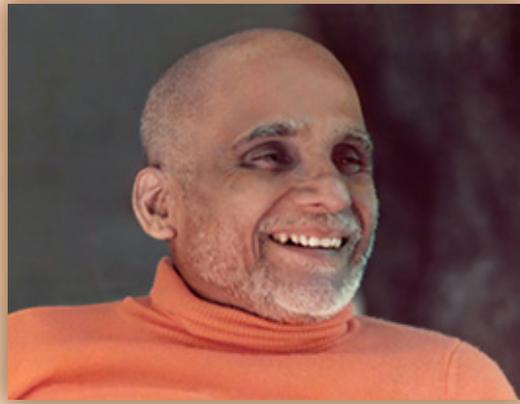


DAILY SATSANGA



SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

The Divine Life Society

Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India

Website: www.swami-krishnananda.org

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JANUARY

from The Realisation of the Absolute

1st January

KNOWLEDGE IS FREEDOM

The attainment of the Infinite Life is the supreme purpose of finite life. Knowledge and meditation have both their dear aim in the realisation of the Absolute. Moksha is the highest exaltation of the self in its pristine nature of supreme perfection. Emancipation is the Consciousness of the Reality; not becoming something which previously did not exist, not travelling to another world of greater joy. It is the knowledge of eternal existence, the awareness of the essential nature of Pure Being. It is the Freedom attained by knowing that we are always free. Knowledge is not merely the cause for freedom; it is itself freedom.

2nd January

THE UPANISHADS ARE THOROUGHLY SPIRITUAL

The Upanishads are thoroughly spiritual and, hence, advocate the most catholic doctrine of the Yoga of Truth-realisation. Their teachings are not the product of an intellectual wonder or curiosity, but the effect of an intense and irresistible pressure of a practical need arising from the evil of attachment to individual existence. The task of the Seers was to remedy this defect in life, which, they realised, was due to the consciousness of separateness of being and the desire to acquire and become what one is not. The remedy lies in acquiring and becoming everything, expressed all too imperfectly by the words 'Infinity', 'Immortality', and the like.

3rd January

A DE-HYPNOTISATION OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS

This Integration of Being can be achieved even in this very life. It is not necessary to take some more rounds of births and deaths for the purpose, provided the integration is effected before the shaking off of the physical sheath, through persistent meditation on Reality and negation of separative consciousness. The quickness of the process of Attainment depends upon the intensity of the power of such meditation, both in its negative and assertive aspects. A dehypnotisation of the consciousness of physicality and individuality is the essential purpose of all methods of spiritual meditation.

4th January

HEROIC LEAP OF THE INDIVIDUAL INTO THE UNKNOWN

The heroic leap of the individual into the unknown is the expression of the want of a superior joy. The dissatisfaction with limitedness in life directs the soul to catch the fullness of

perfection in the truth of its Integrality, with which the individualised condition is not endowed. Hence, universal movement and individual effort, though differing in their altruism of nature, can be understood as a reflection of the tendency to Self-Perfection of Being. The pressure of the truth of the absoluteness of consciousness is the source of the force that compels individuals to transcend their finitude and find their eternal repose in it alone. This permanent Verity is the supreme object of quest through the cosmical endeavour in creation, wherein alone all further impulses for externalisation of forces are put an end to. The desire to become the All terminates in the experience of Infinitude.

5th January

THE SUPREME SILENCE

The delight of the Self is the delight of Being. It is the Bliss of Consciousness-Absolute. The Being of Consciousness is the Being of Bliss, Eternal. It does not lie in *achievement* but *realisation* and *experience*, not invention but discovery. The Consciousness is more intense when the objective existence is presented near the subject, still more complete when the subjective and the objective beings are more intimately related, and fully perfected and extended to Absoluteness in the identification of the subject and the object. This Pure Consciousness is the same as Pure Bliss, the source of Power and the height of Freedom. This is the supreme Silence of the splendid Plenitude of the Real, where the individual is drowned in the ocean of Being.

6th January

THE LOVE FOR THE ETERNAL

The love for the Eternal is the essential passion that burns in the heart of all things. Beings know it not, and so they suffer. When we turn our face away from this one Reality, we open the door to self-imprisonment. No achievement, either on earth or in heaven, no greatness pertaining to the world of name and form, is worth considering. The love of life is based on the love of the Self. All actions are done for the sake of the Self, not for external persons and things. "Not, verily, for the love of the all is the all dear, but for the love of the Self is the all dear."—Brih. Up., II. 4. 5. All actions are done for the sake of the Self, not for external persons and things.

7th January

CHANGE IS THE QUALITY OF UNTRUTH

Change is the quality of untruth and the Upanishads assert that Reality is Self-satisfied, Self-existent, non-dual, tranquil and utterly perfect. An appeal to the inwardness of consciousness expanded into limitlessness is the burden of the song of the Upanishads. In this respect the Upanishads are extremely mystic, if mysticism does not carry with it an idea of irrationalism or a madness of spirit. The transcendental mysticism of the Upanishads is not the effect of an

emotional outburst, but a calm transcendence of intellect and reason through a development into the integral consciousness.

8th January

THE GREAT ROOT OF LIFE

The Truth, “knowing which everything becomes known” is the subject of enquiry and the object of quest in the Upanishads. The Seers dived into the very depth of Existence and tasted the nature of the Limitless Life. They entered into the Root of the universe and the branches could easily realise their inner being through an investigation into the essential workings of the Great Root of Life. When the root is watered, the branches are automatically watered; when gold is known, all the ornaments also are known; when Truth is realised, everything is realised; for, Truth is One. Whatever system of philosophy may be derived from the Upanishads, the obvious truth goes without saying that they propound a theory that holds Reality to be indivisible, objectless and transcendent.

9th January

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE JIVANMUKTA

The Jivanmukta experiences his being the lord of all, the knower of all, the enjoyer of everything. The whole existence belongs to him; the entire universe is his body. He neither commands anybody, nor is he commanded by anybody. He is the absolute witness of his own glory, without terms to express it. He seems to simultaneously sink deep into and float on the ocean of the essence of being, with the feeling “I alone am”, or “I am all”. He breaks the boundaries of consciousness and steps into the bosom of Infinity. At times he seems to have a consciousness of relativity as a faint remembrance brought about by unfinished individualistic experience.

10th January

THE LIBERATED ONE HAS NO RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE

If the Absolute does not have any external or internal relation to itself, the liberated one cannot have any such relation to the universe, because the distinction of the individual and the universe is negated in the Absolute. It is illogical to say, at the same time, that “liberation means Absolute-Experience” and that “the liberated soul is concerned with the work of redeeming others, and even on getting liberated, retains its individuality.” Relative activity and Absolute Being are not consistent with each other. If it is argued that both these are compatible, it is done at the expense of consistency. The Absolute has nothing second to it, and hence no desire and no action. Anything that falls short of the Absolute cannot be regarded as the state of Liberation.

11th January

THE NETWORK OF DIVERSE CONSCIOUSNESS

The world is a presentation of outward variety and seeming contradiction in existence. It is a disintegrated appearance of the Absolute, a limited expression of Infinitude, a degeneration of the majesty of immortal Consciousness, a diffused form of the spiritual Completeness, a dissipated manifestation of changeless Eternity. Each of such separated entities of the world claims for itself an absolutely independent existence and regards all objective individuals as the not-Self. The not-Self is always considered to be in absolute contradiction to or at least absolutely distinguished from the self's own localised being. The exclusion of other limited objective bodies from one's own subjective self involves a relation between the two, and this relation is the force that keeps intact the network of diverse consciousness.

12th January

PRE-EXISTING LINK BETWEEN THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT

The life of every individual bears connections with the lives of other individuals in varieties of ways, in accordance with the degree of its awareness of Reality. Every thought sets the surface of existence in vibration and touches the psychic life of other individuals with a creative force the capability of this action which is dependent on the intensity of the affirmation of the mind generating that thought. Objects entirely cut off from one another can have no relation among themselves. Sense-perception, cogitation and understanding are messengers of the fact that there exists a fundamental substratum of a uniform and enduring Consciousness. Cognition is impossible without a pre-existent link between the subject and the object.

13th January

BEING IS TRUTH

Being is truth in the transcendent sense without reference to anything else. It does not pay heed to the difficulty of man that he cannot transcend the limitations of relativistic consciousness and so naturally takes the value and meaning of the relative order to be the truth. The highest value of truth is equated with pure being, for non-being can have no value. Consciousness is the most positive of facts, the datum of all experience. It transcends all limits of space, time and causality. Consciousness is never limited, for the very consciousness of the fact of limitation is proof of its transcendental unlimitedness. The most fundamental experience is consciousness or awareness, pure and simple, free from the self-contradictory divisions and fluctuations of thought.

14th January

ABSOLUTE BEING IS THE HIGHEST PERFECTION

Absolute Being is the highest perfection. Perfection is Bliss. The Self is the seat of Absolute Love, Love without an object outside it. It is Bliss without objectification, for Brahman-Bliss

is not derived through contact of subject and object. Here, Love and Bliss are Existence itself. That which is, is Bliss of Consciousness which is Being. The highest aim of all endeavour is deliverance from the present condition of limited life and the reaching of the Bhuma which is Bliss. Absolute Existence which is Absolute Knowledge is also Absolute Bliss. The Consciousness of Bliss experienced is in proportion to the growth and expansion that we feel in the conscious being of ourselves. Sat-chit-ananda does not imply a threefold existence, but is Absolute Self-Identity.

15th January

TO ASSERT DIVERSITY IS TO DENY ABSOLUTENESS

To assert diversity is to deny absoluteness. It does not, however, mean that the Absolute excludes the diverse finitudes, but the finite is eternally dissolved in or is identical with the Absolute, and therefore, it does not claim for itself an individual reality. It is argued that to ignore differences is to reduce the Absolute to a non-entity. The Absolute does not depend upon the reality of egoistic differences. By cancelling the relative we may not affect the Absolute, but we, so long as we are unconscious of the fundamental Being, improve thereby our present state of consciousness. Individuality is in every speck of space and these egos must be so very undivided that diversity becomes an impossible conception and homogeneity persists in every form of true reasoning in our effort to come to a conclusion in regard to the nature of the Absolute. We may blindly assert difference, but it is not possible to establish it through any acceptable reasoning.

16th January

EVEN SPACE IS BRAHMAN

Truth being one, it cannot be classed as absolute and relative, except for the sake of human convenience and with reference to subjective changes. It is a sanction of the inability to apprehend Truth, and is not valid with stricter and saner perception. If the one is true, the other must be false. If we cannot experience the Absolute, we have to admit our defeat and ignorance, but we cannot thereby take advantage of our limited consciousness and try to prove that what we experience at present also is real independently. If Brahman has expressed itself as the world, then, the world cannot exist outside Brahman. How can it express itself when there is no space for it to express or expand? Even space is Brahman. Expression or change becomes impossible.

17th January

ABSOLUTISM SATISFACTORILY SOLVES ALL THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE

Brahman which is the cause and the world which is the effect are basically identical, and hence change and causation lose their meaning. The phenomenal world is caught up in space, time and causation, which scatter themselves without a past or a future. One thing is in

relation to the other, and the world-process seems to be eternal. An eternal multiplicity is an impossibility, and an individual cannot be an enduring being. The world, thus, proves itself to be a naught and gives way to the being that is one and that does not change. Since *samsara* as a whole has neither a beginning nor an end, except with reference to the individuals, the ideas of a real creation and destruction fall to the ground. Absolutism satisfactorily solves all the problems of life.

18th January

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE AMONG INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR PERCEPTION

The form of the world is the projection of the objective force of the Universal Consciousness or the World-Mind. Everything in the world is a network of unintelligible relations. Things are not perceived by all in the same fashion. The perceptions of a chair by many individuals are not of the same category of consciousness. They differ in the contents of their ideas which are the effects of the particular modes of the tendency to objectification potentially existent in the individuals. The forces of distraction which constitute the individual consciousness are not of the same quality in everyone. There is a difference among individuals in their perception and thinking. It is impossible to have a knowledge of anything that does not become a content of one's own consciousness.

19th January

THE INFINITE BHUMA ALONE HAILS SUPREME

The Upanishads deny the reality of the *form* of the world of plurality and duality. According to them, except the non-dual Brahman, nothing is. The universe is explained by them as the imagination of the Absolute-Individual. We can only understand that this Absolute imagination is merely figurative and it can have meaning only with reference to individuals in the world, and not in itself. The infinite Bhuma alone hails supreme. It is established on its own Greatness. It is not dependent on anything else, for anything else is not. There cannot be imagination in the Absolute. Imagination may differ in degree or intensity, but even these degrees are but imagination. Even the acceptance of such a difference is ultimately invalid. The experience of external objects depends on the strong belief that they exist.

20th January

THE COSMIC MIND ACTS AS THE ULTIMATE SUBJECT

The world of objects in its presented state is false, being dependent on relative perceptions; its form is unreal because form is an imaginary construction of the objectified centres of consciousness in the universe driven by potent desire-impulses. The Cosmic Mind acts as the ultimate subject whose consciousness is the creator of all norms, in all the degrees of manifestation. The worldness in what is manifested, or, in other words, the very act or process of manifestation itself, is to be construed in the sense of what is illusory, though the

world-essence or the ultimate substance of the world is eternal. It is the form and not the essence that is unreal.

21st January

THERE IS NO DUALITY

There is no duality. All modification is illusory. Differentiation cannot be established. Where there is no duality there is no death. That which did not exist in the beginning (Ait. Up., I. 1.) and does not exist in the end (Brih. Up., II. 4. 14., Chh. Up., VII. 24), cannot exist in the present (Katha Up., IV. 11). Since Brahman does not create a world second to it, the world loses its reality. The central tone of the Upanishads reveals everywhere a disbelief in the world of forms ever since the Rigveda declared that the sages give many names to that which is essentially One (Rigveda, I. 164. 46). This leads further to the conception that plurality is only an idea and that Unity alone is real.

22nd January

TRUTH TRANSCENDS IDEAS OF OMNISCIENCE AND OMNIPOTENCE

It is not possible to rest contented that a personal God is the ultimate Reality, however displeasing this may be to those who do not want to dispense with thinking in terms of the categories of the world. The philosopher-aspirant who is possessed of a flaming passion for integrating himself in Existence does not have the dull patience to linger on with the slow process of progressive self-transcendence through the channels of the different degrees of reality. The highest scientific mind always tries to cling to the Whole, and not to even the biggest part, for, according to it, partiteness in existence is illogical and an ignorant conception. Truth, dependent on its own Self, transcends even the ideas of omniscience and omnipotence, for these involve relations which are a limitation on the Absolute.

23rd January

THOUGHT IS OBJECTIFIED CONSCIOUSNESS

The knowledge of everything through the knowledge of One Thing implies that everything is made up of that One Thing. That the misconception of things being really made of differing natures has to be set aright is pointed out by the disgust that arises in clinging to the notion of the multiple permanence of beings and a passion for catching completely whatever that must exist. The growth of intelligence tends towards urging the individual to grasp the totality of existence at a stroke. This constructive impulse is inherent and is vigorously active both in the instinctive mind and the scientific intellect. The individual is a consciousness-centre characterised by the imperfections of limitation, birth, growth, change, decay and death. Thought is objectified consciousness. The greater the objectification, the denser is the ignorance and the acuter are the pains suffered.

24th January

THE PERCEPTION OF UNITY LEADS TO THE STATE OF IMMORTALITY

Truth does not shine as Truth, owing to the inner instruments, the clogging psychological modifications. The crossing the barrier of these limiting adjuncts seems to lead one to a vaster reality, greater freedom and fuller life. There is a common desire-impulse in every being to exist forever, to know all things, to domineer over everything, and to enjoy the highest happiness. The statement of the Upanishads that the cognition of manifoldness is the path leading to self-destruction is adorned by the supreme exhortation that the perception of Unity leads to the exalted state of Immortality.

25th January

TRUE LOVE IS NEVER EXPRESSED

The seekers who austere transform the objectifying energy into the Conscious Power that causes the blossoming of the self-sense into the objectless Consciousness are the integrated aspirants of the Absolute, whose power is used to carry on profound spiritual meditation. The Chhandogya Upanishad says that, when purity and light are increased, there is a generation of steady consciousness which shatters open the knots of the self. Such glorious aspirants glow with a lustrous spiritual strength which handles with ease even the most formidable forces of nature. They are the heroes who have girt up their loins with the vow of leaping over phenomenon into the Heart of Existence. Love that wants an object is not perfect. True love is never expressed. It simply melts in experience.

26th January

POSITIVE BLISS IS FOUND ONLY IN THE SELF

All actions are done for the sake of the Self, not for external persons and things. It is not the existence of joy in the object as such that brings pleasure to the individual enjoying it, but the cooling of the fire of craving that is brought about by its contact with a particular object which is specially demanded by that special mode of desire generated in the ego-consciousness. The satiation is caused by a temporary turning back of the mind to the Self. The whole of the happiness of the world is, thus, purely negative, an avoiding of the unpleasant, and not the acquirement of any real, positive joy. This positive bliss is found only in the Self, the root of existence. The bustle of life's activity is a struggle to respond to the cry of the anxious ego which has lost itself in the wilderness of its separation from the Eternal Principle. The grieving self bound by fetters in the prison of life is ransomed by the knowledge of the non-dual nature of Existence.

27th January

NO HUMAN BEING CAN CLAIM TO BE OMNISCIENT

Even the highest intellectual perception belongs only to the realm of relativity. No human being can claim to be omniscient and so he has no occasion to rejoice at his profits or grieve at his losses here. The real is not this; the attainment of That alone can liberate the soul from sorrow. Even death is not a bar in the process of the realisation of Truth. Death is a reshuffling of consciousness to adjust and adapt itself to a different order of life. The love for the knowledge of the Self cares not for such insignificant phenomena as the birth and the destruction of the body. The need for the higher illumination is more serious a matter than the birth and the death of the overcoat, and the quest for the Absolute should be undertaken even sacrificing the dearest object, fearless of even the greatest pain and loss that may have to be encountered in the world.

28th January

WHATEVER WE WANT, THAT ALONE WE SEE AND OBTAIN

The desire-centres shift themselves from one object to another and the pleasure-seeker is left ever at unrest. The chain of metempsychosis is kept unbroken and is strengthened through additional desires that foolishly hope to bring satisfaction to the self. Living in the midst of ignorance and darkness, conceited, thinking themselves learned, the deserted individuals seek peace in the objects of sense that constantly change their forms and natures. The objective value in an object is an appearance created by the formative power of the separative will to individuate and multiply itself through external contact. The nature of that which is perceived is strongly influenced by the nature of that which perceives. The moment the form of the desire is changed, the object also appears to change itself to suit the requirements of the centre of consciousness that projects forth the desire. Whatever we want, that alone we see and obtain.

29th January

BECOMING THE OBJECT SEEMS TO BE THE AIM OF THE SUBJECT

Becoming the object seems to be the aim of the subject in its processes of desireful knowledge. The greater the proximity of the object to the subject, that is, the lesser the distance between the subject and the object, the greater is the happiness derived; whereby we are able to deduce that the least distance, nay, the loss of distance itself in a state of identity, a state of infinite oneness, where things lose their separateness, where perception and relatedness are no more, where the subject and the object coalesce and mere 'Be'-ness seems to be the reality, should be the abode of supreme bliss. This consciousness-mass is the one integration of knowledge where it is no more a means of knowing but the essence, the existence and the content in itself. The Upanishads are keen about turning our attention to this truth.

30th January

THE SELF IS IMPERISHABLE

The ordinary man of the world has his mind and senses turned extrovert. Childish, he runs after external pleasures and walks into the net of death which pervades all created things. The wise, however, knowing the Immortal, seek not that Eternal Being among things fleeting here. Some blessed one turns his gaze inward and beholds the glorious light of the Self. This Self is dearer than the dearest of things, this Self is nearer than the nearest. If one would speak of anything else than the Self as dear, he would certainly lose what he holds as dear. One should adore the Self alone as dear. He who adores the Self alone as dear does not lose what he holds as dear. The Self is Imperishable.

31st January

THE BEING OF REALITY

The Being of Reality consists in Experience, uncontradicted by transcendence and untrammelled by modification. In this One Whole all appearances get fused, and they vanish into it. This Reality-Experience is one and attributeless, true to itself which is Alone, above thought, and above every partial aspect of being, but including all, none of which can be complete without getting itself merged in the fully real, which is the Absolute. This Being can only be One, because experience is always a Whole, and because dissatisfaction is the effect of a faith in all independent pluralities and external relations which endlessly contradict themselves. The Absolute is experienced as the same Illimitable Immensity, even if it is approached in millions of ways.

FEBRUARY

from An Introduction to the Philosophy of Yoga

1st February

THE ABSOLUTE IS JUST HERE

God is here, and not in the heavens above. The Absolute is just here, under the very nose of ours. The eternity that we are going to experience, the moksha that we are to realise, is not merely an original Archetype that is removed in space. Again the idea of space comes in, and the notion of time persists in our minds. The Goal is not outside in space, and is not to be reached tomorrow as a future of time experience. All this is difficult indeed for the human intellect to understand. One becomes giddy when thinking about it. But, God loves you more than you love Him, and you are bound to achieve this glorious consummation of life.

2nd February

THE WHY OF A THING IS STUDIED IN PHILOSOPHY

The 'why' of a thing is studied in philosophy. The 'how' of a thing is studied in psychology, and the 'what' is the actual daily routine of activity. In our approach to anything, even the smallest item, even the most insignificant so-called addendum to our life, we have to be scientific in our approach. And what is the meaning of being scientific? It is taking the first thing as the first thing, the second thing as the second thing and not mixing up one with the other. You should not start with the second thing while the first thing has been ignored. To be able to conceive the consecutive series of any kind of movement is to be scientific.

3rd February

HAVE YOU TIME TO THINK?

There is something which speaks within us in a language of anxiety. Something is not all right, though you have everything in the physical or social sense. You are respectable people in society. You have a financial status of your own; everything is going well but you are not really happy, for a reason which you have not yet found time to go deep into. We are so busy with the enormous flood of the atmospheric conditions outside that we have been prevented from even finding time to think, let alone having the capacity to think. Whether we have a capacity to think correctly or not is a different subject, but have you time to think? Everyone is very busy indeed. Therefore, there is the need to learn the art of finding time to think in the proper way, because your life is nothing but a mental life. If the mental life is ignored, your physical and social life is not going to make you free.

4th February

LIFE IN ITSELF IS NEITHER INWARD NOR OUTWARD

Our life, whether it is inner or outer, consists of a series. It is not a solid substance. Our existence is not like a hard stone which is immovable and motionless. It is a flux, a series of tendencies, movements, enterprises, etc., which get practically bifurcated into the inward and the outward phases. Life in itself is neither inward nor outward. It is everywhere. But for convenience's sake we make this distinction of being inside and outside, just as we say we are inside the room. But this 'inside' idea arises on account of the wall around; if the wall were not to be there, we would not say that we are inside. We are just on the surface of the Earth, but because there is a consciousness of walls on the four sides, there is also a consciousness of an inside and conversely a consciousness of an outside. There is really no such thing as inner life and outer life, just as there is really no inside or outside, unless there is a wall which separates the inside from the outside.

5th February

WE ARE NATIONALS OF A PSYCHIC WORLD

We are nationals of a psychic world, more properly than the way in which we belong to the physical world of social beings. Our psychic apparatus is a complicated structure, because it has connections with almost everything in the world. It is like a main switchboard. We are not so much detached from things as we appear to be. There is a subterranean relationship between our inner contents and the whole cosmos outside. The moment we begin to enter the realm of yoga practice, we also start operating upon our cosmic relationships. This is something important to remember. At present we believe that we are isolated individuals with no connection whatsoever with others. But meditation is adventure, which opens up a new vista before us and surprises us with our relationships which were not apparent in our waking work-a-day life.

6th February

WE ARE ON A LONG JOURNEY

We know that the world is not made up of human beings alone. There are others below us and above us. We are in the middle hanging somewhere on the rope that stretches from the Earth to the heavens. We are on a long journey. We are not stationed in this world as permanent proprietors of properties here. We are not owners of anything. We are in a moving flux, as I said. We are on a perpetual journey onward, and we cannot, as a great master said, step into the same water of the river the next moment, because the next moment we step into different water of the same river. Thus, too, the next moment we are not living the same life. Every moment we are in a new life into which we perpetually enter, and the so-called continuity of our personality which makes us feel that we were yesterday the same thing that we are today, and the hope that we shall be tomorrow exactly what we are today, is

due to a limitation of the way in which the mind works, the way in which we get tied up to one set of connotations in this movement.

7th February

LIFE IS A CONTINUITY

There is a continuity, which is life, of which we are a part, and we are not just X, Y, Z or A, B, C sitting here; it is not like that. If we open our eyes to fact, we will be surprised that we have been living a foolhardy life up to this time, and now the time has come when we have to be serious. Our time is short, and there is so much to learn, and a lot to achieve. Obstacles are too many, and we have no time to wool-gather, sleep or while away our time as if there is eternity before us. We cannot take things lightly. Life is precious. We cannot take it as a joke. Every moment of time is as gold because every moment is nothing but a little loss of this span of our life. Every bell that rings tells us that we have lost one hour. It is not a happy thing. Tenacious has to be our effort at gaining insight into that which we seek.

8th February

DO NOT TRY TO BE BIG, BUT BE SMALL

Be humble. Be patient. Do not try to be big, but be small, until you almost become a nothing, which is better for you than to be a large thing in the world, a cynosure of all eyes. There is hope, and so be always confident that you will get what you need. Always remember three things: (1) Be clear as to what you want. (1) Be sure that you will get what you want; do not be hesitant. Assert: "Yes, I am certainly going to get it." (3) Start with that effort just now. Do not say 'tomorrow'. "Everything is clear to me now, and I shall start at it." If these three maxims are before you as your guiding lights, you will succeed always, and with everything.

9th February

THE SEARCH FOR REALITY IS THE SUBJECT OF PHILOSOPHY

Properly speaking, the subject of philosophy is concerned with the nature of Truth, or Reality. It is quite obvious that we are not after unrealities, phantoms or things that pass away; we are not in search of these things. We require something substantial, permanent. And what is this? What do we mean by the thing that is permanent, which is the same as what we call the Real? The search for Reality is the subject of philosophy. Then we come to the second issue, the individual nature, the structure of our personality, the nature of our endowments. An analysis of the entire internal structure of ourselves as individuals in search of anything is comprehended under the various branches of psychology and even what we call 'psychoanalysis. They all are subsumed under this single head of an internal analysis of the individual.

10th February

YOGA IS A PROCESS OF REJOICING

Yoga is a process of rejoicing. It is not a suffering. It is a movement through happiness. From one state of joy, we move to another state of joy. It is not that yoga starts with sorrow, or that it is a kind of prison house into which we are thrown. We have sometimes a feeling that yoga is a torture, a suffering, to the normal life of man. Sadhana means a fear, and indicates an unnatural seriousness. This is so, often because people have created a picture of awe and sternness about yoga, an other-worldliness about it, dissociated from the natural likings of the human being. Our desires are, no doubt, obstacles to yoga. But they are 'our' desires; this much we must remember, and they are not somebody's. So, we have to wean ourselves from these desires gradually and not make it appear that we are peeling our own skin. Such a drastic step should not be taken, and it is not the intention of yoga.

11th February

THE OBJECT OF MEDITATION

The object of meditation is the degree of reality aligned to our state of being. This is a sentence which may appear like an aphorism. We have to meditate only on that which is the exact counterpart of our present level of knowledge and comprehension. There should not be any mistake in the choice of the object. If the object is properly chosen, the mind will spontaneously come under control. The restlessness and the resentment of the mind is due to a wrong choice that is made in the beginning. Often we are too enthusiastic and try to go above our own heads. The mind is not prepared to accept such a sudden revolution which is beyond not only its comprehension but also its present needs or necessities.

12th February

EVERYONE GOES WITH SOMETHING LEFT INCOMPLETE

It looks, many a time, that we have to pass away from this world in despair with everything. If we read the history of the minds of human beings, if there is any such thing as a history of psychology of human nature as such, we will be surprised to observe that it is impossible to pinpoint even one individual who has left this world with genuine satisfaction, save those few who are the salt of the Earth. There has always been a gap, an unfinished something with which the person had to quit. Everyone goes with something left incomplete. It will never be finished. This is the seamy side of things, the unhappy facet of life, which seems to be the outer picture of this world painted before us. But we have also a peculiar solacing and satisfying inner core, which always eludes our grasp. There is something in us, in each one of us, which escapes our notice.

13th February

WE MUST KNOW WHO IS OUR GOD

Spiritual seekers are certainly after God. This is very well known. But we must know who is our God. God is the fulfilling counterpart of the present state of our evolution. Anything that is capable of making us complete is our God. Anything that allows us to remain partial is not going to satisfy us. That which completes our personality in any manner, in any degree of its expression, is to be considered as our necessity, and teachers like Patanjali, who were great psychologists, have taken note of this important suggestion to be imparted to students. The more internal we go, the greater is the need we will feel for guidance outwardly. One may look all right and not feel the need for any kind of assistance from others. But the internal forces are more difficult to subdue and handle. They are impetuous, uncontrollable. The desires which are of this character have to be sublimated with a great analytical understanding by the study of scriptures, resort to holy company, isolation and self-investigation, and methods of this nature.

14th February

THE WORLD AND OURSELVES, THERE IS NOTHING ELSE

There are only two things that we see in this world: the world and ourselves. There is nothing else. If we look around, we see the vast world of astronomical phenomena and geographical extension, and we are there as small individuals in this mighty world. What else can we see? "I am here, and the world is there." The individual and the world are the realities. Perhaps we may say, in a general manner, that we conceive two realities. If this is our concept of what is real, and we are certainly in search of what is real, it would follow from this answer or definition that we are in search of the world, or we are in search of ourselves. Naturally, this should be so, because there are only two things, as we said: We are there, and the world is there. If we are there as a reality, or the world is there as a reality, we are in search of either of these, or both of them. But, actually, we have not found either of these. Though we seem to be in search of the world, the world is not under our possession.

15th February

THE ISHTA DEVATA

The choice of the object of meditation is an important aspect of the very beginning of spiritual life. This choice is the initiation that the disciple receives from the teacher. What is called initiation in the mysteries of the practice of yoga is nothing but the initiation of one's spiritual being into the technique of tuning oneself to that particular deity, the form of God, or the object which is going to be one's target at the present moment. This is a secret by itself and the teacher will teach it to the disciple. The object of meditation should satisfy the student; that is why it is called '*ishta devata*' (loved deity). The '*ishta*' is that which is

desirable, beautiful, attractive, required, that which attracts one's love and one's whole being. One pours one's self into it.

16th February

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED WITH EVERYTHING ELSE

Everything has a connection with everything else. There is nothing which is not internally related to the Almighty, the Supreme Being. Every atom is so related, and every atom can be a teacher under given conditions. We can touch God through every speck of space, because there is no such thing as a universe outside God. God is in everything that is experienced here as the world, or the universe, pervading and permeating all things, so that one cannot touch anything without touching God in some way. There should not be any misconception that the deities, even the images, the so-called idols that the people worship, are all just nonsense or insignificant nothings; these are necessary prescriptions for the illness of the spirit in the stages of its evolution.

17th February

THERE IS NO EXPERIENCE WITHOUT A CONSCIOUSNESS OF IT

Our life is inseparable from our experience. What we call life is nothing but experience, and this is important to remember. And experience, whatever be the nature of it, is inseparable from a consciousness of that experience. There is no experience without a consciousness of it. We are aware that we are undergoing a process or are in a state of experience. If the awareness is absent, we cannot be said to be in a state of any experience at all. To have no experience is to have no awareness of what is happening. Now, our life being identical with a conscious experience, and our search for reality being observational and experimental in the scientific fashion, we have to find out how the panorama of external nature, as it stands before us from the point of view of science, is connected with our personal life.

18th February

WE ARE NOT THE BODY

We are not the body, not the senses, not the mind, not the intellect, not anything of the kind. These are all expressions of the higher order of the universe. What remains in us is not a property or a substance or an object but that basic residuum of truth, which is commensurate with the truth of All-Being. When we go deep down into the base of any wave in the ocean, we will find that we are touching something which is everywhere, that which is at the root of all the waves. When we go down into the barest minimum of our personalities, at the root, we touch that which is within everything also, at the same time, and we, then, need not have any difficulty in universal communication. When this end is achieved, one is supposed to become cosmic-conscious, like the wave becoming ocean-conscious because of the entry of itself into the very substance of it.

19th February

I CAN LIFT MY HAND AT MY WILL

The more do we possess reality, the more is the power that we wield. And what is possession? To possess an object, to possess anything for the matter of that, is to be invariably connected with it, in an inseparable manner. We have a power over the limbs of our body. I am giving one example of what power means and what power does not mean. I can lift my hand at my will; there is no difficulty about it. Even if the leg of the elephant is very heavy, the elephant can lift its leg. The elephant can lift its whole body, though even a hundred people cannot lift an elephant. Perhaps, I may not be able to lift your body, but you can lift your body. You may not be able to lift my body, but I can lift my body. What is this mystery? Wherefrom comes this strength by which I can lift my body and walk? The reason is that my consciousness is one with my reality, which is this body; it is not outside.

20th February

WE CANNOT KNOW THE UNIVERSE UNLESS WE KNOW OURSELVES

We cannot know the universe unless we know ourselves. While this is true, the reverse also is true, at the same time. We cannot know ourselves truly, unless we know the whole universe. The one is the same as the other. Now, how does science lead us to this conclusion? The secret is the discovery of an indivisible continuum of nature, outside which no individual, nothing, can exist. The space-time continuum which scientists speak of today, in the relativity cosmos, is inclusive of yourself and myself and all things. We cannot stand outside it. We are an eddy in this ocean of force which is called the space-time continuum, and so, how can we know it unless we know ourselves, since we are a part of it? Also, it becomes more obvious on account of the fact that to know is to have an awareness of the fact; and awareness is an essentiality of our being. Our being and our consciousness of our being are the same; they are not two different things.

21st February

BEING COSMICALLY CONSCIOUS

The moment we say that we exist, we imply we are conscious that we exist. The existence of things is inseparable from the consciousness of the existence of things. Inasmuch as it has been decided that existence is a continuity, inseparable in its meaning, with no gulf whatsoever, to know the universe would be to have a consciousness of the universe. But in what manner? Not in the form of the consciousness of the world that we have today. I am having the consciousness of a mountain in front of me; that is not the consciousness we are referring to. As consciousness cannot be separated from the existence of things, and inasmuch as the existence of things has been identified with a continuity and a wholeness of process or energy, the revelation would imply a strange conclusion which will startle us

beyond our wits. It would imply that to know anything would be the same as to be cosmically conscious.

