouse the self, but search for Truth. We do not open eyes, but review the light. Do not ever fall into this blunder. Eschew all searches and be silent. Quieten the mind and listen. Keep the eyes unoccupied and see. If the fish in the water, for example, were to seek my advice in its search for the sea, what shall I say to it? I will say, "Eschew your search and see that you are in the ocean itself." Everybody is in the ocean. We are not to realize or attain the ocean. We are to start drinking it.

THERE is a temple in the neighbourhood. Every day, soon after nightfall, they begin to sing and chant holy songs and prayers. The strong smell of the fragrant incense fills the closed sanctuary. Festal lights are waved round the idol and everyone makes obeisance to it. Musical instruments are played. Bells are rung. Drums are beaten. Gongs are sounded. The priest dances and the devotees too dance in due course.

I went to the precincts of the shrine to witness this. What I saw was no worship at all but a deep trance. It was self-forgetfulness in the name of prayer. If you forget yourself you forget your sorrow. The work that intoxication does is also done by these forms of religion.

Who does not wish to forget his life's distress? That is why inebriating stuffs are sought. That is why inebriating rituals too are sought.

Man has concocted many types of wine. And the most dangerous of all the wines are those that are not bottled up.

Sorrow is not quelled by forgetting sorrow; its seeds are not destroyed by these devices. On the other hand, its roots are further strengthened.

Sorrow has to be quelled, not forgotten. Forgetting it is not piety but self-deception.

Just as self-oblivion is the means of forgetting sorrow, self-memory is the means of quelling sorrow.

Dharma is that which rouses the self completely. All other forms of religion are false. Since self-memory is the true path, self-forgetfulness must be the wrong one. Let this also be remembered that the self is not quelled by forgetting the self. Its hidden current is ever flowing. The self can be abandoned or perfectly enlightened only through self-remembrance.

He who knows the self completely, can realize everything through self-abandonment, self-dedication.

The path to the Cosmic is not through forgetting the self but through self-surrender and self-abandonment.

To be oblivious of the self by remembering the Lord is a blunder. Quelling the self by understanding the self is the path. And, when the self ceases to exist, what remains thereafter is alone the Lord.

The Lord is attained not through self-forgetfulness but through self-abandonment.

IT HAS been raining in hissing torrents since sunset. The gusts of wind have up-rooted even huge trees. The electric supply is off and the city is plunged in darkness.

A mud-lamp has been lighted in the house.

Its flame rises up. The light (lamp) is a part of the Earth but the flame continuously shoots up; what it strives to reach and realize is not known.

Man's consciousness too is like this flame.

The body is satisfied with the earth but in man there is something in addition to the body which wishes to rise up above the earth incessantly. This consciousness, this shooting flame of fire, alone is the vital breath of man. This zeal to rise up incessantly is his soul.

Man is man because he has this shooting flame. Otherwise everything is only mud.

If this flame burns completely and blazes fully, there is revolution in life. If this flame comes into view entirely, in the midst of mud itself the mud can be surmounted.

Man is an earthen lamp. While there is mud in him, there is light in him too. If the attention is centred round the mud alone, life is wasted. There must be attention to the light too. Everything is

transformed the moment the light is attended to, because in the mud itself the Lord is seen.

THE morning has risen into midday. The sunshine is increasingly becoming warmer and one wishes to walk in the shade.

An elderly school-master has come. He has been practising austerity of piety for years. His body is so dried up and emaciated that his bones are visible and his eyes have become smoky and pallid. They seem to have sunk into their cavities. It appears that he has tortured himself much and has understood this self-torture as austerity or piety.

The life of many of those who are eager to tread the path of the Lord becomes poison-affected due to this mistake alone. The attainment of the Lord takes the form of the denial of the world and the aspiration of the soul and that of destroying the body. This negative view undermines them, and they are not even conscious that apposition to the objects is not synonymous with the realization of the Supreme Soul.

The fact is that those who harass the body are no better than materialists and the opponents of

the world are devoured by the world in a very subtle form.

The view inimical to the world binds us to the world, more than — and definitely not less than — the hedonistic view of the world.

Transcending the body and the world is the true aspirational austerity and not opposing them.

And that way or mode is neither that of curbless enjoyment, nor that of ruthless suppression. That way is different from both. It is a third mode. It is the way of sobriety and continence. A midway balance is the point of sobriety. It is called "midway" only for elucidation; in fact, it is beyond the two. This midway balance is neither partial enjoyment and partial suppression, nor a compromise; it is full continence, neither enjoyment nor suppression.

'Too much' of anything is incontinence, while to have anything in proper measure is continence. 'Too much' is destruction, moderation is life. He who grasps 'too-much' perishes. Both enjoyment and suppression destroy life. 'Too-much' is ignorance, egotism and death.

I call continence and harmony aspirational austerity. When the strings of the lute are neither loose nor overtightened, a harmonious note is produced. There is, however, a state of strings when

they cannot be called either too tight or too loose. Melody is born in such a state. In life, too, that point is the point of sobriety. The conditions governing melody and continence are the same. Truth is attained through continence.

I have mentioned this aspect of continence to him and it seems he has paid heed to it. His eyes are witness to the same. They evince signs of awakening after a peaceful slumber. He seems to be calm, healthy and normal. Some tension has subsided and some vision has been acquired.

I told him as he rose to depart, "Eschew all tensions then watch. You have eschewed enjoyment. Please eschew ruthless suppression. Eschew, eschew all and watch.

Be normal and watch; only normalcy can produce a normal, healthy condition, can lead you to the natural state."

He said in reply, "What is now left to be eschewed? Everything has gone off. I am returning quiet and free of burden. A painful dream seems to have been shattered. I am much obliged." His eyes bore features of simplicity and calmness. His smile appeared sweet and innocent. Though old, he appeared like a child.

I wish these things were manifest to those who are eager after the Lord.

DO YOU wish to realize truth ? Then leave off mind. When mind ceases to exist, truth becomes manifest in the manner as the diffusion of sunlight within as soon as one opens the doors. The mind has blocked the ingress of truth like a wall. The bricks of the mind's wall are made of thoughts and deliberations. Thoughts and thoughts, this chain of thoughts and thoughts constitutes the mind. Sage Ramana once said to a person, "Check your thoughts and then tell me where the mind is."

There is no mind where there is no thought. If there are no bricks how can there be a wall ?

A hermit was here, last night. He was asking, "What shall I do with the mind ?" I said, "Do not do anything with it. Leave the mind alone and see. Leave it off completely and keep on watching just as one watches the flow of the current while sitting on the bank of the river. Go on watching the current of thoughts, unconcerned and unaffected. Keep on watching; just be alert. By the impact of that watching, thoughts would vanish into the void and the mind would disappear."

And when the mind is removed, what is experienced in its vacant peace is the soul. That alone is existence.

A HERMIT was staying in a certain temple on a dark cold night. In order to ward off the cold he had burnt a wooden image of the Lord. The priest woke up on seeing the blazing fire.

When he saw the image burning he was stunned. In the excitement of anger he could not utter a word. It was an unthinkable, unpardonable atrocity. He noticed that the hermit was searching for something in the heap of ashes. The priest asked him, "What is it that you are up to ?" The hermit replied, "I am searching for the bones of the Lord's body." Now the madness of the hermit was clear to the priest. He said to him, "How can there be bones in a wooden image, O mad hermit ?" Then the hermit said, "Please do me the favour of bringing another image. The night is chill and long."

When I think about this story it appears to me that the mad hermit is none else than myself.

I wish we were free of idols so that we could have visions of the unembodied soul. He who stays with the form cannot reach the formless. How could he who has an eye on the external shape jump into the ocean of the shapeless ? Can a person who is engaged in the worship of another return to himself ? Consign the embodied to the fire so that



the unembodied may remain in experience. Allow the gathering clouds of form to be scattered so that the shapeless void can be known. Let the form flow away so that the boat may reach the ocean of the formless. He who launches his boat from the shore of limitations certainly reaches the unlimited and mingles with it.

25

WHAT is prayer ? Is it self-forgetfulness ? No, it is not. That in which there is forgetting, sinking and losing is only a form of inebriety. That, in fact, is not prayer, but escapism, a flight. It is possible to lose oneself in words, in melody. What is there in the fascination of sound, in dance, can be forgotten. This forgetting and senselessness can yield pleasure as well, but it is no prayer. It is insensibility whereas prayer is the name of perfect wakefulness in perfect consciousness.

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 just offered but lived through. It is inactivity from its very roots. When all activities subside into voidness and only consciousness, the witness, remains, that state is

prayer. The word prayer implies an activity, the word meditation too implies an activity; but these two words are used for that peculiar state of consciousness : to be in the void, in silence, in speechlessness is prayer, is meditation.

I had mentioned this yesterday in Prayer-assembly.

A person asked me later, "Then what shall we do ?"

I said, "For a while, do not do anything. Leave off yourself in absolute rest. Let your body and mind become quiet. Quietly watch the mind. It becomes calm and void by itself. In this void alone can the proximity of Truth be realized. In this void alone that which is within and without becomes manifest. Then 'within' and 'without' wither away and pure existence remains, the totality of which is called God.

26

THE dusk has passed into the night. Some people have come and complain that I teach nihilism, voidness. But at the very thought of voidness they are afraid. Can there be a succour, a support ?

I tell them that courage is essential for a leap

into the void. But those who jump in, do not get emptiness but attain plenitude. And those who hold on to some fancied support get stuck up in the void alone. Are the succours and supports of fantasy real succours and supports ?

It is only through the void that the support of truth is attained. Becoming void means being devoid of succours and supports of fantasies.

I tell them a story.

“On the night of a new moon, a traveller passing through a strange country and crossing a mountainous desolation realized that he had fallen into a ditch. His feet slipped and he caught hold of a cluster of creepers and hung in suspense. There is darkness everywhere. There is deep, impenetrable darkness in the bottomless chasm below. For many hours he remained suspended like that. And all through these hours he suffered the pangs of imminent death. It was a winter night and gradually his hands had become cold and benumbed. Eventually he released the hold of his hands. He was to fall down into the ditch. None of his efforts would save him. He saw himself in the jaws of death. He fell — but no, he didn't. There was no pit at all. The moment he fell he saw himself standing on the ground.”

I have also found myself in a similar predicament.

ment. Falling into the void, I realized that the void itself was the ground. He who forsakes the supports and succours of the mind attains the support of the Lord. The sole goal of man's life is to become void, and those who do not gather courage to become so become void themselves.

27

I WAS returning home from my morning walk. On the bank of a river I saw a small spring. Sweeping away dry leaves on the way, it was rushing to the river. I saw its dizzy speed. I saw its mirthful mingling with the river. I saw that the river too was rushing.

And then I observed that everything was rushing. To meet the ocean, to be lost in the limitless, to achieve fulness, the entire life, driving away the dry dead leaves on the way, it was rushing.

A drop aspires to become the ocean. This very rule is the goal of life. On the basis of this very aspiration rest all motions and in perfection one finds true joy. Limit is sorrow; incompleteness is grief. Life aspires to rise above all obstacles of limit and incompleteness. On account of these both — limit and incompleteness — life has to suffer from death. In their absence it is immortal. Because of them it is

split into pieces, In their absence it becomes an undivided whole.

But man halts at the droplet of the ego and there alone he becomes severed from the endless flow of life. Thus he loses the sun by his own inadvertence; he makes a futile effort of seeking satisfaction in the flickering flame of a feeble earthen lamp. But full satisfaction cannot be achieved, for how can he be satisfied with being but a drop. There is no way out other than becoming an ocean. The ocean is the goal. It has to become an ocean. It is essential to lose the drop. It is essential to destroy the ego. When the ego becomes the Brahman then alone is satisfaction possible.

It is that satisfaction alone — the satisfaction of being the ocean—that establishes one in Truth. And it is the satisfaction alone that liberates, for, how can he who is not satisfied become liberated ?

Jesus Christ has said :

“He who tries to save life loses it and he who loses it realizes it.”

Let me say that this alone is love. Losing oneself is love. Accepting death in love is the means of realizing divine life.

Therefore I say, “Ye drops, rush to the ocean, the goal. Woo death in love, for that alone is life.

He who halts before he reaches the ocean, dies and he who reaches the ocean crosses death.”

ONCE it so happened, that a disciple of a hermit passed away. The hermit went to his house. The dead body was lying there and the people were crying. The hermit approached and asked in a loud voice, “Is the man dead or alive ?”

At this question the people were rather taken aback. Why was the question asked? The dead body lay there. Was any further evidence needed ?

There was silence for a while. Someone then urged the hermit, “Please, sir, answer yourself.”

Do you know what the hermit said to them ? He said:

“He who was dead has died. He who was alive is still alive. Only the link between the two has given way.”

Life has no death and the dead have no life.

Those who do not know life call death the end of life. Birth is not the beginning of life, nor death its end. Life is within and without birth and death. It existed before birth and so would it do after death. The link has birth and death, but life has no birth and death at all.

I have just returned from the cremation ground. There the funeral pyre blazed and the people said, "All is over." I said, "You have no eyes. All this is mere appearance."

29

I HAVE returned from a journey. I had met many hermits, both men and women. Their number is legion, but there is no saintliness in them. These so-called hermits, like so many artificial flowers, are seen everywhere.

Without austerity dharma is impossible. What goes by the name of dharma only adds to impiety. There is religion above but impiety beneath. And this is but natural. Plants without roots may play their brilliant part at a festivity. They may shed lustre but can they grow fruits and flowers on them ?

Roots of virtue, piety and religion lie in Sadhana and Yoga. In the absence of Yoga the life of a hermit can either be a mere display or a ruthless suppression. Both these aspects are undesirable.

A false display of good conduct, not spontaneous and natural, is hypocrisy. And ruthless suppression is fatal. It involves struggle and tension without yielding any achievement. What is suppressed does not die but moves on to deeper layers.

At one end are the afflictions of sensual enjoyment, the heated feverish life scorched in its flames and the insatiable mad race of unquenchable thirst. At the other we find the suppression and the fiery flames of self-torture. He who escapes the well of one extremity falls into the deep ditch of the other.

Yoga is neither enjoyment nor suppression. It is keeping away from both. Neither of the mutually clashing extremes has to be resorted to. Neither of these clashing pairs can resolve the conflict. If we choose either of the two we cannot go out of them. He who selects and holds either is himself selected and held by it.

Yoga is not clinging to anything but is eschewing all clutches. It is not leaving off one thing for siding with the other. Well, being impartial eschew all clutches. It is 'the clinging to' which is the mistake. It is this which leads to a fall into the well or ditch. It takes one to the extremes of mutually clashing conflicts and struggles while the right path runs in the direction where there are no extremes, no duality, no struggle. Do not make selections but be aware of that consciousness which makes selection. Do not fall into duality but be firm and resolute in the knowledge that perceives the duality. The establishment therein is intelligence and it is intelligence that leads to light.

That door is near, and those who liberate the flame of consciousness from the storm of duality get the key wherewith they can open the door to truth.

30

I SEE men so engrossed in their worldliness that I feel pity for them. There is no void, no fraction of empty space inside them. How can he be liberated, who has no void in him (for God or enlightenment to enter)? For liberation it is essential to have some space within and not without. He who has space within is one with the space without. When the inner space (void) is one with the space of the universe that communion is called liberation. That, in fact is, realizing God.

I do not, therefore, urge anyone to fill himself with God but I do say to all, "Make yourself void and bare and you will then realize that God has filled you up.

During the rains, when the clouds pour forth water, mounds remain dry but pits are filled. Be like the pits, and not like the mounds. Do not fill yourself. Keep yourself empty. The Lord is raining at every moment. He who is empty to receive that shower becomes full.

The value of a jar lies in this that it is empty. The ocean fills it up to the extent to which it is empty.

Man is valued to the extent he is bare. The ocean of truth descends into his voidness and makes it full.

31

WHEN I see spiritual aspirants I observe that they are all engaged in suppressing their minds. By suppressing the mind, Truth cannot be attained. On the contrary the suppression of mind obstructs the realization of Truth. The mind should rather be understood than suppressed. If you understand it the door is opened; dharma is realized neither in the mind nor through the mind. It is realized in the state of 'no-mindness'.

Mao Tzu was engaged in performing religious austerities living in a solitary hut in the hermitage of his preceptor, he tried day and night to suppress the mind. He never used to attend to those who came to see him.

Once his preceptor went into his hut. Mao Tzu did not turn his attention to him. But his preceptor stayed there throughout the day, rubbing a brick against a rock. Mao Tzu, unable to stand this,

eventually asked, "What are you doing, sir?" The preceptor replied, "I have to make a mirror of this brick."

Mao Tzu said, "Sir, have you turned mad? Even if you rub the brick all through your life it cannot become a mirror." On hearing this the preceptor began to laugh and asked him, "What are you doing? If a brick cannot become a mirror, can the mind become so?" In fact, neither the mind nor the brick can become a mirror. It is the mind, the dust, which covers the mirror. Eschew it and separate it. Then alone you can realize truth. The mind is a mass of thoughts that are external dust particles which have to be removed. When they are removed the ever-spotless consciousness remains. In that mindless state free from thoughts, we have the vision of that eternal truth which had been hidden behind the smoke-screen of thoughts.

If there is no smoke of thoughts, the smokeless flame of consciousness alone remains. It has to be realized and lived in. The object of achievement in sadhana is that alone.

THE morning came and passed. The afternoon came and went away. A lovely sunset spread over the western horizon.

Every day I observe the sunrise and the day spreading. And I observe the day sinking, and then I observe this too that I have not risen, nor passed into the afternoon, nor realized the sunset.

When I returned from my travels yesterday, it was this that I observed. In all my wanderings I have gained this experience: the path changes but not the traveller. Travel is, of course, a change but the traveller appears unchanged.

Where was I yesterday? Where am I today? What was it just now? What is it now? What I was yesterday I am today. What I was just now even now I remain the same. The mind is not the same. The body is not the same, but I am the same.

There is a perceptible change in space and time, but there is no change in "I".

Everything is a flowing current but this "I" is not a part of this current. Though passing through it, it is without and beyond it.

This eternal traveller, this ever-fresh, well-known traveller, is the soul. In the changing universe, to remain alert to this unchanged one is liberation.

I SEE you and that also which is beyond you. The eyes that stop with the body do not see. How transparent is the body ! Howsoever solid and opaque the body may be, it cannot truly hide what is behind it.

But if there is no eye to see, everything is changed. Even the sun becomes non-existent. All the games we play depend on the eyes. No one comprehends light through deliberations and arguments.