22nd February

THE WHOLE WORLD IS ACTIVE

The whole world is active when even a single event takes place at any point in space, just as the whole body is active even if a little thorn is to prick the sole of the foot. It is not a local effect merely; it is the entire body-organism getting energised into the requisite action. The whole world becomes aware of even the wisp of a wind, the fall of a leaf or even the movement of a bird, and this is not merely a gospel that you hear in the New Testament, the sermon of the Buddha, or the Upanishad; it is a scientific fact. This is a great revelation which came to Seers of such profundity as the Upanishads, for instance, where we are awakened to the fact of a cosmic interconnection of things, which sets itself into motion at the time of the occurrence of any event, perception, or whatever it is.

23rd February

UNIVERSAL SELF-AWARENESS

There is a Universal Self-Awareness at this stage of the satisfaction that arises from consciousness in its essentiality. This joy-experience is *sananda samapatti*. The Self-Consciousness which is attending upon this joy universal is *sasmita samapatti*. Here the efforts of the individual do not continue. One need not have to struggle to meditate. There is no effort on the part of a person, because there is no person at all. Individuality is carried by the current of the universe, of God Himself, if we would call it so. One is possessed by a Power that is super-individual. One is no more oneself, and therefore one has no responsibility over oneself. Hence, there is nothing that one can or need do. The very question of 'doing' ceases, as the individual is not there as a person.

24th February

SCIENCE BECOMES PHILOSOPHY

When I say, "I am living, because I have a purposive existence, and not merely an aimless motion," I have to explain what I mean by purposiveness. It is interesting to see how we go from step to step into greater difficulties. What do we mean by a purposive existence? It would mean, at least in outline, the consciousness of an aim in front of oneself. Now, again, we see where we are moving, dangerously. From science, where have we come? To be conscious that there is an aim before us is to be purposive. Life is, again, inseparable from a state of consciousness. And in the end, biology, also, takes us to the same thing on which physics landed us. Somehow we cannot escape the dilemma of it being impossible for us to be without the principle of consciousness, in whatever we do, in whatever direction we move. The basic sciences—astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology—have a common thing to

say, finally. In the end they tell us the same thing and by this proclamation of a truth, which is beyond their own jurisdiction, they, as sciences, are exceeding their limits. Science becomes philosophy.

25th February

ALL OUR STUDIES LOOK LIKE A BLANK

There is always a distinction between our laboratory life and our public life. We are scientists in the laboratories but commonplace persons in the shops, in the railway stations, and the bus stands. This is the outcome of our learning in colleges, in universities, in institutions. Wherever we are, we are fed up with this kind of life, and that is why we are trying to find a little time, if it is possible, to think in a different manner. It is easy to study. There are countless schools in the world and the result of all the studies is an upsurge of emotions and feelings in the minds of people, a veritable warfare perpetually threatening to take place, so that it is difficult to say if one person, at least, sleeps soundly in the night, with freedom from all anxiety. We have seen this, and we know this, and we are in the midst of this atmosphere. We are tired of it to the core and we realise that there is a basic error in our way of living and thinking, due to which all our studies look like a blank. These have led us nowhere.

26th February

THE ULTIMATE UNION

This is the ultimate union of the soul with All-Being and this is the final stage, practically, of *samapatti*, where the river has entered the ocean and does not any more exist as the river. One does not know in the ocean which is Ganga, which is Yamuna, which is Amazon, which is Volga. No one knows what is where. Everything is everywhere at every time in every condition. One becomes the centre of the Being of all things, the heart of everything. One becomes the Immanent Principle of the cosmos. This is God-Experience, in the language of religion. This is the realisation of the Absolute, *brahma-sakshatkara*. Here the consciousness reverts to Itself and stands on Its own status. It has not become aware of something. It is aware only of Itself.

27th February

ABSOLUTE INDEPENDENCE

Moksha, known also as *kaivalya*, or Absolute Independence, is not one of the stages of experience. It is all-experience melted into one mass of Being. All that was there earlier will also be found there. It is not that the earlier stages are forgotten and one has gone to some new thing altogether. We may wonder where are all these physical objects, these trees and mountains, these friends and relatives, this wealth and status, all these wonderful and beautiful things in the world. Where are they? Have they been left out somewhere, down

below? No, not so is the truth. They have not been left behind. They have been transformed into the 'reality' that they are, and they will be seen as they are, and not as they appeared earlier. This is the great solacing message to all Doubting Thomases who imagine that they, perhaps, lose something valuable as they reach God, or attain liberation.

28th February

SCIENCE CANNOT GIVE US KNOWLEDGE

What is knowledge? It is an assimilation of the object into the consciousness. If I assimilate you in my consciousness, I know you, but if you stand outside as a stranger to me, as an object which is totally independent of me, I cannot know you. All knowledge is participation in the content thereof. Participation implies our capacity to enter into the nature of the object, and the capacity in the object to enter into the nature of our being, our knowledge; that is mutual assimilation of the nature of things. If I stand outside you totally and you stand outside me wholly, there would be no concourse between the two. I cannot know you and you cannot know me. This is what has happened to the scientific observations of modern times. If science is an observation of objects, regarding them as objects having nothing to do with the subjects which observe them, then science cannot give us knowledge.

29th February

FEAR IS CAUSED BY DUALITY

To know you physically, chemically and biologically is not to know you, because physically, chemically, and biologically, one would be the same as the other. The same substance is in each person, each thing—the earth, water, fire, air and ether are the components of the physical body of each and every individual in the world, so that to study one body would be equal to studying any other body. Why are there many people and many things, if everything is equal in bodily structure? The scientific observation is tentatively useful for our physical and social life, but it is not real knowledge; by it nothing can be known, not even one atom, truly if it is 'outside'. This world outside is a fantastic world. It has a tremendous, fearsome significance, for anything that is outside is a source of fear, anxiety and insecurity. There is a great saying in the Upanishad that fear is caused by duality.

MARCH

from The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

1st March

HUMAN LIFE HAS TO ADJUST ITSELF

In all principles which guide human life, there are two aspects known as the exoteric and the esoteric. The formal routine of daily life is mostly guided by what we call the exoteric principles which have a working value and a validity within the realm of human action. In this sense, we may say that the values which are called exoteric are relative, inasmuch as every activity in human life is relative to circumstances. Hence, they do not have eternal value, and they will not be valid persistently under every condition in the vicissitudes of time. This principle which is exoteric, by which what we mean is the outward relative principle of life, becomes, tentatively, the guiding line of action, notwithstanding the fact that even this relative principle of exoteric life changes itself according to the subsidiary changes with which human life has to adjust itself.

2nd March

THINGS CANNOT BE POSSESSED BY ANYONE

The arrangement of things is such, in the temporal realm, that things cannot be possessed by anyone. The idea of possession is a peculiar notion in the mind. You know very well how false the idea of possession is. You cannot possess anything except in thought. So, what we call ownership of property, is a condition of the mind. I can give you a very small gross example: There is a large expanse of land, a vast field which is agricultural in itself. Today you say, it is owned by 'A', and tomorrow it is owned by 'B', by transfer of property. Now, what do you mean by this transfer of property? It has never been transferred. It is there in its own place. It has been transferred in the ideas of people. The whole question of ownership, or psychologically put—like or dislike, is a condition of the mind which is an arrangement of psychological values, agreed upon by a group of people who have decided that this should be the state of affairs.

3rd March

ATMA VIDYA OR ADHYATMA VIDYA

The knowledge proclaimed in the Upanishad is a science which deals with the removal of sorrow. Thus, it is a knowledge which is different in kind from the learning that we usually acquire or the knowledge that we gain in respect of the things of the world. It is not a science in the ordinary sense of the term. While there are sciences and arts of various kinds, all of which are important enough, and wonderful in their own way, they cannot remove sorrow

from the human heart, root and branch. They contribute to the satisfaction of a particular individual, placed in a particular constitution, in a particular type of incarnation, but they do not go to the soul of the person concerned. In the sense of the science of the soul, the Upanishad is also called Atma Vidya or Adhyatma Vidya. When the perceiver is known, everything connected with the perceiver also is known.

4th March

THE SCIENCE OF THE SELF

The grief of the mind, the sorrow of the individual is not brought about by outer circumstances. This is a very important lesson we learn from the Upanishad. We do not suffer by incidents that take place outside. We suffer on account of a maladjustment of our personality with the conditions of life, and the knowledge of this fact is supernatural and super-sensual. What has happened to us cannot be known by us, because it has happened to 'us' and not to somebody else. We cannot know what has happened to others because we cannot know what has happened to us, for who is to know our own selves? This is the crux of the whole matter, towards which the Upanishad is to take us. The Upanishad, to reiterate, is the science of the Self, studied not for the sake of a diversion of the intellect or a satisfaction of the understanding, but for freedom of the spirit and removal of sorrow, utterly.

5th March

THE SORROW HAS NOT COME FROM OUTSIDE

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, particularly, attempts to explain the various processes of bondage and liberation. It tells us how we are bound and how we are to get free; and it goes to the very cause ultimate of the bondage of the soul. Our bondage is not merely physical or social. It is a more deep-rooted condition which has been annoying us through centuries and through our repeated births and deaths. Anything that we do in the outer world does not seem to be an adequate remedy for this sorrow of ours, because the sorrow has not come from outside. We can have a bungalow to prevent us from suffering from rain and sun and wind; we can have daily food to eat; we can have very happy and friendly social relationships; but we can also die one day, even with all these facilities. Nobody can free us from this fear.

6th March

WE BRING SORROW WITH US EVEN WHEN OUR BIRTH TAKES PLACE

The bondage of the self is intrinsically involved in the structure of the individual. We bring sorrow with us even when our birth takes place; and it is often said that we bring our death also together with our birth. The meaning is that all experiences—joys, sorrows, including our last moment of life—all these are a fructification of circumstances with which we are born from the mother's womb. We are born under certain conditions, and they are the seeds of what will follow later, so that the entire life of ours may be said to be an unfolding of that which is present in a seed-form at the time of our birth. We do not pass through newer and

newer experiences unexpectedly, as it were, but they are all expected things only. Every experience in life is expected, as a corollary is expected from a theorem in mathematics.

7th March

HAPPINESS

There is a notion in the minds of people that happiness arises on account of the contact of the mind with desirable objects. That this is not true, is a great point that is made out here. Happiness does not merely arise on account of the contact of the mind with an object which is desirable. The desirability of the object is, again, a condition of the mind. It is a perception of the mind in the contour of the object, of certain characters which are necessitated by the mind. The mind is a pattern of consciousness. You may call it a focused form of consciousness, a shape taken by consciousness, something like the shape the waters of the ocean may take in the surge of the waves. A particular arrangement of consciousness in space and time may be said to be a mind, whether it is a human mind or otherwise.

8th March

EVERY ACTIVITY IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTION

The Cosmic Sacrifice of the Purusha Sukta is an indication to us of the way in which a ritual can become a spiritual meditation, or a spiritual meditation itself can be interpreted as a magnificent ritual. The Brahmanas of the Veda, ritual-ridden as they have been, are brought to a point of contemplative apotheosis in the Aranyakas and the Upanishads, and here it is that every kind of action is identified with a form of sacrifice and action made a part of inward contemplation, so that action becomes a process of thought, rather than a movement of the limbs of the body. Every activity is a psychological function; it is not just a physical process. This is what we have to understand when we convert action into a contemplation. The originally Existent Being thought an Idea, a Being inseparable from Consciousness. The Purusha Sukta tells us that God became all the Cosmos—*purusha evedam sarvam*, and the created beings contemplated God as the Original Sacrifice.

9th March

THE TRUTH OF ALL TRUTHS

The Upanishad takes us from ritualistic concepts to religious adorations, and then to spiritual visualisations. There is, again, a gradual ascent of thought, from the outward to the inward, and from the inward to the Universal. We withdraw from the outward mode of behaviour to the inward psychological factors which determine these external modes of behaviour, and then we contemplate the Being that is precedent even to psychological behaviour. What we do outside is determined by what we think in our minds, and what we think in our minds is conditioned by what we are in our true selves. So, there is a process of the rise of contemplative action from the outer realm of name, form and action to the inward thought-

processes of the individual, and to thought process in general, leading to 'being', not merely to the individual's apparent being, but to the Being of all beings, which the Upanishad would describe as *satyasya satyam*, or the Truth of all truths.

10th March

TRUTH ALONE SUCCEEDS

The Upanishads do not regard anything as absolutely untrue. Everything is true, but relatively so. There is a passage from the lower truth to the higher truth. The Upanishads do not regard anything as absolutely untrue. Everything is true, but relatively so. There is a passage from the lower truth to the higher truth. The Upanishads have a strange way of envisaging things. The True alone prevails everywhere. Truth alone succeeds—*satyameva jayate*—not untruth, because untruth is not. Therefore, the rise is from a lesser wholeness of truth to the larger wholeness which is above it. Actually, we reach, in the end, the Ultimate Wholeness which is Brahman, the Absolute. And also, simultaneously, it is an ascent of the soul from one condition of joy to another condition of joy. We do not rise from sorrow to joy, because sorrow is a misconceived tendency to happiness. It is a misplaced form of being which comes to us as a grief or agony. Just as untruth is *not*, sorrow also is *not*, because they are misplaced values, and when they are placed in their proper contexts, they look beautiful.

11th March

PHYSICAL DIVISION DOES NOT EXIST

I shall give you a small example of how physical division does not exist. It is only imaginary. The bodies of people are constituted of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. Your body, my body and everybody's body are constituted of only these things, nothing else—earth, water, fire, air, ether. If the body of one individual, 'A', is substantially the same as the body of another individual, 'B', because of its being formed of the same five elements, what is the reason for the distinction or the difference that we make between one body and another body? It is that which exists between the two bodies. The space is the cause. But space is a part of the very constitution of the body itself. So, how does this become an element of distinction? That which we regard as spatial, and, perhaps, the only reason for the distinction that we usually make between one body and another, is an element essentially present in the constitution of the body itself.

12th March

THE ENTIRE PSYCHOLOGY OF MEDITATION

The entire psychology of meditation is nothing but a setting right of errors in thought; and the details of these methods we shall be considering as we proceed further. So, to come to the point, this distinction between the individual unit and the Universal Substance is to be

abolished for the purpose of the removal of the sorrow of the individual. Meditation is the technique of the removal of sorrow in the sense that sorrow is caused by the segregation of the individual from the world outside. For this purpose, one enters into the technique of meditation. Now, here, the context being sacrifice, we are given a method which is ritualistic in its nature, and thus the ritualistic horse of the Asvamedha Sacrifice becomes an object of contemplation, literally, liturgically as an animal in the sacrifice, but psychologically and spiritually as an element like any other element in creation as a whole.

13th March

THE DESIRE TO POSSESS OBJECTS

The desire of the mind for a particular desirable object is a desire to get united with that object in its being. So, the idea of possession is something very strong, indeed. It is actually a desire to get united with the object, so that you become physically, psychologically whole in being, and not merely in an external relation. This condition is however not possible, as you cannot enter into the being of any object. Therefore, there is not such satisfaction even after the fulfilment of a desire. No desire can be fulfilled eternally, whatever be the effort that you put forth, because it is not possible for you to enter into the being of that object.

14th March

NOTHING CAN COME FROM NOTHING

In creation, a new thing is not created, because nothing can come from nothing. If a new thing is to be created, it must have been produced out of nothing. How can 'nothing' produce 'something'? This is illogical. The effect must have existed in some causal state. This causal state is the substance of the universe. Now, what is actually the distinctive mark of the universe that is created, as different from the original causal condition? In what way does the effect get differentiated from the cause? If everything that is in the effect is in the cause, what is the distinctive feature, what is the distinguishing mark, which separates the effect from the cause? If the effect is entirely different from the cause, we cannot posit a cause at all, because the cause is non-existent. If the cause is non-existent, the effect also would be non-existent. So, the cause must have contained the effect in a primordial state; and, therefore, nothing can be visualised in the effect which could not have been in the cause.

15th March

THE ABSOLUTE IS TRANSCENDENT BEING

The mind of the cosmos, which is called the Cosmic Mind in usual parlance, is regarded here as an evolute, and not the original Being. The Absolute is Transcendent Being, and not a mind thinking. It is not even a causal state. Even the causal state is supposed to be posterior to the Absolute. We never associate the Absolute with the world. The Brahman of the

Upanishad, or the Absolute of philosophy, is the assertion of Being which is unrelated to creation. And, when we have to associate God with creation, we have a new word altogether for it. Ishvara is the word we use in the language of the Vedanta. Such words do not occur in the Upanishads. They are all to be found in the later Vedanta, but they are assumed here. In the Samkhya and the Vedanta cosmological descriptions, we have certain grades mentioned of the coming out of the effect from the cause. Everything was hidden, though not expressed. Everything was in a universal causal state. That is called Prakriti in the Samkhya language.

16th March

THE ABSOLUTE IS NEITHER A QUANTITY NOR A QUALITY

The consciousness of the existence of the universe is different from the consciousness of the Absolute. That the two are not identical is a point that is made out here. Once the existence of the universe is accepted in consciousness, everything else that follows from it can also be accepted. If two and two make four, four and four make eight, and so on, arithmetically, we can draw conclusions. But two and two must, first of all, make four. We must accept that. If that is not true, then any multiplication therefrom also is not true. There is a distinction between Absolute-Consciousness and universe-consciousness. That distinction is the cause behind this line drawn here between Pure Being that is the Absolute, and the condition precedent to creation. It is difficult for the human mind to understand what the Absolute is. Whatever be our stretch of imagination, we cannot conceive it, because every conception is quantitative and qualitative. The Absolute is neither a quantity nor a quality, and therefore no thought of it is possible.

17th March

THE COSMIC "I-AM"

The Cosmic Mind, Hiranyagarbha, as we call it in the Vedanta, is the Cosmic "I-Am". It is Self-Consciousness, Pure Universality. And, here is the seed of all diversity. In a sense, we may say that we are parts of this Cosmic Mind, but not, indeed, correctly. As I pointed out, we cannot regard ourselves as parts of the Absolute. Nothing that we see with our eyes can be regarded as a real representation of the Absolute. Thus, we have to understand that we are not parts, even of the Hiranyagarbha. We are much less than that. We are far down below the condition of Hiranyagarbha and Virat, for reasons we shall see shortly. For the time being, it is enough if we understand the actual meaning of this passage. There was a destruction, a Mrityu, a complete abolition of Reality, which is what the Samkhya calls Prakriti, and the Vedantins call Maya, Mula-Prakriti, etc., the Potential Being, the Matrix of the universe. That becomes the seed for the manifestation of the Cosmic Mind, known as Mahat and Cosmic Ahamkara. The Vedanta calls them Hiranyagarbha and Virat.

18th March

THE LOVE THAT YOU FEEL IS FOR COMPLETENESS

The love that you feel in respect of an object is in fact the love that you feel towards that which is called perfection and completeness. It is not really a love for the object. You have thoroughly misunderstood the whole point, even when you are clinging to a particular object as if it is the source of satisfaction. The mind does not want an object; it wants completeness of being. That is what it is searching for. Thus, when there is a promise of the fulfilment that it seeks, through the perception of an object that appears to be its counterpart, there is a sudden feeling that fullness is going to come, and there is a satisfaction even on the perception of that object; and there is an apparent satisfaction, just by the imagined possession of it together with the yearning for actual possession.

19th March

WHAT IS DEAR IS THE CONDITION OF COMPLETENESS

What you love is a completeness of being which is reflected in the condition felt to exist between yourself and the object concerned. You must mark this point. What you love is only the condition that you imagine to be present in the state of the possession of the object. But that state can never be reached, for the reason already mentioned. So, nothing is dear in this world. What is dear is the condition which you intend to create, or project in your own being by an imagined contact with the object. So, not one person is dear in this world, but what is dear is that condition which is imagined to be present after the possession of that object or that relationship.

20th March

SHARIRI-SHARIRA BHAVA

The object, in an ordinary perception, is segregated from the subject by the differentiating medium of space and of time, so that there is no vital connection between the object that is perceived and the subject that perceives. But there is a living connectedness between the Cosmic Object and the Cosmic Subject. This connection is sometimes described as one of body and soul. We know that there is a connection between the soul and the body. This relation between the soul and the body is different from the relation between an individual subject encountering an outside object. The soul and the body cannot be separated from each other. They are organically one. This relation is called *shariri-sharira-bhava*, the relation between consciousness and its embodiment. Thus, we can say that the Cosmic Awareness of the universe, in the case of God-Consciousness, is one of inseparable relation, like the relation of the soul and the body. When we are aware of our bodies, we are not only becoming aware of an object situated in space and time. We can say that this body is an

object because it can be sensed, it can be seen, and it has all the characters of any object in the world; but, at the same time, it is an object which clings to us vitally and organically.

21st March

THOUGH IT IS THE 'OTHER', IT IS ALSO THE SELF

It willed, or He willed: "May I have a second Self." This is the origin of creation. The world, this creation, this universe is the second Self, as it were, of the Supreme Being. This 'other' Self, which is this vast creation, is animated by the Supreme Being Himself. It is 'other' in the sense that it had not all the characteristics of the Absolute. Yet, it is the Self. Though it is the 'other', it is also the Self. It is called the 'Other Self', inasmuch as the Selfhood of the Absolute is transparently present in this creation. The Universal Atman is immanent in the whole universe, in all aspects of creation; and yet the universe is an 'otherness', as it were, of God, an object of God. It is as if the Universal 'I' is envisaging a universal object, including all that is visible or sensible—space, time and causal relation. A single Subject encountering a single Object is the state which is described in this passage, a Cosmic Consciousness becoming aware of a Cosmic Object in a peculiar manner, not in the way in which the ordinary individual is aware of an object outside. The way in which God is conscious of the universe, is different from the way in which an ordinary *jiva*, or individual, is conscious of an object.

22nd March

THE WHOLE OF THE VEDA IS INSIDE "OM"

You have heard this great passage of the Bible: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Something like this is what the Upanishad tells us here. The Eternal Wisdom was manifest, with the eternal Word, and with this Word the whole cosmos was created. The Word which is with God, and which is God, is not merely a letter, or a sound that we make through our lips. It is an energy; it is a force; it is a vibration which materialises itself, concretises itself into object-forms. The Word is the Veda, or Eternal Wisdom which is with God, and it is inseparable from God, and so, it is God Himself. The Cosmic Mind projected itself in the form of this Eternal Word, and manifested this universe. In the Manusmriti, and such other ancient texts, we are also told in a symbolic manner that Prajapati, the Creator, conceived the whole cosmos in the pattern of 'Om', or the Pranava. The Pranava, or Omkara, is supposed to be the seed of the whole universe. That is the essence of the Word that is Divine. It is also the Veda contained in a seed form. The whole of the Veda is inside 'Om'.

23rd March

ALL KNOWLEDGE IS FROM THE ABSOLUTE

Without the knowledge of the Absolute, not even the smallest of things can be understood. All knowledge is a partial aspect of the Supreme Absolute, which is Knowledge Itself. It is not knowledge in the sense of an information about things, but the very existence of all things which is inseparable from the knowledge of things. And so, any knowledge or wisdom that is worth mentioning is a fraction, a spark, a ray, of the Supreme Absolute. Even the highest geniuses of the world cannot be compared with a ray of that eternal profundity of knowledge. Everything comes from that.

24th March

THE DESIRE OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL

The desire of every individual is to become the Virat. This is the meaning of any desire. Even if we take a cup of tea, our desire is only that; we want to become one with everything. It is a stimulation of the inner psyche towards the unification of oneself with all things. One who knows this mystery can become everything, says the Upanishad, which is a great consolation and a comfort for created beings. If we can understand what all this drama means, how this creation has taken place, how Consciousness has become all things, what desire means actually in its intention, if this is comprehended properly by us, we can become That, which has been the cause of this manifestation. One who knows it, becomes 'That'. So is this concluding, solacing message of the Upanishad to everyone: *Knowing is Being*. If we can know this secret, we can go deep into the secret of self-mastery, so that desire ceases. The assumption by Consciousness that the object is spatially and temporarily cut off from itself is the cause of desire.

25th March

THE COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS CONTEMPLATED

It is, as it were, the Cosmic Mind contemplated its own Self in the object which is created, namely, the universe. So, the universe assumed a life. There is activity, energy, force and vitality in everything in the universe. That is because of the projection of the Cosmic Mind into this matter, which is the externalised form in space and in time. This happens in every form of perception involving emotion. An emotion is a form of concentration of consciousness on a particular object, and when that concentration is affected, the self moves to the object and enlivens the object in a particular manner. Then, because of the enlivenment, it becomes a part of itself; the secondary self does it become. As the individual object becomes a secondary self of an individual subject by way of emotional movement of self towards the object, so did it happen originally, also. The Cosmic Consciousness contemplated on the cosmic externality, which we call Prakriti, and thus the universe assumed life, as if it is consciousness itself, just as the body assumes a form of consciousness.

26th March

THE KNOWER ALONE IS

Everything is known by the knower, but who is to know the knower? If the knower is to be known, there must be a second knower to that knower, and the second knower can be known by a third knower, the third by a fourth, the fourth by a fifth, and so on. You go on scratching your head, you cannot know the knower. How can the knower be known? We have already designated the knower as the 'Knower' and you cannot now call it the 'known'. Therefore there is no such thing as knowing of Knowing, or knowing of Knower. Knowing of objects only is there before liberation. With liberation, that object has become part of knowing itself; It has become one with the Knower. The Knower alone is; there is no such thing then as 'knowing'.

27th March

MADHU VIDYA

The Earth is the honey of all, and everyone is the honey of the Earth. The Earth is absorbed into the 'being' of everything, and everything is absorbed into the 'being' of the Earth. Apart from the Earth and the beings who are correlated in this manner, there is another superior principle present in the Earth and in all beings. That superior principle is the luminous consciousness. There is an animating being behind this physical entity that you call the Earth, and an animating principle behind what you call all the beings, creatures, individuals, in the world. That which is cosmically animating all creation and that which is individually animating every little creature, that also has to be taken into consideration in the correlation of the objective and the subjective aspect of creation.

28th March

THE COSMIC BEING MANIFESTED HIMSELF AS ALL THINGS

The Devas and the Asuras are two tendencies, and not substances. The tendency to unification is the divine principle, and the urge to diversification is the demoniacal principle. The sense organs are incapable; they were defeated by the Asuras, which means to say, that the sense organs cannot work up this unifying activity which is intended for regaining the original position of the deities of the senses. As mentioned earlier, the mistake that happened during the process of individual creation is a reversal of the subject and the object, placing them in wrong positions. In the Aitareya Upanishad, we have a more clear exposition of this descending process. The Cosmic Being manifested Himself as all things, down to the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—which we regard as objects of sense. The five elements are the objects of our senses, but they were the last evolutes in the process of Divine manifestation.

29th March

THE LAW OF DHARMA

There are no two laws—God’s law and man’s law; universal law and individual law. No such thing is there. Such thing as ‘my law’ or ‘your law’ does not exist. There is only one law operating everywhere, in all creation, visible or invisible, in all realms of being. The same law is there for the celestials, the humans and the subhuman creatures. Everyone is controlled by a single principle of ordinance. That is called dharma. It operates as gravitation in the physical level; it operates as love in the psychological level; it operates as chemicals in the chemical level and it operates as integration of thought in our mental level, the level of cognition and thinking. It ultimately operates as the connecting link between the subject and the object, on account of which there is knowledge of anything at all.

30th March

SRI KRISHNA OPENED HIS MOUTH, AND FIRE CAME OUT OF IT

When we contemplate the Universal Subjectivity of things, the sense organs become causes rather than effects, not as they are now in our individual cases. What this contemplation means is a hard thing to grasp. But, once it is grasped, all fear vanishes in a moment, because fear is due to dependence on things, and independence is assumed the moment this art of transmuting individual consciousness to the Universal Reality is gained. That is real meditation, in the light of the Upanishad. And this contemplation, this meditation on Hiranyagarbha, which is actually the subject of this chapter and which is the reason behind the purification of the senses and their overcoming death, completely converts the effect into the cause, so that speech becomes Fire, the effect becomes the cause, and Fire finds its proper place in the Being of Reality. When Sri Krishna opened up His Cosmic Form in the court of the Kauravas, it is said that the mouth opened, and Fire came out of His mouth. And, in the Upanishad also, we find references to this fact.

31st March

OBJECTS ARE INERT, AND IT IS THE SUBJECT THAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS

Being and consciousness go together; they cannot be separated. Our consciousness is tied to our body, so that whatever we know is limited to this little body. We cannot go beyond. The consciousness of our ‘being’ is the same as consciousness of our body. There is nothing else in us. And the body is so limited, as we know very well. Hence, the expansion of ‘being’, or the dimension of our ‘being’, includes simultaneously consciousness, because ‘being’ and consciousness are one. This is indicated by the other prayer: *Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya*: Lead me from darkness to light. This world is a world of darkness. It is not a world of light. The light that we see in this world is really a form of darkness, as we studied in an earlier portion of this Upanishad that all forms of life are forms of death only. They are not realities. The

sunlight is not real light, because it is not intelligent. It is another intelligence that is responsible for apprehending the value of even sunlight. Mere sunlight cannot understand, because it is an object outside. Objects are inert, and it is the subject that is consciousness. Any object that is bereft of a relationship with the subject is equivalent to darkness. It is lifeless.

APRIL

from the Ascent of the Spirit

1st April

THE IDEAL OF HUMANITY IS SPIRITUAL

The ideal of humanity is spiritual. This is a thesis which cannot be set aside by any observant mind. Even where it appears to be the opposite for all practical observations, even in crass materialistic approaches of life, the movements are not really bereft of the spiritual sense, if we are to be psychoanalytically observant of the motive forces behind attitudes to life. Even the worst of men have a spiritual element hiddenly present, and the vicious movements which we observe in humanity in many a circle may sometimes confound us into a doubt as to whether the Spirit which is held to be omnipresent can be the motive force behind these perpetrations. Yes, is the answer. Even the least of events has a hidden purpose and motive, though not visible outside but covertly present—the motive which rightly or wrongly, by various types of meanderings in the desert of life, directs itself towards awakening into the consciousness of what it is really seeking. The errors of mankind are really the products of ignorance, and an ignorance of a fact cannot be equated with a denial of that fact.

2nd April

THE UNIVERSAL URGE IS REALLY THE SPIRITUAL IMPETUS

The Universal Urge is really the Spiritual Impetus, and we need not use the word 'spiritual' to designate it. An all-consuming impulse towards a Common Aim is what may be regarded as the spiritual aspiration or the basic urge of the individual. It may not be visible in the proper intensity or proportion at certain given levels of experience, but that an expected percentage of it is not visible on the surface is not a reason why one should not give it the credit it deserves. All that we are inside does not come to the surface of our conscious life, as we all very well know; yet, we are that which is there ready to come to the surface of our mind one day or the other as the motivating force of our lives, whether in this life or in the lives to come. The urges of human nature are really universal in their comprehension; they are not individual, they are not even social in the sense in which we try to define society.

3rd April

WHAT IS GRAVITATION IF NOT A SPIRITUAL URGE?

There is a struggle of every individual structure or pattern to communicate itself with other such centres of force, and it is this tendency within the individual patterns or structures to melt into the being of others that is the beginning of all spiritual aspiration. What is gravitation if not a spiritual urge? What is this force that pulls the Earth round the Sun if it is

not spiritual? We may wonder how the force of gravitation can be spiritual, because it is known to be a physical phenomenon. But, it is all a question of nomenclature. We may call it physical, psychological, social, ethical, moral, or spiritual, as we like. The point is, what is it essentially? Why is there any pull at all—the pull of moral force, the pull of psychic contents, the pull of love and affection? What is it that pulls one thing towards another? Why is it that anything should gravitate towards some centre? What is the intention, what is the purpose, what is the motive and what is the secret behind this urge?

4th April

THE LAW OF LIFE IS COOPERATION

Most people come to grief due to the wrong notion that they can succeed by ‘asserting’ themselves. The truth is just the opposite. The false idea that self-assertion can bring success is based on the ignorance of the fact that there are also others in this world who can equally assert themselves and stand against the assertion from any particular individual or centre of action. No one has ever succeeded in life, who confronted the ‘others’ in the world with his ego. All egoism is met with an equally strong egoism from outside. To take always one’s own standpoint, whether in an action, an argument or even in feeling, is to court ‘opposition’, while the law of life is ‘cooperation’. Self-assertion, thus, is contrary to nature’s laws and shall stand defeated in the end. All egoistic action, whether in mind, speech or body, evokes a similar action from other centres of force in the world and to live in such a condition is fitly called *samsara*, and experience in which perpetually warring elements react against one another and bring about restlessness and pain.

5th April

INTERPRETING EVERYTHING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE IDEAL

A spiritual life is that conduct or way of living and mode of thinking and understanding which enables one to interpret every situation in life—physical, social, ethical, political or psychological—from the point of view of the ideal that is above and is yet to be reached, notwithstanding the fact that it is a remote ideal in the future. The inability to interpret the practical affairs of life, and the present state of existence in terms of the higher ideal immediately succeeding, would make us incomplete human beings and keep us unhappy. It is only the animal nature that is incapacitated in this respect. The animals and even human beings who have the animal nature preponderating in them cannot interpret present situations from the point of view of the ideal that is transcendent to the present state. And once we are awakened to the capacity of being able to understand and interpret the lower in the light of the higher, then it is that we can be called real humans, for the superiority of humans over animals lies just in this special endowment. Merely because one walks with two legs, one need not necessarily be regarded as truly human.

6th April

EVEN AMONG HUMAN BEINGS WE HAVE VARIOUS GRADES

According to Hegel, the renowned German philosopher, the lowest level is brute consciousness, which is inseparable from sheer material existence. The second stage, above this, is nature-reactive self-preservative consciousness, observable in plant life. The third stage is of a crude seeking of oneself in others, expressed in the presence of a psychological want, a need and a love which specifically concentrates itself in the reproductive consciousness. The fourth is the stage of self-consciousness which is the special faculty of man, beyond the level of the mere animal satisfaction of self-preservation and self-reproduction in the form of reaction to external stimuli. Yet, human life here is incipient and not fully developed. Even among human beings we have various grades: there is the animal man, the selfish man, the good man, the saintly man and the God-man.

7th April

THE MIND IS NOT ACCUSTOMED TO THINK IN AN INTEGRAL FASHION

Would people realise at least today that existence in the world cannot be bifurcated from the existence of the Central Aim of Life? Gathering the outcome of our thoughts expressed earlier, we may proceed further to the art and the enterprise of blending dharma, artha, kama and moksha into a single body of human aspiration. As was indicated, this is a difficult job, for the mind is not accustomed to think in such an integral fashion. But it has to be done, and one cannot escape it, if life is to have any meaning and not be a mere desultory drifting from one objective to another, every moment of time. Artha, or the material object of one's pursuit, may be considered first, since it is this that seems to be the primary centre of life's attraction in the immediately visible and tangible field of experience. The object is naturally the physical something that presents itself before a sense organ—seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling or touching.

8th April

DHARMA IS THE PRINCIPLE OF THE UNITY OF THE SELF, SPIRITUALLY

It is hard to give a dictionary definition of dharma or find an apt synonym for it in the English language; for, dharma is that all-pervasive cohesive principle, which keeps all things in a harmonious state of integration. Now, this harmony and integration is discoverable in every level of life. Physically, it is the energy which holds one's body in unison and does not allow it to disintegrate; vitally, it is the force which keeps the prana moving in harmony with the body; mentally, it is the power which maintains the sanity of thought and keeps the psychological apparatus working in an orderly fashion and does not allow it to run riot in a

haphazard manner; morally, it is the urge which recognises as much value in others as in one's own self and regards in them the proper status, which they are occupying in their own places; intellectually, it is the logical principle of coherence of judgment and correspondence of idea with fact. In the external universe, it acts as the force of gravitation, physically; as mutual reaction, chemically; as the principle of growth and sustenance, biologically; as cooperative enterprise, socially. Finally, it is the principle of the unity of the Self, spiritually.

9th April

HAPPINESS IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND WHERE PERFECTION IS ABSENT

Varna does not mean 'colour' referring to the Aryan or the Dravidian difference of skin, nor indicating anything like the superior and the inferior in the social organisation of human beings. To think so would be a total misconstruing of fact. Varna is not a 'colour' visible to the eyes but a 'degree' conceivable by the mind; which means to say that by the term 'varna' we are to understand the degrees of expression of dharma in human society in such a way that their coming together or coordination will sustain human society and existence. Though life is a continuous and single whole enshrining in its bosom knowledge, power, richness and energy, it cannot be manifest in any particular human individual in such a comprehensive fashion unless he is a Superman (*ati-manava*). In ordinary human beings, such a blending of the four factors is impossible. Happiness is nowhere to be found where perfection is absent.

10th April

YOGA HAS BEEN DEFINED AS UNION WITH REALITY

Yoga has been defined as union with Reality in its different degrees of manifestation, both within and without. Thus, by the fulfilment of one's functions in life through the laws and disciplines of varna and ashrama, one moves gradually from the outer to the inner—from the external forms to the deeper meaning of things—and rises upward, from the gross to the subtle, and from the subtle to the ultimate essence of existence. The concepts of the four *purusharthas*, dharma, artha, kama and moksha; of the four varnas, the classes of society wielding spiritual, political, economic and manual power; of the four ashramas, the stages of study and discipline, performance of duty individually as well as socially, withdrawal from attachment to perishable things, and communion with the Supreme Reality; these sum up the total structure of life in its integrality, excluding nothing, and including everything in its most comprehensive gamut. The stages are the orders of life necessitated by the progressive emphasis which it receives in outward evolution.

11th April

WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF THE EDUCATED MAN OF THE WORLD TODAY?

It is emphatically said that *knowledge is power*. It is also held that *knowledge is virtue*. And Indian metaphysics, in its last reaches, proclaims that *knowledge is bliss*. Now, does education mean acquisition of knowledge? Any sensible person would not deny that it is so. And what is the condition of the educated man of the world today? Has he power? Is he virtuous? Is he blissful? We would, on an enquiry, discover that our men of knowledge are not really men of power. They need not necessarily be virtuous persons, too. And bliss, of course, is far from their reach. If education is the process of the acquisition of knowledge, that is, if education is the same as knowledge, and if knowledge is defined in the above-mentioned manner, how is it that there is a gulf between education and its expected fruits? We find that the men of power are either the political leaders or the possessors of enormous wealth. On a scrutiny it would be found that it is not true.

12th April

THE PREDOMINANT VIEW IS THAT KNOWLEDGE IS A MEANS TO AN END

The predominant view is that knowledge is a means to an end. In the case of some, this end is economic welfare and gaining of wealth in the form of money, particularly, or power in society. This is the reason why educationally qualified persons seek employments in institutes, organisations, firms, the government, etc. This 'end' which is in view clubs within itself a subtle notion of a simultaneous acquisition of prestige and authority in society. A person in some socially valued employment would at the same time be regarded as a valuable person, whether the nature of this value is clear to anyone's mind or not. Why should an employed person be a person of prestige and dignity? The notion is very vague. Evidently, there is, underlying it, a feeling that such a person can be utilised as a means to some other ends covertly creeping within the minds of people. Also, prestige itself is something very nebulous and cannot stand scrutiny.

13th April

KNOWLEDGE AND ACTIVITY ARE THE FRUITS OF EDUCATION

The problem of human existence and activity is really the problem of the human consciousness. Or, to put it more precisely, the problem is that man is not able to realise that this is the problem. Knowledge and activity are the fruits of education. But neither knowledge nor activity is unconcerned with an object outside. This would mean that our relationship with external things is the deciding factor in judging the worth of our knowledge and the value of our activities. This, again, suggests that the worth and value of our education lies in the meaning attached to our relationship with the objects of our study. The whole question is one of subject-object relation. There is no such thing as either knowledge or effort unrelated to an aim or objective. If this aim is to be missed, if the purpose is to go out of one's mind, if

the object is to be separated from the subject, if the content of consciousness is to be cut off from consciousness, then the result is obvious. And this is exactly what has happened to our educational methods, to the entire process of education today.

14th April

THE FAITH OF THE IGNORANT IS NOT TO BE SHAKEN

The basic psychology behind education should be “not to disturb the degree of reality involved in any state of experience.” The Bhagavadgita exhorts: “The faith of the ignorant is not to be shaken” while the wise one performs the function of imparting knowledge to the ignorant. The standpoint of the student in any stage of education cannot be ignored, though it may be regarded as an inadequate standpoint in comparison with a higher level of knowledge. Education is similar to the artistic process of the blossoming of a flower bud, gradually and beautifully. The bud is not to be opened suddenly by exerting any undue force; else, it would not be a blossom, but a broken structure serving no purpose. The teacher is always to be hidden behind the student, though he is with the student at all times. He is not to come to the forefront, either as a superior or an unpleasant ingredient among the constituents that go to form the feelings, aspirations and needs of the student at any particular level.

15th April

AN INDISTINGUISHABLE AND SUBTLE MASS OF MYSTERY

The solution to the problem of the relation between the mind and the body is perhaps to be sought in a deeper study of the sources of the human organism itself. Investigations in the field of astrophysics and the science of life at the biological level have revealed that the human individual is a developed form of what was originally a united substance, call it an atom or cell. In this primordial condition of existence it would be impossible to draw a line between matter and consciousness, between body and mind, for here existence appears to be at the stage of an indistinguishable and subtle mass of mystery. Is it not a wonder that poetic genius, scientific acumen and philosophic wisdom, which shake the world of mankind with their force of impact and power of conviction, should be hidden latently in a microscopic cellular form of sperm or gene or chromosome? How could one explain the presence of a mighty and wide-spreading banyan tree in an insignificantly small seed thereof? Could the origin of thought and the origin of the body be identical in its structure and formation?

16th April

THE MYSTERY OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP

The chemistry of elements and of a living body, known as inorganic and organic chemistry, also may be said to be closely associated with biological functions. This fact is brought to high

relief in the effects produced by the administering of chemically manufactured drugs into the human system and the chemical effect of organic substances introduced into the body of a human being. Here again we have revealed before us the mystery of the inter-relationship obtaining among chemical, biological and psychological functions. The bifurcation of these sciences into independent subjects unconnected with one another would thus be not proper. Chemistry is the study of the character of the molecular substances constituting the building bricks of all substances—earth, water, fire and air—whether these are studied in the external world or through the individual bodies they form by different permutations and combinations.

17th April

THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF MAN

The self-consciousness of man is the principle of the ego and individuality. Researches in psychology have revealed that living beings below the human level lack self-consciousness in the intensity in which it blossoms in man. It is this specific reason which explains the incapacity of the subhuman species to conduct logical processes of induction and deduction in daily affairs, or remember the past and anticipate the future in a mathematical and logical form, as man does. But, this special endowment raising man above the subhuman level, also at the same time, acts as a serious obstacle to leading a harmonious life with other people, especially. For, self-consciousness is often blended with egoism of an autocratic nature, which refuses to give due credit to people around and delights in affirming its supremacy over others. Metaphysicians explain that egoism is an unfortunate product of a mutual superimposition between consciousness and the principle of individuality, which on the one side lifts up the banner of the indisputable supremacy of consciousness, and the separatist tendency of individuality on the other.

18th April

THE HAPPINESS OF BEING ALONE

When you are absolutely alone, when there are no things to contact you, no persons to see you, when you are in the solitude of your own room, if your happiness is the most intense, that would perhaps indicate your progress along the spiritual path, your inner growth. But on the other hand, if your joy seems to enhance only by contacts, by seeing people and persons, if your joy expands the more you run about, the more you see things, the more you go about here and there, that will not be the indication of your growth in the spiritual field. The more you are alone, the more are you near to your Spirit. This liveness of your life promises you greater satisfaction than all the contacts that you can make in your social life. The Spirit does not come in contact with anything, and its joy cannot be enhanced by contacts; on the other hand, all contacts are a restriction on its expression. Joys of the Spirit get diminished by sensory contacts; that is why we are unhappy in this world.

19th April

THE CONTENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS HAS TO BE RELATED TO CONSCIOUSNESS

One can conceive anything but the finitude of consciousness. It is impossible to imagine that consciousness can be limited by anything external to it. In fact, the concept of there being something external to consciousness is itself an unwarranted intervention of a total impossibility, for that which is external to consciousness has also to become a content of consciousness; else, there could not be even a consciousness that there is something external to consciousness. It is also not possible that what is alien to consciousness in character can be its content, for the content of consciousness has to be related to consciousness in order to become its content at all. Now, this relation between the content and consciousness is again a questionable proposition, inasmuch as any relation between consciousness and its content should again be related to consciousness in some way or the other. It is impossible to hold the notion of anything which is unrelated to consciousness, or what is not a content of consciousness or what is dissimilar to consciousness in character.

20th April

A TOTAL EXTERNALITY TO CONSCIOUSNESS IS INCONCEIVABLE

If existence and consciousness have to be one and the same, how do we explain the anxiety of consciousness to desire objects which have an existence of their own? If the objects of the world have no existence of their own, it would be impossible for consciousness to desire them. On the other hand, if they have an existence of their own, what is the relation of this existence to the existence of consciousness which desires them? Are these objects external to consciousness, or are they involved in the very constitution of consciousness? On the second alternative, it would follow that it would be meaningless for consciousness to desire objects, because they are supposed to be already involved in its very structure. But, if they are not so involved, the desire of consciousness for the objects would be understandable. And if the existence of objects is not involved in consciousness, it would also mean that this existence is bereft of all consciousness; not only that, this existence would be an external to consciousness. But we have already seen that a total externality to consciousness is inconceivable, and is an indefensible position.

21st April

THE STUDY OF MAN IS THE STUDY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The processes of life are, broadly speaking, those which are studied in the fields of politics, world history, sociology, ethics, economics, aesthetics, psychology, biology, chemistry, physics and astronomy. Everything connected with man can be said to be comprehended within this outline of the framework of life's activity. But all this has to be related to

consciousness; else, they would not exist even as subjects of study or objects of experience. The problem of man is therefore the problem of consciousness. The study of man is the study of consciousness. Since it is impossible to conceive a real division of consciousness within itself, it is also not possible to imagine that there can be real objects of consciousness. If there are no such real objects, the whole of life would be a drama played by consciousness within itself in the realm of its infinite compass. There cannot be a greater joy than the identification of existence and consciousness.

22nd April

TRUTH IS NON-RELATIVE

When we say that Truth is non-relative, we have said everything about it. For, to say anything else about it would be to make it relative. And to maintain a consciousness of this non-relativity without any adjectives—for adjectives create again a sense of relativity—would be to live in Truth. This is life-absolute, which steers clear of all references to the outside, and stands supreme in the strictest sense of the term. It is this that people call God, a word whose meaning has not become clear to us, still. The magic works by a single stroke of mental effort, and this magic is the realisation of Truth. Hands and feet do not help us here, nor do the traditional modes of thinking. This transfiguring process deals a deathblow to all that man holds as dear and near in the darkness of his ignorance, for its function is to enlighten him rather than please him, to light the lamp of understanding rather than feed his passions, to wake him from sleep rather than serve him a meal in dream.

23rd April

WHAT IS SEXUAL BEAUTY?

The beauty that the sexes feel between each other is the glamour projected by this super-individual urge in the form of the sexes so that it may be safely said that sexual beauty which is visible to the male in the female and to the female in the male is the form of that lost identity of unisexuality which preceded the subsequent manifestation of bisexual individuals. Then, what is sexual beauty? Does it really exist? Yes, it does, and it does not. It exists because it is seen; it does not exist because what is seen is not beauty but something else which is mistaken for what is known as beauty. The beauty of the sexes that is visible is the consequence of a similarity of vibration that takes place in the vital and physical organisms of the personality which gets pulled magnetically towards the opposite sex, since it sees in the opposite sex not merely a person like oneself but a strange meaning which is read into the body of the person, this meaning being the cause for the perception of beauty more than the person as such.

24th April

THE PATH OF RETURN TO THE ABSOLUTE

Self-preservation and self-reproduction are the spatio-temporal forms taken by the absolute character of the eternity of Consciousness. The 'fall' is a single act with the threefold downward pressure of psychic self-affirmation, physical self-affirmation and the urge for self-perpetuation. The threefold instinct acts simultaneously, only manifesting a particular phase at a particular time attended with favourable circumstances, so that the psychophysical affirmation and the sex urge, though they are present in the individual at all times hiddenly or expressedly, assume special emphasis under given conditions alone, even as a seed thrown into the soil germinates only when the conditions suited to its sprouting manifest themselves in the course of time. Here is a crucial point which has to be taken notice of particularly by those who have dedicated their lives to tread the 'path of return' to the Absolute, on which subject a little dilation of understanding is called for.

25th April

THE FOUNDATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF LAW

Law is a transcendent, connotative significance or force which demands a gradational integration of consciousness, both in quantity and quality simultaneously, until it reaches its culmination, which is known as the Absolute. Law is, thus, an operation of the system of the Absolute, in different evolutionary degrees of comprehensiveness and perfection, right from the Ultimate Causality of the universe down to the revolution of an atom or the vibration of an electron. Social laws and political systems of administration cannot, therefore, be separated from the requisitions necessitated by the law of the Absolute. It is just this Universal Transcendent Principle that either rewards or punishes individuals by its gradational actions and reactions, and it is this, again, that is the basis of all human behaviour, looking so inscrutable, and this is the explanation as to why individuals strive for mutual love and cooperation, and, at the same time, keep themselves ready with a knife hidden in their armpits. Here we have, perhaps, the foundation of the philosophy of law. Ethics and morality have, thus, a necessary value. Law has a meaning, and it points to a truth beyond itself.

26th April

THE WORLD NEEDS THE LEADERSHIP OF A SUPERMAN

The leadership of a tremendous genius and capacity for mustering in universal forces is called for. And these forces are neither material ones minus the spiritual, nor the spiritual minus the material. Truth is a fusion of both spirit and matter, of divinity and humanity, of God and the world. Will man be able to awaken this vision of himself? Then, there is hope for him, and

then there can be peace, not only on Earth but also in heaven and everywhere. Else, the object sought for is far to seek, and difficult to find. The world needs the leadership of a superman, whose eyes can see God and world at the same time, whose personality will be at once the sacred temple of the Almighty and the active thoroughfare of human business. The world did see the realisation of such an ideal in the personality of Sri Krishna, who was an outstanding specimen of the world's greatest statesman in the sense we have defined above as an urgent need for the welfare of mankind.

27th April

A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO PERSONS

Social security and friendship cannot be assured as long as social relationship remains merely an external connection operating independent of the individuals so connected, and not intrinsic to the nature of the individuals themselves. A relationship between two persons has to enter into the very substance of which the two persons are made; it is only then that the relationship between them becomes friendly, secure and permanent. But if this relationship is only a form taken by a pressure exerted by something else upon the individuals appearing to be related, then the individuals so related by an extrinsic power foreign to their own nature can fly at the throats of each other the moment this extrinsic pressure is lifted. This is what happens if the State enforcing the laws of the society is a machinery rather than an organism. With Hobbes we may think the State cannot be anything more than a machine externally operating upon the individual, whatever be the necessity felt to operate this machine.

28th April

PSYCHOLOGICAL GULF

There has been through the history of time a visible irreconcilability, though looking apparent, between the values spiritual and the values temporal. This psychological gulf that has been persistently managing to interfere with the practical life of the individual has many forms which are partly personal and partly social. But, whatever be the nature of this insistent feeling subconsciously operating in the minds of people, it has, obviously, far-reaching consequences. The usual demarcation that is traditionally made between the life religious and the life secular is an outstanding example of the roots of this phenomenon which has manifested itself not only in the private lives of individuals but also in the social and political levels of life. It is this feature inextricably wound up in the thought of man that makes him feel occasionally the rise of a fervour of a renunciation of Earthly values for those that are religious, or even spiritual in the sense that he is able to comprehend within the limitations of his own psychological being.

29th April

THE SPIRITUAL WAY OF LIFE

The spiritual way of life is perhaps the most intriguing and enigmatic of all arts and sciences. The reason behind this difficulty in understanding and living the life spiritual is that this arduous adventure on the part of an individual is connected with so many subtle factors and calls for such dextrous adjustments from moment to moment that the entire process or effort is practically beyond the reach of the common man who is used to what we may call a happy-go-lucky attitude of total abandon to instincts, prejudices, routines and movements along beaten tracks of stereotyped conduct and behaviour in his personal and social life. It is by a rare good fortune, we should say, that a person gets fired up with the spiritual ideal, sometimes by causes which are immediately visible and at other times for reasons not clearly intelligible even to one's own self.

30th April

OUR ACTIONS DETERMINE THE FUTURE

The resultant force of an action has one's future determined by it. Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras, says that the class of society into which one is born, the length of life which one is to live, and the nature of the experiences through which one has to pass, are all determined by the residual potency of past actions. These potencies become active in this life itself or in a life to come. A famous verse proclaims: "The nature of one's life, action, wealth, education and death are all fixed up even when one is in the womb of the mother." Human effort has a relative value and forms a part of this universal law of self-completeness, displaying the manner in which the impersonal reality behaves when it is cast in the moulds of personality and individuality. The doctrine of karma, therefore, is not a belief in fatalism as is often wrongly supposed, but the enunciation of a scientific law that operates inexorably and impartially everywhere in the universe, like the principle of gravitation.

MAY

from The Philosophy of Life

1st May

THE REALM OF THE INFINITE

An analysis of the nature of the world discloses its dependence on a reality higher than its own. It is subject to a teleological direction of its movements towards an end beyond itself. Dissatisfaction with the superficial experiences which one has in life is a tacit admission of a higher standard of reality. Every want, every wish and ambition, every type of wonder, surprise or mystery, every sense of a 'beyond oneself' suggests the existence of something outside the limitations which it indicates. 'Something is wanting' means that what is wanted exists. That we are miserable shows that there is an ideal of happiness. The consciousness of imperfection implies the possibility of perfection. To recognise the finitude of oneself is to step at once into the realm of the infinite. When finitude is known, the fact of the contingency of the knower's transcending it is implied in it. The finite has no significance except in contradistinction to the infinite.

2nd May

UNIVERSALITY OF VISION

A philosophy of life has naturally to be inseparable from universality of vision. It has therefore to start from a study of the most basic fact of human perception, viz. nature in all its externality. The astronomical universe, with its mathematical laws, may be regarded as the extreme content of the extroverted consciousness. Things hang loosely in this scheme with apparently no connection with one another, except perhaps the pull of gravitation and a distant influence characteristic of physical bodies. It is physics which goes deeper into the structure and content of this diversified universe and discovers electromagnetic fields determining the nature and function of bodies and a closer relation among them than crass perception would permit. The physical laws working behind the universe seem to be uniform and the substance of things is seen ultimately to consist not of scattered particulars but a single force or energy permeating and constituting everything. The 'locality' of bodies fades and they coalesce and fuse into one another in an underlying universal continuum.

3rd May

THE ASCENT OF THE FINITE TO THE INFINITE

Philosophy is a rational enquiry into the forms, contents and implications of experience. It is an attempt at a complete knowledge of being in all the phases of its manifestation in the various processes of consciousness. The discovery of the ultimate meaning and essence of existence is the central purpose of philosophy. It is the art of the perfect life, the science of

reality, the foundation of the practice of righteousness, the law of the attainment of freedom and bliss, and provides a key to the meaning and appreciation of beauty. Swami Sivananda holds philosophy to be the Vedanta or the consummation of knowledge, Brahmailydia, or the sacred lore of the Eternal, which is inseparable from Yogasastra, or the methodology of the ascent of the finite to the infinite. It is the way to the knowledge of being as such, of that which is. "Philosophy is love of wisdom, or striving for wisdom. It is a moral and intellectual science which tries to explain the reality behind appearances by reducing the phenomena of the universe to ultimate causes, through the application of reason and law" (*Questions and Answers*).

4th May

PHILOSOPHY IS AN INTENSELY PRACTICAL SCIENCE

Philosophy is a necessary means for the possession of the higher knowledge of the Self. But, if it is defined as process of the function of the intellect, we have to note that it is not always the sole means; for philosophy in Swami Sivananda, as in Plato, Plotinus and Spinoza, makes its appeal not merely to the intellect of man, but to the heart and the feeling as well. It is not enough to understand the teachings of philosophy, it is necessary also to feel them in the depths of one's heart. Feeling, at least in certain respects, surpasses understanding, albeit that feeling is often strengthened by understanding. Philosophy is an intensely practical science. "Philosophy has its roots in the practical needs of man. Man wants to know about transcendental matters when he is in a reflective state. There is an urge within him to know about the secret of death, the secret of immortality, the nature of the soul, the creator and the world." "Philosophy is the self-expression of the growing spirit in man. Philosophers are its voice" (*Philosophy and Teachings*). The Vedanta is the general term applied in India to such a philosophy of wise adjustment of value based on an undeluded perception of Reality.

5th May

THE AIM OF PHILOSOPHY IS DIRECT EXPERIENCE

Philosophy is a general exposition of the ultimate concepts, meanings and values of the things of the universe, by a resort to their final causes which range beyond the reach of the senses. It becomes possible for philosophy to concern itself with metaphysical essences by resting on the strong foundation of the testimony given by sages to deep meditation and realisation. Hence, the source as well as the aim of philosophy is direct experience, non-mediate, super-sensory and super-logical. All knowledge that we ordinarily obtain in this world is mediate, for it requires the operation of the triune process of the knower, knowledge and the known. By this method of knowing, it is not possible for us to acquire an unshakable knowledge of reality, for mediacy in knowledge does not enjoy the characteristics of permanency. The transitory nature of mediate knowledge affects the whole world of science, for this latter is sense-bound. We need not point out here that science lays too much trust in

the validity of sense perception and thus gets vitiated by the gross limitations to which the senses are obviously subject.

6th May

THE WORLD IS BASED ON THE ABSOLUTE

Philosophy soars above empiricity, though it takes the help of empirical concepts and categories for the sake of proclaiming to the world the truths declared by intuition. It speaks to the world in the language of the world, for the language of intuition is unintelligible to the world of experience. The form and shape of philosophy has necessarily to depend on the stuff out of which the world of experience is made, on account of its having to perform the function of transmitting the knowledge of the super-mundane ideal to the realm of mundane values. It has always within itself a living undercurrent of significance and implication which gives a vivid picture of the nature of the ultimate end to the understanding mind. Philosophy stands on the shoulders of the senses, but looks beyond them. Intuition is the soul of philosophy, and reason is its body. By intuition, again, we do not mean the sensory intuition of certain Western philosophers, but the integral intuition of Consciousness, which is non-different from the Absolute. The world is based on the Absolute; it is a manifestation of the Absolute. It is the Absolute flowing and moving that appears to the senses as the world.

7th May

THE REALITY THAT IS ESTABLISHED IN PHILOSOPHY

The Reality that is established in philosophy is to be experienced in the state of deep meditation. Here consciousness and being become one. There is no way of entering into communion with it except by being it. There is no such thing as subject-object relationship in regard to the consciousness of what is universal. Either one knows it fully in non-dualistic communion or does not know it at all. The senses, the understanding and the reason are powerless instruments in one's attempt at perfectly comprehending its nature or realising it in experience. In the realisation of the Supreme Being the mind of the individual is completely transcended, together with all its dualistic categories. The mind does not partake of the characteristics of Reality. It is not conscious and also not universal in nature. The mind is a feeble objective insentient evolute acting as the individual's instrument in the perception of the external world, which is physical in nature.

8th May

PHILOSOPHY IS NOT TO BE CONFUSED

Philosophy is not to be confused with intuition, with mystic or religious experience, though it is a very powerful aid in achieving this end. Philosophy in India is based on the revelations of the sages and provides the necessary strength to the future generation of mankind for

realising this goal. In mystic or religious experience the intellect and the reason are completely transcended, while philosophy is all intellect and reason, though it is grounded ultimately in deep religious experience. While the intuitional truths are rationally explained by philosophy, it does not pretend to prove the nature of these truths through intellectual or scientific categories. Philosophy has a purely negative value—of offering an exhaustive criticism of sense experience and logical thought and indirectly arriving at the concept of Reality by demonstrating the limitations and inadequacies of the former. All philosophy really springs from an inward dissatisfaction with immediate empirical experience consequent upon the perception of the inadequacies inherent in its very nature.

9th May

PHILOSOPHY HAS NO QUARREL WITH SCIENCE

Philosophy has no quarrel with science; it concedes that science is necessary and useful in reinforcing its own conclusions, but it strictly warns science that it is limited to physical phenomena. We study the physical, chemical and biological laws in science, the logical and metaphysical principles in philosophy and the moral and the spiritual verities in religion and higher mysticism. The senses, reason and intuition are our ways of knowledge in the progressive unfoldment of our nature. Science, philosophy and mysticism are true and useful in their own places and together constitute the highroad to a knowledge of life as a whole. Intuition, however, has the special advantage of being able to unfold all that the senses and reason can, and, in addition, also that which these cannot hope to know with all their power. The philosophy of Swami Sivananda is not any partial approach to Truth; it is that grand integral method which combines in itself the principles and laws discovered and established by science, metaphysics and the higher religion and which embraces in its vast bosom whatever is true, good or beautiful in the universe.

10th May

QUESTIONS ARE USUALLY DISCUSSED UNDER METAPHYSICS

Philosophy conceived as metaphysics deals with an extensive reasoned discussion of the natures and the relations of God, world and the individual soul. The latter two are either identical in essence with God, or are attributes or parts of God, or are different from God. The ultimate Reality is either God, or the world of perception alone, or only the individual mind. God either exists or not, and is necessary or unnecessary for an explanation of experience. The world is either material or mental in nature; and consciousness is independent of or is dependent on matter. The world is either pluralistic or a single whole, and is real, ideal or unreal, empirical, pragmatic or rational. The individual is either free or bound. Questions of this nature are usually discussed under metaphysics. It also delineates the process of cosmogony and cosmology, the concepts of space, time and causation, creation, evolution and involution, as well as the presuppositions of eschatology or the

discourse on the nature of life after death. The philosophical basis of modern physics and biology also can be comprised under metaphysics. Under epistemology the various theories and processes of the acquisition of right knowledge, as well as the nature and possibility of wrong knowledge, are discussed in detail.

11th May

BEAUTY IS THE VISION OF THE ABSOLUTE

Though philosophy, in the system of Swami Sivananda, is mostly understood in the sense of metaphysics, ethics and mysticism, its other phases also receive in his writings due consideration, and are placed in a respectable position as honourable scions of the majestic metaphysics of his Vedanta. For him the basis of all knowledge is the existence of the Absolute Self, and perception and the other ways of knowing are meaningful on account of their being illumined by the light of this Self. Epistemological problems are, therefore, in the end, problems of the nature and the manner of the manifestation of the Absolute through the psychophysical organism. Beauty is the vision of the Absolute through the senses and the understanding. The main material of beauty is symmetry, rhythm, harmony, equilibrium, unity, manifest in consciousness. The perception of these characteristics is the neutralisation of want and one-sidedness in consciousness, the fulfilment of personality, the completion of being, and hence a manifestation of the Absolute, in some degree, in one's consciousness.

12th May

LIFE WITHOUT A PHILOSOPHY IS UNIMAGINABLE

Philosophy is generally defined as love of wisdom or the knowledge of things in general by their ultimate causes, so far as reason can attain to such knowledge. It is a comprehensive and critical study and analysis of experience as a whole. Whether it is consciously, deliberately and rationally adopted on conviction or consciously or unconsciously followed in life through faith or persuasion, every man constructs for himself a fundamental philosophy as the basis of life, a theory of the relation of the world and the individual, and this shapes his whole attitude to life. Aristotle called metaphysics the fundamental science, for, a correct comprehension of it is enough to give man a complete knowledge of every constituent or content of human experience. All persons live in accordance with the philosophy of life that they have framed for themselves, consciously or unconsciously. Even the uneducated and the uncultured have a rough-and-ready philosophy of their own. Life without a philosophy is unimaginable.

13th May

TEACHING IN AN APPEALING WAY IS THE TASK OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is a complete world-view, a *Weltanschauung*, a general attitude of intellect, will and feeling, to life. It gives an explanation of the universe at large, by appealing to what is discoverable as the deepest of known facts. It is not a mere description of the details or bits of physical observation. We call an explanation philosophical when it is broad enough to be harmoniously related to the other views of life and fulfils the needs of all the faculties of man to the highest degree of satisfaction, using ultimate principles, and not mere empirical facts, in establishing its validity. "Philosophy, indeed, in one sense of the term, is only a compendious name for the spirit in education," says William James. It is only in this sense of the process of the education and unfoldment of the spiritual spark in man that philosophy is worth its name. To teach a doctrine in a dogmatic and forced way is one thing, and to do it in a rational and appealing way in its greatest fullness is another. The latter is the task and the way of philosophy.

14th May

THE PRISON OF MISERY

It is often said that philosophy is not as useful as science, that science has made much progress and that philosophy is lagging behind, that science has its great utility, while philosophy has none. This complaint comes mostly from partial observers of the strides of science in making inventions of instruments that save us labour and time and thus make for comfort in our daily life. But, this, of which man boasts so much, is applied science, and not science, as such. When we find man at a loss to know how to use the leisure provided to him by applied science, and how to find time to do what is really solacing to him in his life, where and of what use, we ask, is the great advance that science has made in knowledge, with all its herculean efforts? What about the morality of man today, and what civilisation and culture is he endowed with? Where comes the pride of mere applied science when selfishness, greed and jealousy are its masters, when it threatens to make an end of man himself, and when it tightens the knot that binds man to the prison of misery raised by himself on the basis of belief in things that only tantalise him and then perish?

15th May

PHILOSOPHY IS NOT DRY INTELLECTUAL GYMNASTICS

Science can describe the *how* of fragments of sense-observation; but it is impotent to interpret and explain the meaning and value of what is thus observed—the *why* of visible phenomena. Philosophy is not dry intellectual gymnastics; it is the wisdom of life reached after careful reflection and investigation, without which life is but a dismal failure. It was Socrates who said that those who lack right knowledge deserve to be stigmatised as slaves. And Plato was emphatic when he pronounced the truth that, unless philosophers become

kings or the existing kings acquire the genuine wisdom of philosophy, unless political power and philosophy are combined in the same person, there will be no deliverance for cities, nor yet for the human race. Plato here declares an eternal truth, a truth which holds good for all times and climes: administrators should first and foremost be philosophers, not merely lovers but possessors of wisdom.

16th May

THE QUESTION OF AN ULTIMATE CAUSE

The problem of causality has raised questions that stress the need for philosophy. Science believes that every event has a cause and resorts to a kind of linear argument, thinking that to be a cause means just to be antecedent in time. Our movement from effects to causes leads us nowhere, and we find ourselves landed in a hopeless pursuit. The question of an ultimate cause cannot be answered by science. The end or purpose of action is, to it, enveloped in darkness. If the order and method of events in the universe is determined, not by the way in which we are accustomed to observe cause-and-effect relation, but by the laws of a living organism directed by a unitary force, science cannot but find itself in a fool's paradise. When there is mutual interaction among the constituents of the universe, the common sense view of causality falls to the ground. We require a reflective higher study, which is provided by philosophy, in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion regarding the true scheme of things. An enquiry into the nature of facts observed by science leads us to epistemology and metaphysics.

17th May

THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHY

According to Swami Sivananda, philosophy is not merely a logical study of the conclusions of science or a synthesis of the different sciences. Its methods are different from those of science, though, for purposes of higher reflection and contemplation, it would accept the research of science and its accumulated material. Swami Sivananda, however, is not inclined to give too much importance to science, though, for purposes of instructing the modern man in the great truths of philosophy, he has no objection to taking illustrations from the limitations of science and from the necessity that modern science feels for accepting the existence of a reality beyond sense-perception. To Swami Sivananda, the value of philosophy rests mainly in its utility in reflective analysis and meditation on the Supreme Being. Philosophy in the sense of a mere play of reason he regards as useless in one's search for spiritual knowledge. As a necessary condition of spiritual meditations on the path of Jnana Yoga, the value of philosophy is incalculable. It also provides the necessary prop for and gives the rationale behind the paths of Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga.

18th May

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ABSOLUTE

The true philosophic method should not be lopsided, should not be biased to any particular or special dogma, but comprehend within itself the processes of reflection and speculation and at the same time be able to reconcile the deductive and inductive methods of reasoning. The philosophy of the Absolute rises above particulars to greater and greater universals, basing itself on facts of observation and experience by the method of induction and gradual generalisation of truths, without missing even a single link in the chain of logic and argumentation, reflection and contemplation, until it reaches the highest generalisation of the Absolute Truth, and then by the deductive method comes down to interpret and explain the facts of experience in the light of the nature of this Truth. This is a great example of the most satisfactory method of philosophical enquiry. Philosophy being the way of the knowledge of Truth, its method must be in agreement with the nature of Truth. In philosophy and religion the end always determines the nature of the means.

19th May

THE MARVEL OF CREATION

Philosophy is said to have begun with wonder. The marvel of creation evokes the admiration of man, and its mysteriousness excites his wonder; and this wonder naturally leads to a serious enquiry into the nature of things, for man is not content to rest in a state of awe based on ignorance, and is curious to know the truth behind the enthralling wonder of the world. He investigates, speculates, argues and discusses, and comes to a settled opinion of the nature of things in this wonderful world. This becomes his philosophy. Modern man, however, seems to have stepped into the region of philosophy through doubt and sceptical thinking. Man commenced doubting the validity of authority and dogma no less than that of accepted traditional beliefs. Descartes started with doubting everything, even the validity of thought itself. Later, Kant, too, followed the critical method of enquiry in philosophy. Bradley was of the opinion that the chief need of philosophy is “a sceptical study of first principles.”

20th May

THE VEDANTA FOLLOWS THE PURELY SPIRITUAL APPROACH

The way of the Rigveda and the earlier Upanishads is purely intuitional. Seers entered into the heart of Reality in intense concentration of mind, in meditation, ecstasy, rapture and attunement, and proclaimed to the world in their simple language and powerful style that nature is, in truth, one. The Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Sankhya and Mimamsa philosophies bolstered up a thoroughly realistic method of the analysis of experience. The Yoga system pursued the psychological techniques of inner discipline, while the Vedanta followed the purely spiritual approach to life, backing it up with a rigorous logical scrutiny and examination of experience. But, all these Indian systems have one thing in common: to them

all, philosophy is an intensely practical affair, the art of wise living, the way of the attainment of salvation and freedom of the self. The method of philosophy in general is not to study things piecemeal, as physical science does, but to make a comprehensive study of the totality of experience provided to us through all avenues of knowledge.