The spiritual eye cannot likewise be replaced by any other thing. It is essential. We need it to see the spirit. We need an inner eye. If it is there, everything is within our ken, if not, there is neither light nor the Lord.

He who wishes to see existence beyond another's body must peep beyond the earthly existence of his own self.

The other body becomes transparent only to the extent to which I see 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 sluggishness. The world is only that which I am. The world ceases to exist on the very day I realize my consciousness in its fullness.

Self-ignorance is worldly existence; self-knowledge is liberation.

Hence I say every day and to everyone, "See for once who is seated within you ? Who is embedded in this body of bones and flesh ? Who is bound up within your external features ?

What immense cosmic being is shining within this insignificant thing ?

Who symbolizes this consciousness ?" What is this consciousness ?

Without putting these questions, without understanding them life cannot be meaningful and purposeful. Barring the self if comprehend everything else, no value can be attached to that knowledge.

The power through which the other — the supreme one — is known is competent to comprehend the self too. If it can comprehend the other, how will it not know the self ?

The matter concerns only a change of the path of approach. One has to approach him that sees through him that appears. The change of attention to what is seen is the key to self-knowledge.

In the current of thoughts wake up in that which is the witness also thereof.

And, a revolution takes place. Like an impeded stream when the bund is breached, the current of

consciousness sweeps off every type of sluggishness from life.

34

TILL last evening, there was life in a flowerplant. Its roots were in the ground and there was life in its leaves. There was green colour and shining brilliance in it. It used to swing gently in the wind and shed bliss all round. I had passed by it several times and had experienced the melody of its life.

Yesterday, it happened that someone pulled it off. The roots got loosened. Today when I approached it I found that it ceased breathing. This is what happens when the root is dislodged from the ground. The entire play is that of the roots. They are not manifest but the whole secret of life lies in them alone.

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

I was reading a book by Allweyer Kamu. The opening sentence of the book ran, "Suicide is the only important problem of philosophy, why? Because now-a-days a man finds no specific purpose

in life. Everything has become meaningless and futile.

This is what has happened. Our roots are shaken. We have lost our link with the fountain-head of life, in the absence of which life remains but a meaningless story.

We have to give man stable roots. We have to give him fertile tracts of land. The roots are those of the soul. The ground is that of religion. If this can be done, flowers can bloom once again in humanity.

35

I HAD been invited into a family. I returned from there only after dusk. A highly pleasant incident happened there. There were many children in the house. They had built a house with a pack of cards. They took me to the nursery to show it to me. It was beautiful. I praised it. The lady of the house said : "O, a house of cards needs no praise. A gentle gust of wind razes it to the ground."

I began to laugh; the children asked, "Sir, why do you laugh?" Even as we talked, the house of cards crumbled down. Children became sad. The lady of the house burst out laughing "See!" I replied, "Yes I saw. I have seen other houses as



well. All other houses too crumble down like this. Even solid houses of stone are but houses of cards. Not only those of children but those of old men too are but houses of cards. We all build houses — houses of fantasy and dreams. And then a gentle gust of wind razes them to the ground. In this sense we are all children. Maturity, a rare phenomenon, occurs only now and then. Otherwise many people die as children.

All houses are houses of cards. Realization of this makes an individual mature. Even then he remains engaged in building them up. But then it becomes mere acting.

Knowing this that the worldly existence is mere acting, is becoming liberated from the world.

Only that which is acquired and realized in this condition does not become quashed in any of the gusts of wind.

IT WAS a wet drizzly weather. Moist winds were driving the falling leaves as far as the door. It seemed as if the autumn was on, heralding the advent of spring. Roads were covered by the leaves and when people stepped on them, the dry leaves made a sweet rustling sound.

I have been watching those leaves for a pretty long time. That which becomes ripe falls off. From dawn to dusk though leave falls on leave, the trees do not experience any pain whatever. A wonderful rule of life is understood thereby. There is difficulty and pain in plucking anything unripe. When a thing is ripe separation comes off by itself.

A sage has come. Renunciation has not yet become a pleasure to him. It is painful and difficult. It has not come of its own accord; it has been forcefully fetched. The leaves of delusion, ignorance, yearning for family and egotism are as yet unripe. He has applied force. The leaves are broken asunder no doubt but they have left pain behind them. This pain would not allow peace to come. I think I should tell him this evening the secret of the falling leaves. Knowledge, not renunciation, is the first step. In its blaze and fervour the world falls off like dry leaves. Renunciation is not forced but realized.

When revolutionary knowledge is attained, abandonment and renunciation become a pleasure, not pain.

THERE are various types of knowledge. There is a kind of knowledge which is mere knowing, an intellectual understanding and there is a knowledge which is experience, intelligence, a live perception and conviction. One is the collection of dead facts, the other is the understanding of live truth. There is a lot of difference between the two, that of heaven and earth, that of darkness and light. In fact, intellectual knowledge is no knowledge at all. It is an illusion of knowledge. Can a blind man have the knowledge of light? Intellectual knowledge is such a knowledge.

Such an illusion of knowledge covers up ignorance. It is a mere covering. In the maze of its words and in the smoke-screen of its deliberations ignorance is forgotten. It is more fatal than ignorance, for, if ignorance is visible, the aspiration to rise above it, is generated. But, if it is not visible, to be liberated from it becomes impossible.

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

Knowledge — true knowledge — does not come from external source. Know that what comes from without is not knowledge. It is only a cognition, an awareness. One should be cautious of falling into the snare of this illusion of knowledge.

Whatever comes from outside becomes an additional screen over the self.

Knowledge wakes up from within. It does not come but it wakes up and for it, we are not to pile up but tear off screens.

Knowledge is not acquired. It is awakened and evolved. Acquired knowledge is awareness; opened-up knowledge is experience. Life has to be forcibly moulded in accordance with that knowledge — awareness — which is acquired. Yet it cannot entirely accord with that. Therefore a mutual clash continues to exist between that knowledge and life.

But the knowledge that is opened and evolved naturally assimilates the conduct. Life antagonistic to true knowledge is an impossibility. Such a thing has not happened on this earth.

I am reminded of a story. In the rough and rugged foot-paths of a thick forest, there lived two sages. Insofar as their physical relationship was concerned, they were father and son. The son was going ahead and the father followed him. The path was deserted and frightening. Suddenly the roar of a lion was heard. The father said to the son, "Come back and follow me. There is danger ahead." The son laughed and walked on. He continued to go ahead. The father repeated the warning. The lion came face to face. Death was

imminent. The son said, "Since I am not the body, wherein lies the danger? You often told me this, didn't you?" The father ran away from the place, and shouted, "O mad boy, keep away from the path of the lion." But the son continued to walk ahead, laughing. The lion pounced upon him. He fell down, but it appeared clear to him that what fell was not the "I" in him. He was not the body. So death too was not his. What the father used to say appeared clear to him. And this difference is great. His father was miserable. As he stood at a safe distance, tears welled up in his eyes. But the son was the seer. He was a seer in life as in death. He had no misery, no pain. He remained unmoved, unaffected because whatever was going on, was going on outside. He himself was not at all mixed up with it anywhere.

Hence I assert that there is difference between knowledge and knowledge.

38

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."

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Verily I say, "The annihilation of both the drop and the ocean is samadhi. 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 limited nor the limitless, there is samadhi.

Samadhi is communion with the satta (existence).

Samadhi is Truth, consciousness, and quietude.

"I" is not present in samadhi. But on the other hand, when "I" ceases to exist, what remains behind is samadhi.

And perhaps, this "I" which is not "I" is the real "I".

"I" has two sattas: the "ego" and the "Brahman". The ego is that which I am not but appears like me. Brahman is that which I am but which does not appear like me.

Consciousness, pure consciousness is Brahman.

I am pure consciousness, the witness, but this does not appear to be so, for consciousness is identified with the thought-current. Thought itself is not consciousness. That which comprehends thought is consciousness, pure consciousness. That which is the seer of thought is consciousness. Thought is the *visaya* (object of knowledge) and consciousness is the *visayi*, (the perceiver). The identification of the

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*viṣayī* with the *viśaya* is insensibility. This alone is a slumbering state.

What remains in the absence of thought is alone consciousness. Being in this that remains, is samadhi.

Be wakeful therein; this alone is the essence of the utterance of all alert wakeful persons.

39

I SEE the gardener sowing seeds. He then puts the manure in the soil. He waters the garden and waits for the flowers to blossom. Flowers cannot be forcefully brought out of the plants. We have to wait for them patiently and courageously.

Love and patience.

Seeds of the Lord too are to be sown in the same manner. So we have to wait for the blooming of flowers of divine life.

Prayer and patience.

He who goes against this and evinces impatience is unable to reach any goal. Impatience is not a good manure for that development.

If one waits peacefully, courageously and lovingly, flowers begin to bloom one fine morning without any strain and their fragrance fills the front yard of life with sweetness.

For the flowers of the infinite to bloom, infinite patience is essential. But let it be remembered that if one is ready for so much patience, the time for its acquisition too approaches instantaneously. Infinite courage is the only condition for realizing the infinite. As soon as this condition is fulfilled, it is realized. It has not to come from anywhere outside. It is the development of the interior. It is actually present. But on account of impatience and disquietude we are unable to see it.

40

MAN'S mind is wonderful. That alone is the secret of worldly existence and of liberation. Sin and merit, bondage and liberation, hell and heaven are embedded in it. Darkness and light are its own. Birth is in itself only and death too is in itself. It alone is the door to external world. It alone is the staircase to the internal one. And the cessation of its existence becomes the crossing of both.

The mind is everything. Everything is its own sport and fancy. If it slumbers, all sport comes to an end.

Yesterday I had said this somewhere. Someone had inquired, "The mind is very unsteady and

fickle. How can it go to slumber ? Mind is very dirty. How can it become pure ?

Then I narrated a story.

After Buddha had become old, one afternoon he halted at the foot of a tree in a forest for rest. He felt thirsty. Anand had gone to a stream up the mountain to fetch water. But just then some carts had crossed the stream, and the water had turned muddy. Putrefying leaves and slush had begun to float. Anand returned without water. He said to Buddha, "The water in the stream is not pure. I shall go to the big river." The big river was very far off. Buddha pressed him to go to the stream alone and fetch water. After a short while Anand returned empty-handed. The water did not appear to him fit for fetching. This happened three times. Every time Buddha made him return. On the third occasion when Anand reached the stream, he was surprised. The stream had by that time become clear and was now unruffled. The mud had settled down and the water had become pure.

I find the story quite interesting. The state of the human mind is somewhat similar. The carts of life make it excited and agitated. But if anyone were to watch it sitting down, with peace and patience, the slush settles lower down and it ushers in the national purity. In the purity of mind life

becomes fresh. It is a matter of only patience and quiet expectation. Without doing anything the dirt in the mind also settles down.

One has to become a mere witness and the mind becomes pure. We are not to make it pure. All difficulty is due to this making. Just watch it sitting by the shore. Then see what takes place.

## 41

IN THE stillness of the night someone is playing on the flute. The moonlight appears to have settled down. Lonely damp night and the notes of the flute coming from far. Sweet as dream. All this is unbelievable and so beautiful.

How much nectar can a hollow bamboo reed shed !

Life too is like a flute. It is empty and void within but along with it, it has an unlimited capacity for melodious notes.

But all depends on him who plays. As the individual makes it, so becomes this life. It is the creation of oneself. This is only an opportunity. What type of song one wishes to sing entirely rests in ones own hands. The greatness of man lies in this that he is free to sing songs of either heaven or hell.

Everyone can produce divine notes from his flute. It is only a matter of practising the fingers a bit. A little practice yields an immense achievement. The infinite empire of Bliss is attained without doing anything.

I wish to say whole-heartedly, "Take up your flute. The time is fleeting. See that the opportunity to sing song does not slip by. Before the curtain falls you have to sing the song of your life.

42

IT IS essential to know what is the seed and what the fruit. It is necessary to recognize the beginning and the consequence. He who walks ahead without knowing the effect and the cause is likely to err. Going ahead by itself is not sufficient. By going alone no one reaches the goal. The direction and the mode of sadhana must essentially be perfect.

In sadhana something is central and something is peripheral. If the effort is applied to the centre the boundary maintains its balance. There is no reason that it should be separately sustained. It is only the manifestation of the centre; it is only the extended centre. Hence the effort on the boundary is futile. "To beat about the bush" is a well-known proverb.

To become entangled with the periphery is just like this.

What is the centre ? What is the periphery ?

Knowledge is the centre and character the periphery. Knowledge is the beginning and character the outcome, the consequence. Knowledge is the seed, character is the fruit. But generally people start in the opposite direction. Proceeding from character they wish to reach knowledge. They wish to transform character into knowledge.

But character cannot be cultivated in ignorance. In fact, character cannot be cultivated at all. Character that is cultivated is no character. It is a false covering beneath which the bad character becomes concealed. Practised character is self-deception.

Darkness is not to be suppressed or concealed. It has to be eliminated. Paper-flowers of character are not to be pasted on bad character. It has to be eradicated. When bad character ceases to exist, what comes out is character, gentle and pure.

Character, moulded with violence out of ignorance, is fatal because what is not within it appears to be so. What has to be brought thus vanishes from sight as well.

In ignorance, there is no direct means of bringing about character because the manifestation of ignorance itself is bad character. Bad character is

ignorance. A Buddha has said, "what can he, who is ignorant, do?"

It is not character, but knowledge that has to be brought about. Knowledge itself becomes character.

The Agamas declare :

"Knowledge illuminates everything. Only when it rises, ignorance and delusion disappear. By that, passion and hatred are eradicated. Only by that, is the state of liberation attained.

43

I RECEIVED a letter in the morning. Some one has asked therein, "Life is surrounded by miseries. Yet, why do you harp on Bliss? Observing what is present, talk of Bliss is a mere fantasy."

Certainly life is sunk in misery. There are miseries all around us. But that which is surrounded is no misery at all. As long as we keep on observing what surrounds, misery alone comes to sight, but the moment we begin to see what is surrounded, misery becomes unreal and Bliss real.

The whole thing is only a matter of perspective. The vision which manifests the seer is the real vision. Everything else is blindness. The moment the

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seer becomes manifest everything turns out to be bliss, because bliss is its own form. The universe exists even then, but it becomes entirely different. What appear to be thorns in it due to the ignorance of the soul, cease to appear so.

The existence of misery is not real because it becomes split by the transforming experience. As on waking up, the dream becomes unreal, so misery becomes unreal after the advent of self-realization.

Bliss is true because it is self.

44

YESTERDAY I spoke thus at a certain place. I said, "I wish to take away your complacency, your contentment. A divine thirst, an unearthly dissatisfaction, may be born in all — this alone is my longing. To be satisfied with what man is is death. Man has not attained the summit of development; he is only a rung in the ladder. He is a step in the course of evolution. What is manifest in him is nothing in comparison to what is yet unmanifest. In comparison with what he can become, what he is is equivalent to not being anything at all.

Religion wishes to awaken everyone, from this death of complacency to the life of dissatisfaction.

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For, only through that dissatisfaction can that point be reached where there is real satisfaction.

Man has to transcend his humanity.

It is this transcendence that gives him access to divinity.

How can this transcendence be effected ?

If these definitions are understood, the mode of transcendence too can be understood.

Animality is the condition of man before the thought-process starts.

Humanity is the condition during the thought-process.

Divinity is the condition attained after the thought-process is transcended.

If we go beyond the enclosure of thought-process, consciousness reaches divinity.

Transcending thought is transcending man.

45

I SEE God in nature. I am experiencing it every minute, every hour, No air is breathed in or breathed out without a communion with Him. Wherever my eye rests I see Him present. In whatever my ears hear I realize that His melody is being sung.

He is everywhere. Seeing Him is only a matter of the advent of a godly, divine vision. Of course, He exists but in order to grasp Him we need to have the eyes that can see Him. As soon as the eye is ready He presents Himself everywhere, at every moment.

At night, when the sky is filled with stars, do not think about them but see them. And when the waves begin to eddy and dance on the bosom of the ocean, do not think about them but see them. And when the bud opens into a blossom see it, just see it. If there is no thought, if there is only seeing, a big secret is revealed and access is gained from the threshold of nature into that portal which is God. Nature is no more than a covering-sheet over God. Only those who know how to lift that veil become familiar with the truth of life.

A youthful seeker after Truth went to a preceptor. He put a question to him, "I wish to know Truth, I wish to know Religion. Kindly tell me where shall I start ? Where shall I gain entry into it ?" The venerable preceptor said, "Aren't you hearing the sound of water falling from the mountain summit, close at hand ?" The youth replied, "I hear it clearly." The preceptor then added, "Then start from there alone. Enter from there alone. That is the door."



Verily the entrance door is so near. In the waterfalls descending from the hills, in the leaves of trees swinging and rustling in the winds, in the rays of the sun dancing and sparkling on the vast ocean — there is a screen hanging at every entrance-door. It does not rise without being lifted up. In fact, the screen is over our vision, not on the entrance doors. Thus a single screen covers up an infinite number of doors.

46

THE MOON has risen. Passing over the tops of trees, its soft, silver light has begun to spread on the road. The air is being rendered sweet by the overflowing fragrance of the mango-blossoms.

I have just returned from a place of discourse. Most of the persons present there were young men, influenced by modern fashions and highly excited, as if want of faith was their support. Negation of everything was their accepted tenet. One of them said, "I do not accept God. I am free and independent." In this single line the mentality of the age is reflected. The entire age takes shelter in the shade of this freedom without knowing that this freedom is self-destructive, suicidal.

Why is this called suicide? For, without denying oneself it is impossible to deny God.

I narrated them a story. "There was a grapevine spread out in the palace garden of God. It was tired of spreading, growing and obeying orders. It was fed up with dependence and it had wished for freedom. It shouted at the top of its voice that the whole sky should listen to it—

'I will not grow now'

'I will not grow now'

'I will not grow now'

"Certainly this was a strange revolt, because it was against the laws of nature.

"God peeped out and said, 'Do not grow. What is the necessity of growing?' The grape vine was glad; the revolt had been successful. It began to exert itself in withstanding the growth. But the growth did not stop, it never stopped. It exerted itself in the direction of not growing but it went on growing and growing. And God knew it beforehand."

This is the situation. God is our nature; He is our inner Law. It is impossible to go far away from Him. There is no other way except being in God, being God Himself. Well we may deny, well we may try to be free, but there is no liberation from Him; for He is our own self. In fact, He

alone is real and we are His reflections, His images. So I say, liberation is not from Him but in Him.

47

A KING had imprisoned a man of normal health and balanced mind. He wanted to study the effect of isolation on man. The prisoner continued to shout and scream for some time in order to go out. He used to cry and beat his head. His entire existence, he felt, depended on the world outside. His whole life was bound up with others. Within himself he was no better than non-existent. Isolation to him was like not being at all.

And he began to crumble down and break up. Something within him began to erode. Suddenly silence ensued. Crying ceased. Tears dried up. His eyes appeared to be hard, stony. Though seeing, he appeared not to be seeing anything at all.

Days rolled on, months passed by and finally a year elapsed. There had been a provision for his happiness and comfort. In the prison he had all those amenities which he did not have outside. Was he not the recipient of Imperial hospitality?

But by the end of the year, the specialists pronounced that he had become mad.

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Externally he appeared to be what he was before. Perhaps healthier. But within?

Within, he had died up in a sense.

I ask, "Can loneliness make a man mad?" How can it make him mad? In fact, madness had been there already. The external contacts had kept it concealed. Isolation uncovers it.

The restlessness that man evinces in losing himself in a crowd is only to save himself from it.

Every individual therefore is engaged in a flight from himself. This flight cannot be called healthy. Not seeing reality is not being free from it. He who does not keep mental equilibrium of normalcy in perfect loneliness is under delusion. Of course, some time or other this self-deception will have to be punctured. And one has to know what is within, in its stark nakedness. If this does not take place naturally and effortlessly, the individual becomes shattered and confused. That which is suppressed sometimes reaches an explosive stage and explodes.

Religion is the scientific means of descending into this loneliness by oneself. When layer after layer is opened up gradually, the wonderful Truth is directly perceived. By and by, it becomes known that really we are alone. In the depth, in the innermost centre, everyone is lonely. Being not familiar with that loneliness one feels frightened.

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Ignorance and strangeness cause fear. Once it is familiar fearlessness and bliss take the place of fear. God who is *Saccidananda* (Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss) shines in loneliness.

The Lord is attained when one descends into oneself. Hence I say, "Do not run away from loneliness, from yourself, but sink into oneself. Only after diving in the ocean can pearls be secured."

48

THERE had been a shower last night. The roads are waterlogged and slushy. Damp winds blow still and the sky is overcast with clouds. It seems the sun will not rise. I feel rather dispirited in the morning.

A young man has come. He is well-read. It appears to be so. Smell of books and of nothing but books exudes from his words. How nauseating is this smell?

I listen to him, though he has come to listen to me. He continues to speak for an hour; but whatever he says is someone else's utterance. Our system of education now-a-days gives rise to a state of mind that is mechanical; it gives birth to

memory, not to the faculty of thinking. Thoughts are gathered, but the ability to think is not attained. This is an extremely fatal situation. Through it, no development of individuality, thought or self-experience is possible. Like a machine, the individual simply repeats other people's words.

That which simply fills the memory alone cannot be called true education. It is something sham, something phoney. Education must give birth to that inner vision which is capable of examining and scrutinizing problems. If the problems are mine, the solutions provided by others cannot help me. And every problem is so new that no old solution can be a true solution for it.

The power that is slumbering within us, the intellect, must be wakened up by education. We should not be stuffed with those thoughts which we have not lived ourselves, nor known ourselves and which are utterly dead for us. They can only increase our burden. Beneath this dead weight the waking up of intellect becomes impossible.

Everyday, all around me, I see many such persons as groan under the burden of those thoughts which they have not known but have accepted. The thought which has not been known by oneself unavoidably becomes a burden.

Education should not become a mere passive

acceptance of thoughts. Only when it is based on active understanding and creative comprehension does it become purposeful.

I am forgetting that young man amid these digressions. When he stopped after giving expression to his thoughts — nay, they were not his thoughts at all — he gravely looked around as if to indicate that he, too, knew things.

How difficult is knowledge but how easy is the arrogance of knowledge!

Knowledge is difficult to acquire but egotistic arrogance is easy to possess. Let it be remembered that both of them are polar opposites. Knowledge is the death of egotism. Where egotism is present, it can be inferred that knowledge is absent. It is a sufficient indication of want of knowledge.

With the advent of knowledge egotism disappears. The understanding of ignorance steadily increases in proportion to an individual's extent of knowledge. Knowledge does not eradicate the secret but unravels it. At that moment, when the full secret of the universe as well as that of the self stands revealed in front — at that boiling point of knowledge the individual becomes void and his entire 'ego-sensation' is totally quashed. Egotism is the source of the darkness of ignorance. It is dispelled in the light of knowledge.

I kept quiet for a while and then said, "I desired to listen to you. But you do not say anything. What you have said now is not yours at all. All that has been borrowed. One cannot thrive on another man's wealth. It may conceal poverty but cannot eradicate it. Only one's own experience of Truth can be true and alive. If that is present, a revolution in life takes place. Otherwise, by carrying the burden of dead alien thoughts concerning Truth nothing is gained. Only the burden goes on increasing and the possibility of self experience recedes.

Knowledge that is not our own becomes an obstacle in the birth of that knowledge which only can become our own.

THE evening twilight seems to have come to an end. The sun hastening westwards has long since hidden himself behind the clouds, but the night has not yet set in. There is isolation both without and within. I am alone. No one is without, no one is within.

At this time I am nowhere. Rather, I am there where there is voidness. When the mind is void, nothing exists.

This mind is wonderful. It is like the bulbous onion. One day as I was peeling off the rinds of an onion, I was reminded of this resemblance. Layer after layer of the rinds came off. Nothing remained in the end. Thick rough layers at the beginning, soft slimy layers in the middle — then nothing. Thus is the mind too. You go on peeling off the rinds—gross layers, subtle layers, then empty thought, impressions and ego. Well, nothing else. It is a void. I call the further opening up of this void meditation. This void is our real form. That which ultimately remains is itself the form, call it whatever you wish, consciousness or matter. Words do not convey anything special. “What is” is only where there is no thought, no impression, no egotism.

Hume has said, “Whenever I withdraw into myself I do not meet any ‘I’ there. I collide with either thought or some impression or some memory, but of myself nothing is encountered.” This is quite correct. But there, Hume returns from the layer itself. This is his mistake. If only he had gone a little deeper he would have reached the spot where there is nothing to collide with. That is the real form. Everything stands on that void. If anyone were to return from the outer surface, he cannot become familiar with it.

Worldly existence is on the outer surface, the self is in the centre. Everything is on the surface but there is void in the centre.

I HAVE just returned from a walk in the sunlight. How pleasant is the warm sunlight during winter. The sun has risen up and the warmth of its rays is gradually increasing.

I had a gentleman with me. All along the way he was ceaselessly talking, but I was silent. As I listened, I recollected how often we use the word ‘I’ in our conversations, Everything is tied up with the central ‘I’. After birth, possibly, it is the sensation of ‘I’ that springs up at the outset and at the approach of death it is the same sensation that lingers till the end. In between these two extremes we find an extensive application of the same.

This ‘I’ is so familiar and yet so unknown too ! There is no other word in human language which is more filled with secrets than this.

Life passes off but the secret of ‘I’ is rarely revealed in full.

What is this ‘I’ ? It is something which we cannot possibly deny. Even in negation it is implied. Even in saying “I am not” it is present. In human

understanding this 'I' is the most decisive and indubitable entity.

There is the sense that "I am," but "who I am" is not known so easily. The realization of this is easily possible only through sadhana. All sadhana is the means to realize this 'I'. All religions, all philosophies are answers to this single question.

"Who am I?" This question is to be put by everyone to himself. Let everything else give way to this single question. Let this resound in the whole mind. Then this question descends into the insentient. The deeper the question goes, less and less pronounced is the identification on the upper level. It begins to be realized that I am not the body. It begins to appear that I am not the mind. It begins to appear that I am that which sees everything. I am the seer, I am the witness. This experience turns out to be the vision of the real form of the 'I'. With the advent of this real knowledge, the door to the secret of life begins to open. Being familiar with ourselves we become familiar with the entire secret of life. Knowledge of the 'I' becomes the knowledge of God. Hence I say that this 'I' is precious. Descending to its depth is the realization of everything.

THE city is asleep in the stillness of the night. After the usual walk I have returned with a guest. He talked a lot on the way. He is a materialist : a well-read scholar. He has marshalled together many an argument. I have heard all these with peaceful silence and have put but a single question viz., whether through all these thoughts he has been deriving mental peace and bliss or not.

At this he has hesitated a little and has not been able to spell out an answer.

The touchstone of Truth is neither argument nor thought. The touchstone of Truth is the experience of Bliss. If the path of the progress of thought is sound, life is filled with bliss-consciousness as a consequence. It is only for acquiring this condition that thoughts exist. The thought that does not bring about this vision here is 'nonthought' more and 'thought' less. Hence I told him, "Sir, I am not objecting to or opposing your words. Well, I request you to put this question to yourself."

Dharma is not thought. It is only a scientific means of obtaining lordly consciousness and enlightenment. Its test is not in disputation but in

practical application. It is not pronouncing a judgment on Truth but it is the sadhana of Truth, the achievement of Truth.

52

I AM sitting in a poor little hut. Through the holes in the thatched roof, sunlight is falling in circular patches on the ground. Dust particles are seen in them wafted up and down. They are not parts of the light but they have made the light smoky. They cannot even touch the light because they are by all means different. Yet, due to them the light is seen defiled. The light is still the light; there is no alteration in its form. But its body, its appearance, has become impure. Because of these alien guests, the host himself appears to be altered.

A similar thing has happened in the case of the human soul. Many alien particles of dust have settled on it and its real form is hidden among them. It is as though the host is lost in the crowd of guests and is incapable of being recognized.

It is essential for those who wish to become familiar with life and to perceive Truth directly, to recognize that which is not the guest but the host, among the crowd. Without realizing the host, life

is but a slumber. Wakefulness starts with its recognition.

That recognition is knowledge. Through this recognition one becomes familiar with what is eternal, pure and enlightened.

The light does not become impure due to the dust particles — nor the soul.

The light becomes smoky, the soul is forgotten.

What, then, are the dust particles in the light of the soul ?

All those which have come to me and within me from outside are dust particles. What is within me apart from them — that alone is my real form. Whatever have been grasped and collected together by the sense-organs are all dust particles.

What is there in me which has not been grasped by the sense-organs ? Colour, taste, smell, touch, sound — apart from these what is that which is in me ?

That is truth-consciousness which is not grasped by the sense-organs.

It has not come from the sense-organs, but it is, of course, behind them.

This consciousness alone is my real form — the rest is alien to me, like so many dust particles. This alone is my host — the rest are guests. This

consciousness alone is to be known and opened up. In it alone can that wealth be acquired which is imperishable.

53

THE last star visible at dawn is just sinking. Enveloped in fog, the infant day is about to be born. The morning sky is suffused with crimson born of this labour.

A friend has just given me the news of the death of some beloved kinsman. In the still blackness of the night itself the contact with the body had been severed. After pausing for a short while, he began to talk on death. He talked much and said in the end, "Some death occurs everyday yet everyone lives on as though he has not got to die. I cannot even imagine that I too can die. How am I so credulous in the midst of so many deaths?"

This credulousness is highly meaningful. That is so because he who is stationed in the mortal body is no mortal.

Death is on the outer circle, the periphery, not at the centre.

He who is seeing — the seer of the body and the mind — knows that he is separate from the body and

the mind. He is the seer of the mortal, but not mortal. He knows, "I am deathless. Death is only a change of form. I am eternal. Even after crossing all deaths, I, the immortal, remain apart."

But this understanding is insentient. To make this sentient consciousness is to become liberated. Death is directly perceived but the understanding of the immortal is indirect. But he who makes that too direct knows that which has neither birth nor death.

Realizing this life — which is beyond life and death — is emancipation. This is present within everyone. It has only to be known, realized.

Someone had asked a sage, "What is death? What is life? I have come to you to know this." What the sage said in reply is wonderful. He said, "Then go elsewhere. There is neither death, nor life, where I am."

54

I SAID yesterday, "The mud turns into flower. Filth and rubbish used as manure turn themselves into fragrance. The passions and emotions of man too are like this. They are potential powers. What seems brutish in man, on being altered in the mode attains divinity.



Hence the undivine too is divine in the form of a seed. And then, in fact, there is nothing undivine. Life in its entirety is divine. Everything is divine. The differences are in the manifestation of divinity.

Viewed in this manner nothing is despicable. He who is a brute at one end is a lord at the other. There is no contradiction between brutishness and divinity; brutishness develops into divinity. If one proceeds on this assumption, self-suppression and denial are, therefore, futile. That struggle is unscientific. Splitting oneself into two, no one can attain the peace and knowledge of the Soul.

A part of what I am myself, however small, cannot be eliminated. It may be dormant and repressed, but what is repressed has to be incessantly repressed. He who has been defeated has to be successively defeated. Through that path conquest cannot be complete.

The path of conquest is entirely different; it is not that of suppression but of knowledge; it is not that of discarding dirt and filth because I alone am that dirt and filth. It is that of transforming it into manure. This alone is called transforming "base metal into gold" in ancient alchemy.

MAHAVIR had asked, "O ye Sramanas, what is so dreadful unto living beings?"

Yesterday someone was asking the same. Whether one asks or not, the same question lurks in the eyes of everyone. Perhaps this is the only question worth asking.

Everyone is terror-stricken. Consciously or unconsciously, we are all haunted by fear. Sitting or standing, sleeping or waking, fear stares us in the face. There is fear in love, in hate, in merit, in sin — in everything. It seems as if our entire consciousness is built up of this fear, for what else are our faiths, conceptions, religions, and Gods apart from 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 annihilation, of not being. Fear means the apprehension of not being, of being eliminated. Effort goes on throughout the life to escape from this apprehension. Every effort is to save the self from this radical insecurity.

But even after the race run throughout life, the 'being' does not become decisive. The race is at its end but insecurity still persists. In fact, what appears

to be life after it has been fully lived transforms itself into death. Then it appears as though there was no life at all only death was being wooed. It seems as if birth and death were the two extremities of death alone.

Why is this fear of death ? Certainly death is unknown; certainly death is unfamiliar. How can it be feared ? What connection can there be at all with what is not known at all ? In reality, what we call the fear of death is not of death, but it is the fear of losing what we know as life. The fear is that of losing what is known. We have identified ourselves with what is known. That alone has been our 'being'. That alone has become our existence. My body, my assets, my prestige, my connections, my culture, my belief, my thought — all these have become the vital breath of my 'I'. This alone has become 'I'. The fear, then, is — Death will seize this 'I'. All these are being collected together in order to escape fear, to gain security. But what happens is just the opposite — The apprehension of losing these becomes fear. Whatever man does usually bring about a result which is contrary to that for which he has been doing it. All the steps taken for attaining pleasure, in ignorance, take him to misery. The path traversed for reaching fearlessness leads but to fear. What appears to be the attainment of

the 'Self' is not the 'Self'. If one walks up to this truth — if I am able to know that 'I' am not what I have understood as 'I', and that at this moment too I am different and separate from those things, with which I have identified myself, the fear is eliminated. In death only what is alien — another — is lost.

In order to know this, no activity or means is to be pursued. Only those different facts are to be known, only we have to wake up to those different facts which I understand as 'I am', with which I have identified myself. Waking up breaks up the identification. Waking up separates the "self" and the "alien", "the other". The identification of the self and the alien is fear; the realization of their separateness is freedom from fear i.e. fearlessness.

A SAGE had sent out the disciples of his hermitage on a travel through the wide world in order that they might learn something in that vast open institution. When the stipulated time was over, all of them, except one, returned. The preceptor was delighted at their achievements and accumulation of knowledge. They had learned a lot and returned. Afterwards the other student also returned. The

preceptor told him, "You have returned after the rest certainly, therefore, you must have acquired more knowledge than all the rest !" The youth replied, "I have returned without learning anything. Moreover, I have forgotten what you had taught me." What else can be a more disappointing answer ?

Thereafter, one day that disciple was massaging the body of the preceptor. Rubbing the back of the sage, he murmured to himself, "The temple is very pretty, but there is no idol of the Lord within." The sage happened by the way, to hear these words. He became furious. Certainly the words were meaningful, rather insinuating. The word 'temple' referred to the beautiful body of the sage. On seeing the preceptor furious, the disciple laughed. This was like pouring ghee into the blazing fire. The preceptor thereafter sent him out of the hermitage.

On another day when the sage was pouring over the pages of a scripture, that youth casually stepped in and sat near him. He continued to sit there as the sage continued to read. At the same time a wild honey-bee flew in, but was unable to go out. The door through which it had entered was of course open, but it was utterly blind and was trying to go through the closed window. Its humming sound

began to echo in the stillness of the temple. The youth cried aloud to the honey-bee.

"O stupid one, there is no door there. It is but the wall. Stop and see behind. The door is only there through which you had come." It was not the honey-bee but the sage who heard these words. And he found the door too. For the first time he looked into the eyes of the youth. He was not the youth who had gone on travel. These eyes were different. The sage now knew that what he had learned was no ordinary stuff. He had come after knowing something, not after learning something. The preceptor said to the youth — "I am now beginning to understand that my temple is void of the Lord.

I am now beginning to understand that hitherto I have been dashing my head against the wall and I haven't found the door. But now, what shall I do to find the door ? What shall I do lest my temple should be void of the Lord ?" The youth said, "If you wish for the Lord, be a void within yourself. Only he who is filled up within himself is void of the Lord. He who becomes a void within himself realizes that he has been filled with the Lord for ever. And if you wish to find the door as far as this truth, do the same as this honey-bee is doing now. The preceptor saw that the honey-bee was not doing anything. It was sitting on the wall, just

sitting. Now the sage understood. He knew. He realized as though a sudden flash of lightning smote the darkness. Moreover he saw this also that the honey-bee was going out through the door.

This story is my message. This is what I have been saying. To realize God we have to do nothing. But we have to see and abandon all activities. When the mind becomes quiet and begins to see, the door is found. Peaceful and empty mind alone is the door. My invitation to you all is towards that void. This is the invitation of piety and religion. Accepting the invitation alone is becoming pious and religious.

57

THE sun's warmth has spread throughout beneath the blue sky. The damp air has become thick and the drops of snow clustering round the grass are icy cold. Snow-drops drip-drip down the flowers. The fragrant flower, the queen of the night, has gone to sleep after diffusing its fragrance throughout the night.

A cock crows and from a distance its cries are heard. The trees shake gently in the gusts of mild breeze. The chirping sounds of the birds do not seem to end.

The morning has affixed its signature everywhere. The whole world proclaims of a sudden that the day has dawned.