21st May

IT IS A MISTAKE MADE BY MANY THINKERS

The validity of genuine philosophical truths lies in their universality and necessity, and are not in need of any further verification of their tenability. They are illuminated by the torch of intuition, and hence any external verification of their validity is not only unnecessary but meaningless. They are always characterised by immediacy, universality and necessity and, consequently, by infallibility and perfect veracity. They hold good for all minds in all conditions, for they spring from the depths of knowledge. There are certain features of reality pervading even ordinary experience, recognisable through subtle contemplation and reflection. It is the purpose of philosophy to study these pervasive features of reality making themselves felt in experience, so that by means of these visible features man may be in a position to rise directly to an intuition of what they feebly indicate. It is a mistake made by many thinkers to reject all super-rational experience as irrational and to debar it from the field of philosophical studies.

22nd May

A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER OF SANKARA

Swami Sivananda's method combines revelation, meditation and reason in one. To him, all methods of sense function and the mental approach to Truth have to be set aside as faulty for the reason that their deliverances are untrustworthy, being logically indefensible and psychologically warped by the defects of the instruments. Infallible knowledge is to be had only in the intuition of Reality, and all knowledge derived through the senses, understanding and reason falls short of it in an enormous degree. No other method of approach to Truth than communion with being as such can give us ultimately reliable knowledge. Unless the knower and the known are identified in knowledge, knowledge is not true, but gives us only a semblance of what we really seek to obtain. Swami Sivananda is a faithful follower of Sankara in his basic presuppositions, though he is equally friendly with Ramanuja, Madhva and the other dualistic and pluralistic philosophers. To Swami Sivananda, philosophy is the way of the attainment of Brahman, and his method includes all that is best in every school of philosophy. Empiricism, rationalism, transcendentalism and absolutism come to a loving embrace in his most catholic system.

23rd May

THE AIM OF LIFE IS THE ATTAINMENT OF MOKSHA

The central aim of the philosophy of Swami Sivananda is the living of the highest life, a life fixed in the knowledge of the principles which are the ultimate regulators of all things. An enlightened life of peace and joy is the goal of his sublime philosophy. And this blessedness can be attained only in the Divine Being. Dharma, the ethical value; artha, the material value; and kama, the vital value, are all based on moksha which is the supreme value of existence. The aim of life is the attainment of moksha. Swami Sivananda's system is a specimen of a type of philosophy that arises on account of a necessity felt by all in life, and not because of any curiosity characteristic of thinkers who have only a speculative interest and no practical aspiration. The sight of evil and suffering, pain and death, directs one's vision to the causes of these phenomena; and this, in its turn, necessitates an enquiry into the reality behind life as a whole. It is not an academic interest in theoretical pursuits, but a practical irresistible urge to contact Reality, that leads to the glorious enterprise of true philosophy.

24th May

SELF-KNOWLEDGE CAN BE ATTAINED EVEN IN THIS VERY LIFE

Swami Sivananda teaches that the bondage of man consists in his ignorance of the true nature of his Self and that his freedom is in the knowledge of the Self. By bondage he means subjection to the process of birth and death and the consequent experience of suffering and pain. Self-knowledge can be attained even in this very life, provided one puts forth sufficient effort towards this end. True happiness can be had only in the Self, and it is futile to search for it in this temporal world, which does not partake of the nature of Reality. The knowledge that man has to strive for is not a theoretical understanding but is the consciousness of the Self. It is neither information gathered regarding the Self, nor a mere acquaintance with it through discursive reason, that can liberate man from his bondage. What is required is practical realisation, which is possible only through profound meditation on the nature of Brahman.

25th May

IT IS REALLY THE VEDANTA APPLIED TO ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE

The philosophy of Swami Sivananda is not any secret way capable of being trodden only by a select few. It is an all-inclusive method which comprises all existent means of communion with Reality. It is really the Vedanta applied to all aspects of life in order to live one's life at its highest and best. It is the system of the perfect life, the rule of wisdom and the law of liberty. It is not a speculative system reserved for intellectual pleasantries during leisure hours, but is the food of the higher understanding and the light of the innermost Self of man. The Vedanta is as simple as life is; and also it is as complex as life is! Every citizen of the world can be taught this philosophy, provided the teacher knows well what it truly means and how it can

be applied in practice to the different stages of life and to different individuals. It is ignorance and wrong understanding that make certain people think that the philosophy of the Atman or Brahman is an otherworldly theory concerning only a life which follows death.

26th May

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE LOVING BROTHERHOOD

The Vedanta of Swami Sivananda does not teach that one should detest the world or isolate oneself in some world other than this. It does not proclaim that anyone should forsake his duties in life or put on a grave face or behave in any conspicuous manner. His Vedanta declares that one should not be selfish or attached to any fleeting object, that one should live in the consciousness of the loving brotherhood and unity of the Self in the universe, that the truth of existence is one and indivisible, that division or separation, hatred, enmity, quarrel and selfishness are against the nature of the Self, that the pain of birth and death is caused by desire generated by the ignorance of the Self, that the highest state of experience is immortal life or the realisation of Brahman, that everyone is born for this supreme purpose, that this is the highest duty of man, that all other duties are only aids or auxiliaries to this paramount duty, that one should perform one's prescribed duties with the spirit of non-attachment and dedication of oneself and one's actions to the Supreme Being, and that every aspect of one's life should get consummated in this Consciousness.

27th May

THE LONGING APPEARS TO HAVE NO END

Man's life on Earth is a continuous flow of events, and no event seems to be lasting. There is always a desire to grasp and hold something else, something different from and better than what is possessed at the present. This longing appears to have no end, and it does not seem to lead one to any definite goal. There are only anxiety, vexation, craving and dissatisfaction visible everywhere. Unrest and pain are seen riding over all things in the world. The drama of life is but a show of shifting scenes, and no amount of worldly satisfaction appears to save one from this ceaseless anguish which follows every failure in the achievement of one's desired end. Youth fades like the evening flower, strength vanishes like the rent cloud, and the beauty of the body quickly gives way to the ugliness of death. All things are certain to pass away either today or tomorrow. Nothing will live. The man of now is not seen in the next moment. The pleasure-centres of the human being mock at him for his folly, and he realises that all that he enjoys is not worth the striving.

28th May

HUMAN LIFE IS A PROCESS OF KNOWLEDGE

Human life is a process of knowledge. All knowledge implies a subject or a knower, whose relation to an object manifests knowledge. The existence of the knower in an act of knowledge cannot be doubted, for without a knower there is no knowledge, and without knowledge there is no experience. The whole of one's life is constituted of various forms of experience, and all experience is attended with consciousness. Consciousness has always to be in relation with the subject or the knower. Without a knowing self there is no objective knowledge. The experience of a world outside would become impossible if it is not to be given to a knowing subject. The fact of the known implies the truth of a knower. Even thinking would lose its meaning without our tacitly admitting the existence of our own self. This self reveals itself as the centre of all the knowledge which illumines every form of human activity. All activities can, ultimately, be reduced to a kind of knowledge. It is some form of knowledge that fulfils itself through external action.

29th May

THE SELF IS NOT MOMENTARY IN NATURE

The Self is of the nature of self-luminosity and intelligence. If the Self were something other than a self-illuminated or self-conscious being, it would have to be known as an object by another being which ought to be self-luminous. But if the Self is not at all to be self-luminous, we would be led to an infinite regress of positing a self behind self, so that there would be no end of our search for the origin of knowledge. The Self is not momentary in nature, for what is momentary is destructible and cannot be the source of knowledge. The perception of momentariness is due to a succession of the appearance of objects at different instants of time. It is not the Self or the consciousness that is momentary, but the perception of objects determined by the nature of the appearance of objects to consciousness. Momentary elements are what are known by consciousness as its objects. The Self is not made manifest by external proofs as outward things are.

30th May

CONSCIOUSNESS IS ONE

Though the objects that are known in consciousness are different and of various kinds, consciousness is one. It is what integrates all sensations and perceptions into a coherent whole. If consciousness were a changing phenomenon, such a synthesis of knowledge would be impossible, and there would arise the contingency of introducing different consciousnesses at different times. Such consciousnesses, in order that their existences might be justified, may have to be known by another consciousness, which, after all, we have to admit as the real Self. That the Self is one, and not more than one, need not be proved, for no one ever feels that one is divided, that one is two or more. Everyone knows that one's self

cannot be cut or divided into segments but always retains its unity. Even supposing that the Self can be manifold, we would be led to the necessity of asserting a unitary consciousness knowing the difference between the parts assumed in the Self.

31st May

THE ABSOLUTE IS BEYOND THOUGHT

Appearances have reality in them, but reality is different from appearances. Appearances do not exist in the Absolute even as its adjectives, for it can have no adjectives other than itself. Qualities have a meaning only in the sense world. There is no quality without relations, and all relations are empirical. A relational Absolute must be perishable, for, here, its very essence is said to include distinction, and all distinction presupposes individuality. The two terms of a relation are really separated by an unbridgeable gulf, and no stretch of imagination can intelligibly bring out their connection. If the two terms are identical, there is no relation, for there will then be no two things to be related. But if the two terms are different from each other, they can bear no relation. The Absolute has no qualities or relations, for it is beyond thought. The proof of its existence is itself.

JUNE

from In the Light of Wisdom

1st June

WHAT WE ARE IN SMALL THINGS, THAT WE ARE ALSO IN BIG THINGS

It is not proper that we should simply die with the same old ideas with which we were born and which we always thought were the right things. It is possible that we are, in fact, not correct in our assumptions and that they may need correction. Just as this is the circumstance in small matters, this happens to be the situation in big things as well. What we are in small things, that we are also in big things. We should not think that we can just be careless in small matters but then be very careful in big matters. When we are careless in tiny things, then we will also be careless in big things. Drops make the ocean, as you know. Even the apparently small matter of drinking a cup of tea is important. A small thing like a few words that we speak to a brother is as important as a big matter like the practice of yoga or even God-realisation itself. I am not just joking. These are serious things upon which we should reflect and meditate. There is nothing that is unimportant. Before God at least, nothing is unimportant, insignificant or unnecessary.

2nd June

LET US BE SURE THAT WE ARE HUMANS FIRST

As a true human being, our life is a whole. All these imply what we call 'human'. It is a regeneration of the mind that implies 'humanity', and not merely walking with two legs. We may be able to talk and walk on two legs, but even then we need not be wholly human. Before studying yoga we have to learn first to be human beings. It is from humanity that we rise to divinity. Let us be sure that we are humans first, and then let us think of divinity. These ideas seem to perhaps be small matters, as I said in the beginning. "Oh, these are just nothing," we may say, but they should not be taken like that. There is nothing unimportant, as I told you. We ought to remember one great motto: "Anything that is connected with us in any manner whatsoever is not unimportant." Just imagine for a few minutes what are the things that are connected with our lives. They may be persons, things, conditions, situations, ideas, concepts or whatever they are. If they are connected with us in any manner whatsoever, they are important.

3rd June

EVERY FAILURE IS A KIND OF DEATH

Destruction of the physical body is not the only form of death. Every failure is a kind of death. Any kind of a fall—psychological, social or personal—is a kind of dying. We are dying every moment of our lives, and we are also reborn every moment of our lives. Creation,

preservation and destruction are taking place every moment. These are not cosmological events that took place millions of years ago. They are an eternal, perpetual and unceasing process that continues even now, individually and cosmically. The student of yoga is to be aware of all the subtle shades of difference in conducting oneself in life, to be cautious inwardly and outwardly, and to be wholly human, and then to aspire for the divine. At the present moment, this may be difficult to envisage and comprehend wholly. It is difficult to get teachers, but it is also difficult to get able disciples. Both of these are rare in this world, and the combination of these two rare ideals is surely the manifestation of God's grace. We offer a prayer to the Almighty to know what our right and whole-souled objective in life is.

4th June

MANY PARTS PUT TOGETHER DO NOT MAKE A HUMAN BEING

A human being is not merely the head, nor the limbs, nor even the totality of all the limbs. We are not merely a total of the physical parts; we are something more than these combinations. A human being is not merely a mathematical total, but a vital total. Likewise, not merely the last step that we take, but every step that we take is included in yoga. It is not the mathematical total of these steps that constitutes yoga, but something vital that is present in the combination of the parts. Many parts put together do not make a human being. The many stages of yoga put together do not make yoga, though they are all essential in the beginning. Therefore, I will try to answer the question "Where is the need for it?" The need, the purpose and the goal are the incentives behind every action. There needs to be a necessity to motivate an action. Yet in many experiences that we have in life, we feel that we are lacking something. Due to this lack, there is often a dissatisfaction in life. We are not satisfied with the daily eating of our meals; we feel that there is something more than merely sustaining ourselves with food.

5th June

THERE IS A KIND OF TENSION BETWEEN THE IDEAL AND THE REAL

When the higher begins to determine the lower in any stage of life, law comes into play. We have various kinds of laws: laws of health, laws of family, laws of society, laws of the nation and so on. The law is for determining the lower from the higher. The law is only a symbol of the higher principle which we regard as more real than the lower level. Social living should be determined by a higher level of existence, and this is why we have laws. If such a determination of the lower by the higher were not necessary, no laws would be necessary, and there would be no need for governments. Any plan, scheme, system, proposal or law is only a symbol of our aspiration to determine a lower existence by a higher ideal which has not yet been realised—but which is implanted in our minds. If the higher would already be realised, there would be no need of determining the lower by it. The ideal is there weakly before the

mind's eye but has not yet been materialised into the reality of experience. There is a kind of tension between the ideal and the real.

6th June

PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOLOGY

When I say there is a conflict between the ideal and the real, I mean that this conflict occurs in every type of life that one leads and in every stage of life in which one finds oneself. In our personal lives we have this conflict, in our social lives we have this very same conflict, in our political and national lives we have this conflict, and in international life we have this conflict between the ideal and the real—the real conflict between what ought to be and what really is. This is also the theme of a subject which comes from the West called 'psychoanalytic psychology'. We need not go into the details of its techniques as practised in the West, but I am just mentioning the basic principles implied in this science. If conflict is visible everywhere in life, and if this conflict must be resolved if man is to be happy, what is the way to resolve this conflict? This was a question with which analytic psychology concerned itself. The ideal conflicts with the real, and here we are confronted in life with the devil, as it were.

7th June

WHAT IS SOCIETY, IF NOT ALL OF US PUT TOGETHER?

Where can we run away in this world? Wherever we go, we will still be in human society. Society has its own peculiar notions of etiquette. These norms may be fair, or they may be unfair, but that is a different matter. These norms exist, and we cannot escape them. We find it difficult to adjust ourselves to these laws for a long time. The individual ideal rebels against the social etiquette and law. Society has its own strength, and it will keep us in line with its own force. The fight between the individual ideal and the social ideal leads to social tension, and in this case nobody can be truly happy. One may wonder what this peculiar society is after all, as it is itself made up of many individuals. What is society, if not all of us put together? Why could not the exercising of the individual ideal be made possible, inasmuch as society is only all of us put together? There is no society independent of individuals, but there is another peculiar trait of the human mind which is studied in the field of group psychology. Each one of us may individually agree to one thing, but when we are all put together we may not agree with it.

8th June

GIVE ME THE WILL TO CHANGE WHAT I CAN

We should attune ourselves with reality, and then we would be all right! Yet, instead we try to conform to society and the circumstances of the times. Whatever the society says is okay with us. As time marches, we also march with it. Striving with the same speed as society, there appears to be no tension. But it may be that one is unable to change sufficiently with society,

and in that case one would have to suffer. If we do not have the strength to change society, society will try to change us. We either change society with our power or adjust ourselves with it. If we cannot do either, then we must endure it. People who want to change circumstances, but cannot, are the sufferers in the world. They say that society should not be as it is, and that it must change. But who is going to change it? Not us—we cannot do it. Then we go on complaining and suffering. Here I am reminded of a famous saying of a philosopher: “Give me the will to change what I can, the courage to bear what I cannot, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Very interesting!

9th June

WE MUST UNDERSTAND LIFE AS IT IS

To understand life in its true perspective would be true philosophy. We must understand life as it is. We should not have a wrong idea about it. When we go to a place, we must understand where we are staying and what kind of people are around us. We should not go just like a fool, without knowing anything about the circumstances prevailing outside. “Where am I; what is this country; what kind of people are living around me, and what are the conditions in which I am going to be there?” All these are thoughts that might occur to our minds when we go to a new place. When we are in life, when we are living in this world, it must be our duty to understand what is the circumstance in which we find ourselves. “What is it that I am seeing in front of me; how am I related to these things, and what am I to do with these things? I have got to do something with them. I cannot just ignore them because they look at me, and they seem to be wanting something from me. How am I going to deal with these things that I call the world in front of me?”

10th June

YOGA IS NOT PRACTISED WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING

The wisdom of life, which is philosophy, is an understanding of life. Yoga therefore is a philosophy upon which is constructed the beautiful edifice of its psychology. Yoga is not practised without understanding. It is a practice with a tremendous understanding behind it. When this understanding becomes complete, one becomes a perfect human being attuned not merely to sociological reality but to reality in its completeness. It has many stages, and not merely the stage of sociological reality which psychoanalysts are concerned with. There is some deeper reality to which we have to attune ourselves systematically. When through all the levels of reality we attune ourselves and harmonise ourselves, we are one with nature, one with truth, and ultimately one with God. This is yoga. Yoga began to contemplate the mysteries behind the phenomenon of unhappiness persisting in spite of one’s having everything in life.

11th June

WE WANT TO MANUFACTURE SOME PEACE ARTIFICIALLY

We might have seen people carrying their radios with them wherever they go. Whether they are in the bathroom, or at the lunch table, or in the meditation room—it makes no difference, as the radio must also be there. They go to the store to purchase something, and the radio is still hanging there on their shoulders. They try to drown themselves in the sound of this instrument, because they have no peace within. We want to manufacture some peace artificially through some instruments that we have created, because the peace is not there inside. “If I have not got something, I will try to import it from outside. I will drown myself in a loud sound so that I may not hear any other sounds. I do not want to hear the sound of even my own mind, because it is very inconvenient.” This sort of person not only wants to hear the constant sound of the radio but may also seek to constantly be moving about from place to place. The tendency seems to be to never sit in any one place and to be a permanent tourist throughout life. In this case, one has no time to think problems, because to think of them is another problem. “Better not to think about them—let them die out”, the person imagines to himself.

12th June

CREATION IS NOT EXHAUSTED BY THIS SMALL EARTH

To try to increase the field of one’s influence is not a solution to one’s problems. We may seek the assistance of many people outside, but how many will we collect altogether? The whole world? Even then there are many things left out. Creation is not exhausted by this small Earth. Even if we roam around the whole solar system, creation is not encompassed. The intention of the mind is to reach the limit of its activity, and this limit is never reached by external movements. Despite any amount of external activity—though it may serve as a temporary substitute in order to forget the monotony of life—life nevertheless becomes a monotony to many people. They just cannot tolerate it, but they do not know what to do with this fact. They try to forget it in various ways, but though these may become temporal aids, they are not going to be solutions. The creditor is put off with pleas like, “Come tomorrow, sir, or after one month,” but he will eventually come. It may be after five years, but he is going to come.

13th June

A POLITICIAN IS ONE WHO CREATES A PROBLEM AND THEN TRIES TO SOLVE IT!

We are the same persons that we were some centuries back, and our present day’s troubles are the same as they were some centuries back. Two thousand years ago man was suffering from something, and now he is suffering from the same thing. Yes, we have learned to fly like a bird and swim like a fish, as we have learned many other things, but we have not yet learned to walk the path of being true to ourselves. Man needs to be the subject of his own study,

because man is the problem. Space and time are not the real problem. Why should we try to tackle space-time problems alone? Ultimately the world has not really been the problem—we have been the problem. I am reminded that a school teacher once asked a student, “Do you know, my dear child, what a politician is?” The student answered, “A politician is one who creates a problem and then tries to solve it!” Likewise, man seems to have created a peculiar problem, and now he finds this problem present before him. However, he finds it difficult to tackle the problem, because it is his own child. We cannot so easily deal with our own children.

14th June

OUR PROBLEMS ARE IN US, AND WE ARE THE PROBLEMS

There are some doctors who cannot treat themselves. Though they are physicians, they must go to other doctors. It looks very strange—why should they go to other doctors? But a psychological difficulty is there, and they cannot treat themselves. Man’s problem is man, and not so much the world itself. Our problem is ourselves; my problem is myself and not somebody else or something else—not the moon, not the sun, not the astronomical world, not society and not anybody else. Let us forget all these. Our problems are in us, and we are the problems. I began by saying that we are moving vehicles of problems; we are made up of these unanswered questions. This is the outermost layer of the ‘I’ of the human being, which is the personality of conflict. We do not eat peacefully, we do not speak peacefully and we do not sleep peacefully. When we eat our meals we are not at peace, because we are thinking of something else. When we go to bed, we don’t think of going to bed—we think rather of something else about yesterday or tomorrow.

15th June

LAYERS AND LAYERS OF SELF ARE COVERING THE TRUE SELF

Sometimes we belong to a community and we begin to associate ourselves with that. We talk about it again and again, and we cannot so easily extricate ourselves from the idea that we ourselves are a part of that community. “I am a Hindu, a Maharashtrian, I am this, I am that.” These are the communal selves, but then we have the family selves. We have got family names which are called ‘surnames’, and to each person a surname is attached. It is a family heritage. Then come the personal associations of “I am a judge, a teacher, a businessman, a professor”. These are also selves we have created, but they are false selves. Socially also we have created these false selves. As if the inner problems are not sufficient, we have created additional problems by adding all these from outside. Inwardly there are also many layers, and I shall touch upon these inner layers a little later on. Layers and layers of self are covering the true self. Like layers of clouds can make the sun dark, layers of the false self have made our true selves a mass of darkness, confusion and therefore unhappiness.

16th June

WHAT IS ABOVE THIS WORLD?

For psychologists, reality means the social world. For them, we must be in tune with the world outside. For them 'world' means mankind. The world of human beings is called the world as far as they are concerned, because we are not concerned with the astronomical world. If the world of human society has to be regarded as the reality, then the attunement of our minds with it should assure our happiness. But we saw in our earlier discussion that this is not the case. People who are well off in society are not always found to be happy. They have a secret problem which they cannot understand or much less explain. Yoga began to contemplate the mysteries behind the phenomenon of unhappiness persisting in spite of one's having everything in life. We may be the king of the whole world, yet it is still doubtful if we are going to be happy, and we will still have many problems. What is above this world? Why not conquer that? May be we have ambitions. Desires cannot be overcome even if we were the kings of this world. Death will come to us when it is time to leave this world.

17th June

ONE GOING ONE WAY, AND ANOTHER GOING THE OTHER WAY

What is the difference between 'looking at' and 'seeing through'? They are quite different things. The inner stuff of things has to be seen. We ought to see the object, the thing or the person as it is or as he is in itself. There is no use in merely gathering information. Glancing over something is not knowledge. Yoga psychology is based on a philosophy that commenced with the observation of the fact that there is a deeper conflict in nature than the mere psychological conflict in the mind of the human being. This psychological conflict seems to be based on another conflict which our psychologists do not know. Why should there be this conflict of the ideal with that real? It is due to another deeper conflict. Here we have entered the philosophy of yoga. There seems to be a conflict between the individual desire and the society's ideal, because these two seem to be irreconcilable with one going one way and another going the other way.

18th June

WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THIS HUGE COSMOS IS

There seems to be a fundamental conflict between man and nature. The conflict between man and society is small when compared to this conflict between man and nature. There is a larger conflict of the irreconcilability between man and nature, because we do not know what this huge cosmos is. Inasmuch as we have not been able to answer this question of the relationship between us and this cosmos, we have not been able also to answer this question of our relation with human society. What we call human society is only a small fraction of the vast universe. Just as a finger is a part of a person's larger body, this so-called society which is apparently troubling us so much is only a part—a very small part, insignificant perhaps—of

this vast and magnificent creation. It is creation that is posing a problem, not this small human society. The problem of society is a part of the problem of the world as a whole.

19th June

THE STRINGS OF LOVE AND HATRED

The strings of love and hatred which mean so much to us in our practical lives are primary obstacles in the practice of the sublimation of values. Love and hatred take certain peculiar shapes, and when they take a concrete form in the world outside, they may take the shape of pampering one thing and injuring another. Affection can get intensified and then harden into concrete forms. On one side there is pampering, on the other side there is the intention even to harm. Anything that is going to be a hindrance to our affection becomes an object of our hatred, and we take vengeance against it. By engaging these two strings of love and hatred, we end up cutting the ground from under our own feet. Such a person cannot live happily in society and becomes caught in suffering. There are various subtle as well as gross forms of the expression of this entanglement which are different for each person. These complications must be analysed in the context of the morality of yoga.

20th June

IS THERE A RELATION OF ONE LINK WITH ANOTHER LINK?

We have been just glibly talking about relation. In this sense, when I touch this desk, my finger is supposed to be in relation with this desk. The question then becomes, what does 'touch' mean? Is my finger really in relation with this desk? Is a link in a chain really touching another link? We may say, "Yes, it is touching," but what is this 'touch'? Does one link enter into touch with another link? Is there a relation of one link with another link? In a chain, does one link enter into another link, or does it lie outside another link? It does not enter—it remains outside. In a relation of this kind, which is perhaps the larger amount of relations in the world, the connected items lie outside each other. The child may be related to the mother, but it does not enter into the mother, or the mother does not enter into the child. They are outside each other and exclusive, even though the child may be so near the mother that she feels it as an inseparable part of herself. Yet, one is outside the other. This sort of exclusive relationship is the so-called relationship of most things in this world. That is why, though things seem to be related to one another, sometimes they depart from one another.

21st June

ALL THAT WE POSSESS MAY LEAVE US

We have a working knowledge of things, as people say. We don't have a real knowledge—just a working knowledge which goes with the life we lead. We have been getting one with things through various kinds of relationships. The *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*, the subject and the object, and man and nature have been in this sort of relationship—not really related, but only

apparently connected. We have not been able to know what to do with this world. Nature has always been lying outside us. It has never become ours. We have never been able to control or master nature fully, because it was always something different from us, and not ours. Ever since creation, this has been the situation, as we have never been able to possess a thing properly. If we could possess it really, why should it leave us after some time? Why should we lose a thing that is really ours? The reason is that it is not ours. We have been thinking that it was ours, but it asserts its real nature of not being ours when it leaves us. “I am not yours, my dear friend. Don’t think I am not going.” Things may leave us; it may be a person, it may be our own relationships, our own possessions—whatever it is—all that we possess may leave us.

22nd June

THERE IS AN UNINTELLIGIBLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE

We may be thinking that it is ours, but a time comes when those things assert their independence. “Oh, we are absolutely independent, just as you are. You think that we belong to you, as well as we may think that you belong to us. Why should I belong to you, sir? Why shouldn’t you belong to me?” Why do we say some objects are ‘mine’, some objects are ‘yours’? What makes us think like that? The others also may think that we belong to them. Instead of other things belonging to us, we may belong to something else. There is a relativity of belonging and relationship. Sometimes we are told that this is the world of relativity, one thing hanging on another and nothing absolutely independent by itself. We hang on something else, that thing hangs on us. This is a simple, crude explanation of the relativity of things, which will be more fully explained in the next lesson. There is an unintelligible relationship between man and nature.

23rd June

IT IS NATURE THAT SPEAKS THROUGH US

We should not approach nature like a businessman approaching his account books. Nature has to be approached as nature would expect us to approach it. If a person is to approach us, how would we expect him to approach? If some person comes to us seeking work, how do we expect him to come? He should come in a sympathetic manner, in an understanding manner, in an amiable manner, and in a manner which is agreeable to our expectations. This is how we would expect a person to approach us, and not in a way that is contrary to our essential nature. If he approaches us wrongly, then we are repelled by him, and we cannot bear his presence. If this is the human attitude, then this is nothing but nature’s attitude as well. It is nature that speaks through us. When we expect others to correspond to our nature, it is the natural disposition of creation which speaks through our personalities. Nature will not tolerate a person who tries to conquer her.

24th June

WE TRY TO SUBJUGATE NATURE

We try to utilise, conquer, overcome and subjugate nature. This is a very untactful method which we have adopted! Nature puts us off the moment we approach it in a conquering spirit or in a suspicious attitude. Nobody wishes to be approached with suspicion. Our approach should be sympathetic, if it is going to be successful. I will now try to take us step by step to show how nature has been approached by our scientists up until this time. For the astronomer, nature appeared to be constituted of diversified objects, and he took things as they appeared. Each star and each planet was separate, and there were no connections between one and the other. The original approach of astronomy was one of an attitude of the diversity of things. The *adhibhuta* or the external world was approached as it appears to the physical senses. This approach brought a knowledge which saw the universe as merely a physical object, but the ultimate questions remained unanswered. As a consequence, the world remained distant and only empirically knowable.

25th June

GRAVITATIONAL PULL EXPLAINED EVERYWHERE

Man advanced in his knowledge of nature step by step till he reached the present circumstance of this twentieth century. Nature was an astronomical diversity constituted of planets, stars, the Earth and so on, and there was apparently no relation between them. We seemed to be suspended in space in a very mysterious manner unknown to the human mind. Advancing knowledge revealed by various methods that the stars and the planets are not hanging or suspended as they appeared to be, but were relatively attracting each other by a force called gravitation. This relativity of gravitational pull keeps them in the position in which they are, and this was a later discovery of many scientists of both the East and West. Gravitational pull explained everything. The foremost among those scientists of the West was Newton, and in India we had the astronomers Bhaskara and Varahamihira.

26th June

THERE WAS AN IMAGE OF LORD KRISHNA SUSPENDED IN SPACE

Just for your information, it is said that in southern India near Vijayanagar, a great ancient capital of a Hindu kingdom of the past, that there was an image of Lord Krishna suspended in space. How could this be? Many engineers came and stood looking at the image as it stood in space without dropping to the earth—with no wires or connecting links from any side. British archaeologists who were interested in the phenomenon later on discovered that there were four pillars on the ground which were made up of magnets. The four magnetic pillars were pulling this iron image on the top with an equally distributed power in different directions in such a way that the image could not drop. They wanted to improve this and removed one pillar. An electromagnet was put in the pillar, but afterwards it did not succeed.

They could not get the image suspended again, and the effect has been lost for ever. Those ancient people were apparently wiser and surer than the present day scientists! The pull of a magnet is a familiar phenomenon comparable to the universal magnetic pull of the stellar and planetary regions.

27th June

THE WONDER YET REMAINS

How many stars and how many planets are in the heavens? We cannot count them, and how is it that they are all so systematically and mathematically arranged with relative pull upon one another? The wonder remains as to how all this system could have been conceived, if at all there were a mind which could have originally set these bodies in such a harmonious relationship with one another. If there is anyone who could have done this, there could then be no greater wonder than the mind of that person. Well, to come to the point, it was discovered that the heavenly bodies are not scattered as children might imagine. There is an unknown power connecting these bodies, and this power is the explanation for the movements of the stars in the universe. But our explanation is not complete here. The wonder yet remains. What is this gravitational pull, and what have we to do with it? How are we to explain the universe for our purposes, and how are we going to understand nature? Unless there is a thorough understanding, there will be no satisfaction.

28th June

THE MANY THINGS ARE MADE UP ONLY OF A FEW THINGS

Knowledge is bliss. The greater the knowledge, the greater also will be the happiness. If there is inadequate understanding, then there will be a dissatisfaction lurking within. "Something is not all right. I don't understand this." This is the sorrow of the scientist and the philosopher. As knowledge advanced, it was discovered that the gravitational pull was not the full explanation. The necessity arose to find out what these bodies were made of that were attracting one another. What is the sun? What is the moon? What are the stars? Of what are they constituted? The actual substance of the cosmos became the subject of study. While the superficial vision sees many colours, many sounds and many things in the universe, the analytic mind of some ancient scientists discovered that the many things are made up only of a few things. The multitude in the variety of creation is explicable in terms of a few fundamental elements of which everything is made.

29th June

WHAT IS EARTH MADE OF?

The ancient Indian scientists felt that everything was made up of five things: the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the air element and the ether (space) element. The ether element was an especially enigmatic thing for these scientists. Everything is made up of these five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. All the wonder of creation is included in the wonder of these five elements. The vast astronomical universe is made up of these five elements alone. But what these five elements are—that is another question. One needs to go deeper and deeper: what is earth made of? ‘Earth’ is only a name that we give to something which appears hard to the touch, but the mere name does not satisfy us. We may use the word ‘earth’, but what is earth? What is water? What is fire? What are these five elements? Why not go deeper and discover what these five elements are made of? In Sanskrit, these elements are called the *mahabhutas*.

30th June

THOUGH WE USE ELECTRICITY, WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS MADE OF

Maha means ‘great’, and *bhutas* means ‘existing elements’. What are these made of? They became the object of further scientific analysis. We know as educated people what these discoveries have been. Physicists of later times analysed the elements of earth, water, fire and air, although they could not analyse ether because they did not know what ether was. It appeared to be a vacuum, and how could one analyse a vacuum? Hence, the vacuum was left out of the analysis. The analysis was only of the four elements of earth, water, fire and air. They went on dissecting these into bits and parts and minor particles visible only to a powerful microscope. It was proclaimed as a great discovery that these physical attributes were made up of elements. They said that there are about ninety-two or so elements. This was a great advancement by the scientists, and they were all very happy. “Now we have discovered nature!” We know that a chemical substance differs from another in constitution and function. Though we use electricity, we do not know what it is made of.

JULY

from The Spiritual Import of the Mahabharata and the Bhagavadgita

1st July

CHILDREN ARE LIKE AN ORB

The search for truth by seekers on the spiritual path is a veritable epic, which is the subject of the poetic vision in the Mahabharata. The whole universe is portrayed by the masterly pen of Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa. Everything looks like milk and honey in this world when we are babies, children—we are all friends. Children belonging even to inimical groups in the neighbourhood do not realise that they belong to such factions of society. Even if the parents know the difference, the children do not. The children of one family may play with the children of another family, while the two families may be bitter opponents. The babies may not know this. Likewise is the condition of the soul in its incipient, immature, credulous waking. The spiritual bankruptcy and the material comforts combined together makes one feel that there is the glorious light of the sun shining everywhere during the day and the full moonlight at night, and there is nothing wanting in this world. The emotions and the periods of understanding and revolutions are all in the form of an orb, where there may be a little bit of gold, a little bit of iron—the one cannot be distinguished from the other. Children, in their psychological make-up, are like an orb—their components are not easily distinguishable.