I am sitting and watching the many winding paths being lost among the distant trees. Slowly the paths are crowded with pedestrians. Although they are walking, they appear to be fast asleep. Some internal lethargy has caught hold of them. They do not seem to have wakened up in these blissful moments of the dawn and it seems they are not aware at all that He who is behind the universe manifests Himself during these moments effortlessly.

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

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

How much pleasure is there in life and how destitute of feeling is man!

That day I had just gone to the top of the hills. We had stayed on the mountain ranges for a long time, but my companions were deeply engrossed in insignificant talks of routine life, the talks which have no meaning. The cover of these talks deprived them of the pleasure of seeing the beauty of the mountain twilight.

Similarly being engrossed and encompassed in the insignificant, we remain unfamiliar with the

immense cosmic being. What is near is being driven far off by our own hands. I wish to say, "O Man, you have nothing to lose except your own blindness, but you have to attain everything. O self-made beggar! open your eyes. The entire kingdom of heaven and earth is your own."

58

YESTERDAY afternoon we wandered in the valley of a mountain. In that vast expanse of shade and sunshine we spent many a pleasant hour. There was a pond nearby — which many a powerful gust of wind had ruffled and excited. Waves rose, fell and lay shattered. Everything was agitated.

Then the winds subsided and the pond too was lulled to sleep!

I said, "See, he who is restless can also become quiet. Restlessness keeps quietude hidden within itself. The pond is quiet now. Then too it was quiet. The waves rose on the surface. There was peace within at first too.

Man too is restless and ruffled, only on the outer surface. The waves are only on the surface. Deep beneath there is heavy silence. Let us go away from the stormy blasts of thoughts — the visions of quiet lake begin to appear. This lake

can be found here and now. There is no question of time, for time extends only as far as our thoughts go. Meditation is out of the sphere of time. Jesus has said, "And there is no Time there."

There is unhappiness in time. Time is misery. To surmount Time is to live in Bliss. To transcend Time is to become bliss.

Come on, friend. Let us go beyond time. We are only there. What appears within time is really without it. Knowing this much is going. When the winds stop, the lake becomes quiet.

59

I SEE man encompassed by words. But scriptures and words are futile. Though people can realize truth by these means, they are not adequate enough for the realization of truth.

Existence cannot be understood through words. The door to existence is void.

Dharma is the courage to take a plunge from words into wordlessness.

Thought is the means to know the non-self; it does not reveal the self because self is behind it, Self is before everything. We are united with 'existence' through self. Thought too is alien.

When that too is non-existent that 'which is' is revealed. Before that I am 'Ego'; in it I am 'Brahman'.

In truth in Existence 'self-alienation' is eradicated. That difference too was only in thought and of thought.

Consciousness has three aspects: 1. Outer insensible—inner insensible 2. Outer alert—inner insensible and 3. Outer alert—inner alert. The first aspect is that of insensibility—non-consciousness. It is sluggishness—insentience. It is the condition anterior to thought. The second aspect is that of half-insensibility—half-consciousness. That is between the insentient and the sentient. That is the condition during the thought. The third aspect is that of absence of insensibility—perfect consciousness. It is complete Caitanya and beyond all thought.

Mere absence of thought does not enable one to secure the knowledge of Truth. It leads only to sluggishness, to insensibility. Many of the activities current in the name of religion lead only to insensibility. Wine, sex, and music too lead only to insensibility. In insensibility there is flight. It is not a positive achievement.

One has to possess absence of thought plus Caitanya to realize Truth. The very name of that condition is Samadhi.

IT WAS the full-moon night and the sky was overcast with clouds. Some children were playing on a sand-mound. They had built a few sand-houses. A dispute arose among them. (All disputes arise only over sand-houses!) They were, after all, children, but in a short while elderly persons too joined in the fray. In the quarrel of children, their elders too joined later on.

I stood by the roadside and began to think—How artificial is the division between children and their elders. Age does not bring about any real difference and maturity has no connection whatsoever with it.

Many of us die as children. There is a story about Lao Tse that he was born as an old man. This story sounds very unnatural. But, if one does not attain maturity till the time of one's death, is it not a more unnatural event? The body develops but the mind remains stationary as it was before. Then only is it possible that there should be quarrels over sand-houses and man should strip man naked and proclaim from the house-tops that all talk of development is meaningless. Who says that man is evolved out of the brute? It is wrong to say that man is evolved out of the brute because he is still a brute.

Is man not yet born?

Viewing deep into man, it is not a positive answer that we get. Diogenes used to hold a burning candle even in the broad daylight and say, "I am searching for Man." When he became very old, someone asked him whether he still hoped to find 'Man.' He replied, "Yes. Because even now I have the burning candle with me."

I am still standing there. A big crowd has collected near the sand-mound. People are highly jubilant, drinking in all the vituperative ribaldry, threats and raillery. A peculiar glitter appears in the eyes of those who fight. A brutish pleasure is flowing through their eyes and activities.

Gibran says, "One day I asked the old scarecrow in the middle of the field — 'Are you not tired of standing still in the field?' It said, 'Oh! the pleasure of scaring the birds away is so much that I am not at all aware how and when the time passes!' I thought for a while and said — 'This is true because I too have the experience of the same pleasure.' That scarecrow replied, 'Yes, only he whose body is filled with straw and grass can be familiar with this pleasure!'"

But all people appear to be familiar with this pleasure. Is not our interior then filled up with straw and grass? Are we not sham men — the scarecrows — standing in the field?

I have returned after witnessing this pleasure on the sand-mound. Is not the same pleasure prevalent over the mound of the whole earth?

I ask this of myself and lament. I cry for that man who can be born but who is not born; who is within everyone but who is hidden like the burning coal beneath the ashes.

In reality the body is no more than a heap of straw and grass but if anyone stops with it, it would have been better if he were to be in some field. Would he not then at least have served the purpose of guarding the crop from the birds? Man does not evince even that much of usefulness!

No one becomes man without knowing that which transcends the body. No one becomes man without knowing the soul. To be born in the shape of man is one thing and to be a real man is entirely different thing.

Man has to give birth to himself within himself. He is not like a piece of cloth with which one can cover oneself. No one becomes human merely by wearing the garment of humanity, for the apparel sustains man only so long as the actual necessity for being human does not arise. But when this necessity arises, one does not know when the garment falls off!

The seed sprouts not by wearing a new set of apparel but by vitally transforming itself. Similarly,

man too has to transmute his entire vital existence, his whole being. Only then is he born; only then is he transformed.

Then his pleasure does not lie in scattering or sowing thorns but in picking and throwing them out. His pleasure finds its consummation in scattering flowers all round. That hour itself proclaims that he is no longer straw and grass. He is a Man. Not the body but the soul.

Gurdjieff has said, "Abandon the false notion that everyone has a soul." He who is actually slumbering is unaffected by it whether he has a soul or not. Only that is real which exists. The soul is a possibility for every one but he alone finds it who makes it real.

61

I FIND the entire consciousness man rotating round the axis of three small words: discrimination, intellect, and avocation.

The most excellent people make use of discrimination, mediocres of intellect, and men with little or no intelligence at all of avocation.

Avocation is brutish; intellect is human; discrimination is divine.

Avocation is congenital and blind. It is slumber. It is the world of the insentient. There is neither auspiciousness nor inauspiciousness. There is no differentiation or diversity. There is no inner struggle or tussle. It is the natural flow of blind passions.

Intellect is neither slumber nor wakefulness. It is semi-insensibility. It is the transitory stage between avocation and discrimination. It is a corridor. A part of it has become conscious. But the rest is insentient. There is an understanding of difference, the birth of the auspicious and the inauspicious. There is passion and thought too.

Discrimination is complete wakefulness. It is pure consciousness. It is light alone. There is no struggle in it. It too is congenital. It is the natural flow of the auspicious, the existent, and the beautiful.

Both avocation and discrimination are natural. But while avocation is blind naturalness, discrimination is alert naturalness. Intellect alone is unnatural. Avocation is behind it and discrimination is ahead of it. The halo of its coronet is that of discrimination. Its supporting roots are in avocation. The upper surface is one thing, the vale below is another. Here alone is the tension. The temptation to sink to the level of the brute — the challenge to



rise up to the level of the Lord — both are co-existent in it.

Those of us who strive to sink down to the level of the brute on being frightened by the challenge are under delusion. The part that has become conscious and enlightened cannot revert to the stage of the insentient. In the scheme of the universe there is no path of reversion.

Those who, accepting the challenge, begin to make a selection between what is auspicious and inauspicious on the surface, are also under delusion. That sort of selection and change of conduct cannot be natural. It is merely a feigned acting. That which is feigned is not auspicious too. The problem lies at the bottom, is essential. One has to waken that which slumbers there. It is not the inauspicious that has to be eschewed but insensibility.

62

A STILL, serene afternoon full of bright sunlight and drowsy plants. I am squatting 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 and sprouts have clustered on the tops of all trees. With the advent of new leaves

many new birds have also come. There seems to be no end to their chirping songs. How many varieties of sweet notes make up the melody this afternoon. I listen. I go on listening. I move about in a new world of music.

The world of self is the world of melody. The music is present in everyone. It need not be produced. We have only to be silent to make it audible. The moment we are silent, a veil seems to be lifted. What was there always is being heard and for the first time we realize that we are not poor. We gain the new heritage of an endless legacy. How much do we laugh — he whom we were seeking was already seated within !

63

IT RAINED last night. The weather continues to be moist. A fragrant odour emanates from the earthen soil. The sun has risen and a herd of cows is moving out to the forest. The bells round their necks chime sweetly. I have been listening to it for a short while. Now the cows have gone very far and only a faint echo of tinkling bells remains.

By this time, a few persons have come to see me. They are asking "what is death ?"

I say, "Since we do not know life, we assume there is death. Self-forgetfulness is death. Otherwise there is no death. There is only a change. By not knowing the real self we have created an artificial self. That is our 'I' (the ego). But that does not exist. Its existence is illusory. It disintegrates in death. It gives rise to misery because we have established an identity with it. To realize this illusion even in life is to escape from death. Know life so that death will come to an end. What is eternal. To know it is to attain an eternal, permanent life. Yesterday I said all this at a meeting. Self-knowledge is life. Self-forgetfulness is death.

64

THERE is a schoolmaster. He is very much interested in religion. He has dedicated his life to the study of scriptural texts. If the topic of discussion is religion, there is no end to the flow of his thoughts. Just like an endless tape, the thoughts come out and continue. It is difficult to say how much he can quote or how many aphorisms he has learned by heart. There is no one who is not impressed by him. He is a walking Encyclopaedia, he is reputed to be so. Many times I have heard his thoughts and have

kept silent. Once he asked me what I thought of him. I said, "In gathering thoughts about God you have lost God." Surely he was stunned. He seemed to be so. He did come to me again. He had come to question further in this connection. He said. "It is only by study and deliberation that Truth can be found out, there is no other way. Knowledge of course is everything. How many of us don't have this false notion ?

I ask all such people only one question. "What is learning ? What happens within you thereby ? Is a fresh vision born ? Does consciousness reach a new, hitherto unexplored, unknown level ? Does any revolution take place in your being ? Do you become a different person from what you had been before ? Or do you remain the same old person and only some more thoughts and some more information become part of your memory ? Studies enable you to train the faculty of memory better, but in the bottom layer, the dust particles of thought continue to accumulate. There is no more change than this. Consciousness remains exactly where it had been before. The expanse of experience remains where it was before. Knowing something about Truth and knowing Truth are two different things altogether. Knowing about Truth is an intellectual process, whereas knowing Truth is the process of consciousness.

In order to know Truth, it is essential to have a fully awakened consciousness — the absence of its insensibility. By training the memory, or by the so-called knowledge, this cannot take place. What has not been comprehended is no knowledge. The intellectual understanding of Truth, the unknown Truth, is only a sham thing. It is false and is an obstacle in the path of perfect knowledge. There is no way through the known to know what is in fact unknown. It is quite new, it is such as has never been known before. Hence memory is not competent to present it or facilitate its recognition. Memory can present or facilitate the recognition of only that which has been known at first. It is the re-iteration of only what is known.

But, in order to make way for the advent of what is fresh what is entirely new and what is unknown and unfamiliar before, memory has to stand aside. Memory and all known thoughts have to stand aside so that the new ones can be born, so that what is can be known exactly as it is. All conceptions of men, all abcessions have to stand aside to enable it to appear. Only the mind that is free of thoughts, memories and conceptions can be wakeful, sensible. Only after its advent, is there a transformation at the centre and the door to Truth is flung open. Before this, every thing is mere wandering and waste of life.

A HERMIT was heard saying this yesterday, "I have eschewed all mundane activities. My present activities are directed towards liberation. This alone is Nivṛtti (Abstention). Activity directed towards worldly affairs constitutes inactivity towards liberation and activity towards liberation is aversion to worldly affairs."

The statement evidently appears to be very precise and full of wisdom. There seems to be no error anywhere. But it is also futile. In fact, many people are subject to such misconceptions. In the sphere of spiritual life intellect and cogent arguments do not appear to lead us anywhere.

I told him, "Sir, you are entangled in words. 'Activity directed towards worldly affairs,' has no meaning. Actually activity itself is worldly existence. It makes no difference, whither it is directed. Well, its existence itself is worldly existence. Its form is the same whether it is directed towards self or piety. Activity leads man out of his own self. It is a fanciful inclination, it is an ardent desire for some gain, it is a yearning, a mad rush to become something. A desires to become B. This constitutes its form. As long as there is an infatuated inclination to become something, that which 'really exists'

is not revealed. The awareness of 'what exists' is liberation. Liberation is not a substance which has to be acquired. It is not the aim or end of any fanciful inclination. Hence there cannot be any activity directed towards it. It stands manifest then, when all activities cease, even those for liberation, — what then manifests itself is called Liberation. So, liberation has not to be acquired; actually, acquisitions have to be abandoned and lo! liberation is attained.

66

WHAT men call the universe is not the limit of existence; it is only the limit of their senses. Beyond the senses is the boundless expanse. This boundless expanse cannot be wholly attained through the senses, because the senses perceive only the fragment — only the part. What is boundless, the infinite, cannot be subjected to fragmentation. It cannot be divided. A limited, restricted means is ineffectual in measuring what is boundless. What is boundless can be grasped only by what is boundless.

Those who have known it have not known it through their senses or their intellect. They have become boundless themselves and known it. This

is possible because the boundless is present in man, apparently insignificant and limited, The extent of man does not stop with his senses. He is in the senses but not exclusively in it. He extends to the expanse also beyond senses. The limit which he appears extending is the point of beginning and not the limit of termination. He is invisible. The invisible is seated within the orbit of the visible. If a man realizes the invisible within himself, he realizes all the invisible things of the universe, because all divisions and fragments are related to the visible. The invisible is unfragmented. The one and the many there are one and the same. Hence by attaining the one he attains all. Mahavira has said, "If you have realized one, you have realized all." This one is within. This one is the seer, not the seen or seeable. The eye is not the way to realize it. In fact, closing the eye is the way. 'Closing the eye' means liberation from the fetters of the visible. Even after closing the eye, should the visible continue to flow, the eye is as good as open. If nothing is visible while the physical eye is open, the eye is as good as closed. The seer manifests himself if only the vision, the looking on, persists and there is no visible. The vision in which the seer appears is a perfect vision. Until this vision is attained man is blind. Having eyes he has no eyes. He comes to possess them through this vision, the real eyes,

the eyes that are beyond the sense-organ known as the eye. Then the lines of limitation, the lines that restrict are effaced. That which is without beginning or end, the immanent Brahman, is attained.

This attainment is liberation while every limitation is bondage, every limitation is dependence. Rising above limitation is becoming independent.

67.

I HAPPENED to listen to a discourse yesterday. Its theme was self-suppression. The popular belief is that we have to love everyone except ourselves. We have to hate ourselves. Then possibly we can master the soul. This thought, however, is as incorrect as it is popular. Those who tread this path find their personality split into two, and violence to the soul is initiated. And violence makes everything ugly and hideous.

Man does not have to suppress his natural inclinations and infatuations, which really cannot be suppressed. This path of violence cannot be the path of piety. So many varieties or modes of torturing the body have been developed as a consequence of this! Holy penance is supposed to be manifest in them, but in reality it is the sadistic pleasure of violence — the happiness of ruthless

suppression and resistance. This is not holy penance but self deception.

Man does not have to fight himself. He has to realize himself. But realization begins when one loves oneself. One has to love oneself in a wholesome manner. Neither the man who blindly runs after the intuitive inclinations of infatuation nor the man who blindly fights with them loves himself. Both of them are blind. The second blindness is but a reaction of the first one and is born of it. If the former ruins himself in infatuations, the latter ruins himself in fighting with them.

Both of them are full of hatred to the real self. Beginning of knowledge, on the other hand, is only through loving oneself.

68

WHATEVER may be the real 'I' it has to be accepted; it has to be loved. Only through this acceptance and love is that light obtained with which a natural transformation of everything takes place. It is only through this that a fresh beauty arises in the individual, a harmonious melody, a quiescent peace, a sublime bliss — the consummate effect of all these is termed spiritual life.

Since people have been discussing Truth, I have come down here. I listen to it: The gentleman who is speaking is studious. He is acquainted with different schools of philosophy. He seems to be well-acquainted with all types of thought systems and viewpoints. His mind is full, not of Truth but of what others have said concerning Truth. It appears as if Truth can be known on the basis of what others have said, or as if Truth is an opinion, a thought, a resultant of intellectual argumentation! Their discussion is going on deeper and more profound. Now one is not in a mood to listen to what another is saying. Everyone is speaking. No one is listening.

I am silent. Then some one looks at me. They evince a desire to know my opinion. I have no opinion. It appears to me that there is no truth where opinions creep in. Truth begins where there is a cessation of thought.

What shall I say? All of them are eager to hear. I tell them a story, "There was a saint, Bodhidharma. In the sixth century A.D., he had been to China. He stayed there for some years. Then he desired to return home. He gathered his disciples, and wanted to know how far they had progressed in the knowledge of Truth.

"In reply to his query a disciple said; 'In my opinion, Truth is beyond acceptance and non-

acceptance. It cannot be said that it is, nor can it be said that it is not because such is its form.'

"Bodhidharma said, 'It is my skin that you have.'

"The second disciple said, 'As far as I see, Truth is the inner vision. Once it is attained it is attained for ever. 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 voidness 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 preceptor and remained silent. He kept quiet and his eyes were vacant.

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

And this very story is my answer.

I HAD been to a temple to give a talk. After I had delivered my speech, a young man said, "Can I put a question which I have already put to many,

but I am not satisfied with the answer I received. All systems of philosophy declare, 'know thyself.' I too wish to know myself. This alone is my question, 'Who am I?' I desire an answer for this question alone."