2nd July

THERE IS PRACTICALLY A RISING OF THE EGO IN THE CHILD

The embittered feelings manifest themselves into concrete forms when the child grows into an adult, and there is psychological tension. Slowly, as age advances, we become more and more unhappy in life. The jubilation and buoyancy of spirit that we had when we were small children playing in the neighbourhood or playground—that joy slowly diminishes. We become contemplatives with sunken eyes and a glaring look, and a concentrated mind into the nature of our future. We begin to exert in a particular direction, while exertion was not known when we were small babies—we were spontaneous. Spontaneity of expression gives place to particularised exertion when age advances. We become more and more marked in our individual consciousness, whereas it is diminished in the baby. There is practically a rising of the ego in the child. It sprouts up into a hardened form when age advances into youth, and even earlier. These two principles are present in the individual; they are present in human society; they are present in the cosmos. The Puranas, particularly, embark upon an expatiation of the war that takes place between the Devas and Asuras, in a cosmic sense.

3rd July

THE PURANAS ARE RIGHT, THE PSYCHOLOGISTS ALSO ARE RIGHT

Often people say the Devas and the Asuras described in the Puranas are allegories of psychological functions in individuals. These are all artificial, modernised interpretations, under the impression that reality is confined to one section of life alone. We cannot say that there is no cosmic counterpart of the individual psyche. The Puranas are right; the psychologists also are right. It is true that there is a Ganga flowing in us in the form of the *sushumna nadi*, and there are the Yamuna and the Saraswati in the form of the *ida* and *pingala*. There is no gainsaying; it is perfectly true. But there is also an outward Ganga; we cannot deny it. The world outside and the world inside are two faces of the single composite structure of reality. So the battle between the Devas and the Asuras takes place in every realm and every phase of life. It takes place in the heavens, it takes place in the cosmos, it takes place in society, and it takes place within ourselves. The Mahabharata is not merely a depiction of a human series of events that happened some centuries back—though it is also that.

4th July

WE HAVE SOMETHING INSIDE US AND SOMETHING OUTSIDE US

The Pandavas and the Kauravas are especially interesting today in pinpointing the subject of the conflict of the spiritual seeker. The Pandavas and the Kauravas are inside us, yes, as well as outside. The *sadhaka* begins to feel the presence of these twofold forces as he slowly begins to grow in the outlook of his life. There is a feeling of division of personality, as mostly psychologists call it, split personality. We have something inside us and something outside us. We cannot reconcile between these two aspects of our outlook. There is an impulse from within us which contradicts the regulations of life and the rules of society in the atmosphere in which we live, but there is a great significance far deeper in this interesting phenomenon. The opposition is between the individual and reality, as psychoanalysts usually call it. Psychoanalysis has a doctrine which always makes out that psychic tension or psychotic conditions of any kind are due to a conflict between the individual structure of the psyche and the reality outside.

5th July

LIFE IS A MYSTERY, AND IT IS NOT MATHEMATICS

In Uttarkashi you cannot get your stomach filled. You have to come back to Rishikesh with a hungry stomach. You say, “Thank God, goodbye to Uttarkashi.” You come back. People have tried; they cannot live there, because human nature is a very complex structure. You cannot simply tabulate it into pigeon holes. It is an ununderstandable, impossible organism, and cannot be easily handled. You cannot stay either in Uttarkashi or in Hollywood. Either place would be a failure due to the miraculous dissidence that is within us, as miraculous as we ourselves are, because it has an element of the mystery of the cosmos. And so one cannot

teach it in a mathematical or scientific manner, or purely in the light of logic. It is a mystery. Life is a mystery, and it is not mathematics. It is not an equation. We cannot say that this plus that is equal to that—that is not possible in spiritual sadhana. It is a very difficult task. It is an art rather than a science, we may say. Well, coming to the point, this difficulty that the spiritual seeker faces, as he advances on the path, is similar to the difficulties of the Pandavas.

6th July

THE WAR BETWEEN THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT

The external forces, the objective forces, are the Kauravas. The forces that are subjective may be likened to the Pandavas. So the Mahabharata is a war between the subject and the object. Now, what this object is, is also very difficult to explain. It may be a pencil; it may be a wristwatch; it may be one single item in this world that we may call an object. It may be one human being who may be in the position of an object. It may be a whole family, it may be an entire community, and it may be the whole human setup, the entire mankind or the whole physical universe—it is an object in front of us. The irreconcilability between the subjective attitude of consciousness with its objective structure is the preparation for the Mahabharata battle. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to give a very homely example. Fire can burn *ghee*, as everyone knows. If we pour *ghee* over fire, the *ghee* will be no more. It is simply burned to nothing; it simply becomes vaporised. Yes, it is true, fire has the power to burn *ghee* and destroy it completely. But, says Sri Ramakrishna, if we pour one quintal of *ghee* over one spark of fire, what will happen to that fire? Though it is true, in principle, that fire can burn *ghee*, that one spark of the fire will be extinguished by the quintal of *ghee* that we poured.

7th July

TRUTH TRIUMPHS NOT ALWAYS

The seekers are not safe even at the gate of heaven, as John Bunyan put it in his *Pilgrim's Progress*. There is a possibility of there being a hole leading to hell even at the entrance to heaven. A big gate leads straight to heaven and we are just there, standing. But there is a pit, like a manhole, and we fall in. And where do we go? Into Yama's abode. Well, it is strange that there is a hole there, just at the entrance to heaven. This is possible, says John Bunyan, and says everyone. The idea is that the boat can sink even near the other shore—not necessarily in the middle. The point is that we have to be very cautious about the powers of the world. The world is not a petty cat or a mouse in front of us, and we should not be under the impression that we are great yogis who can simply tie the whole world with our fingers. It is not so. We are not Krishnas, blessing Arjuna with one hand. We are babies, spiritually. And the baby Pandavas were not an equal match to the terror of the Kauravas, who had the tactics of the time, who could counterblast the little aspirations of the spirit which were about

to blossom in the hearts of the Pandavas. Goodness does not always succeed in the earlier stages. Truth triumphs not always.

8th July

OM IS THE COSMIC VIBRATION

Om is more a vibration than a sound. There is a difference between sound and vibration, just as energy is not the same as sound, because while energy can manifest itself as sound, it can also manifest itself as something else, such as colour, taste, smell, etc. Just as electric energy can manifest itself as locomotion, as heat, as light, etc., the various configurations in the form of bodies or things in this world are expressions locally of this universal vibration which is the cosmic impulse to create, the creativity or the will of God that is identified with a cosmic energy. Om is the symbol of this cosmic force. From a single point it expands itself into the dimension of this universe in space and time, and from being merely an impersonal, unthinkable, supernatural power, energy or vibration, it becomes visible, tangible, sensible, thinkable and reasonable when it manifests itself as this gross universe and our own bodies. So the chant of Om is not merely a word, but also an effort of the mind in the dissolution of the personality in the causes thereof.

9th July

NO ONE ESCAPES THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE

The power of sadhana does not gain adequate confidence until divine powers collaborate with it, and God Himself seems to be at the back of the seeker of God. We have been noting a great epic symbol in the Mahabharata, wherein we are given the narration of the adventure of the spirit in its struggle for ultimate freedom. The wilderness of the forest life that the Pandavas had to undergo is a great lesson to the spiritual seeker. No one can escape the ups and downs of life, the vicissitudes of time through which the ancient sages and saints have passed; everyone seems to have the duty to tread the same path. We have to walk the same path, and the path is laid before us with all its intricacies, with all its problems and difficulties, as well as its own facilities. We seem to be lost to ourselves and lost to the whole world, with no ray of hope before us, at least to our waking consciousness. When the Pandavas were in the forest, they did not know what would happen in the future. It was just oblivion and gloom which hung heavy like dark clouds upon them. The strength of the Pandavas was not equal to the task.

10th July

GOD HELPS US IN HIS OWN WAY

God helps us, it is true, but He helps us in His own way—not in the way we would expect Him to work. There is a logic of His own, which is not always expressed in terms of human

logic. Sri Krishna was there, alive, even when the Pandavas were tortured, almost, in the forest, but we do not hear much about his movements during this period of twelve years. There was, however, a mention of his casual visit to the Pandavas, where he expresses in a few words his wrath, his intense anger against what had happened. “Well, I am sorry that I was not present. I would not have allowed this to have happened if I had been present.” That was all he could say, and that was all he did say. Well, his associates were more stirred up in their feelings than could be discovered from the words of Krishna Himself. They spoke in loud terms and swore, as it were, to take active steps in the direction of the redress of the sorrows of the Pandavas at once, without even consulting Yudhishtira. But Krishna intervened and said, “No. A gift that is given is not as palatable as one’s own earning. The Pandavas will not accept gifts given by us—they would like to take it by themselves. We may help them, but this is not the time.” Many a time we feel as if we have been lost and have been forsaken totally.

11th July

THE MIND IS ADDICTED TO SENSE-EXPERIENCE

This spirit that is implanted in us suffers for union with the spirit outside, the Absolute. There is its critical moment. It is as if we were going to embrace the ocean. This experience has been compared in many ways to merging into fire, tying a wild elephant with silken threads, swallowing fire, etc. The problem arises on account of the peculiar nature of the mind. The mind is addicted to sense experience. It is accustomed to the enjoyment of objects, and it is now attempting to rise above all contacts and reach the state of that yoga which great masters have called *asparsha* yoga—the yoga of non-contact. It is not a union of something with something else; that would be another contact. It is a contact of no contact. It is difficult to encounter because of a sorrow of the spirit, deeper than the sorrow of the feelings, which even a saintly genius has to experience. The deeper we go, the greater is our sorrow, because the subtle layers of our personality are more sensitive to experience than our outer, grosser vestures. We know very well that the suffering of the mind is more agonising than the suffering of the body. We may bear a little sorrow of the body, but we cannot bear sorrow of the mind—that is more intolerable.

12th July

HOW COULD THERE BE SORROW FOR THE SPIRIT?

There is such a thing called the sorrow of the spirit, though it may look like an anomaly. How could there be sorrow for the spirit? Yes, there is some kind of situation in which our deeper self finds itself in its search for the Absolute. These are all interesting stages that are in mystical theology and the yoga of the advent of the spirit. Some of the songs and poems of the Vaishnava saints of the south, the Alvars, particularly the Nawars, and some of the rapturous expressions of the leading Shaivite saints, will be enough examples to us of the inexpressible and intricate spiritual processes through which the seeker has to pass. We are

accustomed merely to a little *japa*, a little study of the Gita that we chant and repeat by rote every day like a machine, and we feel that our work is over, that we have done our *sadhana*. The deeper spirit has to be touched, and it has to be dug out like an imbedded illness. When it is pulled out there is a reaction, and the reaction is a spiritual experience by itself, through which Arjuna had to pass. A little of it is given to us in the first chapter and the earlier portions of the second chapter of the Bhagavadgita.

13th July

WE ARE MORTALS AND IMMORTALS AT THE SAME TIME

The *jiva* principle within us has the double characteristic of mortality and immortality. We are mortals and immortals at the same time. It is the mortal element in us that causes sorrow when it comes in contact with the immortal urge that seeks its own expression in its own manner. There is a tremendous friction, as it were, taking place between the subjective feelings and the objective cosmos. No one can know the strength of the universe. The mind cannot imagine it, and we are trying to overstep it. We can stretch our imagination and try to bring to our memories what could be the magnitude of this task. We as individuals, as we appear to be, are girding up our loins to face the powers of the whole universe—a single Arujna facing the entire Kaurava forces, as it were. Yes, Arjuna had the strength, and also he had no strength. If Arjuna stood alone, he could be blown off in one day by a man like Bhishma. Well, Duryodhana pleaded every day before Bhishma and cried aloud, “Grandsire, you are alive, and even when you are alive, thousands and thousands of our kith and kin are being massacred. How can you see it with your eyes?”

14th July

THERE SEEMS TO BE A RAY OF LIGHT ON THE HORIZON

Before the Universal takes possession of us, it burnishes us and cleanses us completely. This process of cleansing is the mystical death of the individual spirit. There it does not know what happens to it. That is the wilderness; that is the dark night of the soul; that is the suffering, and that is where we do not know whether we will attain anything or not. We weep silently, but nobody is going to listen to our wails. But the day dawns, the sun shines and there seems to be a ray of light on the horizon. That is towards the end of the Virata Parva of the Mahabharata. After untold suffering for years, which the human mind cannot usually stomach, a peculiar upsurge of fortune miraculously seems to operate in favour of the suffering spirit, and unasked help comes from all sides. In the earlier stages, it appeared that nothing would come even if we asked. We had to cry alone in the forest, and nobody would listen to our cry. Now the tables have turned and help seems to be pouring in from all directions, unrequested.

15th July

IT IS NOT EASY FOR US TO LOVE GOD WHOLLY

The decision is taken by God Himself—man cannot take the decision. And Sri Krishna took up the lead in this path of what decision is to be taken finally. Is the universe as an object to be retained, even in a subtle form, or is it to be abolished altogether? Is it to be absorbed totally? And do we have to see to the deathbed of the entire objective existence, or is it necessary to strike a lesser note and come to an agreement with factors which are far below this level of extreme expectation? Yudhishtira was wavering, and could not come to a conclusion; and we too are wavering. It is not easy for us to love God wholly, because that would mean the acceptance of the necessity to dissolve the whole world itself in the existence of God, and one would not easily be prepared for this ordeal. “It is true that Krishna is my saviour and my friend, philosopher and guide, but Duryodhana is my brother-in-law and my cousin—how can I deal a blow to him? Bhishma is my grandsire and Drona is my Guru. My own blood flows through the veins of these that seem to be harnessed against me in the arena of battle.” So there is a double game that the spirit plays.

16th July

EVERYONE LOVES A SIMPLE INNOCENT CHILD

In the journey of spiritual practice, there are many halting places on the way. It is not a direct flight without any stop in between. At the very inception of this endeavour known as spiritual sadhana, there is an upheaval of the powers of aspiration, an innocent longing for God and a confidence that one would reach God—perhaps the same kind of confidence that a child has in catching the moon. The innocence and the credulity do not permit the acceptance of the difficulties involved in this pursuit. There is simplicity, sincerity and honesty coupled with ignorance, and this is practically the circumstance of every spiritual seeker. There is a humble innocence, very praiseworthy, but it is also attended with ignorance of the problems on the path and the difficulties of attaining God. The innocence of childhood is simplicity incarnate. Everyone loves a simple, innocent child, and everyone is happy about a simple, innocent seeker of truth. The Pandavas—we are studying certain implications of the Mahabharata—were innocent children playing with their own cousins, the Kauravas, and they would never have dreamt, even with the farthest stretch of their imaginations, of the forthcoming catastrophes in the life to come.

17th July

WHAT I LIKE NEED NOT BE YOUR LIKING

In the process of evolution there is a transfiguration of the structure of individuality. The individuality transforms itself in the process of evolution, and simultaneously with this transformation, the notions, the ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, pleasure and pain also change. What is pleasant today need not be pleasant even to me, myself, tomorrow on

account of the change of my attitude to things, due to a shift of emphasis in the process of evolution. This is commonplace and does not require much commentary. Hence, we should not be under the erroneous notion that a jubilant feeling within us is a sign of spiritual vision, since our jubilation is somehow or other connected with the nature of our own personality. The likes and dislikes of the mind of an individual are reactions set up by the structure of the mind of that individual. The structure of the mind is responsible for the particular type of satisfaction that it feels, and the particular type of dissatisfaction also, which follows automatically from this structure. So what I like need not be your liking, it follows, because of the simple fact that minds are not made in the same manner.

18th July

A DEPENDENT SUCCESS CANNOT CALLED A SUCCESS

The life of a saint is a mystic Mahabharata itself. Every sage or saint has passed through all the stages of the Mahabharata conflict. No one lived as a great saint without passing through untold hardships, and no one ever left this world with the feeling that it is all milk and honey flowing. The truth of the world becomes evident to the eyes that are about to close to this world; the untutored mind takes it for what it is not. Hence, the glory of the royal coronation and success ended in untold grief, because of a negative aspect that was hidden in the joy of the coronation. There was something lacking. It was a glory that was bestowed upon Yudhishtira by the power of people, like the ascent of a person to the throne of a ministry by the raising of hands of the vast public. But the hands can drop down tomorrow; they need not always be standing erect. There is always an unpredictable uncertainty about mob psychology, and therefore a dependent success cannot be called a success. If I have become great due to your goodness, that would not be real greatness, because your goodness can be withdrawn. If the greatness is at the mercy of another's opinion or power, it falls.

19th July

INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH IS NO STRENGTH

People cannot help us, because people are like us. Everyone is made of the same character, a chip off the same block, as they say, and so the help that we receive from people of our own type will be as fallible and unreliable as the passing clouds in the sky. The realities of life started to stare glaringly at the faces of the Pandavas, and they began to realise that there is a gap between the hopes of the mind and the joys that it had experienced earlier. It is not always the playful innocent joy of a child that will pursue us throughout our life. The pains of life are hidden like knives under the armpits of thieves, and they are unleashed at the opportune moment. Every dog has his day, as they say; everything has its own time. Individual strength is no strength; our efforts cannot be regarded as ultimately adequate to the task. We have observed that the world is too vast for us. It is mighty enough—it is all-mighty, we may say. Who can touch the stars, the sun and the moon with the fingers of one's

hand? The strength is inexorable; the law is very precise and unrelenting upon people, like the law of gravitation which has no pity for any person.

20th July

THE WORLD IS THE FACE OF GOD

In the Ramayana, Tulsidas gives a beautiful description of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana walking, with Sita in the middle, and gives the image by saying that Sita was there as *maya* between *brahma* and *jiva*. Likewise, there is this world before us, which we are likely to unintelligently ignore in our enthusiastic aspiration for God. The world is the face of God; it is the fingers of the hands of God Himself moving, and the so-called appearance of the world is rooted in the reality of the Absolute. There is a very unfortunate aftermath of this interesting analysis, namely, we ourselves are a part of this appearance; and to put on the unwarranted status of the reality in ourselves, while we are looked at as appearance, would be to disregard the law that operates in the realm in which we are placed. Appearance is, after all, an appearance of reality—it is not an appearance of nothing. If it had been nothing, the appearance itself would not be there. Inasmuch as the appearance is of reality, it borrows the sense of reality. The snake is in the rope, yes, but we must know that the rope is not absent. Though the way in which the rope is seen may be an erroneous perception, the fact of the rope being there cannot be ignored—that is the reason why the snake is seen at all.

21st July

THE PERSON WHO RENOUNCES THE WORLD IS A PART OF THE WORLD

Religions often have made the mistake of a transcendent ascent of the religious spirit, overcoming the laws of the world, facing God in the high heavens and preaching a renunciation of the things of the world to the extreme point, the breaking point we may say, until it would be not tolerated by the laws of the world. The person who renounces the world is a part of the world—we forget that, and there lies the mistake. The suffering of the seeker is due to a mistaken notion of himself in relation to the world outside. He has not yet become a part of God, though he is aspiring to be such, and the hands of God work through the forms of the world—that cannot be forgotten. Just as the power of the president or the prime minister may work through a small official, and we cannot ignore this official merely by saying that we are not concerned with him in any manner inasmuch as we are somehow or other placed in an atmosphere over which he has jurisdiction, the world has jurisdiction over our individuality. The world is made up of several grades of density, to which we have already made reference. There are the various *lokas*—Bhuloka, Bhuvarka, Suvarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka And Satyaloka. The ascent of the spirit is through the ascent of these various densities of manifestation, the *lokas*; and we are in the physical realm, not in other realms.

22nd July

CONFORMITY TO REALITY IS DHARMA

Conformity to reality is dharma, and anything opposed to it is *adharma*. The principle of reality is what determines the nature of dharma or virtue, goodness or righteousness, or rectitude in action, conduct, behaviour, thought and feeling. So a person who does not have a correct idea of what reality is cannot be really virtuous or righteous. Our social forms of goodness and virtue, rectitude and legality are relative to the conditions in which we are placed, and inasmuch as they have no reference to the ultimate reality of things, we have to go on changing our colours like chameleons from day to day. But there can be harmony between the relative forms of dharma and the ultimate form of it. Our daily conduct may vary according to the needs of the hour. Seasons, social circumstances, the state of one's health and various other requirements of the time may demand a relative expression of conformity, all which has to be in harmony, finally, with a principle motive which cannot change.

23rd July

OUR ESSENTIAL NATURE IS NOT GRIEF

The turmoil in the mind of Arjuna, described in the first chapter of the Bhagavadgita, is attributed by Bhagavan Sri Krishna to an absence of correct understanding. Every sorrow which sinks the heart is regarded, in the light of higher thinking, as a consequence of inadequate knowledge. Man is not born to suffer; it is joy that is his birthright. It is hammered into our minds again and again that our essential nature is not grief, and therefore to manifest grief cannot be the manifestation of our essential nature. Sorrow is not our birthright; it does not belong to our true substance. What we are really made of is not capable of being affected by sorrow of any kind. There is a deep quintessence in the heart of every person which defies contamination by sorrow of every type. Hence, the great point made out by Bhagavan Sri Krishna is that the sorrow of Arjuna is unbecoming of the knowledge that would be expected of a person of his kind. What is this knowledge that we are lacking, whose absence is the source of our sorrows? Whatever be the nature of sorrow, it is just sorrow—a kind of agony that the individual feels.

24th July

THE ABSOLUTE IS ALL-PERVADING

The Absolute Almighty pervades every nook and corner of the universe. Every nook and cranny is permeated by the presence of the Supreme Being. The consciousness of the presence of the Almighty inseparably in every little thing in the whole of creation is the ultimate constitutional dharma. It is the central constitution of the cosmos, and all local and provincial laws follow from it. Political laws, social laws, family laws, personal laws, physical laws, psychological laws, and what not—all these are expressions according to the

requirement of the particular state of affairs of that eternal deciding factor which is the presence of one common Being everywhere, equally, unanimously, perpetually in everything. The presence of God is defined here as an invisible presence, an unmanifested existence—*avyakta-murtina*. It is not a gross, visible, sensory presence.

25th July

THE SUPREME BEING IS ALL-PERVADING

Inasmuch as the Supreme Being is above every dualistic concept, inasmuch as He is present unanimously and uniformly everywhere, He has to be impervious to the ken of the senses. The senses are outer expressions in space and time in terms of objects which are hard and concrete, and therefore, to the senses, the Creator of the cosmos is invisible. It is not that He is invisible under every condition; under the conditions in which we are living today God is invisible, just as high voltage and high frequency light waves may be invisible to the condition under which our eyes operate at present. So, the imperceptibility of God's Being is not a negation of the possibility of experience of God's Being. It is a description of the inadequacy of sense power in respect of God experience.

26th July

ONLY THE COSMIC MIND CAN KNOW ALL THINGS CORRECTLY

It is difficult therefore to know anything unless we know everything. To know anything completely would mean to know everything completely. Only the cosmic mind can know all things correctly, and its judgment alone can be called correct. "So Arjuna, your statements are based on your notion that you are a human being belonging to a class and category, an individual among many others, separate entirely from the objective world—which is not true." Hence, a transvaluation of values becomes necessary. The individual has to rise up to the occasion, and the occasion is the recognition of the involvement of the very judge himself in the circumstance of judgment. Well, if this is the truth, what is the duty of the individual under this condition? One cannot act, one cannot move, one cannot even think perhaps, if it is to be accepted that the thinker is inseparable from that which is thought. The answer of Sri Krishna is, "It is not like that. This again is an individual's judgment, that in that condition no action is possible." We are imagining that in a cosmic state of things one would be inert, and no activity of any kind would be possible.

27th July

KARMA YOGA OF THE GITA IS DIVINE ACTION

There is a transcendental type of activity which the human mind in its present state cannot understand, and that is the significance behind the great gospel of the karma yoga of the Gita. Karma yoga can be said to be a transcendental action. It is not my action or your action; it is not activity in a commercial sense. It is an activity which is commensurate with the law of the

cosmos. It is, again, an activity which is based on *samkhya buddhi*—we have not to forget this point. The enlightenment of the *samkhya*, to which we made reference earlier, is the basis of this action called ‘yoga’ in the Bhagavadgita. The karma yoga of the Gita is therefore divine action, in one sense. It is not human action, because the human sense of values gets overcome, transcended in the visualisation of the involvement of the seer in the seen universe. Every thought becomes a kind of universal interpretation of things, and every action becomes a universal action. That action is divine action, and universal action is God acting—the two are not separate—and this action cannot produce reaction. Therefore there is no bondage in performing this kind of action.

28th July

YOU HAVE TO RESORT TO A HIGHER POWER

The senses are controlled and directed by the mind, and the mind works according to the understanding of the intellect. The one is higher than the other. Higher than the senses is the mind, and higher than the mind is the intellect. So by the power of the mind, the senses can be restrained. But how can the mind have the power to control the senses, when the intellect passes judgment that such-and-such thing is the proper thing? So the intellect has to be approached, and it has to put a check upon the mind itself; and, sympathetically, the mind puts a check on the senses. But the problem arises—how will the intellect permit this process? It is the intellect that creates this mistake, and yet it is said that the intellect itself should restrain the mind, and the mind has to control the senses. The intellect sees a division between itself and the world outside. It is the creator of logic of every kind, and therefore it sees a gulf between itself and things outside. How will it permit the control of the senses by the mind? Therefore, the great Teacher of the Gita says: “You have to resort to a higher power.”

29th July

THE WHOLENESS OF REALITY IS BEYOND THE MIND

The scientific adventures and rational philosophies of humanity are incompetent to fathom the depths and the mysteries of the cosmos, because the wholeness of reality is not capable of being contained in the finitude of human understanding, or in anything finite, for the matter of that. There is nothing in this world that is capable of being an instrument in the knowledge of God. Hence, the world is called a relative world. There is nothing absolute here, because the Absolute is only One, while the relative parts can be many. While the entire relative world is contained in God and the relative is in the Absolute, the Absolute is not in the relative, because there is a distracted differentiation of particulars in the world of relativity; and in this distractedness of finitude, the Infinite cannot be wholly present.

30th July

A HUMAN BEING ALWAYS STANDS OUTSIDE THE WORLD

Bhagavan Sri Krishna was there as a super-personal individual, the one who could think in a different way altogether, far different from the way in which all human beings can think. He was a total Man, 'M' capital, the true 'son of Man', in biblical words, who could think as all human beings and yet go beyond the ken of human knowledge. The structure of the world is not the object of ordinary human perception. This is the theme of the third chapter of the Gita. The world is made in such a way that it cannot be comprehended by the apparatus of human understanding, and therefore to pass judgment on the consequences that follow from the actions of man in the field of this world would be to go off on a tangent and would not serve the purpose. It would not touch even the border of reality. The nature of the world conditions the effects of human action, as it conditions the effects of any action, for that matter. Every event is inwardly connected to the organic structure of the cosmos; and this structure of the cosmos being the determinant of the rightness or the wrongness of any procedure, a human being who always stands outside the world, regarding the world as an object of the senses, would be a bad judge of the circumstances of life.

31st July

GOD NEVER WITHDRAWS HIS GRACE

God manifests Himself at all times, and this manifestation is a perpetual process. Divine grace is like the flood of a river or the flow of the oceanic waves that never cease. God never withdraws His grace; He is an unconditional Giver. There is a perpetual flow of charity from the benign hands of the Almighty, and His charity is not merely material. He is not giving something out of Himself—He is giving Himself. The charity that comes from God is not a charity of objects, as is the case with the charity of people—it is a sacrifice of Himself that He makes. A self-abandonment is performed by the great Almighty in the incarnation that He takes, in the blessings that He gives, and in the grace that He bestows. So there is a great solace for all of us in the midst of the turmoil of life, in the sorrows of our days and the grief through which we are passing every moment of time. *Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata, abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srjmyaham. Paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya ca duskrtam, dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge* (Gita 4.7-8) is an eternal gospel. This one gospel is enough to keep us rejoicing day and night, completely forgetful of all the apparent sorrows of life.

AUGUST

from Lessons on the Upanishads

1st August

SOMETHING OUGHT TO BE LIKE THIS

When we look at the world, we have what may be called a first view of things, and dissatisfaction with the first view of things is supposed to be the mother of all philosophical thinking. If we are satisfied with things, there is nothing more for us to search for in this world. Any kind of search, quest, enterprise, or desire to seek implies that we are not satisfied with the existing condition of things. And, we are quite aware that nobody in this world can be said to be totally satisfied with the prevailing conditions of things—neither in one's own self, nor in one's family, nor in the society outside, nor in anything, for the matter of that. There is always a tendency in the human mind to discover a lacuna in things: "It should not be like this. It should have been in some other way." This is a distinction that we draw between the 'is' and the 'ought'. We may say "something is like this"; but instead, what we express is "something ought to have been like this" or "something ought to be like this". The 'ought' is something that we are expecting in this world; the 'is' is what we are actually facing in this world. There is always this distinction, drawn in ourselves, between the 'is' and the 'ought'.

2nd August

A THING THAT CHANGES CANNOT PERCEIVE CHANGE BY ITSELF

We begin to feel there must be something above this world. This was what the great poets and the sages of the Vedas felt. Everything seems to be transitory, moving, and in a state of flux. There is change in nature, change in human history, change in our own mental and biological constitution, change in even the solar system, the astronomical setup of things. Everything is changing. The perception of change is something very important for us to consider. How do we know that things are changing, that things are moving or are transitory? There is a logical peculiarity, a significance and a subtlety at the back of this ability on our part to perceive change and transition in things. A thing that changes cannot perceive change by itself. Change cannot know change. Only that which does not change can know that there is change. This is a very important point at the rock bottom of our thinking that we have to recognise. If everything is changing, who is it that is telling us that everything is changing? Are we also changing with the things that change? If that is the case, how do we come to know that all things are changing?

3rd August

THERE IS NO 'UNGod' IN THIS WORLD

The whole universe of perception, the entire creation, may be said to be involved basically, at the root, in something which cannot be said to change. This is an adorable and most praiseworthy conclusion, and anything that is adorable is a worshipful something. These masters of the Vedas Samhitas, therefore, recognised a divinity in all things. There is a god behind every phenomenon, which is another way of saying there is an imperishable background behind every perishable phenomenon. The sun rises in the east, the sun sets in the west; clouds gather, pour rain and then go; seasons change; something comes, something goes; we are born, we become old and we also go. Everything is changing, everywhere, even in the vast universe of astronomical calculation. But all this is only an indication, a pointer to an unrecognised fact of there being something which is an adorable background of the cosmos itself. And wonderfully, majestically and touchingly, we may say, these sages of the Veda Samhitas began to see a god everywhere. There is no 'ungod' in this world, because every phenomenon must be conditioned, or determined, by something which is not a phenomenon itself.

4th August

THERE IS NO MOVEMENT WITHOUT A PURPOSE

The reality of things is what we are after; unrealities do not attract us. That which perpetually changes and escapes the grasp of our comprehension cannot be considered as real because of the fact of its passing constantly into something else. When we say that things are changing, we actually mean that one condition is passing into something else; one situation gives way to another situation. Why should this be at all? Where is the necessity for things to change and transform themselves? There is also a dissatisfaction with everything in its own self. We would like to transform ourselves into something else. It is not that things are changing only outwardly; we are changing inwardly. There is psychological change, together with physical and natural change. So, the transitoriness of things—the changeful character of everything in the world, including our own selves as perceivers of change—suggests the fact that we seem to be moving towards something which is not available at the present moment. Movement is always in some direction, and there is no movement without a purpose. So there must be a purpose in the movement of nature, in even the historical transformations that take place in human society and in the world as a whole.

5th August

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

Never be in a hurry in the practice of yoga. Take only one step if it becomes necessary; do not try to make a hurried movement. If today you are capable of taking only one step, that is good enough. It is better to take only one step, but a firm step, rather than many steps which

may have to be later retraced due to some errors that you have committed. Quality is important, not quantity. Many days of meditation do not mean much; it is the kind of meditation that you have been practising, and the quality, that is involved there. Here, the Upanishads, or the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, or the Bhagavadgita—all are telling you, finally, one and the same thing: “To thine own self be true,” as the poet has very rightly said. The whole of yoga can be said to be equanimous with this implication of the poet’s words: “To thine own self be true.”

6th August

EVERYWHERE THERE ARE GODS

The recognition of a spiritual background behind the transitory phenomena of life is actually the object of worship. This is known as the divinities, or gods, who are adumbrated in the Veda Samhitas. Everywhere there are gods. We can worship a tree, we can worship a stone, we can worship a river, we can worship a mountain, we can worship the sun, the moon, the stars. Anything is okay as an object of worship because behind this emblem of an outward form of things in this world, there is a divinity masquerading as these forms. This is the highlighting principle of the Veda Samhitas. If we read the Vedas, we will find that every mantra, every verse, is a prayer to some divinity above, designated by various names: Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, etc. We may give them any other name, according to our own language, style or cultural background. The point is not what name we give, but that there is something behind visible phenomena. Our heart throbs in a state of satisfaction of the fact that there is something above us. Religion, spirituality or philosophy, in the true sense of the term, is the recognition of something above oneself and a simultaneous recognition of the finitude of one’s personality.

7th August

THE INFINITE IS SUMMONING EVERY FINITE INDIVIDUAL

The non-finite is what we call the Infinite. The Infinite is masquerading in us, which is another way of saying that the Unchanging is present in us. The Infinite is summoning every finite individual. The Unchanging is calling us moment to moment: “Don’t sleep, get up!” One of the passages of the Katha Upanishad is *uttisthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata* (Katha 1.3.14): “Wake up. Sleeping mankind, stand up!” Are we slumbering? Are we seeing only what we are able to cognise through the sense organs or are we also aware of something that is deeply rooted in our own self? *Prapya varan*: “Go to the Masters.” Go to the wise ones in this world—masters and teachers and guiding lights of mankind—and *nibodhata*: “know the secret”. The Bhagavadgita also has this great teaching for us: *tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya* (Gita 4.34): “Go to the Masters.” How do we gain knowledge? *Pranipatena*: “Go and prostrate yourself before the great Masters.” *Pariprasnena*: “and

question them”. “Great Master, this is the problem before me. I am not able to understand the solution for this. Please condescend to come down to my level and satisfy my inquisitiveness.” Serve that great Master; prostrate yourself; question the Master.

8th August

WE CAN NEVER BE HAPPY IF THERE IS ANOTHER PERSON NEAR US

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad tells us in one little passage: *dvitiyad vai bhayam bhavati* (Brih. Up. 1.4.2). We can never be happy if there is another person near us. Always we have to adjust ourselves with that person and we do not know what to expect from that person. We cannot keep even a mouse in front of us; we will be very disturbed because the mouse is sitting in front. The mouse cannot do any harm to us, but we do not like the presence of even a little ant. “Oh, another thing has come.” This “another thing” is what is troubling us. The difficulty arising out of the cognition of another is because of the fact that the basic Reality, that unchanging Eternity, has no “another” outside It. Because of the absence of another in the basic reality of our own Self—the Truth of this cosmos—we feel a discomfiture at the perception of anything outside, human or otherwise. Whatever it is, we would like to be alone. Finally, we would like to be alone because that Aloneness, which is spaceless and timeless, is telling us: “You are really alone.”