I said, "You haven't yet asked me the question. How can you get an answer? It is not easy to put a question."

For a while, the young man gazed at me in utter confusion. It was clear that he could not understand the implications of my statement. He said, "why is it, Sir, that you say I haven't asked the question at all?"

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

He came. As soon as he sat I switched off the light. He said, "Sir, what are you doing? Do you give answers in darkness?"

I said, "I am not giving an answer. All I teach is how to put a question. Answers in regard to spiritual life and Truth do not come from outside. Knowledge is not an exterior entity; nor is it an information. It cannot be foisted on you. It has to be taken out from within as water is drawn out from a well. It exists; it is ever-present. We have

only to reach our vessel as far as possible. In this process, only one point is to be borne in mind namely, that the vessel is empty. If the vessel is empty, it returns full and we realize the end."

For a little while he was quiet. Then he said, "Now what shall I do?" I said, "Empty the vessel, be quiet and ask, 'Who am I?' Ask once, twice, three times. Ask with the full force, 'Who am I?' Let the question ring through our entire frame of body. And then let us remain quiet. Silently thoughtlessly, wait for the result. Question and then keep silent — waiting vacantly. This is the procedure. He said after a short while — "But I cannot remain quiet. I can put the question but I cannot wait for the answer. Now I realize that I have not actually put the question till today."

I AM reading a discourse, an elucidatory talk of a saintly gentleman. He has urged people to abandon anger, to eschew delusion, to forsake inclinations of infatuation, as if these were the things which could be abandoned! One wished to shake them off and then left the world. On reading and listening to these discourses this is what appears to me. On hearing these and similar

instructions we know how thickset is our ignorance and how little we know about man's mind!

I asked a child one day, "Why don't you shake off your illness?" The boy began to laugh and said, "Is it within my power to shake off illness?"

Every individual wishes to cast off illness and evil emotions. But it is essential to dive deep to the bottom of vicious emotions — as far as the insentient and insensible bottom from which they spring up. We cannot rid ourselves of their tentacles by the mere desire of the sensible mind. In one of his discourses Freud has described an interesting event. A villager was staying at a city hotel. At night he tried his best to put out the light in his room. He tried to blow out the light again and again, but the light shone without even a flicker. Next morning he made a complaint of it. In answer to it he came to know that the light was not of ordinary 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 lights. The process of extinguishing them lies concealed in the insentient. Attempts to blow out the wishes and resolutions of the sentient beings are as futile as their attempts to blow out the

electric lamp. Their roots can be broken only by descending into the insensible through the medium of Yogic discipline.

TICK. Tick. Tick. So the clock resumed its function. It had been going on itself; but only for me it had stopped. Or, to put it correctly, it was I who had stopped whereas the clock kept functioning without break.

I had gone off into another strata of time. I was sitting with eyes closed. I was looking within. Time had a different order. Then the order was disturbed!

How blissful is it to go out of the sphere of Time. Pictures are kept closed in the mind. Their existence is time. If they fade, time too fades. Then the 'present' alone remains. The 'present' is said to be a part of time. But actually it is beyond the order of time, it is out of it. To be in it is to be in the self. Now I have returned from that world. How peaceful is everything. Far away a bird is chirping sweetly. A child is crying close by and a cock is crowing.

Oh! How blissful is life! Now I realize that death too is blissful because life does not cease with



it. It is only a stage in life. Life exists both before and after it.

72

### WHAT is God?

Minds agitated by this question are legion. Yesterday a young man was asking me about God. And the question is put as though God is an object, separate and different from the seeker, and can be secured like other objects. It is futile to speak of securing God or of realizing Him, because He is at this as well as that end of me. I am in him, or, to say the same thing more precisely, 'I' does not exist, only He exists.

God is the name of what exists. He is not something within existence, He is existence itself. It is not that He possesses Existence. On the other hand existence is within Him. He is the name of what exists, what is and what is nameless.

Hence He cannot be sought because I too am in Him. One can 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 repeated too often. One day it asked the queen of fishes: "I have been hearing the name of the ocean since long. But what is this

ocean ? Where is it ?" The queen said, "It is in the ocean that you are born, that you live. The ocean is your world. It is your existence. It is within as well as without you. You are fashioned out of it and you have end in it. The ocean surrounds you every moment of your life."

God envelops everyone every moment. But we are insensible and therefore we cannot see Him. Insensibility is the universe, the worldly existence. Sensibility is God.

73

ONCE an ascetic happened to come to me. He had been an ascetic for many years. I asked him, "Why did you turn an ascetic. ?" He replied, "I desired peace."

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

He was a little confused. Then he said, "What shall I do then ?"

I began to laugh, and then said, "Is not desire hidden in 'doing' too ?"

The problem does not lie in doing something. Nothing can be 'done' for peace. It is not a part of desire. It is futile to desire it. Really it is necessary

to know disquietude. What is disquietude ? We have to know it. Not through sacred Texts, through one's own experience. The desire for peace is generated only by understanding the sacred lore and then the problem of what should be done arises.

The ascetic said, "Disquietude is due to the inclination towards vicious thoughts, due to desire. If there is no ardent desire there is peace."

I said, "This reply is through the sacred Texts, not through self-experience. Otherwise, it would not have been possible to say, 'I desire peace.' If ardent desire is disquietude, if desire itself is disquietude, how can peace be desired ? Know disquietude — wake into it through self-experience — understand it through a faultless-impartial mind. This understanding will bring the roots of disquietude to the fore-front. It will appear clear that the root of disquietude is vicious emotion. The appearance of the same is the eschewal of disquietude. Knowledge of disquietude itself is its death. Life of disquietude is possible only in darkness and in blindness. No sooner is the light of knowledge shed than it ceases to exist. What is left over, after disquietude is eschewed, is peace. Peace is not desired in opposition to disquietude, because it is not antagonistic to it. It is its non-existence. Hence peace is not to be sought; only disquietude is to be

known. Knowledge of scriptures, which is an imparted one, becomes an obstacle to this knowledge (i.e. of disquietude), because readymade answers fill the mind with loaned conclusions even prior to self-experience. No transformation is effected through loaned conclusions. Self-experience alone is the path. In his spiritual life, every individual has to move ahead after setting aside the burden of loaned knowledge.

WHAT has befallen man ?

I get up early in the morning; I see the squirrels frisking about; I see the flowers blooming in the rays of the sun; I see nature overflowing with harmonious melody. I go to bed at night. I see silence emitting 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 brimful of bliss except man. Everything is ringing with music except man. Everything is radiating divine peace, except man.

Is man not a participant in all this ? Is man an outsider, a stranger ?

This strangeness man has fashioned out of his own hands. This rupture he has created with his

own hands. I am reminded of a fable in the Bible, according to which for tasting the fruit of knowledge man is banished from the kingdom of bliss. How true is that story! It is the knowledge, the intellect, the mind, that have torn man asunder from life. Having once been in existence he has been compelled to be out of it.

As soon as we empty ourselves of knowledge, as soon as we withdraw from our mind, a new world unfolds itself. In that, we become one with nature. Nothing is separated from us, nothing remains different from us. Everything begins to throb in a melodious music of peace.

This experience alone is "God".

God is not an embodied individual, nor can there be any experience of God. In fact, a particular experience is often called God. It is not 'His' direct perception but a direct perception itself that is called God.

In this direct perception man becomes normal and whole, and he feels at home. In the light of it he becomes the sharer of the inspired and natural bliss of plants and flowers and he vanishes at one end and appears at the other. This is his death as well as his life.

SOMEONE was saying, "How can the Atman (the Self) be attained? How can Brahman be realized?"

As far as I can see, the very mention of attaining the Self is wrong. It is not something yet to be attained. It has already been attained. It is not a substance that has to be bought nor an aim which has to be realized. It is not the future that one has to reach up to. It is the name of that which exists. It is the present, the everlasting present. There is neither the past nor the future in it. There is no becoming in it. There is no losing or attaining it. It is the pure, eternal co-eternal Light.

Then on what basis has this loss taken place? Whence is this appearance of losing and the thirst for attaining?

If one understands the 'I', the losing of the Self, which really cannot be lost, can be understood, 'I' is not the Atman. Nor is the 'self' or the other the Atman. This dichotomisation of the world into a Self and a not-Self is a matter of the intellect. It relates to the mind which is the apparent existence but is never in the present. It is either in the past or in the future, both of which have no real existence. The one (i.e., the past) has already become non-existent. The other has not yet come into

existence. The one lives in our memory, the other in our imagination. But neither has any existence as such. In this non-existence the 'I' is born. The 'I' is the origin of thought. Time too is the source of thought. Thanks to thought, thanks to the 'I' that the atman is shrouded. It exists but appears to be lost. This 'I' itself, this series of thought processes is constantly engaged in searching for the so-called lost soul. This quest is impossible because through this quest, the sense of 'I' becomes more and more strengthened.

Searching for the Atman through the 'I' is like searching for alertness through dreams. It has to be attained not through the 'I' but through eschewing it. If and when the dream ceases, alertness comes into being. If the 'I' vanishes, the atman comes into being.

The atman is void because it is fullness. There is neither the 'Self' nor 'the other' in it. It is non-dualistic. It is beyond all Time. When thought ceases, the mind vanishes. It is known that it has never been lost.

Hence it is not to be sought. Quest is to be eschewed and the one engaged in the quest is to be abandoned. When quest and the quester vanish, the quest becomes complete. It is attained by losing the 'I'.

WHAT is saintliness ?

The question arises in the minds of many. If there had been a link between saintliness and apparel, the question would not have arisen at all. Certainly saintliness is not an external factor. It is an internal Truth. What is this internal Truth ?

Saintliness is being in oneself. Generally man is out of himself. Not even for a moment is he in himself. He is with everyone but not with himself. This aloofness from the self is impious, unsaintly. Returning to the self, being stabilized in one's own features, being normal — all this is saintliness, While spiritual abnormalcy is unsaintly, normalcy is piety itself.

If I am outside, I am slumbering. The external, the 'other' is insensible. Mahavira has said, "He who sleeps is not a saint. To wake up in freedom from the slumber of dependence on the other is to be saintly."

How can this saintliness be recognized?

This saintliness can be recognized through peace, through bliss, through perfection.

There was a saint — St Francis. He was on a pilgrimage in the company of his disciple Leo. They were on their way to St Marino when they were caught in rain and storm. They became mudstained

and drenched completely. The night had set in. The day-long starvation and travel-weariness had overwhelmed them. The village was still far off. They could not reach it before midnight. St Francis said "Leo who is the real saint? Not he who can bestow sight on the blind, make the sick healthy and even raise up the dead. He is not the real saint." There was silence for a short while. Then Francis said, "Leo, he too is not the real saint who can understand the language of beasts, trees and stones and rocks, nor he who has acquired the knowledge of the universe." There was silence again for a short while. They plodded on their weary way in darkness, tempestuous wind and heavy down-pour. Now the lights of the village St Marino were visible. St Francis continued. "And he too who has renounced all his possessions is not the real saint."

Now Leo could not remain silent. He said, "Then who is the real saint?" St Francis replied, "We are nearing St Marino. We will be knocking at the outer door of the inn. The watchman will ask, 'Who is there?' We will be replying, 'Your own kinsmen — two ascetics.' If he were to say then, 'O ye beggars, wretched mendicants, lazy lubbers — away — there is no place here for you,' and refuse to open the door, if we continue to stay hungry and tired in the midnight there in the open, if we knock at the door again and if at this time he were to come out and

give us a thrashing with his baton, if he were to say, 'Ye knaves, do not pester us', if on this occasion we don't feel excited within — if everything there is peaceful and void — if we see the Lord alone in that watchman — well, this would be real saintliness."

Certainly the observance of unimpaired calmness, simplicity and equanimity in every circumstance, is what constitutes saintliness.

LAST NIGHT a young man had said to me, "I am fighting against my mind. But I cannot find peace. What shall I do with the mind so that I may attain peace?"

I said, "No one can 'do' anything 'with' darkness. It indeed does not exist. It is only the absence of light. Hence fighting against it is ignorance. So is the mind too. It too does not exist. It too has no existence of its own. It is the absence of the realization of Atman. It is the absence of meditation. Hence nothing can be done directly against it. If we have to remove darkness we have to bring light. Similarly, if the mind has to be removed, meditation has to be brought in. The mind does not have to be controlled, but it has to be realized that it does not exist. As soon as it is known, the liberation from it takes place.

He asked, "How can this be known?"

This is known through consciousness, through being the witness. Be the witness of the mind. Be the witness of what exists. Abandon the thought, "How should it be?" Wake unto what exists and as it exists. Be alert. Do not take any decision. Do not effect any restraint. Do not get involved in any struggle. Well, be silent and watch. This watching, this being the witness alone becomes liberation.

As soon as one becomes the witness, consciousness withdraws from the visible and becomes fixed on the seer. In this situation, unshakeable splendour of pure intellect is attained, and this splendour alone is liberation.

78

I FIND a mirror lying in a corner for many days. Dust particles have completely covered it up. It does not now seem that it is still a mirror and will be able to hold reflections. Dust particles have assumed the importance they never have and the mirror has become insignificant. Evidently there are only particles of dust and there is no mirror. But by getting hidden behind the dust particles is the mirror destroyed? No, the mirror is still a mirror. No change has taken place in it. The dust is above it

and not within the mirror. The dust has become a screen, a cover. It does not destroy. As soon as this screen is removed, what it is becomes manifest again.

I said this to someone. I said this also that man's consciousness is like this mirror. Dust of vicious inclination has spread over it. There is a screen of emotions over it. There are layers of thought over it, though no change has been effected on the form of consciousness.

It is there, alone. It is always there, alone. Whether there is a screen or not, there is no change in it. All the screens are only on the surface. And pulling them down or removing them is not a difficult process. Removing dust particles from consciousness is not more difficult or strenuous than removing the dust particles from the mirror.

It is easy to attain the Self because there is no obstacle in between except a sheet of dust. When this screen is removed it is immediately realized that Atman itself is the Great Atman, God.

79

I HAVE returned from a movie show. It is interesting to see how these pictures fascinate people,

pictures projected on the screen by means of electricity. Events take place where actually there are no events. I looked at the people at the show. It appeared to me that they had forgotten themselves, as if they did not exist; only the stream of pictures electrically produced was all in all.

A blank screen is hung in front of the spectators. While the pictures are flashed on it from behind, they have their eyes fixed in front. No one is aware of what is happening behind their backs.

A pastime is thus provided. Both within and without the man, the same thing happens.

Similarly, there is a projector at the back of the human mind. Psychology calls this spot behind the mind the "Unconscious". The predilections, the inclinations, the emotions and the impressions accumulated in the unconscious are continuously flashed on the mind's screen. The string of mental activities goes on incessantly. The conscious is a mute spectator — merely a witness — and it forgets itself in the series of volitional pictures. This forgetfulness is ignorance. This ignorance is the cause of worldly existence, the transmigration, the circle of innumerable births. Waking up from this ignorance is in restraining these mental activities. When the mind is devoid of activities, when the flow of pictures on the silver screen stops, the looker-on remembers himself and returns home.

This restraint of the activities of the mind is called Yoga by Patanjali. If this is achieved, everything is achieved.

LAST night I was standing at the door of a temple. With the burning of the incense, the whole atmosphere was rendered fragrant. Bells of worship were rung and the lamp of propitiation (ārati) was waved in front of the idol. A few devotees had gathered there. The entire arrangement was tastefully made, producing a delectable lassitude. But it had nothing to do with dharma.

No temple, no mosque, no church, no form of worship, no adoration with flowers has any relation with dharma. All the idols are stones and all the prayers are nothing but empty words addressed to the walls.

But some happiness seems to emanate from all these and that is the danger, for, due to this reason a great deception starts and develops further. A false notion of its being true is produced in the illusory feeling of happiness. Happiness derived is through insensibility — forgetfulness of the self — through fleeing from the reality of the self. The pleasure of

intoxicants, too, is derived from such a fleeing. All exertions and activities of such insensibility in the name of religion bring only a false pleasure like that of the intoxicants. Such an happiness is not dharma because it is only the forgetfulness of misery, not its end.

What, then, is religion?

Religion is not fleeing from the self, it is waking unto the self. This waking up has no kinship with external arrangements. It is related to the penetration within and acquisition of consciousness.

Let me wake up and be a witness — let me be conscious of what exists. Dharma is related only to this. Dharma is non-insensibility and non-insensibility is bliss.

81

THERE is a story. An unmarried girl had become pregnant. Her relatives were at their wit's end. They asked her about the person who was responsible for it. She said that an ascetic staying outside the village had raped her. The infuriated relatives surrounded the ascetic and hackled him. The ascetic calmly listened to their outbursts and said simply, "Is that so?" He said only this much

and then volunteered to look after the child that would be born. On returning home, the erring woman repented and confessed the fault. She said she had not set her eyes on the ascetic and that she had lied to shield the real father of the child in the womb. The kinsmen were filled with remorse. They expressed their regrets to the ascetic and prayed to him for forgiveness. The ascetic listened to their words calmly and said, "Is that so?"

If there is peace in life, the entire world and life become no more than mere acting. I become a mere actor. The events occur outside, but the interior is untouched, unaffected. Only by attaining this situation is the liberation from the slavery to worldly existence achieved. I am a slave because I am excited by whatever comes from without. Anything from outside can affect and alter my interior. In this way I am dependant. If I am liberated from external things — Let there be anything internally, if I am able to remain the same as I am, it marks the beginning of self-knowledge and freedom.

This liberation begins with the attainment of the void. We have to become a void. We have to experience the void. Walking or sleeping, sitting or getting up, each of us has to realize, "I am a void," and to retain it in his memory. By remembering the void we become void. Every breath is instilled



and infused with the void. If the void is produced within, there is simplicity without. Voidness is itself saintliness.

82

ONCE I was seated with my eyes shut. Habituated to seeing with the eyes open as he is, man is forgetting the art of seeing with his eyes shut. In the presence of what is seen when the eyes are shut, what is seen when the eyes are open is of no consequence. The small screen of the eye separates and unites the two worlds.

Well, I was sitting with eyes shut when a gentleman arrived. He asked me what I had been doing. When I said I had been seeing something he seemed to be confused. Perhaps, because he might have been thinking, "Can shutting the eyes be seeing something?"

When I open my eyes I limit the area seen. When I close my eyes, the doors of the boundless are flung open. At this end the visible and at the other the seer are seen.

There was an ascetic woman, Rabiya. On a fine morning somebody told her, "Rabiya, what are you doing within the hut? Come out. See here.

What a beautiful morning has the Lord created!" Rabiya replied from within, "Within here I am seeing the creator of that morning which you are seeing outside. Friend, come within. There is no meaning in external beauty as against the beauty of what is here."

But how many people are there who withdraw themselves from the external after closing their eyes? The eyes are not really closed when we merely shut them. They are physically closed but the external pictures flow on. The lids are shut but the external scenes are descending. This is not the real closing of the eyes. The real closing of the eyes is voidness; freedom from dreams and thoughts. When thoughts and visible scenes become submerged in one another, the eyes are really closed. What then manifests itself is the eternal caitanya (consciousness). That alone is existence. That alone is knowledge. That alone is bliss. Everything is the play of the eyes. The eye is altered, everything is altered.

83

IT IS now a year since some seeds were sown. Now the flowers have come out. How much was it desired that flowers should come out all by themselves,

but they do not come out thus. If a cluster of flowers is to be got, it is essential to sow seeds, look after the plants and in the end realize our expectations. The process is true not only in regard to the flowers but also in regard to life.

Non-violence, non-acceptance of gifts, truthfulness and celibacy—these are the flowers born of austerity. No one can get these directly. If we have to get these we shall have to sow seeds of self-knowledge. As soon as they are sown all these come to us of their own accord.

The knowledge of the self is the root; the rest are its products. The hideousness of the external activity in life is a symbol of internal decay and the beauty thereof is the echo of the inner life and its melody.

Hence nothing worth while takes place by altering or transforming the form. The alteration is to be effected at the root, the root of the vicious emotions, the content.

Ignorance of the self is at the root of vicious emotions. "Who am I?" this is to be known. As soon as this is known, the fearless and the non-dualistic is realized. The non-dualistic realization, i.e., the awareness that the other is the same as I, burns up all violence from its very root. As a result of it, non-violence appears. Knowing

'another' as 'another' is violence. Viewing the self in the other is non-violence and non-violence is the soul of dharma.

IT WAS raining last night. I had come in. The windows had been shut and there was a sense of suffocation. I opened the windows. A wave of freshness blew in with the gusts of the rain-drenched wind. When I sank into deep slumber I know not.

In the morning there was a visitor. On seeing him I was reminded of the suffocation of the previous night. It struck me that all the windows and all the doors of his mind were firmly shut. He had not left even a single window within open, whereby fresh air and light might get in. Everything was found shut. I talked to him and realized that I was talking to the walls. The majority of people are similarly shut ones who have been denied novelty, beauty and freshness of life.

Man fashions out of his own hands a prison for himself. Suffocation and despair are experienced in the internment but he is not aware of the root cause — the source of boredom and bewilderment.

Thus the whole of life is spent. He who could have the delight of a flight in the open sky shuts himself in the cage of a parrot and breathes hard.

If we demolish the walls of the mind, we attain an open sky, and this open sky is life. Everybody can attain this liberation as this liberation attains everybody.

I repeat this almost every day. But, perhaps my words do not reach everyone. Their walls are impregnable, but howsoever strong the walls, they are weak at the base because they are walls of grief. This is the only ray of hope that they are made of grief. What is grievous cannot last long; only Bliss can be eternal.

85

THE DOMES of the temples are shining in the brilliant sunshine. The sky is clear. Crowds of pedestrians are getting thicker and thicker. I observe them, but I know not why they do not appear to be alive. If we have no awareness of life, consciousness of existence, how can we call ourselves alive? How life originates, when and whence it comes, we do not know. Generally we have consciousness of life when death is imminent.

I had read a story. There was a person who was incorrigibly forgetful, so much so that he did not remember that he was alive. Then one day he got up in the morning and realized that he was dead. Then he realized that he was once alive. This story is completely true.

I am reminded of this story. I had had a hearty laugh over this that a person should realize that he was once alive, only after death, but my laughter gradually turns into grief at this abnormal, pitiable state.

I was still thinking of this person when a few visitors arrived. I look at them. I listen to their words and I peep into their eyes. There was no life anywhere in them. They were like shadows. The entire universe is filled with shadows. The majority of people are living in the world of ghosts created by their own hands. Further, inside these shadows there is a live fire-life; but these are not aware of that. There is real life within this shadow life. Beyond this ghostly life, there is a truthful life too which can be achieved even now, here itself.

Moreover, how simple is the condition for achieving this.

How easy is the means of achieving this!

Yesterday I said this: "Seeing is to be directed within."

I LOOK at him. I know him already. His thirst, his eagerness for knowing the 'truth of life' is acute. He wishes to experience Truth at any cost. His intellect is keen. Superficial faiths do not satisfy him. Impressions, traditions and conventions offer him but little. He is surrounded by doubts and suspicions. All his mental props and convictions have been truncated and he has sunk into an impenetrable negative gloom.

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

I advise him, "Please don't say so. Being an atheist is not becoming irreligious. One has to pass through a negative phase to attain a real phase. It is the beginning, in fact, of becoming religious and not of becoming irreligious. Faith, inherited through foisted impressions, inculcated training and deliberations is no real Faith. He who is content with it is in delusion. If he had been nurtured in the midst of the opposite school of thought, his mind would have been shaped in the opposite way and he would have been content with that alone. Impressions falling on the mind are the products of the outer circle and the surface. They are dead layers. They are state and loaned-out situations.

A person thirsting for real spiritual life cannot quench his thirst with that imaginary water. Moreover in this sense he is blessed and fortunate because the search for the real water begins with this unquenched thirst. Thank God that you do not agree with the conviction of God, for this disagreement will lead you up to the Truth of God.

I now see a glow on the face of that youth. A serenity, a consolation, has descended upon his eyes. When he took leave of me I told him, "Remember that non-faith is the beginning of a righteous religious life. It is not an end. It is a background. You are not to stop there. It is a dark night. Do not sink therein. It is after this and through this that the dawn appears.

LAST NIGHT, we had been sitting in a mangrove far away from the madding city. There were some rain clouds in the sky amongst which the moon played hide-and-seek. There were a number of persons near by watching silently this lovely sport of light and shadow for a long time. How hard it is to speak sometimes! When the atmosphere is thick with melodious music one is afraid to speak, lest he should destroy it with words. So

did it happen yesterday. We returned very late at night. On the way, someone remarked, "This is the first time in life that we have experienced silence. I had heard that silence is gold, a wonderful bliss, but I have realized it only to-day, that too without an effort. How will this happen again?"

I said, What has happened effortlessly usually happens effortlessly, and not with a strain. Effort itself is disquietude. Effort means, something is being wished for, something which is different from what exists. This is a situation charged with tension. Only tension is produced by tension; whatever is done in disquietude brings only disquietude. Disquietude cannot turn itself into peace. Peace is a different state of consciousness. Its being is effected when there is no disquietude. Do not do anything, do not strain yourself, eschew all activity but keep on watching. Then it is realized that a new consciousness, a fresh glow, is descending slowly, very slowly. Only that which is realized in this new world exists in fact. The revelation of what exists is bliss; its unfolding is liberation. This Cosmic, Immanent Being appears when there are no efforts, when the 'I' is not present it cannot occur through our efforts, it cannot occur through our 'I'.

Whatever is achieved in the world is achieved through actions, through efforts. Effort is a means;

the 'I' is the centre there. Every achievement makes the 'I' still stronger. In fact, the happiness in achievement is only that of strengthening and expanding the 'I'. But this 'I' is never full. This is as it should be. Hence happiness is apparently seen but not achieved. Hence the learned have said, there is misery in the world. Our error lies in doing that for the sake of liberation which we do also for worldly existence. We are engaged in achieving that which does not have to be achieved, or, rather, we have to lose ourselves. As soon as we do that we realize it.

LAST NIGHT, I was on the river-bank for a long time. The current of the river, shining like a silver tape, wound its way far into the distance. A fisherman came there rowing his pinnace slowly. The aquatic birds that had been chirping for a long time became silent on hearing his shouts.

A friend had accompanied me. He sang a song of prayer. Our conversation centred on the topic of God. The theme of the hymn he sang was also the quest for God. He who sang it had spent years in this quest. I had met him only yesterday. He

had taken a degree in science; but all of sudden a craze for God had seized him. Many years had passed since then, yet nothing was attained by him.

I was silent after listening to the song of prayer. His voice was sweet and his fervour tickled the mind. At the bottom of the song, there was a feeling heart, and that was why the song had become very lively. It was reverberating in my mind. My companion broke this silence and asked whether the quest was only a delusion. "I was very hopeful at the outset," he said, "but gradually I am getting disillusioned."

Still I kept quiet for a while and said, "Quest for God is definitely an illusion because the problem itself does not arise. He is ever present. But we haven't eyes competent enough to see Him. The real quest should be for the perfect vision." I continued, "There was a blind man. He went out in search of the sun. His quest was wrong. ..." The sun is there. He has to find out eyes. When he gets the eyes he finds out the sun. Usually the so-called seeker after God directly engages himself in seeking God. He does not think of his defective eyes. This basic blunder ultimately brings about disappointment. My mode of viewing is just the opposite. I see that the real problem is mine, that of my trans-

formation. How am I? How are my eyes? — that alone is the limit of my knowledge, the limit of my vision. If I am altered, if my eyes are altered, if my consciousness is altered, what is invisible becomes visible; and God is realized in the depth of that alone which we are seeing even now. The Lord is realized in the world itself. That is why I assert that dharma teaches the technique of attaining a new consciousness, a new vision, and not the realization of God. The Lord does exist. We are standing in Him alone; but since we do not possess the eyes, the sun is not visible to us. Seek not the sun: search for the eyes.

GAUTAMA BUDDHA has propounded four noble Truths: Misery, cause of misery, restraint of misery and the path leading to the restraint of misery. There is misery in life and there is the cause of misery. It is possible to control and restrain this misery. And there is a way to restrain it.

I see another noble Truth, the fifth one, which exists prior to these four. Because it exists, these four too exist. But for its prior existence, the four too would not have been there.

What is that fifth, or rather the first, noble Truth?

That Truth is our insensibility towards misery. There is misery but we are unconscious of it. It is not visible due to this unawareness. Thanks to this insensibility, misery does not distress us though we are within it. The whole of our life passes on in this dim senselessness — in this lassitude. What is nothing but misery is being borne.

Due to this insensibility or unconsciousness what exists does not come within the range of the eye; the dreams of what does not exist continue to haunt us. There is blindness towards the present while our vision is glued to the future. In the drowsiness of the pleasant dreams of the future, the misery of the present lies submerged. In this way, the misery is not seen and the problem of surmounting it does not arise at all.

Should a prisoner be not aware of his fetters and the high walls of the jail, where is the problem of yearning for freedom in him?

Hence I consider this Truth to be the first noble Truth — the Truth that we are insensible to misery. This truth that life is misery is not in our consciousness. The other four follow this truth. If I wake up to it, they too become visible.

I MENTION a few things here that can be counted on fingers.

One: The mind has to be known — the mind that is so close to us yet so unknown.

Two: The mind has to be transformed — the mind that is so stubborn, so over-anxious, in regard to transformation.

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

The three things are three only superficially. A man has to act only in respect of one: that is knowing the mind. The other two come of their own accord when the first has been achieved. Knowledge alone is transformation. Knowledge alone is liberation.

I was mentioning this yesterday when somebody said, "How is this knowing to be effected?"

This knowing is through waking up. Our activities, both physical and mental are performed unconsciously. We have to wake up to each one of these activities, whether we are walking or sitting or lying down. We have to remember perfectly each one of these. Suppose we wish to sit. We have to wake up to this wish, this inclination: we

have to watch the situation when there is no anger in the mind or when there is. We have to be the witness of everything: are thoughts cropping up or are they not ?

This alertness cannot be achieved through suppression or struggle. Do not take any decision. Do not make any selection between the good and the bad. Merely wake up and be alert. As soon as you wake up, the secret of the mind is revealed. The mind is known and realized, and merely by knowing it, the wished-for transformation takes place. When knowledge is complete, perfect liberation takes place.

Verily I say that it is easy to get liberated from the sickness of the mind. To know the sickness is to be cured of it: the diagnosis is itself the remedy.

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THE AFTERNOON has crept into twilight. A little while ago the sky was clear but suddenly strong gusts of wind began to blow and thick black clouds covered it up.

The sun sets. There is chillness in the air.

A mendicant comes to the door. He has held a parrot in his hand. There is no cage, but the parrot

seems to have forgotten the skill of flying. On their arrival it is the parrot that begins to speak not the fakir. "Ram! Ram! Chant the name of Ram, chant the name Ram, Ram, Ram!" I said, "The parrot speaks well!" The mendicant says, "This parrot is a great pandit." On hearing this I laughed to myself and said, "It must be so, for all scholars are only parrots."

This is clear to me that knowledge is not derived through learning. What is acquired by learning is not knowledge. Real knowledge is not an achievement of the intellect. Learning is a feat of memory. Perfect knowledge is derived not by remembering much but by discarding memory. What is taught and inculcated in one makes one a parrot. Another name for parrot talk is scholarship.

There is no greater hindrance than this on the path of perfect knowledge.

Scholarship consists of a collection of dead facts which are but loaned ones. They do not have any root in experience. A mind encompassed by these facts cannot have the vision of "what exists". These facts constitute a screen. The unknown is revealed when this screen is removed. This vision is perfect knowledge. It is not learning. It is the vision. The way to that achievement is Truthful vision. Not big tomes, nor collected facts.



DUSK HAS set in. The fragrance of so many evening flowers has begun to diffuse itself and spread.

A cuckoo had been cooing all the afternoon. It has become silent now. As soon as it became silent, it drew my attention. While it was singing, I did not quite feel its attraction. I am eagerly awaiting the resumption of its cooing, but in the meantime a saintly gentleman has arrived, a young Brahmacharin. His body is sickly, withered and lean. His face is pallid, dim, like a blown-out lamp. His eyes are parched and dry. On seeing him I am filled with pity. He has tortured the body a lot. When I told him so, it made him shudder. He thought he had made a great sacrifice, as though ill health itself was spirituality, as though hideousness and distortion constituted Yogic practice, as if austerity meant amassing the ugly. Count Kaiserling has said, "Health and normalcy are ideals inimical to spirituality." In these lines there is an echo of the same ignorance. This line of thought is the result of an acute reaction. There are people who are always after their body. The physical body is all for them. This is an extreme. Then as a result of severe reaction another extreme crops up. Both the extremes spring up from the body. The body

is neither to be fondled and made much of, nor to be broken and shattered. It is a fully stored-up dwelling. It is essential to keep it healthy and clean.

Spiritual life is not antagonistic to healthy normal life. It is perfect health. It is synonymous with a situation full of melody and beauty, cadence and concordance.

Suppression of the body is not spiritualism; it is hedonism in disguise. It is only a violent reaction to a life of sheer enjoyment of pleasures. There is no perfect knowledge in it. It is ignorance and self-torture. It is violent in temperament. No one reaches anywhere through it. It is not to be suppressed. It is only an innocent instrument, our loyal factotum. As I am, so it becomes. If I indulge in vice it keeps me company there. If I begin to practise penance there also it renders me assistance. It is behind me: Transformation is not to be made in it. It has to be made in that which it follows.

I AM talking on peace, bliss and salvation. This is the central quest of life. If it is not realized, life

becomes futile. I was speaking so yesterday when a young man said, "Can everybody attain salvation? If everybody can why don't all of us get it?"

I narrated a story.

One morning a person asked Gautam Buddha to throw light on the same problem. Buddha asked him to go round the city and enquire everybody individually what he wished for in his life. The man visited every house and returned at twilight utterly exhausted but armed with a complete list. Somebody had wished for fame, another for a high position; a third for wealth, yet another for prosperity, and so on. But there was not a single individual desiring salvation. Buddha said then, "Now tell me, can everybody get salvation?" It is there no doubt. But do you look at it even for once? We are standing without our back turned to it.

This is my answer too. Everybody can get salvation in the manner every seed can become a plant. It is a possibility for us. But this possibility must be turned into actuality. I know that the process of converting a seed into a plant is not difficult. Let the seed be ready to die. The germinating sprout comes out ere long. If I am ready to die, salvation comes to me instantaneously. The 'I' is the bondage. If it goes, there is salvation.

With my 'I' I am worldly; without it I am in salvation.

DURING the last rainy season I had sown the seeds of Gultevari plant. When the rainy season was over, the flowers too withered. The dry stumps of the plants were cut off and cast away. Now after a year when the rains have come I see so many Gultevari plants growing by themselves. They have begun to peep out from the ground at many places. The seeds that had missed the last year's germinating season had waited for a year. To see them enlivened now is delightful. In the darkness under-ground they had waited patiently during winter and summer. Now they have the opportunity of seeing light again. Thanks to this achievement, an auspicious melody has spread over those newly grown plants. I experience it.

Centuries before, a musical throat, as sweet as nectar, had sung: *tamaso ma jyotir gamaya* (lead me from darkness to light). Who does not yearn to rush towards light from dreary darkness? Are not similar seeds lying hidden in man, in every living being, that wishes to get light? Is there no patient waiting and fervent prayer in the course of many births?

These seeds are lying hidden within everyone and it is only through these seeds that the thirst

for plenitude, for being full and perfect rises up. These flames of yearning are lying concealed in everyone. They are impatient to reach out to the sun. No one becomes content without transforming these seeds into plants. There is no way out without being full. One has to become full, because at the bottom every seed is full.

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A NEW dawn. A new sun. A new sunshine. Fresh flowers. I have got up from sleep. Everything is new and fresh. There is nothing in the world which is old and stale.

Many centuries ago Heraclitus of ancient Greece had said, "It is impossible to step into the same river twice."

While everything is new, man is old, lifeless. He does not live in the new, in the now. Hence he becomes old. He lives in memory, in the past, in the dead. This is mere living but not real life. This is death-in-life. We grant this semi-death to be life and come to an end. Life is neither in the past nor in the future. Life is in everlasting present.

That life is attained through yoga because yoga makes one wake into everlasting freshness. It makes one wake into the everlasting present. We

must wake into that which 'exists'. It is not 'what was' nor is it 'What will be'. It is only when man's mind is free from the burden of memory and imagination that 'what exists' becomes manifest.

Memory is a compilation of the fragments of the dead past, of the moments gone by. In it life in all its reality cannot be attained. Imagination is but the offshoot of memory; it is but its echo. It is but its scattered diffusion. All this is but moving about in the known. The doors of what is unknown are not thrown open through it.

Let the known go that the unknown may manifest. Let the dead go that the lively one may manifest. The substantial formula of yoga is this alone.