9th August

THE RECOGNITION OF A SUPREME VALUE IN LIFE

This world is not in a position to satisfy the desires of even one person, finally. If the whole world is given to you with all its gold and silver, rice and paddy, wheat and whatever it is, you will not find it satisfying. “The whole world is with me.” All right. Are you perfectly satisfied? You will be unhappy even then, for two reasons. One of them is: “After all, there is something above this world. Why not have that also?” A person who has a village wants another village also. If you have all the villages, you would like the entire state. If the state is under you, you want the entire country. If the country is under you, you would like the whole Earth. But why not have something above the Earth? So there is a dissatisfaction. “What is above? No, this is no good; there is something above me which I cannot control, which I cannot understand.” The presence of something above the world, outside the world, will make you unhappy again. The second point is: “How long will I be in possession of this whole world, sir? Is there any guarantee?” Nobody knows. The next moment you may not be here. “Oh, I see. So, what is the good of possessing the whole world, if tomorrow I am going to be dispossessed of it?” Thus, the recognition of a supreme value in life, and the need to adore it as the objective and the goal of one’s endeavour in life, became the Devata or the Divinity of the Vedas.

10th August

YOU YOURSELF ARE THE SPIRIT

The Upanishads are the doctrine of the lifting of your own self to the Self of the universe, the Spirit which you are. It is not merely the Spirit inside you—you yourself *are* the Spirit. Why do you say “inside”—because when the outer cloth of this body and even the mind is shed at the time of departure, do you remain, or do you exist only in part there? Can you say, “A part of me has gone; I am only partly there”? No, you are wholly there. Independent of the body and also of the mind, you are whole. This is a fact you will recognise by an analysis of deep sleep. The body and mind are excluded from awareness or cognition in the state of deep sleep. Do you exist only partially in deep sleep, or do you exist entirely? If your body and mind are really a part of you, when they are isolated from your consciousness in deep sleep, you would be only fifty percent or twenty-five percent; and when you wake up from sleep, you would get up as a twenty-five percent individual, and not as a whole person. But you wake up as a whole person. Therefore, the wholeness of your true essence need not include the body and the mind. This is what is meant by the word ‘Spirit’.

11th August

DO YOU WANT ONLY YOURSELF AS THE TRUE SPIRIT?

When you search for the Spirit of the world as a whole, the Spirit of your own Self, when you search for your Self, you conclude there is no need in searching for anything else. Here is the condition that you have to fulfil before studying the Upanishads. Do you want only your Self as the true Spirit, commensurate with the Spirit of the universe, or do you want many other things also? Those who want many other things are not fit students of the Upanishadic or even the Bhagavadgita philosophy, because the Upanishads and the Gita take you to the very essence of things, which is the Reality of all things. When you get That, attain That, reach That, identify yourself with That, you will not have to ask for anything else. It is like the sea of Reality, and nothing is outside it. But if desire still persists—a little bit of pinching and a discovery of a frustration, and emotional tension: “Oh, I would like to have this”—and it is harassing you, then you had better finish with all your desires. You should fulfil all your requirements and not come to the Upanishadic teacher with the disease of a frustrated, unfulfilled desire.

12th August

WHEN ONE KNOWS THAT, ONE HAS KNOWN EVERYTHING

Teachers used to prescribe many years *tapas*—in the form of self-control—to students. That is why in ancient days the students were required to stay with the teacher for so many years. What do you do for so many years? *Pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya* (Gita 4.34): “Every day prostrating yourself before that person—questioning, studying and serving.” This is what you

do with the Master. This process should continue for years until you are perfectly chastened and purified of all the dross of worldliness—Earthly longings, all rubbish of things. These must be washed out completely and like a clean mirror, you approach the teacher; then, whatever knowledge is imparted to you will reflect in your personality as sunlight is reflected in a mirror. Thus, you receive something in depth in the Upanishads. The last portion, Vedanta, is also the name given to the Upanishads. *Anta* means the inner secret, the final word of the Veda or the last portion of the Veda—whatever is one’s way of defining it. The quintessence, the final word, the last teaching of the Veda is the Upanishad, and beyond that there is nothing to say. When one knows That, one has known everything.

13th August

WE ARE THE MOST SECRET ASPECT OF CREATION

The most unpleasant thing in the world is to say anything about one’s own self. We can go on saying anything about people, but when it is a matter concerning us, we would like that not much is said. Om Shanti. This is because we are the most secret aspect of creation and we are very touchy; we would not like to be touched, even unconsciously, by anybody. “Don’t say anything about me; say anything about other people.” Now, what is the matter? There is some peculiarity about this so-called ‘me’, ‘I’, or the self. This is the peculiarity of the Upanishadic teaching, and also its difficulty. The knowledge of the gods in the heavens, the knowledge of historical personages—kings, saints and sages—and the way of worshipping them and adoring them is something we can comprehend. “Yes, we understand what it means.” This is exactly what we commonly understand by the word ‘religion’. “He is a religious person.” Sometimes we even say, “He is spiritual.” Generally speaking, when we say that a person is religious or spiritual, we have an idea that this person is concerned with something higher than himself or herself—some god, some ideal, some future expectation which we may call divine, not concerned with the present, necessarily.

14th August

UPANISHAD REFERS TO GOD AND IT REFERS TO NOTHING ELSE

The Upanishads are not telling us about any god. Then, what is it that the Upanishads are telling us if it is not speaking about God? It is speaking about God, but not about the God that we usually think in our mind according to our upbringing, culture, language or tradition. It refers to God and it refers to nothing else, whereas the other religious forms of the concept of God—the God of the various ‘isms’ in the world—have other things in addition to and simultaneous with God’s existence, such as: Something must be done, something must not be done. These ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ fill the texture of every religion in the world. Something has to be done and something should not be done. The question of this dichotomy does not arise in the Upanishads. The concept of God, or the Ultimate Reality, that we encounter in the Upanishads is markedly different from our transcendent conception of God. We always look

up to the skies, fold our palms and humbly offer a prayer to a divinity that is invisible to the eyes but considered as transcendent, above us—perhaps very far from us. None of us can escape this idea of God being a little far from us. Certainly, there is some distance between us and God. That distance frightens us.

15th August

THE CONCEPT OF DISTANCE IS THE CONCEPT OF SPACE

Simultaneous with this concept of distance between us and God, there is also the concept of futurity of the attainment of God. It is not something that can be attained just now; it is a matter for tomorrow. “I will attain God one day.” This “one day” implies some time in the future. So, somehow the concept of time also comes in when we conceive God in the traditional pattern. Because of the space concept in our mind, we feel that God is far away from us; there is a distance. The concept of distance is the concept of space. It has entered our brains to such an extent that we cannot think anything except in terms of measurement—length, breadth, height, distance. So, God is away from us, measurably, by a distance. He is also a futurity in time, and He can be attained by hard effort. There is also a causative factor involved in the concept of the attainment of God. Space, time and cause—these are the conditioning factors of human thinking. Without these concepts, we can think nothing. Hence, we are trying to cast God Himself into the mould, the crucible of this threefold determination of our thought—namely, space, time and cause. However, because the concept of space, time and cause involves objectivity, we cannot cast God into this mould.

16th August

WHAT SORT OF RELIGION IS THERE BETWEEN US AND GOD?

If God is not spatially distant and temporally a futurity and He is not caused by some human effort, what sort of relation is there between us and God? Here is a point which will be before us like a hard nut to crack. What is our relationship with God? If we say we are a part of God, we again bring the concept of space and time. If we say we are created by God, then also we bring space, time and causation. If we say we are a reflection of God, then also we bring something external to God’s universality. Whatever we may say about ourselves in relation to God, in that statement of ours we are delimiting God and denying the universality and the ultimacy of Reality that is His essential characteristic. The Upanishads take up this subject, and they want to break this hard nut; but, it is not as easy to break this nut as one may imagine. If we read the Upanishads, we will find ancient seekers undergoing tremendous hardships even in approaching these great Masters of yore, and undergoing disciplines which are unthinkably painful for weak wills and minds and bodies like ours. It is not merely that we are weak psycho-physically; we have other difficulties which are more important and crucial—namely, obstacles which will stand in the way of our contacting God.

17th August

EVERYBODY USES THE WORD 'SELF'

When we speak of the soul, we do not know what it is that we are speaking about, finally. It is a nebulous, flimsy, slippery object. What are we talking about when we say “self”? Everybody uses the word ‘self’. “I myself I have done this work.” “He himself is responsible for that mistake.” Do we not use the word ‘self’ in this manner? We are very well acquainted with the use of the word ‘self’: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself—everywhere this ‘self’ comes in. It is so common in our daily life that we do not see any special significance in that usage at all. We do not see the significance because we do not know the meaning of the word ‘self’, and no dictionary gives us the correct meaning of this word. Even if the dictionary says it is you, one’s own Self, the basic Reality, the Atman, these are only words which will mean as little as the word ‘self’ itself. This is because here is a question of the handling of one’s self by one’s Self. You may ask me: “Why should I handle my self when there are more important things in the world? The world is so rich and beautiful and grand and vast; instead of that I handle my self? What is the great thing that I am going to gain out of it?” Terrible is the problem. If you have answers and questions of this kind and you have doubts as to why this Self is to be considered as so important, you will not be immediately fit for the knowledge of the Upanishads.

18th August

YOU CAN BE FREE BY KNOWING YOUR OWN SELF

All our educational technology these days, as education is generally understood, concerns itself with objects of perception and intellectual understanding. The Atman is not a subject which can be perceived through the sense organs, nor can it be understood intellectually by any kind of logical acumen. The reason is that the Atman is yourself; it is not somebody else. In all courses of knowledge and procedures of study, you place yourselves in the position or context of students, and you consider the world of objects outside as subjects of observation, experiment and study. In your education you do not study yourself; you study something other than your own self. You go to a college or a university and study subjects like mathematics, physics, chemistry, sociology and what not. All these subjects, which are so well placed before you in great detail, are external to yourself. Everything that you study, anywhere, is outside you. You do not study yourself in any course of study that has been made available to you. But the Upanishad is a study of ourselves. *Atmanam viddhi* is the great oracle of the Upanishad: “Know thyself and be free.” It is something astounding to hear that you can be free by knowing your own self.

19th August

'A' IS 'A'; 'A' CANNOT BE 'B'

There is an 'I-ness' or a feeling of self-identity even in a tree, which grows according to its own predilection for the purpose of its own survival. The instinct of survival is present in each and every living entity—and perhaps even in non-living elements, like an atom. They maintain an identity of themselves. The Atman may be said to be the characteristic of the self-identity of everything. You cannot become other than what you are. You are something, and you want to be that thing only, and you cannot be something else. 'A' is 'A'; 'A' cannot be 'B'. This is the law of identity in logic. Everything is what it is; nothing can be other than what it is. There is a peculiar inherent tendency of the maintenance of self-identity in all things. You have to listen carefully to every word that I speak. This inherent tendency in everything in respect of the maintenance of that vehement form of self-identity consciousness is the Atman. The Atman is not merely a force that causes this impulse of self-identity in things, it is also a consciousness of there being such a self-identity. You are what you are, but not only that; you are also aware that you are what we are. So it exists, and it is also conscious that it exists.

20th August

KARMA IS DISCHARGE OF ONE'S DUTY

There is a tendency inherent in the human mind by which the pure subjectivity, which is the consciousness of the Atman, is pulled, as it were, in the direction of what it is not, and is compelled to be aware of what it is not in the form of sense-perception. Not only that, it cannot be continuously conscious of one particular object. Now it is aware of this; now it is aware of another thing. It moves from object to object. The tendency to move in the direction of what the Atman is not—the impulsion towards externality of objects—is the dirt, or *mala*, as it is called. The impossibility of fixing the mind on anything continuously is the distraction, or the *vikshepa*. The reason why such an impulse has arisen at all is the *avarana*, or the veil. These three defects have to be removed gradually by protracted self-discipline coupled with proper instruction. It takes its own time. There are techniques of yoga practice known as *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana*—or *karma*, *upasana* and *jnana*. *Karma* is activity, work, performance of any kind—discharge of one's duty, we may say.

21st August

WORK DONE AS A DUTY ALONE CAN PURIFY

When you do a work, you must put a question to yourself: "What is the reason behind engaging in that work? Is it because there is some extraneous or ulterior motive behind that work? Or is it done for mere self-purification? You must distinguish between work done as a job and work done as a duty. A duty may not apparently bring you a material benefit at the very outset, but it will bring you an invisible benefit. That is why duty is adored so much

everywhere and people say you must do your duty. If duty is not so very important, but a remunerative job is the only thing that is important, then insistence on duty would be out of point. Everybody says duty must be done; but, what is duty? Work done as a duty alone can purify; no other work can purify the self. It is not any kind of labour that can be regarded as karma yoga. So, what is this duty that we are talking of which is going to chasten the personality of the individual, and purify it? Briefly it can be called unselfish action. It is a work that you do for the benefit that may accrue to a larger dimension of reality, and not merely to the localised entity called your own individual self.

22nd August

ONE'S ESSENTIAL BEING IS ALSO THE ESSENTIAL BEING OF EVERYBODY ELSE

When you serve people, you are to always bear in mind the reason why this service is done at all. Mostly, the reason is buried underneath. You have social reasons, political reasons, economic reasons and family considerations when you do any work in the form of service of people. But service which is spiritually oriented is not a social work or a political activity, nor is it connected even with family maintenance. It is actually a service done to your own self. How is that so? You may put a question: In what way is the service of people, for instance, a service to you own self? Remember the few words that I spoke a little while ago, that one's essential being is also the essential being of everybody else. So the people that you see outside, even the world of space-time, is a wider dimension of the selfhood which is your own pure subjectivity. This is a subject that is a little difficult to understand, and is to be listened to with great caution and care. The service that you render to others—even to a dog, let alone human beings, even feeding manure to a tree for its sustenance or taking care of anything whatsoever—is not to be done with any kind of ulterior motive, much less even the consideration that it is something outside you.

23rd August

YOU ARE SERVING YOUR OWN SELF WHEN YOU SERVE HUMANITY

Work becomes purely a spiritual form of worship only when the character of selfhood is introduced into the area of this performance of work and into the location of the direction towards which your work is motivated. You are serving your own self when you serve humanity. People sometimes glibly say, "Worship of man is worship of God." It is just a manner of speaking, without understanding what they mean. How does man become God? You know very well that no man can be equal to God. So how do you say that service of man is equal to service of God? Therefore, merely talking in a social sense does not bring much meaning. It has a significance that is deeper than the social cloak that it bears—namely, the essential being of each person is present in every other person also. So when you love your neighbour as yourself, you love that person not because that person is your neighbour in the sense of social nearness, but because there is a nearness which is spiritual. The person is near

to you as a spiritual entity, as part of the same self that is you, rather than a nearness that is measurable by a distance of yards or kilometres. The spiritual concept of work is the great theme of the Bhagavadgita.

24th August

THIS UNIVERSE IS A WELL-MANAGED ORGANISATION

The whole theme of the Bhagavadgita is how we can conduct our activity in the sense of a transmutation of all its values into spiritual worship. Actually, service is not service done to anybody else—that term ‘else’ must be removed from the sentence. It is service done to a larger area of one’s own self. This idea can be planted in one’s own mind by doing service of any kind, whether it is service of Guru, service of mankind, or even work in an office without laying too much emphasis on the salary aspect, etc. If the administration is well managed, the salary will come of its own accord—you need not cry for it—and this universe is a well-managed organisation. It is not a political system which constantly requires amendment of laws and regulations. Everything is systematically ordained and, therefore, you need not have any doubt in your mind whether you gain anything at all by doing service in this manner. When you serve your own larger self, which becomes largest when it is a service done to the universe as a whole, virtually you are serving God, because the largest self is God. And it is an expanded form of your own self. This is the point to be borne in mind.

25th August

YOU ARE ATTRACTED TOWARDS THAT WHICH IS EVERYWHERE

In the beginning when you conceive of the Supreme Being, you have a spatio-temporal imagination of that Being. God is very big, very large, very far away, very great, adorable; you offer your prostrations to that Almighty as something lovable. Even the Upanishads sometimes refer to the Supreme Absolute as the most lovable. *Vanam* means adorable; that Being is the most adorable. That thing which you call God, that thing which pulls your attention in its own direction, that which is the Ultimate Reality of things, that which is the Self of the cosmos, is the most magnificent, beloved, lovable, beautiful, most essential of all beings. And one who loves this Ultimate Being as the most lovable is loved by the whole world. You attract things towards yourself because you are attracted towards that which is everywhere. This is the best way of making friends in this world. You need not read Dale Carnegie, etc. If you are attracted towards that which is everywhere, wholly and solely, the entire world will be attracted towards you as a natural consequence of the attraction that you feel towards that Ultimate Reality. This is how you can honestly love it, if you want to be loved by others.

26th August

AUSTERITY IS PHYSICAL, VERBAL AND MENTAL

The first thing you can do in your life towards performance of austerity is to avoid luxury and a happy-go-lucky attitude. You should have or keep with you only those things which are necessary for you, and should not keep those things which are not essential for a reasonably comfortable existence. This is the first step that you can take in austerity. Something is necessary for you under certain given conditions—okay, granted—but you need not ask for more than that. Eating, sleeping and comforts of any kind have to be within the limit of the exigency that you feel under the conditions that you are living, for the work that you are doing, etc., and you need not go beyond that limit. This is the first step that you may take towards austerity. Austerity is physical, verbal and mental. You have to be restrained not only in your physical appurtenances but also in the words that you speak and the acts that you do. That is, you should not cause any kind of disharmony, incongruity in the atmosphere, and towards that end you may manipulate and adjust yourself ably for being a humane individual, a good person, in the sense that your presence does not cause conflict with anyone.

27th August

HOW DOES GOD CREATE THE WORLD?

The Creator, Whom we call God, manifests this universe, creates this universe. In what manner does He create the universe? There are instances of someone creating something in this world. A carpenter creates a table or a chair. A potter creates a mud pot. Is this the way in which God creates the world? Some say that this is not the way in which God creates, because a carpenter requires some tool and some material out of which and through which he can manufacture a table or some furniture. But, where is the instrument or tool, and where is the material for God? If we say that there is some material outside God, then there will be another difficult question: “Who created this material?” If God created the world out of some existent material, someone must have created that material also. Is God Himself the creator of that material wood or furniture of this cosmos? The question is a vicious one; it is what is called ‘begging the question’. Hence, problems connected with the creation of the world do not seem to be easily solvable by merely assuming that there was some material before God at the time of the creation of this universe. Though there are some thinkers and philosophers who hold this opinion that there is an eternally existing material out of which God fashions this universe, there are others who feel that this is not the proper way of visualising the fact of creation.

28th August

GOD MUST HIMSELF HAVE BECOME THIS UNIVERSE

God must have modified Himself into this universe, as milk modifies itself into yogurt or curd. Otherwise, we cannot explain how God creates this world. The assumption of a totally independent material existence outside God is not permissible for various reasons, one of the reasons being that it would limit God to a finite entity. Finitude is that state of being which has something outside it, another finite. Everyone is limited and everyone is finite because of the existence of other finitudes—in the sense that there are things and persons outside every person and thing. God also would become finite because the existence of another thing outside God, such as the material for creation, would condition God to a limited existence. Therefore, the doctrine that the creation of the world came out of an already-existing material would be a contending factor before God, an opposition to God. God would then not be infinite. Therefore, God must Himself have become this universe. This is the second doctrine. The first doctrine is called Arambhavada. A creation out of something and producing something totally new is the doctrine of Arambhavada, which involves multiplicity and duality in creation.

29th August

THIS IS WHAT WE CALL GOD

Consciousness cannot be in some place because to be conscious that consciousness is in this 'some place', it has also to be somewhere else—where it now appears not to be. Therefore, consciousness cannot deny that it exists in another place as well, somewhere else, because such denial is impossible unless it is already present there at the spot which is being denied. Therefore, the nature of consciousness is universal. This is the nature of the Ultimate Reality. This is what we call God. This is what we call Ishvara. Therefore, the pervasion of this Supreme Consciousness, which is the Absolute Reality, is not pervasion—something entering into something else—in the ordinary sense of the term. It is the One Thing being all things. In a great mantra of the Rig Veda we are told: *ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti* (R.V. 1.164.46). "The one Being—poets, sages, and masters call It by different names" such as Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and so on. Therefore, this world of perception, this universe of variety, is a perceptual presentation and not actually a modification, because eternal things cannot modify themselves. If eternity modifies itself, it becomes a temporal something. That which is above time cannot become something in time.

30th August

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS POSSESSION

You feel happy only if you have some property. A propertyless person is considered an unhappy person. People say: "I have nothing—neither land, nor house, nor money. My condition is pitiable." If you obtain land, money and a house, you are happy. But the

Upanishad says: “You will not be happy by acquiring land, money, house, etc.” Actually, possession is not the way of being happy. There is no such thing as possession. You cannot possess an area of land. It was already there, and was there even before you were born. Can you grab a piece of land, which is the earth? How can you grab the earth? Even the house that we propose to purchase from somebody must have been there before you existed. What exactly do you mean by saying “I possess something”? Does that object enter into your body? Does the house seep into your flesh and bones? Does the land enter your brain, and is the money under your skin? Does it happen so? They always remain outside, just as they were outside even before you were born. Nobody has seen money entering into someone’s stomach. For obvious reasons, a thing that is outside, totally, cannot become yours. How can you possess a thing that is not yours? But you somehow convince yourself that it is yours.

31st August

DO NOT BE POSSESSIVE

Do not be greedy. Do not be possessive. Do not say “I want, I want, I want.” You require nothing, finally. Even the richest people do not sleep on ten kilometres of land. They require six feet on which to sleep. Do you think a millionaire requires a longer, lengthier bed, several furlongs long, to sleep on? Will a rich person eat two quintals of food because he is rich? He will perhaps eat less than what you eat. These are confusions in the mind. Wealth and possession—accretion of objects, imagination that one has everything in this world—“I am the ruler of this Earth”—these are rank illusions in the mind, and you will know this when the time comes. When everything goes, you will realise that you made a mistake in thinking that you had everything. You never brought anything when you came to this world. Are you trying to possess things which you did not bring? How did you earn this property of the world when you did not bring it with you when you came? Actually, if you have earned this property, you could take it when you go. Why do you not take it with you? You have so much wealth that you have earned through your profession; take it with you when you go. Can you? If you cannot bring anything and if you cannot take anything either, how is it possible for you to possess anything in the middle?

SEPTEMBER

from Essays in Life and Eternity

1st September

RELIGION IS THE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is the rational foundation of religion, and religion is the practice of philosophy. The development of the religious consciousness in the human individual is the enhancement of dimension in experience achieved through the series of the degrees in which man adjusts himself with the universe. The centrality of this consciousness which occupies the position of the Soul of the Universe may be said to be a reasonable concept of the Almighty God. One's most intense longing, when it reaches its maximum, may well also be regarded as a symptom of God calling through one of His operations in creation. The universe is a total action, and entirely individual actions may not fit into its structure. Here is evidently the central message of the Bhagavadgita. The way to salvation is proclaimed as a fourfold endeavour through work, devotion, concentration and knowledge, cognition, emotion, volition and reason, which are the principal operating faculties of human nature, corresponding to the manner in which religious exercise and spiritual practice in a sense of man's endeavouring to rise above himself towards Godhead takes place. Spiritual life is not, as wrongly supposed, different from secular life, nor are the so-called secular needs divested of their spiritual meaning.

2nd September

THE ONLY DUTY IN LIFE

Mankind, today, with all its appurtenances of knowledge and experience gained through the historical movement of several thousands of years on this Earth, can be said to have learned no lesson at all as to where its true blessedness lies or what are the mistakes that it is daily committing in its life at every moment of time. Humanity's blunders in its entirely empirical-oriented sense-ground perception of the values of life are as it has been briefly outlined above. If the human individual persists in this kind of thinking and acting inwardly as well as outwardly, such a life of the human individual cannot but be designated as a cauldron of hell-fire, which, unfortunately, to the bound individual, appears to be a highly satisfactory state of affairs, because of its dictum, as the poet well said in this context, "It is better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." The hope of mankind is not going to be in the continuance of this state of affairs even though it may go on through millions of years of human history. Every soul has to engage itself throughout its career in life. This is the final duty inseparable from man's aspiration, nay, the only duty in life.

3rd September

A HUMAN BEING TRANSCENDS THE DIVERSITY OF THE PHYSICAL LIMBS

Since Spirit is universal—because non-universality would make it perishable—the presence of the Spirit in anything is, in fact, the Universal Existence being immanent in the particular. Spirituality, or religion, a designation that has generally been applied to signify the higher values of life, consists, then, in the measure of awareness of the extent to which the Universal Principle inhabits locations of any kind. The human body, the family, the community, the province, the nation, or the world as a whole stands before us as an example of the operation of the Universal in different degrees of particularity. Human individuality, physically speaking, is all anatomy and physiology, a combination of physical and chemical properties cohering into the pattern of a whole, with vitality pervading the whole system, so that the human being is not just bone and flesh and it transcends the diversity of the physical limbs. This is common knowledge, and it becomes clear when one investigates into the fact of man remaining a whole as a self-identical entity even if some limbs of the body are to be taken away by medical operation.

4th September

A UNIVERSAL INDEPENDENT OF PARTICULARS

Philosophers, many a time, have found it difficult to imagine the existence of a universal independent of particulars. This difficulty arises because it is wrongly assumed that the universal is an abstraction, a conceptual generalisation arising from some common features seen in particulars, such as the universal principle of horseness seen to be present in each individual case of a horse. But the Universal need not be a quality depending upon an isolated individual as a substance. The Universal is not like the greenness seen in all leaves or the redness seen in roses. That is to say, the Universal is not a quality of a substance other than itself. Such a nominalism of outlook in the definition of the Universal can arise only if one is completely oblivious of the fact that even the awareness of there being such things as particulars would not be possible unless there is a prior element of consciousness-grasp which knows all the particulars in a single act of attention, proving thereby that such a consciousness is larger in dimension than the particulars, is immanent in them, by which immanence it knows them, and is also transcendent to them due to which it is none of the particulars.

5th September

IT IS THE SUPPORT BEHIND ALL DIVERSITY

The meditation of life, then, is the gradual establishment of wholeness in the midst of particulars, in every level, in every stage, in every degree of evolution. Grandly has it been proclaimed by the Bhagavadgita, in a majestic epic fashion, that the Universal, designated as Brahman, has hands and feet everywhere, has eyes, faces and heads everywhere, and it exists

enveloping everything. It is the illuminator of all the sense organs, but in itself it is none of them. It is the support behind all diversity, but it cannot be identified with any one of these. It is the reality behind appearances. Being above substances and qualities, relations and modifications, it cannot be said to have any attributes, though no quality or attribute can subsist without it being there as the basic substratum. It is inside and outside all things; but it has itself no inside and outside. Being the foundation for all movement and activity, it cannot be characterised by any movement or activity. Being the very Seer and Knower, as the basic Subject, it cannot be seen, heard or even thought by the mind. Being endless and infinite, it is everywhere like a limitless expanse; but as the Self of everything, nothing can be nearer than its presence.

6th September

UNLESS THERE IS SPACE TO CREATE, THERE CANNOT BE CREATION

As we have in the field of modern astronomy and physics the theories of the Big Bang and related descriptions of the cause of the universe, the scriptures delineate the process in which one can consider the universe as having evolved from the state of an original ubiquitous continuum, into greater and greater diversified forms and more and more externalised shapes. The affirmation mostly centres round the enunciation that the Supreme Being was engaged in *tapas*, which is the original concentration of the Universal Consciousness in a cosmic act of willing and deciding to be something logically differentiated from its own pure being. Unless there is space to create, there cannot be creation, and unless there is time to create, there would not be creation even then. The beginning of creation implies, therefore, the projection of space and time in a blend of instantaneous, co-eval and co-eternal mutual participation. Space-time is the fundamental base, the matrix of creation. The Will of the Absolute becomes an intensely powerful vibration into which the space-time complex reduces itself; that is to say, what is known as space-time is itself an unending sea of omnipresent vibration.

7th September

ADHIDAIVA DIVINITIES ARE COUNTLESS IN NUMBER

The tripartite arrangement of the Universal Being into the subjective, objective and the principle of an intermediary consciousness, namely, *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*, raises also the question of the whole range of theological enunciations, since the *adhidaiva* is the divinity that controls the subjective and the objective sides of experience—*adhyatma* and *adhibhuta*—and at the same time rises above them in an instantaneous act of transcendence by not belonging either to the subjective or the objective side, though immanently present in both the sides, without which there cannot be a conscious relation between the subject and the object. The descent, or may we say ascent, of the hierarchy of subject-object relations in the history of the creation of the universe may be said to be constituted of an infinite series of

degrees of lesser and larger dimensions, the relation becoming grosser and more inscrutable as the degrees come downwards in descent and enlarging in greater and greater perspicuity and transcendence as the degrees ascend towards the Absolute. Inasmuch as these degrees of ascent and descent are spread out everywhere in the universe, differing in quantity and quality in accordance with the corresponding degree of inclusiveness and transparency obtaining between the subjective and objective sides, it appears that these *adhidaiva* divinities are countless in number and these are, in fact, the many gods of popular religious worship.

8th September

ARE THERE REALLY MANY GODS?

Are there really many gods? The answer is yes, and no. There are many gods, because there are many degrees of the subject-object relation obtaining successively in a sequential order of the manifestation of the universe, and these being transcendently operative powers beyond the subject and the object, they are verily gods, the shining ones, the conscious relation without which perception or knowledge would be impossible. But, in fact, the gods are not many, since their manifoldness is just a nomenclature designating the levels of consciousness through which the Absolute descends in terms of several subject-object relations in the story of creation. The Indian religious perspective visualises, adores and worships many a god, the god of the house or the family, the god of the village or the community, the god of the town, the god of the nation, the god of war, and the god of peace, and so on, because these concepts of many divinities follow automatically from the concept of there being many superphysical causes behind the multitudinous variety of events and occurrences in the world of nature.

9th September

THE HIGHER REASON IS THE TRUE PHILOSOPHER

The ratiocinating, discriminating, deciding, and logically judging faculty is at the higher level and is known as the *buddhi*, or the pure understanding. It is this faculty that draws conclusions on a consideration of pros and cons of situations by inference, either deductively or inductively. This is the realm of reason which has a dual aspect, namely, the lower and the higher. The lower reason, which is the one that mostly operates in all human individuals, is that operation which just collects the reports and evidences supplied by the mind through the sense organs, arranges them into a pattern of wholeness and passes a judgment on the nature of these sensory evidences. This would mean that the judgment of the lower reason is not qualitatively different from the reports of the sense organs, and its judgment is virtually the judgment of the sense organs arranged into a system of apparent collectivity, totality uniqueness and unity. But, the higher reason is something like an ambassador operating between the consciousness of human individuality and the possibilities ranging beyond the individual and its operations. The higher reason is the true philosopher and repository of the wisdom of life.

10th September

THE ABSOLUTE IS REALISED IN A STATE OF UNIVERSAL SELFHOOD

The individualities of created beings vary according to the several species or genera into whose mould the individualities are cast. According to the traditional Indian concept, these created species of beings run to eighty-four lakhs (8,400,000) in number, in which series the human being is said to occupy the topmost position, almost completing the purpose of nature in its scheme of evolution. The general arrangement of things in the evolutionary process is considered to be a gradual ascent from mineral to plant, from plant to animal, and from animal to man. This does not, however, mean that there are five categories separated as if in watertight compartments, for there is a countless variety even in this fivefold classification—varieties in the mineral constitution, varieties in the plant and vegetable kingdom, varieties in the animal kingdom and in the different kinds of subhuman species, and varieties even at the human level. The number, eighty-four lakhs, perhaps, would give a good picture of the tremendous specifications in almost unthinkable types of differentiation in the structure of individuality. Indeed nature's work is not complete until the Absolute is realised in a state of Universal Selfhood.

11th September

GOD AND BRUTE CROSSED AT ONE POINT

The evolution of consciousness does not end with man, really. Man may be described as the image of God only figuratively but not truly, for there has to be a further ascent in the process of evolution from man to superman, a stage which acts as a link between man and the ultimate Godhead. Indications of the higher category of levels of life, beyond the human state, are available in the positive statements recorded in the Upanishads to the effect that above even the best of human beings there are the levels of the realms of the Pitrs, Gandharvas, Devas, the higher gods of the heavens, the perfected ones almost converging in the stages of Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Ishvara and Brahman. That is to say, man has to evolve further on and he at present occupies a place somewhat midway between god and brute crossed at one point. The restlessness, the finitude, the consciousness of limitation from every side, the incessant and resistless longings for expansion of one's suzerainty in larger dimensions of space and endless life in time, nay, even the compulsions of being born and dying, announce in loud voice that man is far from the expected perfection to be reached in nature's scheme of evolution, and there is a long way higher up, from man to Godman, and from Godman to God Himself.

12th September

KNOWLEDGE RISES AS A WHOLE AS AN INCLUSIVENESS

Knowledge is not always derived through sense-perception alone in the manner of a correspondence between the perception and the object. There has to be a sort of coherence of

the different particulars connected with the knowledge process, and utility is not always the test of right knowledge. Pragmatism is not a workable doctrine in realms of human aspiration and philosophical deduction, which may not see the utilitarian theory as fitting well with the immutability characteristic of right knowledge. Utility does not bring out well the organic structure of knowledge, which is not just a linear relationship temporarily obtaining as an external relation between the subject and the object. Knowledge rises as a whole, as an inclusiveness, and not as a spatio-temporal 'otherness' of the object in its relation to the subject of perception. If the object is a reality alien to the subjective consciousness, there would be no knowledge of the object in an integral fashion. Knowledge and its object cannot be dovetailed as two different things in an artificial way. There has to be a vital unity between the two, so that the object may become the real content of knowledge.

13th September

TANTRA SADHANA

A specialty of practice through Tantra is that there is no specific injunction towards a rejection of the outer for the sake of the inner, the material for the sake of the spiritual, or a considering of every joy in life as an evil to be eradicated wholesale. To the Tantra, the things of the world, the material forms of perception, are not really obstacles, and the desire for them cannot be overcome by rejecting the desire itself. Everything in the world, the world itself in its entirety, is a passage to perfection when its manifestations are viewed in their proper context and spirit. The visible is a way to the invisible. Human desires arise on account of the unintelligent attitude that man develops towards any desire, and there is a fear of desire since its pressure seems to be mastering him rather than himself being its controller and director. The fact that the object is inseparably related to the subject, because the object is just the other pole of which the subject is one phase, is highlighted in Tantric forms of meditation. Thus comes the great dictum of the Tantra, that desire can be overcome only by desire, even as the object can be overcome only by the object. The other aspect of this principle held by the Tantra is that 'that by which one falls is also that by which one rises'.

14th September

THE STUFF OF THE WORLD IS CONSCIOUSNESS

It is the theory of relativity that actually shook the world of science from its very roots, which, while it accepted that matter and energy are inter-convertible ($E=mc^2$), rose up to the necessity to investigate the very structure of space and time in its relation to gravitation. The relativity position is difficult to explain in a few words, but suffice it to say that it discovered that space is not like a sheet spread out in a three-dimensional fashion, and time is not just linear motion. Space and time go together to constitute what may be called space-time and form a four-dimensional continuum, very uncomfortably breaking down all the rules, laws and regulations of the three-dimensional world of common perception. Even the space-time

continuum should not be regarded as a substance somewhat like a tangible something. Rather, the space-time of relativity is a conceptual field of mathematical point-events, reducing staggeringly the whole world to the nature of a universal mind-stuff. “The stuff of the world is consciousness,” said Arthur Eddington, and “God is a cosmic mathematical Thought,” said James Jeans. We have gone very far from the rural conception of a farmer’s field of harvest and plantation to the field of universal relativity, which looks more like God thinking His own Thought, rather than anything else, if we could be permitted to employ this phrase which we cannot avoid one day or the other.

15th September

THINGS IN THE WORLD ARE CALLED ACTUAL OCCASIONS

The interconnectedness of phenomena in the so-called events of the world taking place not in space or in time, but in a four-dimensional space-time continuum, was taken up with its more advanced implications for consideration by Alfred North Whitehead. In his *Philosophy of Organism*, Whitehead arrived at the conclusion that there are no set causes producing set effects, but anything can be an effect or a cause in a symmetrical manner of action and reaction, since the world as it is discovered by the theory of relativity is an organism with its parts integrally related to it. Cause and effect are continuous, the absence of which continuity would sever any possible relation between cause and effect. Things in the world are called ‘actual occasions’, the potential concentrated points of force whose very existence as well as structure are conditioned by the existence and structure of other ‘actual occasions’ which fill the cosmos as its constituents. The world is not a solid substance but is more like a field of law and order, an idea of total inclusiveness, a system of internal give-and-take policy obtaining among the individualities known as ‘actual occasions’, transforming the location of individuals into a fluid movement of a liquefied connection, as it were, with everything else also in the world.

16th September

THE PERCEPTION OF PRIMARY QUALITIES

The specially religious import of modern physical science is highlighted also in the system of Samuel Alexander, which he purports to explain in his book entitled “Space, Time and Deity”. According to Alexander, space-time is the matrix of all things, the very substance of the universe, a clue that he gathers from the Theory of Relativity. The space-time matrix causes motion and force, and brings about the three-dimensional picture of what are known as primary qualities, like length, breadth and height, substance, volume and content. The perception of these primary qualities happens to be through the secondary qualities arising as a sort of action-reaction process obtaining between the object of perception, namely, a primary quality and the perceiving mind. To cite an instance, a leaf looks green in colour not because there is such a thing called greenness in nature itself, but because of an abstraction of

properties automatically taking place in the internal structure of the leaf excluding all other characteristics in nature apart from what looks like green. So is the case with other colours and forms of objects.

17th September

THE ATMAN IS CONSCIOUSNESS ITSELF

The Upanishads hold that the waking consciousness is a whole by itself and constitutes a transparent activity of the mind, as contrasted with the states of dream and sleep. To the Upanishads, the mind by itself is not self-conscious and it is illumined by the true self within, the Atman, which is the only thing that is finally conscious; verily, the Atman is consciousness itself. Its consciousness permeates the entire physical system in the waking condition and even the body then appears to be conscious, as we can feel a sensation of awareness, in waking, when we touch the body, or when we experience ourselves as a whole body in that state. The waking state of consciousness is occupied with perception of objects and storing within itself impressions of the forms of perception. These impressions remain, like the repeated impressions created on the same receiving film of a photographic camera, as impressions piled one over the other as a large mass of chaotic accumulation of potentialities of perception which are driven into the subconscious level when active perception takes place through waking consciousness. The waking, dreaming and deep sleep states are herein explained as conditions of the mind-stuff.

18th September

TO BE TRULY GOD IS AN ART

The human individual is ostensibly concerned with the true nature of things; it loves the world of truth as distinct from the realm of untruth—stages of which have been briefly noticed in our earlier findings—but there is also the love of system, symmetry, order, pattern and beauty which satisfies the mind deeply. While truth attracts our admiration, awe and wonder, beauty evokes a sense of composure, sobriety and inner delight. All kinds of art come under the study of aesthetics. There are indeed many arts: kinds of expertness in methodical presentation to the point of perfection. Good writing is an art, good administration is an art, maintenance of good health is an art, being always happy within is an art, to live harmoniously with one's atmosphere or environment is an art, to think logically is an art, to be truly good is an art. All things that 'satisfy' are embodied in art. The greatest arts, supreme objects of aesthetic enjoyment are, to state them in an ascending order of importance, architecture and sculpture; drawing and painting; music, dance and drama; and, above all, literature.

19th September

PEOPLE MAKE THE LAW TO ADMINISTER PEOPLE

The word 'society', for all outward look, would just mean nothing more than a group of people come together on account of their common ideology, cultural values, religious outlook and kindred characteristics which unite them as a bond commonly linking them into the pattern of a whole. The question is: Does society consist of individual personalities, as human beings, or does it consist of the bond mentioned, which is ideational? A society of people can be there even if their constituent members happen to live geographically away from one another, but even a group of people sitting in a single room may not form a society if among them there is nothing to call a common cause. Actually, the common cause is what can be called society, and not merely the persons. A large number of people travelling in a railway compartment do not necessarily form a society. What then is society? A society can constitute itself into an administrative organisation, such as a government, and frame laws and rules to restrain and order the life and conduct of people. Who makes the law to administer whom? It is clear that people make the law to administer people.

20th September

THE TERM 'MOKSHA' DESCRIBES THE FINAL AIM OF ALL THINGS

What are the needs of people? One may say that they are social, economic and political security. But, this would be to look at things only from the peripheral level. Ancient Indian thought, recorded in the scriptural texts, such as the Smritis, Epics and Puranas, which have gone into great detail in this field of investigation, has classified the basic requirement in terms of what are known as dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Here is a standing example of the great intuition of the early seers into the essentials of human life. The four aims stated exhaust the entire area of human aspiration and performance. The term 'moksha' describes the final aim of all things. The restless asking, characterising all living beings in a variety of ways, has to end somewhere, sometime. There cannot be only asking without the chance of fulfilling it. An endless asking for wider dimensions which can be seen working vigorously in every living being, and most perspicaciously in human nature, has to have its origin nowhere except in the very consciousness and the very life principle of all beings.

21st September

MAN LIVES TO STRIVE TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF MOKSHA

Man lives, finally, to strive towards the attainment of moksha. Nevertheless, the aspiring human individual involved in the shackle of body and mind has to pay some attention to what exactly is to be done while actually involved in this manner. The physical body has its material needs and the mind has its emotional calls. The working for moksha is also to take into account these lesser psychophysical requirements. The physical needs come under the realm of artha, including material possessions necessary for the survival of the physical body.

Food, clothing and shelter are the barest minimum necessary for the continuance of life. Everyone has the right to live, even as everyone has a duty to achieve ultimate freedom. Further, a phenomenon presented as a content of experience should be considered as real enough to call for concerted attention. That the body is not the soul does not preclude the necessity to pay due attention to the demands of the body, for even a phenomenon not finally real assumes a reality to the extent it is received and accepted into the constitution of consciousness.

22nd September

THE EXPERIENCE OF MEDITATION

The consciousness which earlier was locked up within the physical body begins to peep through the apertures of the localised individuality, and beholds itself in persons and things beyond the limits of the single body to which it was shackled. There is then a sense of power felt within, a feeling of control over outer conditions, and a satisfaction that one has obtained what is required to be obtained, done what is to be done, and known what is to be known. The sense organs begin to loosen their clutches over the body and, loosening themselves from their bodily locations, relate themselves to the divinities behind their operations, becoming thereby channels of the flow of super-physical forces that enter the personality of the meditating individual. The sun and the moon and the stars, the very sky, and all space and time, slowly open up the secret of their really not being situated in large physical distances and of their internal intimacy and organic connection with the very spot and the very personality of the meditating individual.

23rd September

DHARMA IN FACT, IS GOD IN ACTION

Dharma is the law that grants freedom and also restrains freedom at the same time. While it is necessary to give freedom to everyone, it is also necessary to limit everyone's freedom to the extent to which everyone else also needs freedom equally. Society has to cohere into a harmonious blending of all its parts in the requisite proportion of emphasis on each particular part. Since unity appears to be the law of all things, there has to be some principle of action that insists on its introduction, in the manner necessary, amidst the diversity of isolated things and human beings apparently divided among themselves. Physical gravitation, chemical coherence, physiological health, mental sanity, emotional balance, and logical consistency, are various forms of the working of the unity of all life. This principle, this rule of the cohesion of divided parts into the pattern of perfection, is dharma, which inexorably works everywhere, and, at all times. Dharma, in fact, is God in action, the Absolute revealing itself in and through its manifestations by degrees of concrescence and division. Nothing worth the while, political solidarity, social peace or personal happiness, can be achieved

without the sanction of dharma, which is an impersonal law of equity and justice, not to be confused with any form of cult, creed, faith or religion.

24th September

IF EVERYONE TELLS ONLY UNTRUTH, IT WOULD LOSE ITS PURPOSE

It was held by thinkers like Immanuel Kant that there is also another way in which we can ascertain what is right or proper. Assume, for a while, if you would like everyone in the world to behave in the same way as you, and watch the consequences of such a proposition. Would a thief like that everyone in the world should also be a thief? In that case, theft would lose its meaning, because the significance of theft is in that there are some people in the world who are not thieves. If everyone tells only untruth, it would lose its purpose. Untruth seems to succeed because there are some persons in the world who speak the truth. If everyone is equally violent in respect of everyone else, the purpose of violence would be defeated. When a conduct, behaviour or intention cannot be permitted to be adopted by everyone in the world, such a policy should be regarded as contrary to the expected norms of ethics and morality. Kant also held a third principle as important in this case, namely, the 'imperative' character of the impulsion in people to do what is right and just and an inward abhorrence automatically arising in oneself to do what is improper and unjust.

25th September

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE GREATEST HAPPINESS?

The hedonistic and utilitarian doctrines of ethics which make out that the quantum and kind of happiness available to the largest number of persons is the principle of ethical goodness, or that the extent of utility in life is what determines conduct, have a flaw in their doctrines. What does one mean by saying that the largest number of people should have the greatest happiness? How many people are we to include within this largest number? Perhaps, the entirety of the human species in the world. But is it possible to imagine a state of affairs where every human being in the world is equally happy? Secondly, what is the meaning of 'the greatest happiness'? Where does one reach its limit? It is clear that the happiness of the mind is superior to the pleasures of the body, an obvious fact which does not require an explanation. But, is not the joy of the spirit greater than even mental satisfaction? Where do we actually land ourselves in our computation of the greatest form of happiness? It is the famous opinion of the Upanishad that, supposing there is a ruler of the whole Earth, uncontested by anyone, youthful, healthy, educated and cultured, good and loved by all people—if such a person can be imagined to be existing at any time—the happiness of such a person would be one unit of happiness.

26th September

THE GREATEST OF ALL SERVICES

The well-known programme revolving round the dictum, “Love thy neighbour as thyself,” has far-reaching implications. Why should one love one’s neighbour? The Vedanta philosophy would give the answer: “Because thy neighbour is thy own self.” The responsibility of a person to another person, who is here called the neighbour, depends on the extent to which one recognises in the person of another the essence of one’s own self. Those who render the greatest service to mankind are people who do not merely behold in front of them a multitude of persons and feel a social obligation or a political necessity to be considerate and serviceful to them, but those in whom a deeper impulse is welling up to see their own selves in all. The spiritual leaders of mankind alone can render the greatest service to people in terms of their very souls, while the common social-welfare projects can touch only the fringe of humanity’s needs. To serve the body with food, clothing, shelter and medical attention is indeed good, but a better service would be to educate people and make them confident in themselves with the recognition of the dignity of man as an emblem of divinity. To work for the salvation of the soul is the greatest of all services. The saints and sages, with their powerful thoughts and concentrated feelings, render a service which cannot be seen with the physical eyes.

27th September

THE FIRST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The civic duty of man is a basic common sense consideration that one should have to the environment of people and the world, and it is good to be always friendly with the community around. Not only that, it would be better to be kind and serviceful to persons in the vicinity. If charity begins at home, love and service also start in the immediate neighbourhood. Goodness of behaviour is more a quality of outlook than a quantitative reach of one’s actions to distant corners of the world. To be qualitatively good in respect of even one person would speak more gloriously of that source of service than to be just quantitatively philanthropic to a large number of individuals. Goodness does not require any announcement in public, it does not seek recognition, not even a word of thanks, for, “Is not the least one in this world going to be recognised as the first in the kingdom of God?” Civic obligations arise from human nature itself. They spring from the very needs of human make-up which has connections with different kinds of facility that is expected to be received from the world. The brute man, the vegetable man, the animal man, and the truly human man are classifications possible even at the human level.

28th September

WORK EVERYONE MUST

In civic body or society it is obligatory that everyone should contribute something to the survival and welfare of that body, and no one can remain idle, doing nothing. Work everyone must. The participation of the person in the form of service to society is naturally graded according to the station in which the person is placed in society. The circumstances of one's life, one's knowledge and capacity, will decide the quality and the extent to which such a service would be expected by the society to which one belongs. Society lives by the mutual coordination of its constituents, as a fabric of cloth is what it is because of the threads that go to form it. Since no single individual can be said to have the ability to contribute individually everything that the society would need, the ancient system of law has laid down that each one should share with the social set-up the highest possibility of which one is capable. Analysing the requirements of society as consisting of the necessary ways and means of maintaining and administering society, the law-givers in terms of the social order spelt out such needs as the fourfold blend of directing power, executive power, commercial power and manpower, known in Sanskrit as Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra, representing wisdom, administration, trade and work, respectively.

29th September

NATURE, THE FIRST AND IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOUR

Civic duties also include ecological considerations and the obligation to protect nature in its originality and purity. Let mountains stand, let rivers flow, let trees grow, let fresh air blow, and let no one interfere with their freedom, freshness and innocence. Polluting air with smoke and dust, vitiating water by dumping waste and dirt on it, destroying living trees which are responsible for the strength of the ground on which they stand and are also responsible for rainfall in the suitable season, are civic offences on the part of man. Throwing garbage on open ground is prohibitory to commonweal and health of people. Is not nature the first and immediate neighbour whom one has to love as one's own self? Life survives by the principle of economy it maintains in itself. Life is a system of harmony without excess in any of its features. Economic conditions do not exhaust themselves merely in gold and silver, land and property. Economy is the principle of the conservation of life and energy, the proper maintenance of balance in its internally adjusted parts. As more than the normal or less than the normal needs of the body may turn it sick and make it droop in weakness, so can the mind lose its power and become ill by either excessive activity or inactivity.

30th September

THE ONE SOUL PERMEATING ALL LIFE

It is the gospel of the Bhagavadgita that has lifted the dignity of labour and social welfare work above its ordinary meaning generally limited to the physical and empirical

circumference of society. While the Bhagavadgita emphasises the need to work as an obligatory call on each and every person, it also enlightens us as to why we should work at all. The reason is not just the material comforts of social existence but a higher demand from the spiritual side of human nature which in a state of insight beholds the one soul permeating all life and the need to present oneself before others in the light of a presence in others of that which is present in oneself also. Work, then, becomes a larger requirement on the part of man than merely a social necessity. The Gita exhorts us to work and serve as a Superman does, nay, as God Himself operates in creation. We are told that the Creator projected beings together with a compulsion for sacrifice (*sahayajna*), an impulse to share with others what one has, even as one would wish to share for oneself something of what others have, in a mutual give-and-take system of cooperation, inasmuch as everyone may have something which may be the need of another and no one can have all things that one may require in life.

OCTOBER

from *The Study and Practice of Yoga*

1st October

THE INTEREST SHOULD BE ONLY IN ONE THING

The great adventure of yoga is not easy for those whose minds are distracted with various occupations. The difficulty with the human mind is that it cannot be wholly interested in anything. While on the one hand there is a pressure of the mind towards taking interest in things, there is, simultaneously, a peculiar cussedness of the mind on account of which it cannot take interest in anything for all times. It has a peculiar twofold *rajas*, or inability to rest in itself, working behind it, inside it and outside it—from all sides—as a disturbing factor. There is no harm in taking interest in anything; but the interest should be only in one thing, not in many things. Anything in this world can be taken as a medium for the liberation of the soul. An object of sense can cause bondage; it also can cause liberation under certain conditions. When an object becomes merely one among the many—just one individual in a group—and the interest in the object may shift to another object after a period of time, then that object becomes a source of bondage, because it is not true that any single individual object can manifest the wholeness of truth in itself.

2nd October

SOMETIMES WE MIX UP NEEDS WITH LUXURIES

While desire is a bondage when it is caught up in diversity, it is also a means to liberation when it is concentrated. The concentrated desire is exclusively focused on a chosen ideal, and the freedom of the mind from engagement in any other object than the one that is chosen is the principle of austerity. We limit ourselves to those types of conduct, modes of behaviour and ways of living which are necessary for the fulfilment of our concentration on the single object that has been chosen for the purpose of meditation. We have to carefully sift the various necessities and the needs of our personality in respect of its engagement, or concentration, on this chosen ideal. This is the psychological background of the practice of self-control. Self-control does not mean mortification of the flesh or harassment of the body. It is the limitation of one's engagements in life to those values and conditions which are necessary for the fulfilment of the chosen ideal and the exclusion of any other factor which is redundant. It is a very difficult thing for the mind to understand, because sometimes we mix up needs with luxuries, and vice versa, and what is merely a means to the pampering of the senses, the body and the mind may look like a necessity or a need.

3rd October

MODERATION IS TO BE PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD

While indulgence in the objects of sense is bad, overemphasis on excessive austerity beyond its limit also is bad. Moderation is to be properly understood. It is difficult to know what moderation is, because we have never been accustomed to it. We have always excesses in our behaviours in life. There is always an emphasis shifted to a particular point of view, and then that becomes an exclusive occupation of the mind. The difficulties and the problems encountered by great masters like Buddha, for example, in their austerities, are instances on hand. Enthusiasts in yoga are mostly under the impression that to take to yoga is to mortify—but it is not. The subjection of the personality to undue pain is not the intention of yoga. The intention is quite different altogether. It is a healthy growth of the personality that is intended, and the obviating of those unnecessary factors which intrude in this process of healthy growth of the personality—just as eating is necessary, but overeating is bad, and not eating at all is also bad. We have to understand what it is to eat without overeating or going to the other extreme of not eating at all.

4th October

THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS NOTHING BUT SELF

It is mentioned in the Yoga Shastras that the essence of yoga is self-restraint, no doubt, but this is precisely the difficulty in understanding what yoga is, because we cannot know what self-restraint is unless we know what the self is which we are going to restrain. Which is the self that we are going to restrain? Whose self? Our self? On the one side, we say the goal of life is Self-realisation—the realisation, the experience, the attunement of one's self with the Self. On the other side, we say we must restrain it, control it, subjugate it, overcome it, etc. There are degrees of self, and the significance behind the mandate on self-control is with reference to the degrees that are perceivable or experienceable in selfhood. The whole universe is nothing but Self—there is nothing else in it. Even the so-called objects are a part of the Self in some form or the other. They may be a false self or a real self—that is a different matter, but they are a self nevertheless. In the Vedanta Shastras and yoga scriptures we are told that there are at least three types of self: the external, the personal and the Absolute.

5th October

WE CREATE A WORLD OF OUR OWN

Attachment, or affection, is a peculiar double attitude of consciousness. It is simultaneously working like a double-edged sword when it is attached to any particular object. It has a feeling that the things which it loves, or to which it is attached, are not really a part of its being—because if a thing is a part of our own being, the question of desiring it will not arise. There is no need to love something which is a part of our being, so we have a subtle feeling that it is not a part of us. The members of the family do not belong to us, really speaking. We

know it very well. Therefore, we create an artificial identification of their being with our being by means of a psychological movement or a function known as affection, love or attachment. We create a world of our own which may be called a fool's paradise. This is the paradise in which the head of the family lives. "Oh, how beautiful it is. I have got a large family." He does not know what it actually means. Also, it is very dangerous to know what it is because if we know what it really is, we will be horrified immediately, to the shock of our nerves.

6th October

THE SELF IS A PRINCIPLE OF IDENTITY

The Self, or the Atman as we call it, is a principle of identity, indivisibility and non-externality or objectivity. It is that state of consciousness or awareness which is incapable of becoming other than what it is, and incapable of being lost under any circumstance. It cannot be loved and it cannot be hated, because it is what we are. This is what is called the Self. There is no such thing as loving the Self or hating the Self. No one loves one's Self or hates one's Self, because love and hatred are psychological functions, and every psychological function is a movement of the mind in space and time. Such a thing is impossible in respect of the Self, which is Self-identity. Thus the definition of the Self as Self-identity will not apply to this false self which is the circumstantial self, the family self, the nation self, the world self, etc., as we are accustomed to. Also, there is another self which is known as the *mithyatman*—the false self which is the body. The body is not the Self. Everyone knows it very well, for various reasons, because the character of Self-identity—indestructibility, indivisibility, etc.—does not apply to the body.

7th October

THE LEAST OF ATTACHMENTS SHOULD BE TACKLED FIRST

Inasmuch as our external relationships—which constitute the outward form of the relative self—have become part and parcel of our experience, they are inseparable from our consciousness. It requires a careful peeling out of these layers of self by very intelligent means. The lowest attachment, or the least of attachments, should be tackled first. The intense attachments should not be tackled in the beginning. We have many types of attachment—there may be fifty, sixty, a hundred—but all of them are not of the same intensity. There are certain vital spots in us which cannot be touched. They are very vehement, and it is better not to touch them in the beginning. But there are some milder aspects which can be tackled first, and the gradation of these attachments should be understood properly. How many attachments are there, and how many affections? What are the loves that are harassing the mind and causing agony? Make a list of them privately in your own diary, if you like. They say Swami Rama Tirtha used to do that. He would make a list of all the desires and find out how many of them had been fulfilled.

8th October

THIS IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF MODERATION

By a very dispassionate and unattached attitude, one can diminish one's relationships with things which are really not essential for one's comfortable existence. Let us assume that a comfortable existence is a necessity; even that comfortable life can be led without these luxuries. How many wristwatches have you got? How many coats? How many rooms are you occupying? How much land have you? How many acres?—and so on. These are various silly things which come in the way of our yoga practice because the extent of trouble that they can create will come to our notice only when we actually touch them, or interfere with them, or try to avoid them. As long as we are friendly with things, they also look friendly, but when we try to avoid them, we will see their reactions are of a different type altogether. It is very necessary to use tact even in avoiding the unnecessary things; otherwise, there can be a resentment on the part of those things. This is the philosophy of moderation—the *via media* and the golden mean of philosophy and yoga—where the self that is redundant, external and related has to be made subservient to the ultimate goal which is the Absolute Self.

9th October

EVERYTHING HAS SOME IMPORTANCE

The social self is easier to control than the personal self, known as the bodily self. We cannot easily control our body, because that has a greater intimacy with our pure state or consciousness than the intimacy that is exhibited by external relations like family members, etc. We may for a few days forget the existence of the members of the family, but we cannot forget for a few days that we have a body; that is a greater difficulty. So, the withdrawal of consciousness from attachment has to be done by degrees, as I mentioned, and the problems have to be gradually thinned out by the coming back of consciousness from its external relationships, stage by stage, taking every step with fixity so that it may not be retraced, and missing not a single link in this chain of steps taken. We should not take jumps in this practice of self-restraint, because every little item is an important item and one single link that we missed may create trouble one day. There may be small desires which do not look very big or troublesome, but they can become troublesome if they are completely ignored because there is nothing in this world which can be regarded as wholly unimportant. Everything has some importance or the other; and if the time comes, it can help us, or it can trouble us.

10th October

WE SHOULD NOT FEEL RESTLESS OR TROUBLED IN OUR PRACTICE

Everything has to be taken into consideration so far as we are related to it, and a proper attitude of detachment has to be practised by various means, external as well as internal. This is the principle of austerity which, to re-emphasise, does not mean either too much

indulgence or going to the other extreme of completely cutting off all indulgence. It is the allowing in of as much relationship with things, both in quantity and quality, as would be necessary under the conditions of one's own personality in that particular stage of evolution, with the purpose of helping oneself in the onward growth to a healthier condition of spiritual aspiration. Again, it may be pointed out that every stage in self-restraint or practice of yoga is a positive step, so that there should not be pain felt in the practice. When we feel undue pain, suffocation or agony—well, that would be an indication that we have made a slight mistake in the judgment of values. We should not feel restless or troubled in our practice. That would be the consequence of a little excess to which we might have gone, not knowing what actually has been done.

11th October

THE UNIVERSALITY OF TRUTH IS DENIED BY THE SENSES

It is the pressure of the senses towards objects that prevents the mind from taking to exclusive spiritual meditations. The objects of sense are so real to the senses that they cannot easily be ignored or forgotten. Even the very thought of an object will draw the mind towards it, and every particularised thought in the direction of an object is a further affirmation of the falsity that Reality is only in some place, in some object, in some thing, in some person, etc., and it is not universal in its nature. The universality of Truth is denied by the senses, at every moment of time, in their activities towards sense gratification. The very purpose of the senses is to bring about this refusal of the ultimate universality of Godhead, to affirm the diversity of objects and to push the mind—forcefully—towards these external things. If this undesirable activity on the part of the senses can be ended to the extent possible, this force with which the mind moves towards objects can be harnessed for a better purpose, for a more positive aim than the indulgence of the senses in objects.

12th October

VEDA MANTRAS AS MEDITATIONS

A daily recitation—with the understanding of the meaning—of such hymns as the Purusha Sukta from the Veda, for instance, is a great *svadhyaya*, as Vachaspati Mishra, the commentator on the Yoga Sutras, mentions. Also, the Satarudriya—which we chant daily in the temple without perhaps knowing its meaning—is a great meditation if it is properly understood and recited with a proper devout attitude of mind. Vachaspati Mishra specifically refers to two great hymns of the Veda—the Purusha Sukta and the Satarudriya—which he says are highly purifying, not only from the point of view of their being conducive to meditation or concentration of mind, but also in other purifying processes which will take place in the body and the whole system due to the chanting of these mantras. These Veda mantras are immense potencies, like atom bombs, and to handle them and to energise the system with their forces is a spiritual practice by itself. This is one suggestion. There are

various other methods of *svadhyaya*. It depends upon the state of one's mind—how far it is concentrated, how far it is distracted, what these desires are that have remained frustrated inside, what the desires are that have been overcome, and so on. The quality of the mind will determine the type of *svadhyaya* that one has to practise.

13th October

THE MIND NEEDS VARIETY

The mind needs variety, no doubt, and it cannot exist without variety. It always wants change. Monotonous food will not be appreciated by the mind, and so the scriptures, especially the larger ones like the Epics, the Puranas, the Agamas, the Tantras, etc., provide a large area of movement for the mind wherein it leisurely roams about to its deep satisfaction, finds variety in plenty, reads stories of great saints and sages, and feels very much thrilled by the anecdotes of Incarnations, etc. But at the same time, with all its variety, we will find that it is a variety with a unity behind it. There is a unity of pattern, structure and aim in the presentation of variety in such scriptures as the Srimad Bhagavata, for instance. There are 18,000 verses giving all kinds of detail—everything about the cosmic creation and the processes of the manifestation of different things in their gross form, subtle form, causal form, etc. Every type of story is found there. It is very interesting to read it. The mind rejoices with delight when going through such a large variety of detail with beautiful comparisons, etc.

14th October

GOD IS THE SUPREME DOER

The goal of life in every stage of its manifestation is the vision of God, the experience of God, the realisation of God—that God is the Supreme Doer and the Supreme Existence. This is the principle that is driven into the mind again and again by the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana or such similar texts. If a continued or sustained study of such scriptures is practised, it is purifying. It is a *tapas* by itself, and it is a study of the nature of one's own Self, ultimately. The word 'sva' is used here to designate this process of study—*svadhyaya*. Also, we are told in one *sutra* of Patanjali, *tada drastuḥ svarupe avasthanam* (I.3), that the seer finds himself in his own nature when the *vruttis* or the various psychoses of the mind are inhibited. The purpose of every *sadhana* is only this much: to bring the mind back to its original source. The variety of detail that is provided to the mind in the scriptures has an intention not to pamper or cajole the mind, but to treat the mind of its illness of distraction and attachment to external objects. The aim is highly spiritual.

15th October

PERHAPS THERE IS NO RESPONSE FROM GOD

The idea that God is extra-cosmic and outside us, incapable of approach, and that we are likely not to receive any response from Him in spite of our efforts at prayer, etc.—all these ideas are due to certain encrustations in the mind, the *tamasic* qualities which cover the mind and make it again subtly tend towards objects of sense. The desire for objects of sense, subtly present in a very latent form in the subconscious level, becomes responsible for the doubt in the mind that perhaps there is no response from God. This is because our love is not for God—it is for objects of sense, and for status in society and enjoyments of various types in the world. And when, through austerity, or *tapas*, we have put the senses down with the force of our thumb, there is a temporary cessation of their activity. But the subconscious desire for things does not cease, just as a person who is thrown out of his ministry may not cease from desiring to be a minister once again; he will stand for election another time, if possible. The subtle subconscious desire is there. He will be restless, without any peace in the mind, because the position has been uprooted.

16th October

THE SUBTLE DESIRES MAY NOT LOOK LIKE DESIRES AT ALL

The various types of suspicion that arise in our mind, and the diffidence we often feel in our daily practice, are due to the presence of subtle desires. The subtle desires may not look like desires at all. They will not have the character of desires, as they are only tendencies. They are tracks or roads kept open for the vehicle to move. The vehicle is not moving, but it can move if it wants; we have kept everything clear. Likewise, though the vehicle of the senses is not moving on the road towards the objects outside, there is always a chance of it moving in that direction, in spite of the fact that it has been controlled. Austerity, *tapas*, does not merely mean control of the senses in the sense of putting an end to their activity. There should be an end to even their tendency towards objects; otherwise, they will create a twofold difficulty. Firstly, they will find the least opportunity provided as an occasion for manifesting their force once again; secondly, they will shake us from the core of all the faith that we have in God and the power of spiritual practice.

17th October

THERE SHOULD NOT BE A DOUBT WHETHER IT WILL YIELD FRUIT

Nehabhikramanaso'sti pratyavayo na vidyate (Gita 2.40), says the Bhagavadgita. Even a little good that we do in this direction has its own effect. Even if we credit one paisa (one-hundredth of an Indian rupee) to our account in the bank, it is a credit, though it is very little. It is only one paisa that we have put there, but still it is there. We cannot say it is not there.

Likewise, even a little bit of sincere effort that is put forth in the direction of sense control and devotion to God is a great credit indeed accumulated by the soul. There should not be a doubt whether it will yield fruit. We should not expect fruit in the way we would dream in our mind, because the nature of the response that is generated by the practice depends upon the extent of obstacles that are already present and not eliminated. The peculiar impressions created inside by frustrated feelings will also act as an obstacle. The frustrated feelings are the subtle longings of the mind, deeper than the level of conscious activity, which create a sense of disquiet and displeasure in the mind.

18th October

WHEN THE HEART IS NOT THERE, THERE CANNOT BE JOY

We are always in a mood of unhappiness. We cannot know what has happened to us. We are not satisfied—neither with people, nor with our *sadhana*, nor with anything in this world. This disquiet, peacelessness and displeasure which can manifest as a sustained mood in spiritual seekers is due to the presence of the impressions left by frustrated desires. We have not withdrawn our senses from objects wantonly or deliberately, but we have withdrawn them due a pressure from scriptures, Guru, atmosphere, monastery, or other conditions. Sometimes factors which are extraneous become responsible for the practice that we have undergone or are undergoing; and because the heart is absent there, naturally the feeling of happiness is also not there. When the heart is not there, there cannot be joy. That is why it is suggested that the *sadhana* of self-control, or control of the senses, should be coupled with a deep philosophical knowledge and spiritual aspiration, which is what is indicated by the term '*svadhyaya*', and the other term '*Ishvara pranidhana*', which is adoration of God as the ultimate goal of life.

19th October

THE SOUL THAT WE ARE IS THE SPECIES THAT WE ARE

The purpose of sense control, study of scripture and adoration of God is all single—namely, the affirmation of the supremacy and the ultimate value of Godhead. This requires persistent effort, no doubt, and as has been pointed out earlier, it is a strenuous effort on the part of the mind to prevent the incoming of impressions of desire from objects outside on the one hand, and to create impressions of a positive character in the form of love of God on the other hand. *Vijatiya vritti nirodha* and *sajatiya vritti pravah*—these two processes constitute *sadhana*. *Vijatiya vritti nirodha* means putting an end to all incoming impressions from external objects and allowing only those impressions which are conducive to contemplation on the Reality of God. *Vijati* means that which does not belong to our category, genus, or species. What is our species? It is not mankind, human nature, etc. Our species is a spiritual spark, a divine location in our centre. The soul that we are is the species that we are. *Sajatiya vritti pravah* is the movement like the flow of a river or the continuous pouring of oil,

without break, in a thread of such ideas which are of the character of the soul—which is universality.

20th October

HONEY DOES NOT START FLOWING IN THE BEGINNING ITSELF

The practice mentioned is for the purpose of directing the mind slowly towards its final achievement, and for the attenuation of all the obstacles. The difficulties that present themselves with great intensity, ostensibly as if they are insurmountable, will be there in that form for a long time, making it appear that perhaps they are impossible to approach and difficult to overcome. It is the experience of all students of yoga, and saints and sages of the past, that honey does not start flowing in the beginning itself. One cannot see the light of day at the very commencement of the practice. It will be like a dark sky thickly covered with black clouds, and the only thing that one will be able to see or visualise in front of oneself are problems, difficulties, pains, and everything that is the opposite of what one is asking or aspiring for. It is not till very late in the day that a feeling comes within oneself that, after all, things are not so bad as they appear. These difficulties and pains that are consequent upon one's strenuous effort are due to the thick layer of *samskaras* and *karmas* which have been accumulated in oneself since many births. The very personality of the individual is nothing but a bundle of *karmas*.

21st October

LONG PRACTICE IS THE ONLY SOLUTION

Long practice is the only solution. These difficulties, problems, pains, *samskaras* and desires cannot be faced with any armour or apparatus that we have with us. There is no alternative except continued practice. This is a kind of *satyagraha* that we are doing with these desires, we may say. We cannot face them in battle directly because they too are equally powerful. But, we can be persistent to such an extent that there is no chance for them to show their heads again. The feeling that one is moving towards one's goal begins to rise within oneself after years and years of practice—not after months. Of course there are masters, great heroes on the path, who must have done this practice in previous births, such as Jnaneshwara Maharaj, Janaka, and such great heroes of the spirit who showed signs of mastery and achievement early in life. For others it is a torture, but it is a necessary ordeal that one has to pass through for the sake of scrubbing out all the encrustations in the form of anything that goes to make up this personality of ours in all its five vestures. *Annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya*—all these five *koshas* are various densities of the manifestation of desire.