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NIGHT IS getting darker and drearier. There are but a few stars in the sky and a broken piece of the moon is hanging in the west. The jasmine has blossomed. Its fragrance is floating in the air.

I have just seen off a lady up to the door and returned. I do not know her. Something is worrying her mind. Its darkness appears to have encircled her.

As soon as she came I saw this circle of misery. She too, without wasting time, asked me immediately, "Can a misery be quelled?" I gazed at her. To me she appeared to be a living monument of misery.

Many more people are gradually becoming similar monuments. They wish to quell their miseries but cannot do so because their diagnosis of misery is not correct.

Misery is experienced when consciousness is in a particular state. That is the characteristic feature of that state. In that state there is no freedom from suffering because that state itself is suffering. When one misery is removed, another takes its place. This process continues. You may very well free yourself from one misery or the other, but it is impossible for you to free yourself from misery. Misery stays, only the causes change. Suffering may end only when consciousness is transformed, not by any other means.

On a dark night a young man approached Gautama Buddha. He was miserable, worried and distressed. He told him, "How miserable is the world! What a torment it is." Gautama Buddha had said, "Come where I am. There is no suffering, there is no distress there."

There is a state of consciousness in which there is no misery. It was to point out this that Buddha had said, "Where I am, there is no misery." Consciousness has two situations—one of ignorance, the other of knowledge; one of identification with the other and another of self-realization. As long as I identify myself with the other there is misery. The bondage to the other is misery. Freedom from the other, realization of the self, and being in the self result in the cessation of misery. I am not myself. Hence this misery. When I am myself in reality, misery disappears.

TODAY the sky is not studded with stars, for it is overcast with dark clouds which drizzle now and then.

The *rajanigandhā* flowers are in full bloom, loading the wind with their fragrance. I feel as though I am not. My sense of emptiness is full to the brim. I am in a state in which death is but life, in which to lose is but to find. I had once thought of merging this tiny drop of life into the ocean of existence but now I find that the very ocean has merged into the tiny drop itself.

The very existence is entanglement. To be void is liberation. The knot of existence makes one roam aimlessly. The fear of voidness forbids one to be full. And so long as one does not risk oneself, one lives in perpetual dread of death but when he faces death he finds there is no death at all. When he is ready to eschew himself, he finds that something exists in him which he cannot discard or end.

This contradiction is the law of life. The knowledge of this law is meditation. To know it fully is to be out of it. Its ignorance makes us wander aimlessly. But its knowledge stops all our wanderings and enables us to realize the goal of our life.

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ONCE upon a full-moon night, a party of revellers left the pub and arrived at the river bank for a boat-excursion. They rowed the boat ceaselessly from midnight to day-break. When the sun rose in the morning and the cold wind blew, their consciousness began to dawn. They thought it was time to return. But their surprise knew no bounds when they found that the boat stood where they first saw it at night.

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They quite forgot it at night that it was not enough to row the boat; the boat should have been untied from the post before it was propelled by the oars.

I told the tale to an old gentleman who approached me this evening. He had said, "I have been wandering throughout my life. But now at the end of my life I think I have reached nowhere." True, man is not aware of himself. His unawareness is the ignorance of his self — a state wherein his all actions are mechanical. He moves in this thoughtless state as in dream but he reaches nowhere. As the chains of the boat are tied to the post, he too remains tied somewhere in this condition.

Dharma says this bondage, this entanglement, pertains to the senses. Though man is tied to his senses, still he believes that he is moving to the region of pleasures. He runs after them but his race leads him to mirage at the end. Let him ceaselessly propel the boat with whatever oars he has, but his boat will not move from the shore of discontent. He goes away empty and incomplete; his senses do not achieve gratification. The wheel of life goes on no doubt, but the end of voyage remains unrealized. And at last he finds to his dismay that his life's boat stands anchored at the harbour where it stood before.

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Every sailor knows that he has to unfasten the boat from the post before he launches it on the ocean. A common man should also know that before he sets his life's boat afloat on the ocean of pleasure, fullness and light, he has to untie it from the entanglement of the senses. When he has done so, he need not even propel the boat with the oars. Ramakrishna says, "Set your boat afloat, spread the sails, divine winds are anxious to carry you every moment."

99

A HERMIT saw me yesterday. We talked about the process of meditation. I wonder how many erroneous and illusory notions prevail concerning the nature of our mind. If we start with the current assumption that the mind is our enemy, our entire process of meditation comes to nought. In fact, neither the mind nor the body is our enemy. Both are mechanical instruments helpful to our cause. Consciousness can use them just as it likes. At the very outset, this notion of mind's enmity and struggle generates the idea of control and restraint over the mind. And as a result thereof our life becomes poisonous.

As a matter of fact, the mind of man seeks pleasure. There is nothing wrong about it. That is why the mind is attracted towards its own form. If the mind ceases to function thus, the individual loses all aptitude for the spiritual life. The mind is a pleasure-seeker. It seeks pleasure in the world but when it does not find any therein, it diverts itself inwards.

Pleasure is the centre both of the world of the senses and of the world of liberation. The wheel of life here and hereafter moves on this very pivot.

The mind gets a glimpse of pleasure outside, in the world. Therefore it runs outward. If the mind is fixed in meditation, it finds real joy there. Then it goes inward. But it is not to be forced. If we force the reluctant mind to go inward, it reacts violently. What we have got to do is to extend the circle of our inward joy. As soon as the circle is widened, the mind which is naturally a pleasure-seeker, enters it of its own accord; for, where there is pleasure it has a natural access.

Pleasure — indivisible pleasure — is the aim of life. The pleasure of this world is only a glimpse, an infinitesimal glimpse of that pleasure which can be traced to the state of liberation. The source of this pleasure lies inward while its projection stands outward. Its life abides in the centre whereas its

shadow falls on the circumference. Hence the world and liberation are not contradictory terms. Nor is the outward the enemy of the inward one. The entire existence is a uniform melody. As soon as the individual realizes this truth, he is released from bondage.

100

EARLY at daybreak a youth has approached me. I see him dejected and dismayed as if a feeling of loneliness has overtaken him, as if he has lost something which his eyes are searching for. He has been visiting me for over a year. That such a day would come I also knew. In the past he felt an imaginary pleasure which has now gradually disappeared.

There has been silence for a while. The youth has closed his eyes and is thinking about something. He has then spoken in clear accents, "I have lost my faith. Formerly I lived in dream which has been shattered now. Formerly God stood by me and I had his company. I am now left alone, confounded and disconsolate, as I never did before. I wish to return to my former self but that too is not possible. The bridge that linked me to the past is now broken to pieces."

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I say, "A non-existent, imaginary being can be separated from us, but not so the ever-existent. We create an illusory figure and then think that we are not lonely or companionless. But the fact is that our loneliness is mitigated, and not eliminated, by the creation of illusory Personality we call God. A concept of God based on our mental projection does not give real joy. Such a concept is not our support but an illusion. The sooner we withdraw from this concept the better for us. If we want to realize God we have to take leave of our mental concepts to which the concept of God is no exception. This activity on our part will be our renunciation, our asceticism. There is no greater trouble than bidding farewell to our dreamy concepts. When we have done so, the ever-existent Self appears and our dormant state of sleep gives place to wakefulness. Then the ever-existent Self is realized. This self-realization is inseparable from us; this self-experience is indivisible and cannot be shattered by any other experience. There is no perception of any object. It is a perception of the self by the self. The self is to see God in itself, not outside itself. Now if you have given up the accepted or conventional concept of God and lost faith in Him, don't be perplexed and confused.

"Give up all creeds and concepts and then see. What exists or remains is God."

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A FRIEND has made a gift of paper-flowers to me. I look at these and find there is nothing beyond their outward appearance. Everything is visible, nothing invisible. But outside in the park I see roses and find there is something beyond the visible. There is something invisible which is their very breath.

Modern civilization is analogous to paper-flowers. It ends with the outward appearance and is therefore lifeless. It has lost its link with the unknown, the unseen. Therefore, today, man stands so cut-off, so separate from his own roots as he never stood before.

Plants together with their leaves and flowers are visible to us but their roots lie hidden under the earth. The roots that are visible to us have also their invisible roots. Similarly our existence is linked with that greater existence which is not only unknown but is also unknowable. When man communes with the unknowable, he visualizes his actual roots.

The unknowable cannot be realized through deliberation. Deliberation, being knowable and visible, ends with the knowable. As such, it cannot

become the medium of knowing the invisible. Existence lies beyond the reach of thought.

Realization of existence is the process of becoming itself, not the process of knowing it. It is not through subject-object relationship that self-realization takes place. Consciousness has to merge itself into super-consciousness in order to realize it.

Give up thinking; be quiet and void. You then reach that non-dual state which enables you to realize Truth, the real Existent. Artificial flowers can be seen from a distance. There can be a seer to see them. But if you want to see the natural flowers it is better to be one with them.

A GIRL is in tears. Her doll is broken. She laments. And now I ponder: Is not all our weeping only a lamentation over broken dolls ?

Yesterday an aged person came to see me. He had not realized his ambition. He was on that account sad and sorrowful. Today I met a lady who now and then wiped off her tears as she talked to me. She had great ambition in life but failed to realize them. And now here this girl is weeping. Do not the tears of this girl represent the basic flow of all the tears? Is not the original cause of all the



tears typified in the broken doll that lies before her ? Somebody is trying to make her understand that after all it is no more than a toy, and it is useless to weep for it. As I hear it, I laugh. If man were to know this truth, will not his entire wailings and lamentations come to an end?

A doll is merely a doll, nothing else. How difficult it is to understand this!

Man is hardly so advanced that he can understand it. His growth of body is one thing and his growth of understanding is another. His growth of understanding is his liberation from the mind. So long his mind is active it creates dolls. As soon as it is set at rest, dolls cease to exist.

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“I AM an aspirant. I aspire after my elevation. Gradually I am making progress in that direction. I hope to achieve success one day.”

A hermit thus talked to me once. His talk had a sensual, not a spiritual, ring about it. Generally such spiritual austerities too are obstacles. Why adopt them for realizing the Existent. Realization is not an achievement; it is a sort of knowledge that the Existent is not a lost entity that has to be

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found but an entity always present with us. The so-called austerities hide this truth. At the base of these, there exists a sensual desire, an aspiration for a certain gain and a certain change, such as: “I am to change from what I am. I have to transform A into B.” This duality lies at the base of all sensual desires. This duality is this world and its sorrow.

Verily I say: If you desire for even a little change from what you are, it would mean you are going to an opposite direction. The Existent itself is the path. When we are awakened to that Existent, our life becomes full of beauty and naturalness. A sense of freedom and liberation inspires our breath. The so-called practitioner of aspirational austerity can seldom reach this beauty. Force, restraint and aspiration destroy his naturalness. That is why a sort of ugliness is found in all those so-called aspiring ascetics.

Then what shall we do ? Nothing. Cessation of all activities is meditation. The Self exists neither in action nor in deliberation. It manifests itself outside of all action and thought. Leave everything, let everything be merged and mingled and lost. Then what is realized in this nothingness, in this void, is all that — is Self.

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THERE is a tale of wisdom.

Once a youth asked a hermit, "How can one attain liberation?" The hermit said in reply, "Who has bound you that you ask for release?" The youth, silent for a moment, collected himself and said, "In fact, nobody has bound me at all."

Thereupon the hermit said to the youth, "Then why do you ask me for the way to liberation?"

"Why do you search for liberation?" This was the question I put to an individual yesterday. In fact, every person should put this question to himself. "Where is the bondage?" Be conscious of that what exists. Abandon your anxious efforts for initiating a change in the concept of the Existent. Don't run after ideals. You are identical with the present, not with the future. The present has no bondage. And as we become aware of the present, bondages disappear in no time.

Aspiration — aspiration for becoming and achieving something — itself is a bondage. Aspiration does always live in the future, in tomorrows. That itself is the bondage, tension, race and the world. That itself creates the idea of moksa. That itself functions as the basis of achieving moksa. And if bondage be the moksa, how can moksa be the result?

We have to initiate the attainment of moksa (liberation) with the process of becoming mukta (liberated). Moksa is the start as well as the end of itself.

Liberation is not an achievement but the realization that I stand in liberation, The realization that I am liberated is achieved in quiet, wakeful consciousness. It is only an awakening to this truth that every individual is free what forms ingredients of liberation.

As I give up racing, the aspiration for becoming something, I become myself. This 'becoming myself' is in full sense what we may call liberation. The so-called aspirant cannot achieve this becoming because he is in, and not out of, the race for achieving moksa, the self and super-self; for he who is in race, whatever be the form of that race, is not in his self. We must know that religiousness is not a faith, an effort or an activity; but it is being in one's self. And this realization can come in a moment. Being awakened to the truth that bondage lies in aspiring, racing and idealizing, our ignorance falls off and what is then seen has no bondage at all.

Truth revolutionizes thought in a moment.

IT IS the winter season. The sun has just risen. Cold winds have been blowing the whole night through. Early this morning, the grass was covered with dew-drops which have disappeared under the sun-beams getting hotter and hotter.

A pleasant morning has initiated the day. How do these songs of birds, though meaningless, seem to be so meaningful! But perhaps life has no meaning. Meaning is a man's creation. Because it has no meaning that life is infinitely profound and vast. Meaning implies limitation while life is an infinite existence and therefore has no meaning. He alone who becomes boundless by his merger in the meaningless can realize the 'Existent' one. All meaning is insignificant and is attached to the insignificant. It is understood in relation to 'I' on which it is centred. The world seen through this 'I' is not the real world, for that which is related to 'I' is not real. Truth is an undivided whole, not divisible into 'I' and 'not-I'. As meaning is centred on 'I' alone, the indivisible one which is beyond 'I' and 'not-I' is not meaningful. The labels — meaningful or not-meaningful, cannot be assigned to it. The concept of God too is centred on 'I' and as such is not real. All that seems to be

meaningful is really meaningless. In fact to go beyond the limit of meaningfulness is to become spiritual.

A person had asked Bodhidharma, "Please tell me something about that pious liberation." Bodhidharma had replied, "There is nothing of piety about it. There is voidness and only voidness."

I HEAR a cock crowing.

A cart is going on the road. I watch it.

There is hearing and seeing; but there is no sound in between. All sounds are an obstacle to the attainment of Truth. It stands in relation to Truth but is not Truth itself. The last stage of our realizing it is marked by the absence of sound rather than its presence.

There is an absence of sound in meditation, but the absence of sound alone is not meditation. Sounds are absent in faintness and in sound sleep too. But even in the absence of sound we keep wakeful consciousness. That alone is the state of meditation.

I have been talking about it to a hermit who wrongly believed that merger and stupefaction were necessary for meditation. Numerous thinkers too

have fallen into the same grievous error, giving rise to practices of worship, devotion and stupefaction. All these are methods of escape, being analogous in utility in intoxicating stuffs. Under the influence of intoxicants the individual becomes oblivious of his self—a state which gives him a semblance of exhilaration. As a matter of fact, meditation is a realization and not forgetfulness of the self.

When I am completely awake, I am completely in my self. This awakening arises when I am free from sound, thought and mind. In this wakefulness and soundless consciousness the 'I' (the ego), but not the 'I' (the Self), is eliminated. When 'I' (the Ego) is eliminated, the realization of 'I' (the Self) becomes complete.

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THE DARK moonless night is advancing. The birds have returned to their nests. And in the enveloping darkness they are chirping on the trees before they will retire to rest. The lamps are being lit in the city. In a short while, the sky is going to be studded with stars and the earth glittered with lamps.

Two tiny dark patches of clouds are floating in the eastern direction. I have no companion. I stand all alone. I sit void of thought. How pleasant it is to sit! The firmament and the galaxy of stars, it seems, are merged in themselves.

In the vacuum created by the cessation of thought, the individual existence is merged in the universal existence. There is a small screen between the two, if that is removed every individual is the lord himself.

There is a coverlet on our eyes, hiding the Lord. This coverlet has assumed the shape of this world. As soon as it is removed, the gates of infinite, blissful kingdom stand open to us.

Jesus Christ has said, "Knock and the doors shall open." I say, "Glance but a little and the doors shall open." They say a person was running to the west. He asked somebody on the way, "Where is the east?" The reply came, "You turn your back and you will find the east facing you." I too say, "All is there; you need to turn your eye to the right direction to see it."

This should be declared to the whole world. To hear it distinctly is to achieve much. Indeed, if we have faith in the divinity of the self, we have reached half way to self-realization.

I said to a friend who came to see me today, "Property you have indeed, but you have forgotten that you have it. Awaken your memory, recollect your divinity, and know who you are. Inquire yourself to the extent that your enquiry may resound through your mind and breath and its shaft may delve deep in the cavity of your consciousness. Then the wondrous answer will reveal itself to you, the knowledge whereof includes the knowledge of everything.

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THE NIGHT has not yielded to the dawn. The sky is still studded with stars which are about to bid it farewell. The river looks like a thin rippled sheet of silver. The sand is cool with the dew-drops. The winds are bitter with cold.

A deep solitude prevails. Its monotony is heightened by the warble of birds now and then.

I have come to this solitary region along with my friend. He says, "I am frightened by this solitude. If the mind remains busy well and good, otherwise a deep feeling of distress overpowers me."

I tell him that this feeling overpowers all. Nobody desires to realize his 'self'. If you peep into

your inner 'self' you will be perplexed, because solitariness leaves you alone with the self. This solitariness is very frightening. On the other hand, if you are entangled in the meshes of the world wherein you forget the self, you feel you have escaped; but that is not your permanent escape. Man has been trying in vain for this escape. For this is the escape from his own self. But is that our real escape? No. We can run away from others but not from our own 'self'. We may be running away from our 'self' throughout life but at the end we shall find we have reached nowhere. The wise, therefore, do not run away from the 'self'. Rather they try to understand and realize it.

If man peeps inward, he will find that all is void within. He is perplexed at the sight of this perpetual vacuum and runs away. He tries to fill it up with the external objects but is unable to do so. That is his distress, his affliction. And that is the failure of his life. Death brings this distress before his very eyes and takes him to the eternal void which he has been trying ever to avoid. That is why the idea of death is very dreadful to us. I say it is futile to run away from the void of the 'self'. It is in the realization of the self, in our identification with him, that we can find solution to the problem of our existence. Accession to the void is our dharma. In this completely solitary state, our

activities in relation to the 'self' alone constitute dharma.

109

“WHAT IS the goal of life ?”

A youth has asked me this question.

The night is far advanced. The sky is overspread with stars. The wind is cold. Somebody says there has been a snow-fall somewhere. The path is lonely. There is dense darkness under the trees.

How pleasant it is to live in this quiet, solitary night. The very living is a joy. But we have forgotten the very living. How blissful is this life ! But we do not like to live merely for living. We wish to live for an ideal. We regard life as the means and not the end. Our race for achieving the ideal poisons everything. The very tension for the ideal disrupts the harmony of life.

Once upon a time Akbar asked Tansen, “How is it that you do not sing so well as your preceptor does ? His songs evince a rare divine quality in them.” Tansen said, “My preceptor sings a song for its own sake, while I sing with some purpose.”

For a few moments at least live your life for its own sake. Live a simple life devoid of struggle and exertion. Remain silent and watch things happen.

Let them happen. Allow that to exist which must. Leave all tension voluntarily. Let life flow and become an actual fact. That I assure you will lead to your emancipation.

The illusion of the ideal is one of the blind faiths cherished through the ages. As a matter of fact life is meant to be lived for its own sake, not for an ideal, a person, or an object. He who lives for an ideal, etc. does not live at all. He alone lives who lives for the sake of living. He alone realizes what is realizable. He alone can realize the ideal too.

I look at the young man. There is a curious calm on his face. He does not speak out anything but the expression of his face manifests everything. He has kept quiet for an hour and left. But he is quite a changed man. He himself has declared at the time of his departure. “I am leaving quite a changed man now.”

110

IT IS morning. The sun is hidden behind the clouds and it is drizzling. The rain has moistened everything.

A hermit, drenched to the skin, has come to me. Some fifteen or twenty years back, he had left home

and sought self-realization. But in spite of his renunciation he has not been able to realize the Self. He is, therefore, filled with vexation and despair. They say that society and family are hindrances in the way of self-realization. But in vain have such concepts alienated people from the pleasures of life.

I tell them a story.

There was a mad woman. She believed that her body was divine and not made of gross, earthly matter. She often used to say that in beauty and perfection her body had no match on this earth. One day she was brought to face a full-sized mirror where she saw her own image. So enraged was she at the sight that she threw the chair on the mirror, breaking it into several pieces. Then only could she heave a sigh of relief. When they asked her the reason for breaking the mirror she replied that the mirror was transforming her celestial body into the terrestrial one and spoiling her beautiful form.

Society and family are no more than mirrors, reflecting our true Self. Breaking the mirror is a non-sensical act, so is renouncing the world. We have to transform ourselves, not the mirror. Transformation can be made at the very place where we stand. Revolution starts from the centre. To start it from the periphery is a sheer waste of time.

We have to start from the Self directly. Society and family are no hindrances in our way. If there is an obstacle, it is we ourselves.

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.

“Has life a meaning ?” We don’t know.

This ignorance sums up the entire corpus of human philosophies. There is no end to our race for knowledge about the physical world or other related matters, but in regard to the consciousness of the Self we are still lost in darkness.

In our ignorance we see light outside, pitch darkness inside and our knowledge is centred on the circumference and not on the centre itself.

And, surprisingly enough, no effort is needed on our part to illumine the centre. The centre is illumination itself. We have only to turn our eye inside and visualize everything illumined there.

If the eye is withdrawn from the periphery, it would naturally turn inward. When it has lost its base in the outer world, it can find a base in the inner self.

Consciousness, the basis of the self, is meditation.

And meditation is the gate way to truth. In meditation, it is not only that the problems are solved but they disappear altogether — a fact which itself is the right answer. There is no problem where only consciousness exists.

Without this knowledge, life is a sheer waste.

112

ONE NIGHT a traveller, desirous of taking rest, broke his journey at an inn. When he arrived there, he saw some travellers ready for departure. Next morning when he was ready to depart, he saw some other travellers coming in. True, there were arrivals and departures of the guests at the inn but the landlord remained the same. A hermit who witnessed this scene posed a question, “Does not the same happen with the man every day ?”

I, too, ask the same question and say that in life there is nothing more important than the recognition of discrimination between the guest and the landlord. The body as well as the mind is an inn where deliberation, desire and transformation are guests. But there is an entity even apart from these guests. That entity is the Lord. But who is this Lord ?

How shall we know Him ? Buddha has said, “Halt.” This ‘halt’ is the realization of the Lord. Buddha has explained the ‘halt’ in this way : “This non-sensical mind does not halt. But if at all it does, it comes to acquire wisdom and liberation.” As the mind halts, the Lord reveals himself. He is the absolute ever-wakeful consciousness. He is unborn and immortal. He is unbound and hence needs no liberation. He is sole supreme. And his realization is the highest bliss.

113

WHAT IS that which we understand by life ? Last night somebody put this question to me. I told him a story.

Once a young man and an old person were sitting on canvas chairs. The old man who had shut his eyes, smiled from time to time. And intermittently he made gestures with his hands and face as if he wished some object to be cast off far away. After sometime he opened his eyes. The young man could not but ask him, “Sir, what is that which makes you smile in this inattractive restaurant ?” The old man replied, “Dear, I am recalling to my mind some stories of my life and these make me laugh. The young man then asked him again, “Sir,



what is it which with the gesture of hand and face you wish to cast off?" The old man smiled and said, "I wish to cast off those tales which I have often recalled." The youth said again, "Sir, do you at this age make your mind understand with the help of tales?" The old man replied, "My son! you too will realize one day that your life is nothing but a process that enables you to understand it better with the help of tales."

Indeed, life as we have it is but a tale that enables us to understand ourselves better. Life, as we understand it, is nothing but a dream. When we wake up we find we have nothing in our grasp. That which we knew we had was nothing but an illusion.

But we can wake up from this dream-life to that which is real. We can cast off our slumber. He who is asleep can wake up also. His state of sleep implies that he had had his state of wakefulness too.

114

IT IS almost midnight. The sky has become clear after several days. It appears to me that everything is moist. The setting moon is half visible in the western horizon.

I have spoken to the prisoners this evening. There were many of them present. How simple do

they become when they talk to me! What a radiance of sanctity emanating from their eyes! The very scene returns to my mind's eye.

I address them thus: "There is no sinner in the eye of God as there is no darkness in the presence of light. I do not, therefore, ask you to cast off anything. I don't ask you to give up clay but I do ask you to get diamonds. When you have got diamonds, the clay will take leave of you itself. Those who desire you to leave clay first are most stupid. In this world we always get something first before giving up something old. When we ascend the second step on the ladder we leave off the first. "Leaving" is a negative step followed by pain, misery, and forced restraint. Achieving is a positive step followed by bliss. In every day life we find but apparently that we leave something first to get something next. As a matter of fact, we have reached the second step before we have left the first step. We know that we have realized this fact before we have left the first step. Similarly when we have realized God, the sin leaves us of its own accord.

Indeed, by realizing that One we realize all. When that truth comes to us, all our dreams vanish in the air. Instead of trying to give up dreaming, we have to wake up from them. He who is busy in leaving them off, virtually accepts their existence. As a matter of fact, no dreams exist. We, therefore,

say, "I am Brahman." They who proclaim themselves as Brahman do not believe in the existence of darkness.

Friends, realize this; awaken light within you and pray. Realize the Lord within, be conscious of Truth within. You will find darkness nowhere. Our own unconsciousness is darkness; our own consciousness is light.

I have been telling this to the prisoners, but I should tell this to everyone. For is there a man who is not a prisoner ?

115

I HAVE been to a church today. I did not make my presence felt there, for I abstained from taking part in the proceedings. I was a mere listener. What I heard was quite common but what I saw was certainly extraordinary.

There were discussions on all problems. I heard them all, but something else came to my notice. I saw that the discussion centred round 'I' (the ego), but not a word was said on the problem taken up for discussion, for nobody aimed at establishing anything. Generally, we see that the roots of discussion are centred on 'I', howsoever they may appear to lie anywhere else. They are imperceptible.

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What is perceptible is not the root. The perceptible is secondary as are the flowers and leaves. If we stop with the perceptible, the question of solution does not arise at all, for, then, there remains no problem.

The existence of problem implies the existence of solution. Discussions lead us nowhere. For, therein the root is neglected altogether.

We also see that in discussion nobody talks to the other. Everybody talks to himself. Apparently some talk goes on. But where there is 'I' there is a wall which makes it hard for the one to reach the other. It is not possible to hold conversation with others in the presence of 'I'.

Most of the people spend their lives in holding conversation only with themselves.

I have read an account of what once transpired in a lunatic asylum. Two lunatics were engaged in a conversation. Their doctor was surprised to observe that while one spoke to the other, the other remained silent, though their conversation had no relevance, no link. The doctor put them a question, "How is it that when one of you babbles, the other remains silent ?" They made an answer, "We observe the basic rule of conversation : while one is talking, the other should remain silent so long as he has not finished talking."

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The statement is quite true, not only in relation to the lunatics but in relation to all. Indeed, people do observe the rules of conversation, even then everybody is talking to himself.

None can speak with the other without taking leave of 'I'. And this 'I' disappears only in love. Hence conversation can be held only in love. Every other talk is a wrangle, a confused verbiage, wherein each and every word spoken is addressed to ourselves by ourselves.

When I returned from the church, a person said to me, "Sir, you said nothing there." I said, "Nobody said anything there."

116

I AM awakened from a dream. Just on awakening I have seen the truth. In dream I was a partaker as well as a seer. So long as I remained dreaming I forgot that I was a seer, I remained only a participant. Now that I am awakened I find that I was only a seer. My being a participant in the dream was not a reality at all.

The dream and the world are both alike. The all-seeing consciousness alone is the truth. All else is fiction. What we know as 'I' is not real; that which knows this 'I' is alone real.

This all-seeing element is independent of all and is beyond all. It is neither the cause, nor the result. It is the ultimate end of everything.

When the unreal 'I', the dream 'I', ceases to exist, the Existent appears. The realization of this Existent is moksa, liberation.

117

A HERMIT once told me, "I have renounced everything for the sake of the Lord and now nothing is left with me."

I see that apparently there is nothing left with him. But I tell him that he still possesses what he should have abandoned and what lies in his power to abandon.

He looks sideways, askance. True, he has no visible possessions. Still in the form of renunciation, the abandonment of the objects of the world, he has a sense of possession in his egotistical inward awareness. To give up that alone constitutes renunciation, All other possessions are seizable and finally death snatches away everything. But 'I' cannot be snatched away. It can be only eschewed, renounced. The renunciation of this unseizable 'I' alone is renunciation.

Therefore man has nothing but 'I' to offer as gift to the Lord. Every other renunciation is only an illusion, because the so-called possessions which he is going to renounce do not really belong to him. The awareness of this so-called renunciation, on the other hand, would heighten his egotistical feeling on the basis of which even the gift of his very life is no gift. No gift can be called a gift except the gift of 'I'.

'I' alone is our possession. 'I' alone is the world. He alone who has given it up is the hermit who has really renounced his possession.

'I' is the possession, the root of all evil. The absence of 'I' is renunciation.

The offering of 'I' (the ego) to the Lord is an activity embodying a genuine religious revolution and transformation. When the gift is made, the resultant vacuum is filled up by substituting the omnipresent consciousness in its place.

The statement of Simon Wells has very much appealed to me that the Lord, and none else, has the privilege to employ the word 'I' for himself.

Indeed, he that is the centre of all existence is privileged to employ the word 'I' but he has no purpose to employ it, because his 'I' is not a separate entity but includes all. It is not strange that he who has the privilege of using his 'I' has no purpose to use it, whereas he who has the purpose to employ it, is not privileged to do so.

But he alone can achieve what he legitimately owns who has abandoned what he does not legitimately possess. He can abandon the 'I' (the ego) and become 'I' (pure consciousness). He can reach the right centre when he has given up that which appears to be, but actually is not, the right centre. The moment he has decentralized the centre, he has achieved the centre.

Man's 'I' has no entity. His 'I' is an aggregation of components and as such has no real existence. It gives rise to an illusion of truth which is ignorance itself. But he who peeps into truth and searches for it will find that illusion gone, the thread of truth which the petals in the form of 'I' had covered laid bare.

Thus with the cover of petals removed, he will find that the base of the cover was not his possession alone. It was as much his possession as of anybody else and that it pervaded all existence.

He who has not passed through this stage where the 'I' has not been eliminated cannot live a spiritual life. The elimination of the 'I' is the elimination of the wall that stands between us and the Existent, Truth. As soon as this 'I' is eliminated, the wall that separates us from ourselves is also demolished. Blessed is the person who has achieved the death of 'I' before achieving his physical death.

HE WHO desires to realize truth should not accept a conventional notion or tenet of truth. If he accepts that, his attempts for the realization of truth would become futile.

Further, in order to realize truth he should have the courage to discard all temptations held out by the mind. He should not accept any proposal made by the mind. When he reaches the stage where his mind becomes inactive and indolent, the self reveals itself to him.

But before he reaches the stage where his unalloyed knowledge becomes evident to him he comes across much that is not truth. And if he gets entangled in the cobweb of that apparent truth he misses his true self, although he may meet several other things. Self is not cognizable as other objects are and so long as any other object remains visible he cannot realize the self. When his mind becomes devoid of any cognizable object then what remains is the knowledge of self and truth.

A sage has said, "If, during meditation, you come across the very Lord himself, keep him off from your path."

I also say the same. When our path of meditation is quite solitary and the series of cognition

without an object, then alone we can meet and cognize what is real truth.

A teacher has also said the same. A student who heard his discourse went home, broke all the images he used to worship and burnt all his books he used to read. Then he returned to his teacher and said, "Sir, I have destroyed all that was a hindrance in my path of self-realization." Thereupon the teacher laughed and said, "O silly boy, first burn those books that are inside you and break the images which your mind ever creates."

A similar event has happened here today. A youth who heard my discourse went home destroyed his altar of worship and threw the images in the well. Then he returned and told me what he had done with the altar and the images. I said, "Instead of throwing away the images, throw away your mind which creates the images. Of what avail is it to destroy the altar as long as your mind is active creating new altars and new images every moment."

A PERSON inquires of me about dharma. I tell him: dharma is not what you believe or disbelieve. Nor is this a term synonymous with your faith. It

is what you breathe, what you do and what you do not do, what you are and what you are not. Dharma is an act, not a statement.

But dharma is an action only when it becomes the Self. Its 'becoming' is an antecedent and its, 'doing' is a consequence. As it is essential to become a flower in order to give out smell, so it is necessary to become the Self in order to realize dharma. The process of sowing the flowers is the process of sowing the self.

For that it is not necessary for you to go to the hill or to a quiet retreat. You can sow seeds in the self wherever you are. Because wherever you be, there is a hill, a forest within you. Indeed truth and beauty are cognizable in complete solitariness, and they who have the courage to stay in loneliness can achieve what is the best and the highest in life. The secrets of life open the doors of their cells only in solitariness where the supreme bliss can be had. In a completely calm and quiet atmosphere the seeds grow up into shoots — the seeds which remained hitherto invisible in the inmost recesses of our 'Being' withholding all bliss from us by restricting our approach. It is only the artificial flowers that grow outside, the natural flowers grow from within. The inward seed of genuine truth shoots forth from within where its root lies hidden from our eye. The

artificial flower of the semblance of truth grows outside and has no root within.

It is not necessary to go to the hill or the forest for the inward spiritual growth but it is necessary to be on a hill or in a forest. The way to the hill or the forest lies within us. Let us snatch a few moments from the hustle and bustle of our racy life and annihilate the notion of space and time and their offshoots — the so-called individuality and I-mindedness. Let us empty our mind of all that which it is full of and throw it off as an element foreign to us. Let us cast off everything — our name, our country, our family and wipe off all from our memory and remain void like a blank sheet of paper. This is the path of our inward solitude and its resultant inward renunciation.

When your consciousness loosens its grasp of objects and rends asunder all the bondages created by name and form, then alone it remains in itself which is its real form. Then you find yourself all alone, in solitariness. What you realize at that time is something supreme which does not belong to this objective world. The flowers of dharma grow up in that state of consciousness and fill up our life with the fragrance of the supreme soul.

Whatever is realized in these few moments — of silence, beauty, truth — gives you strength to

maintain simultaneously your twofold standard of living: you live in this universe, yet you are out of it; there is no bondage, still you are released. You live in waters yet waters do not touch you. In this very experience there lies the success of your life and the attainment of your dharma.

120

HE ALONE who has taken leave of all the tenets stands on the path of truth. On the other hand, he who has prejudices and sticks to particular tenets cannot lay claim to truth. Tenets are the creation of man's mind. Truth has no sides to take. Therefore, he who is unprejudiced, without a side to favour, becomes the possession of truth as well as its possessor.

Therefore, I say, do not stick to a particular side, tenet or view. Let your mind reach the stage where no side remains. On that point alone thought ceases to exist and 'seeing' begins. When the eyes become unprejudiced they can behold Him who ever exists.

A truly religious person is he who takes leave of all the tenets or creeds and who does not adhere to a particular creed. In this way, when he

bids farewell to all religions he becomes a religious person.

People ask me, "What is your dharma?" I answer, "I am a religious person but I do not belong to any religion." That there can be many dharmas I do not understand. Deliberations create only differences, they do not lead you to any dharma. Only in the state of thoughtlessness can dharma be approached, and there is no variation of dharma in the state of thoughtlessness.

The state of contemplation is one. Truth that is experienced in that state is also one. Truth is one, though tenets are many. He who out of manifold tenets selects one, closes doors against truth. Therefore I ask you, "Release the tenets and be released from them; open the door for truth. This alone is my advice to you."

East or West, the taste of the oceanic salt is invariable everywhere. The law of evaporation does not vary with different lands. Similarly the law of metempsychosis applies equally to all. Then is it possible that our inner Being is governed by different laws and truths?

The self has no categorical basis, on geographical frontier, no space-direction. Variations belong to the faculty of the mind and get entrance in its different cells. They cannot reach the indivisible 'self.'

I was returning home from my early morning walk. I saw a bird in the cage. I was reminded of the people imprisoned in subtle and artificial prejudices which they themselves have created. By entering this cage we deprive ourselves of our capacity to fly in the open firmament of truth.

And just now I see a bird flying in the firmament. How freely does it move in the air. I see also the bird in the cage. Are not the two birds symbolical of two different states of the mind?

The bird that flies in the air leaves no groove behind. Similarly, they who move in the firmament of truth hardly ever leave a groove behind. Therefore I tell you it is futile to search for any path, for actually there is no path as such. The so-called paths which seem to exist lead you only to bondage; they do not let you move freely. The seeker of truth has to make his own path. And how beautiful it is! Besides we should know that life is not an engine going on the beaten track. It is but a stream that rises from the mountain and runs towards the sea.



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