22nd October

IT LOOKS AS IF WE HAVE NO FRIENDS IN THIS WORLD

It is a great symbolic march of the soul towards its goal, represented in such epics as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, etc., where a time presents itself when it looks as if we have no friends in this world. So was the case with Yudhisthira and others. They were thrown into the forest, into the wilderness. They were princes, born of great kings, but who bothers about this heritage and inheritance? They were driven to the wilderness with no help and no succour of any sort whatsoever, as if they were the most unwanted people in the whole world. This is the Mahabharata of the spirit that we are discussing—the war of consciousness with the entire structure of creation. Here, the same problems will arise as have been depicted by the epics. There is an enthusiasm of spirit in the beginning, as was the case with the childish Pandava brothers in their jubilant youth when it looked as if everything was beautiful, the world was friendly, and they had parents, brothers, relatives and protectors. It was all very nice, no doubt. We have parents, friends and brothers, and all things that are needed for safety and security, but suddenly we will find that the earth will give way under our feet and we will be the target of the very same persons and forces whom we looked upon as our friends. The very same cousin-brothers drove the Pandavas out. The Pandavas were helpless—in a predicament which was understandable only to God. Man cannot understand.

23rd October

YOU ARE PATIENT ENOUGH FOR 107

There is an old story of a devotee of Lord Siva. It seems he used to carry a pot of water from a distant river for *abhisheka* in the temple, and he was told by his Guru, “Do *abhisheka* in this manner 108 times, and you will have *darshan* of Lord Siva.” It was a strenuous thing, because he had to carry water for a long distance. This disciple followed the instruction of the Guru, and was indefatigably working, sweating and toiling, carrying this holy water from a distant river and doing *abhisheka* to the *murti*, the *linga* of Lord Siva in the temple. He did it 107 times and got fed up. He said, “107 times I have done it; nothing is coming, and is one more pot going to bring anything?” He threw the pot on the head of Siva and went away. Then it seems, a voice came, “Foolish man! You had not the patience for one more pot? You were patient enough for 107. You could not wait for one more? And that would have worked the miracle!” Likewise may be the fate of many people like us. We may be working very hard. We may be spending half of our life in sincere effort towards achieving something, but at the last moment we lose hope and give up the effort altogether. The advice of Patanjali is that this should not be.

24th October

WHAT ACTUALLY EXISTS IS NOT KNOWN

As far as the origin of bondage is concerned, the common background of all schools of thought and philosophy is the same—namely, ignorance of the true nature of things. ‘Avidya’, ‘ajnana’, ‘nescience’, etc. are the terms used to designate this condition. What actually exists is not known; this is called *avidya*. We cannot, by any amount of effort of the mind, understand what is actually there in front of us; and whatever we are seeing with our eyes or think in our mind is not the true state of affairs. This is called *avidya*. We may logically argue, deduce, induce, but all this is like the definitions given by the blind men who touched different parts of the elephant. Every school of thought is like one blind man touching one part of truth and giving a partial definition of it, but never the whole definition of it. On account of a partial grasp of truth, there is a partial attitude to life; and everything follows from that, one after the other. This principle of bondage is the subject of the vital discussions in Buddhist psychology known as Patīccasamuppāda, or dependent origination. Every successive link in the chain of bondage is dependent in one way or the other on the previous link.

25th October

OUR INDIVIDUALITY IS INSUBSTANTIAL

The inability to perceive the true state of affairs, the absence of an understanding of the correct relationship among things, creates a false sense of values. This sense of values is not merely an abstract imagination, but is a solid metaphysical entity that crops up. *Avidya* is not merely absence of knowledge—just as, as the expounders of this *sūtra* tell us very humorously, the word ‘*amitra*’ in Sanskrit grammatically means ‘no friend’ or ‘non-friend’, though actually it means an enemy. A non-friend is not a non-existent person; he is a very existent enemy. Likewise, even as *amitra* does not mean the absence of a friend but the presence of an enemy, *avidya* does not merely mean the absence of knowledge but the presence of a terrific foe in front of us, which has a positivity of its own. It exists in a peculiar way which eludes the grasp of understanding. So a negative type of positivity is created, we may say, called the individuality, which asserts itself as a reality even though it is based on a non-substantiality. The individuality of ours is insubstantial, like vapour. It has no concrete element within it. It can be peeled off like an onion, and we will find nothing inside it.

26th October

THAT WHICH IS REAL HAS BECOME UNREAL

Piles and piles of notions of this false individuality, *asmita*, get grouped together, and there is an impregnable fortress created in the form of what we are as individuals. It looks as though now the cart is before the horse—that which is real has become unreal, and that which is unreal has become real. The thing that has really evolved as an effect becomes the cause, as it

were; and that which is the cause looks as if it is the effect. The cosmic substance out of which the individuals have evolved has become the object of perception of the individuals, and the latter have usurped the position of the cause of cognition, experience, etc., notwithstanding the fact that they are evolutes. They have come further than the original substance, which is cosmic. This is a very beautiful process described in the Aitareya Upanishad: how the cause can become the effect and the effect can become the cause by a topsy-turvy positioning. Everything is in a state of confusion on account of this situation that has arisen, and there is a total misconstruing of all the features that rule this world. Conclusively, we may say that everything that we think is a wrong thought. There is nothing like correct thinking as far as the reality of the individual is concerned.

27th October

THE MIND IS REALLY NOTHING, BUT DOES EVERYTHING

In one place Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has mentioned in a humorous way that the mind is something which is really nothing, but does everything. This is the world—it is really not there, but it is terrible. That terrific character of it, which is not there, is due to something else that has taken place. There is a transposition of values, on account of which the reality of ‘unreal’ becomes possible. The character of the real is injected into the apparent formation of the unreal, and then the unreal looks like a reality. We transfer ourselves to the objects in our perceptions, and then it is the reality of the background of our being which is the cause for our belief in the reality of objects. All this is unknown because the causative background of our own individuality cannot be known by us since we cannot climb on our own shoulders, or look at our own back, or see our own eyes, etc. Because of the fact that the causes of our individual existence cannot be known by the faculties with which the individuality has been endowed, we are caught up in a confusion—a mess, which is a total disorder.

28th October

THE FEAR OF DEATH IS THE FEAR OF LOSS OF PLEASURE

The confirmed belief in the substantiality of our phenomenal experiences subtly creates a feeling of fear in us simultaneously, which is contrary to the apparent belief in the reality of things. Why are we afraid of things? The fear is due to the subtle feeling of the possibility of one’s being wrenched out of one’s contact with the objects of sense. The fear of death is nothing but the fear of loss of pleasure. “I may lose all my centres of pleasure if the forces of death come and catch hold of my throat.” The love of life which is so inherent in every individual, accompanied by the fear of death, is another form of the love of pleasure; otherwise, why should one fear death so much? It is because the so-called phenomenal relationships created by *asmitta* have formed the impression that there are centres of joy here, and they are the only realities—there is nothing beyond. Can anyone imagine, even with the farthest stretch of thought, that there is any delight possible, or even conceivable, beyond the

pleasures of sense? There is nothing conceivable. We only imagine intellectually, academically—but practically, there is none. Everything is included within sense pleasures. They are everything.

29th October

THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF BONDAGE

It is difficult to know why we feel happiness, why there is pleasure at all in sense contact, unless we know the anatomy of perception itself. Why is it that we are seeing objects? What is it that compels us or drives us towards objects? Where is the need for us to come in contact with things? If the history and the anatomical background of this situation are properly grasped, we may also be able to know to some extent why it is that we wrongly mistake pain for pleasure, and how is it that we can get fooled by the senses in creating a notion of falsehood—how a negative reaction, which is merely a little bit of freedom from tension of nerves, can look like a positive bliss. It is the inability to grasp these things that has created an impression that bodily experiences and phenomenal processes are independent by themselves—a reality taken by themselves. This is the essence of bondage; and how difficult it is to get out of it is clear on the very surface. Most of the endeavours in spiritual practice become failures on account of the causes being left untouched and the effects being taken into consideration with great ardour and force of concentration. This is partly due to circumstantial reasons.

30th October

IGNORANCE IS THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

If we go into the psychology of human nature, we will find that the whole of mankind is stupid and it has no understanding of what right conduct is, in the light of facts as they are. Nevertheless, this is the drama that has been going on since centuries merely because of the very nature of mankind's constitution—he cannot jump over his own skin. But then, suffering also cannot be avoided. We cannot be a wiseacre and at the same time be a happy person. This wiseacre condition is very dangerous, but this is exactly what everyone is, and therefore it is that things are what they are. This *avidya*, or ignorance, is a strange something which is, as we were trying to understand previously in our considerations, a twist of consciousness, a kink in our mind, a kind of whim and fancy that has arisen in the very attitude of the individual towards things in general—which has been taken as the perpetual mode of rightful thinking. This ignorance is the root cause of all mental suffering, which of course is the cause of every other suffering.

31st October

RECOVERING ONE'S SPIRITUAL HEALTH

The yoga practice is terrific in the sense that when we deal with the so-called subject of knowledge which is the mind, we find that we are killing ourselves, as it were. It is like a suicide committed by the so-called empirical subject. And the worst thing that one can conceive of is suicide—death of one's own self. Here, the return of the reflected reality in the form of the individual to its original source—an absorption of the objective character of knowledge into its universal subjectivity—is the so-called death of its empirical existence. Well, it is true. When we become healthy, sickness is destroyed. It is a suicide of illness. There is a destruction of disease when we are to recover health. But it is worthwhile; we cannot say it is suicide. Can we say that the disease is committing suicide? Well, it is so, in one sense. But yet it is a recovery of the original status of the organism—that is called health. Thus is the necessity by the practice of yoga to recover one's spiritual health, which is universality of nature and pure subjectivity of existence.

NOVEMBER

from Your Questions Answered

1st November

YOU ARE A CHILD OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

It has been well said that every particle of our body—call them cells, or whatever they are—are concretisations, manifestations, solid forms of the cumulative force exerted upon a particular centre called the human individuality by the total action of the planets and the Sun. So, you are a child of the solar system. You are not born to any father or mother; these are all social interpretations of your position, but you have a larger stellar relation. You are a citizen of the solar system. We should not be under the impression that the Sun is so far away, the planets are invisible to the eyes, and stars are still further. It is nothing of the kind. There is no distance in this electromagnetic field of the stellar region, the solar atmosphere. ‘Electromagnetic field’ is the description we can give of the manner in which the entire atmosphere works. It is not visible to the physical eye. So forceful, so powerful is this influence that it concretises itself in certain forms which are called individualities. They may be the forms of the plant kingdom or animal kingdom, or human kingdom.

2nd November

THE CHARACTERISTIC OF BEAUTY

Beauty is the characteristic of that object which exactly fits in as a counterpart of the lack in the mind of a person. There is a kind of lacuna in the mind, and the exact counterpart of it is the beauty of the object. It is a purely psychological question. There is a particular lacuna in the mental structure of a person which keeps that person restless, unhappy, etc. Though everyone is unhappy in some way, the cause of that unhappiness is not uniform in all cases. The restlessness and unhappiness may be caused by different factors in the case of different persons, and a corresponding object must be presented before that particular type of mind in order that it may be made to feel happy. What looks beautiful to me may not look beautiful to you. People sometimes get attracted even to ugly things. What you may consider as ugly and uninteresting may be an attractive thing for another person, because he/she is in a different kind of mental make-up. Each one has to find out what it is that attracts. Unless you are hungry, the food will not be satisfying. Your particular kind of hunger will determine the kind of diet that you need.

3rd November

THE SELF IS NOT A PERSON, IT IS A SUPER-PERSON

In the ultimate existence, there is no he, she, it, I and you. Nobody will say “my Self, your Self,” etc. These ideas are empirical, tentative, relative, connected with personality-consciousness, and the Self is not a person, it is a Super-Person. I am giving a hint that there is something more for you to know than the level you have reached now by this analysis. It will take some time even to understand what this great thing is. Knowing your deepest Self is identical with knowing God Himself. That will be a terrifying thing to hear! How will knowing the deepest level of my being be the same thing as knowing God? You have an idea of God as the comprehensive Almighty, the universal omnipresent Being. Is He planted in my own heart at the deepest level of my being? Then what is my relationship with God? After having known that in that deepest level you will have a sense of completeness, the question still persists as to what the relationship is between yourself and God. That is the next step. Whatever we have been discussing up to this time is the first step only. We have not touched the second level.

4th November

MEDITATION IS AN INTEGRATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Meditation is an integration of consciousness. It is not a routine or a ritual. It is not a religious exercise belonging to some religion. It is an opening of yourself to the final realities of life. It has nothing to do with Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, or any religion. It has no connection with any scripture. It is an impersonal act on the part of yourself, wherein you lift up your consciousness to a recognition of the fact that you are a temporary sojourning entity into eternity. You have come from a larger realm, and will enter into the same realm after some time, which will indicate gradually that your existence has a kind of cosmic sweep. From plane to plane you have journeyed in your millions of incarnations. How many planes of existence have you crossed, through what forms of life, what types of experience; how many parents, relations, types of work you have had! All these things you cogitate slowly in your mind so that you start thinking along these lines, and you will not think you are so-and-so any more. This is only a temporary form that the cosmic form has taken due to some karma, some pressure of circumstance.

5th November

A METHOD OF MEDITATION

When you concentrate on any object, your consciousness is transferred to that object, and then the consciousness of your body becomes less. You are thinking too much of this body; therefore, the objects are cut off. But one of the techniques of meditation is to concentrate the consciousness on another thing. It may be anything. Then immediately the attachment to this body gets loosened. That is one method which is prescribed by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras.

That thing which you are concentrating upon can be any object. It can be a little material thing, or it can be God Himself, or all the five elements, or the sun, the moon, the stars, space, time—to anything you can transfer your consciousness. Then, the attachment to this body gets loosened and becomes less and less. Slowly you will find that your mind spreads into a universal state. This is one method of meditation. Here, the consciousness exists between you and what is outside you! Wonder indeed! Keep doing it, and you will see that it comes under control.

6th November

YOU MUST BE ALWAYS HAPPY

In sleep, you had no father, mother, relations—nothing was there. Just, you were there. And, the state of sleep brought you such a joy that you would not like to have any other joy compared to it. Even a king cannot be so happy as a person who has entered into deep sleep, because he has entered the Self, the ocean of Self. And, you had no relations, no property, no friends, no body, no mind at that time. What was there? ‘You’ were there. This is what I call the ocean. Do not make a distinction between practical life and factory life, office life, etc. There is really no such thing. This is a very interesting and important point. You must be always happy, blissful—“Everything is fine; nothing is wrong. Everything is good; all is well with me. Why should it not be? It must be.” Nobody can create trouble for you. Who can create trouble? You are creating trouble for yourself, because you yourself are the trouble. So, why do you complain? The mind is very subtle. It cannot think like this. If it starts thinking thus, it will become giddy, and you will fall into sleep, again.

7th November

THE DESIRE TO MERGE WITH THE OBJECT

Even when a person desires a thing, the subtle desire is to ‘become one’ with it. That is why if you hear that your object of desire is nearby, you feel happy. When it comes near, and you can see it, the joy increases; and when it is coming nearer still, there is more joy. When you touch it, it is still more, but even that is not sufficient. You cannot, unfortunately, go beyond that. You can touch an object of desire, but you cannot enter into it. That is why there is bereavement, suffering, death, birth, following desires. The ultimate desire is to make the object melt into your being. You do not want to stand outside it. You want perpetual enjoyment, but the space-time complex which is outside prevents the object from entering into you because every object is independent; so, how can it become your property? There is no such thing as possessing anything. It is a foolish idea, but actually, the intention is to merge yourself with the self of that object, so that the two selves become one self of a bigger size. If all the selves melt together, it becomes a larger self.

8th November

CREATING A FLASH OF INTUITION

When the intellect asserts itself in deep contemplation, it becomes feeling, and if the intellect and the feeling go together, they can create a flash of what is called intuition. Intuition is nothing but the blending together of intellect and feeling. They are generally acting separately. What we understand, we don't feel; and what we feel, we don't understand. It should not be like that. They must act together parallelly, so that it may be one action of understanding and feeling. Feeling is nearer to you than understanding. Feeling is what you are, actually speaking. Into that the understanding has to sink. This is what they call the process of *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*. Whatever we are discussing now is *sravana*, hearing. I hear what you say, and you hear what I say. Then you cogitate over this matter and sink these thoughts into yourself. Finally, you be that thought itself; that is called *nididhyasana*. This practice has to be carried on throughout the day.

9th November

THE ABSOLUTE WANTS YOU ONLY

The Absolute wants you. It does not want anything else *from* you, it wants *you* only. You cannot give anything to the Absolute, because nothing actually belongs to you. You are alone in the world. There is no such thing as property; it is an illusion. Nobody can own anything. Each thing is independent, so you cannot give anything to God; you can give only yourself. That is the final thing, the sacrifice. For giving yourself to God, there are other ways also, but they all finally lead to meditation only. The final thing is meditation. Where is the Absolute at present? If it is 'everywhere', is there anything outside the Absolute, or does only the Absolute exist? What about all these people sitting here? Are they inside the Absolute? If they are inside the Absolute, what is your attitude towards all things in the world? When you see a thing, what do you feel at that time? You may respect everyone. But there is no 'everyone'. You said there is only one Absolute, so why do you say 'everyone'? Everyone has gone into the Absolute. If this thought can continue always, that is the highest meditation on the Absolute. But, sometimes if you start feeling that there are many things other than the Absolute, then the meditation will not be complete.

10th November

THE HIGHEST TAPAS IS TO THINK LIKE GOD HIMSELF

Tapas is energy and heat, a force generated in the personality by preventing the sense organs from diverting energy outside in the direction of objects. The consciousness, the total quantum of your energy, is diverted by the sense organs outside towards objects of sense when you see a thing, hear, smell, taste, touch, or even think a thing. If you prevent the consciousness from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or even thinking an

externality of any kind, the energy will not go out of your personality. It will be retained inside. Then you will feel strong, energetic, forceful. This process is called *tapas*, an inwardisation of power. For the beginner, this much understanding about *tapas* is sufficient, but the highest *tapas* is to think like God Himself. When you can think as God thinks, that is the greatest *tapas*. You can imagine how God thinks; He will think in one Thought the whole cosmos directly, without the use of any sense organs, i.e. eyes, ears, nose, etc. His very Being is His Thought; His Thought and His Being are identical. In the case of human beings, thought is of an object, but in the case of God, Thought is of Being Itself.

11th November

GOD IS DOING EVERYTHING

The whole universe is acting perpetually for the purpose of the evolution of the lower categories into the higher ones. Actually, there is only one action taking place in the universe. This is why some people say that God is doing everything. The idea behind it is something like the action that the physical body does. For example, whether you lift your hand, walk with your feet, see with your eyes, eat with your mouth, digest with your stomach—whatever be the diversity of these actions, you will agree that it is one action being done by the whole body. In a similar manner, the universe, being a large organism, sometimes called in religion the body of God, all these diversities of action which differ one from the other are actions of the central force which is the will of God or the Centre of the cosmos. There are not many actions taking place in the universe; only one action is taking place, regardless of who is appearing to do it. The problem is that each individual part imagines that it is doing it. It is something like the legs not agreeing with the eyes. You can imagine that they can assert and not give any credit for the cooperation received from the other limbs. Each one could say that it is independent.

12th November

YOU HAVE TO OPEN YOUR HEART

You have to open your heart. You open it, and He will enter. Your mind is filled with thoughts which are other than God's. "Empty thyself and I shall fill thee," is an old saying from the Bible. If you want to fill a basket with the fragrance of flowers, first the rubbish and dust that is inside it must go. Is the mind thinking of God, or is it thinking something else? That 'something else' is the obstruction. You have closed the gates, and you want God to enter. There was a painter in England who painted a picture of a beautiful house. He called all the artists to see if there was any defect in the painting. Everybody admired it, saying that it was beautiful. Finally, one man said that he had forgotten to put a latch on the outside of the door. The painter said that the latch is inside; it is always open from the outside. That is, God's doors are always open, and you put the latch inside so that He may not enter. The idea is that our thoughts are our bondages; our thoughts also are our friends. They can act in two ways, like a double-edged sword. When you develop integrated thought, harmonious

thought, inclusive cosmically oriented thought, God will enter, because God is another name for integrated, harmonious, Absolute Consciousness. That cannot enter the little pin hole which is constricted on account of an abundance of other Earthly desires.

13th November

THE TRUE RELIGION

Some Christians have the feeling that converting also is a duty, because of the fact that Christianity is the true religion, and everyone else who follows another religion is following a lesser religion or perhaps a false religion, and so converting is an essential duty. This is one of the doctrines which has been inculcated to the priests. If a Christian feels that his religion is the true and best religion, it follows from that feeling that others are inferior. If the idea that others are inferior is simultaneous with the feeling of one's own superiority, there is a third corollary following from it that it would be good to transform people into the true religion. This follows automatically. So, if the priest does not do that, he is not doing his duty properly. I have met many good Christians, and they are honest people; one priest from Italy likes me very much. He used to tell people that I am a very nice person, and I am on the right path, and one day I will become a Christian!

14th November

YOU YOURSELF ARE SOMETHING BEHIND SCIENCE

Modern subatomic science is not measurable in terms of ordinary mathematical calculations. All the values of life get negated in a realm where mathematics and logic do not operate. In this condition, science also will not operate. When you cross that limit, it becomes metaphysics. It is not physics any more; it is not geology. It becomes meta-geology afterwards, because any kind of measurement, observation and calculation cannot apply in certain realms. You are feeling that you are sitting here as a whole person, but how should you feel that you are one whole total being when you are made up of little parts? You have got ears and eyes and nose and bone and flesh, heart and lungs. Why don't you feel that you are an assemblage of so many little things? Who is sitting here? You should not say that you are sitting here; you should say that here is a bundle of little particles. Why don't you feel like that? Here you yourself are something behind science. Your very existence as so-and-so defeats the calculative process of science. Otherwise, if it is an observable, measurable thing that you are, then you have to describe yourself as an anatomical and physiological entity, and not so-and-so.

15th November

THE NECESSITY FOR A GURU

Every student must have a Guru. Totally independent marching is not possible. You cannot even pilot an airplane of your own accord without training under some Guru; otherwise,

somewhere wrong you will go. For everything a Guru is necessary. A teacher is absolutely essential, especially in this path where the future is totally unknown to us. We are passing through some track, of which we have no idea at all, and we do not know what is ahead of us. And so, we have to be guarded by the caution of the Guru only, and when you have got a competent Guru, you should have no problems. It is not that every day you should go to the Guru and put questions, but whenever you have a difficulty which is genuine, poignant, and eating your vitals practically, and you are in distress, at that time only you can tell him that this is the difficulty.

16th November

FIRST IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

No medicine can be considered as appropriate unless the diagnosis of the case is done properly. You cannot prescribe any medicine unless you know what the illness is. You may do *vipassana*, *japa yoga*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, *jnana yoga*, *raja yoga*, pilgrimage to holy places, *satsanga* with *mahatmas*, etc., but this is like eating all kinds of medicines from a chemist shop. All right, take it, but what is your illness? Unless you know what your illness is, these medicines will not be of any utility. Thus, each one who meditates must be clear about what the trouble is; if the nature of the trouble is clear, you also know what to do for that. You may do *vipassana*, you may stand on your head; do what you like, but don't unnecessarily do a thing without knowing what your problem is. What is your problem? What is wrong with you that you are running about in search of Gurus and yogas and meditations and all that? Let anybody be clear to one's own self. All right, if your problem is separation from the universe, how will you unite yourself with the universe? How are you going to rectify this mistake? What is the method that you are adopting?

17th November

THIS IS THE SECRET OF YOGA

Your energy becomes less and less as you desire things more and more. Whoever wants things loses energy; whoever is one with things, becomes filled with energy. One who is united with things has no desire for things; this is the way one becomes filled with energy. When things stand outside us, they take away our energy; if they are one with us, they give us energy. This is the secret of yoga. Nothing should stand outside us; everything should be one with us. You cannot be a friend of anybody when that person is outside you. A person has to be one with you in thought and being; then he is a real friend. This is how you can be a friend of all things, even God Himself. When you become the very things that you want, all energy comes in. This is the secret behind success. You have to intensely feel that *you already have what you want*. Then things will really come to you, without your asking for them. This is how energy increases. Yoga is the technique by which you do not run after things, but things, by themselves, will come to you. You have not only to *know* a thing but also to *be* it.

18th November

THE TRANSCENDENT ELEMENT IN US

In a life which is characterised by momentariness and fluxation, with temporality reigning supreme everywhere, and nothing permanent worth the while, with no control finally over anything, what kind of happiness are you expecting in this world? Perhaps happiness that is going to be enduring and not merely fleeting cannot be had in a world which is fleeting by its nature. Nobody can be happy in this world, yet it is happiness that we seek. It looks like a contradiction in our approach. Involved in a world of fluxation and temporality, how do you expect permanent happiness? Yet our heart seems to be yearning for permanent happiness. It doesn't want a joy for one moment, and destruction the next moment. Actually, the joy that we seek is super-physical, super-terrestrial; it is transcendent. All that we empirically experience, sensorially perceive or contact, what we feel psychologically in terms of sense perception is not the joy that we seek, finally. There is a transcendent super-physical element operating in us, and if you can contact that transcendent element in your own self or in the world, you may be contacting the source of your joy. This is the work of religion.

19th November

NOTHING IS EQUAL TO SATSANGA

Meditation is better here because of the influence of the atmosphere. If you are in a different atmosphere, the thought gets diluted. Circumstances and the atmosphere around you have a great influence. If you are alone, you think in one way; if you are in the midst of many people as in a railway compartment, you will think in a different way. If you are inside a church or a temple, you will think in one way; if you are in a marketplace, you will think in a different way altogether. If you are in the presence of a holy man or a great soul, you will think in one way; if you are in the presence of a thief, you will think in a different way. This is to give an example of how circumstances and the atmosphere around have an influence upon oneself. That is why it is said that the most important requisite for a spiritual seeker is company of good people, called *satsanga*. Nothing is equal to *satsanga*. The company of noble persons is the best remedy for every kind of problem in spiritual life.

20th November

PERSONALITY IS A HUMAN CONCEPT

Whether God is a person or not is a fairly important question in the study of theologies everywhere, in all religions. All the Semitic religions (Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam) consider God as a Supreme Person, almost identifying Him with the concept of a Supreme Father. "Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,"—that is how the prayer goes. All these descriptions of God imply that He is a large inclusive universal personality. Personality is a human concept. When we talk of personality, we always think of the pattern of human personality. We don't think of the personality of a lion, or an elephant. Our thoughts are

conditioned by the human way of thinking. Now, is it true that the human way of thinking is the only way of thinking, and there is no other way? A frog also thinks, a reptile thinks, a cow thinks, an elephant thinks. Do you think that their thinking is wrong? We generally think that God is a huge human form, as big as this universe.

21st November

INDIA HAS THE BLESSING OF GOD

India has the blessing of God, somehow. It has not died like other nations, and it does not appear that it is going to die easily. India has suffered due to one mistake that it has committed. It lost its independence for some centuries because it discredited the value of Earthly existence, and gave too much credit to a transcendental existence. That is, the love for God was not equally commensurate with the duty to the world, and so the worldly forces attacked, and God did not come to help because people segmented God Himself into two parts—the Creator and the created. The country suffered economically, militarily, and even in its concept of spirituality. Yet, in its aspiration for the transcendent, though it was not conceived properly in an integral fashion (it was segmented because it was separated from the world's existence), the intensity of the longing for the transcendent was such that its soul is still surviving, though economically, and from the point of view of defense forces, it is not possessed of much that can be admired. Most of the religious people in India asserted the importance of the transcendent Creator, and it was not so easy to bring together into a state of harmony the world and God.

22nd November

THINGS COME, AND THINGS GO

You must be affectionate, kind and compassionate, serviceful and charitable, they say. All this is very, very important indeed, but there is something more important than all these things, which is the destiny of the soul of the human individual—what happens, finally. This world shall vanish one day, with all its humanity. If it had a beginning, it shall have an end, also. Even the solar system may not survive eternally. It would not be a wise complacency on the part of anyone to imagine that everything is fine, as it appears on the surface to the sense organs. Things come, and things go. People are born, and people die. Empires rise, and empires fall. Caesars and Napoleons have come, and many have gone, also. Nothing remains. What is this drama? In this mysterious presentation of the history of the universe, the history of humanity, nothing seems to be enduring, and even when something appears to be enduring for some time, we do not know for how long it will endure. None of us knows how many minutes more we will be in this world, let alone years. There may be only a few minutes, for some reason. We have to learn by past experience, and by history.

23rd November

YOUR MIND IS THE SAME AS YOUR DESIRE

You cannot concentrate on something with a desire for something else. Your mind is the same as your desire. As a cloth is made up of threads, and a cloth is not independent of the threads, the mind is made up of desires, and it is not independent of desires. So, how would you concentrate, except through the mind—which means to say, with your desires only? And, where are your desires? What are the things that you require? If there is chaos in the assessment of your desires, and if you are not very clear as to what it is that you really need in this world, the mind will not be prepared for meditation or concentration. You will be able to concentrate your mind only on that which you desire. You cannot concentrate on anything which you do not desire. Or, to put it more plainly, you can concentrate your mind only on that for which you have deep affection from the bottom of your heart. You cannot concentrate on anything for which you have no affection. Is yoga meditation a kind of unpleasant discipline that is imposed upon you by someone? Or, is it a joyful, spontaneous outpouring of your own feeling, because you want it?

24th November

YOU CANNOT KNOW THE ENVIRONMENT, UNLESS YOU KNOW YOURSELF FIRST

You are perfectly right in saying that you would like to know yourself. Scientists, philosophers, ecologists, politicians, sociologists, whoever they are, make the fundamental mistake of thinking that they are outside the universe, that they can handle it, and harness it as if it is a bull, or a horse, or an elephant—not knowing that they are included in that which they seek. You cannot know the environment, unless you know yourself first. Why should people have such problems, but for the fact that they have misconstrued the whole structure of the environment, which includes themselves, as if the environment is outside? We always think that the environment is sticking to us, like a shawl or a blanket, but, it is not so. The environment is not a blanket which we can throw it away. It is rather like skin; you cannot remove the skin. The environment is your skin itself, so when you handle it, you are handling yourself. Yet, no politician will understand this point because he is selfish, and is concerned with a little temporary gain, and not thinking of the future in the spirit of a statesman.

25th November

THE LAST THOUGHT IS THE CREAM OF ALL THOUGHTS

If you have a secret affection for something which you are not telling anybody, that will come with great force at the end, and that only will work. But, if it is not so—emotionally, also—and you are thinking only this great wonderful thing, you do not want anything in the world, you have no friends, you have nothing, you are concerned only with the Supreme Being and He is everything for you, and all day and night you are thinking That only—then, in that case,

the last thought will be That only. Whatever your emotion says, that will be the last thought. So, this is your question? How can the last thought be something different from what you have been thinking your whole life? It will be the same thought. Why should the last thought be different? The last thought is the cream of all thoughts. There is no distraction. How can there be, unless your mind is thinking very strongly about something—a property, a legacy, a bank balance. “If I die, who will take all this property?”—some people think like that, and then is the trouble.

26th November

THE WHOLE THING YOU HAVE TO SEE AT ONE STROKE

There are no such things as males and females. But, if you say they are, then they are everywhere. Even in trees you will find male trees and female trees. It may be true, also. I am not joking. That is why cross-pollination takes place, and then fruits are produced in the trees. That is a male-female action only. Even insects have male and female distinction—like in honey bees, there are males like drones, and the female is the queen. Everywhere you find the same features. But, if you try to transcend this consciousness, and feel God’s power present everywhere, then the positive and negative, both, will melt into God-consciousness. Then there will be no such distinction as you are thinking. In the lower levels, these distinctions are seen, but in the higher level, they all get fused into God-energy, God-consciousness. So, what is your doubt? What are you concentrating? Why do you want to concentrate on anyone’s face? What is the purpose? You cannot judge a person by seeing the eyes, nose, ears, etc. It is a total that is there. The whole thing you have to see at one stroke—from head to foot simultaneously.

27th November

RELIGIOUS CONCIOUSNESS

Anyone who feels that there is something above oneself is a religious person. Religion is the consciousness of there being something above and beyond oneself. That is all. If you feel that you are complete, and there is nothing beyond or above you, there is no need for religion. This is a simple psychological definition. The consciousness that there is something above, beyond you, more than you, larger than you, transcending you, which you would like to reach, is religion. You may call it religious consciousness, if you like. Now, you are asking if it is necessary to have religion. The way in which you conduct yourself in your daily life, in the light of this consciousness, in this world, is religion. Firstly, there is a consciousness. Secondly, it has an impact upon your daily life and you conduct yourself in a particular manner accordingly. Your behavior, conduct and action are all determined by this consciousness; so one is the cause and another is the effect. You may say that religious consciousness is the cause; religion is the effect. They go together. One cannot be without the other. Experience is nothing but direct entry into this consciousness of religion. At present,

your religious consciousness is only conceptual. It has not actually *become* you. When it becomes you, it is experience.

28th November

WHEREVER THERE IS NO EGO, IT LOOKS BEAUTIFUL

So, the other thought, which is spontaneous, naturally will not be beautiful. It will be a fragmentary and broken thought. Only God-thought is beautiful; no other thought can be called finally beautiful. A complete structure is necessary for anything to be beautiful. Nothing that is not complete can be beautiful. So, who is complete in this world? Tell me. Nobody. And, therefore, nobody is beautiful. Sometimes the most beautiful thing, which is God, gets reflected in something; then, that also looks beautiful. Do you understand? Though God alone is ultimately beautiful, that in which God is reflected also looks beautiful. A child is beautiful, and a saint is beautiful, because both child and saint have no ego. Wherever there is no ego, that state looks beautiful. Wherever there is ego, it looks ugly. Egolessness is the nature of God. God gets reflected in a child and also in a saint, so both look beautiful; but the middle people are not beautiful because they are neither saints nor children. Do you understand? If you are a child, then you are beautiful, because in a child there is innocence, absence of egoism and self-affirmation, so God reflects Himself in that condition. God can be reflected in the things of the world also, provided these things are 'minus ego', and are innocent. Then, God will be reflected there.

29th November

IN THE EASTERN SIDE, THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES OF LIFE

The European way of thinking is, as they usually call it, empiricist. It is based on sensory observation, and on inference based on that perception through the sense organs, believing in nothing that cannot be proved rationally. That is one of the traits of Western thought—believe nothing which cannot be established by rational investigation. And, it is also socially oriented, to a large extent; they think in terms of society and individuals. The value of the individual and the society of individuals is not given up. In the Eastern side, the emphasis is on the universal principles of life. It is not just empiricist. It is also rational. Its emphasis is on the basic principles of all the values of life, which the East thinks is universal in its nature. Western thinking deduces the universality of a thing by observation of particular instances. If many horses are there, there is a general universal principle called horseness, etc. The Universal does not exist by itself, according to Western thinking. It exists as a corollary followed from the observation of many particulars. In the East, the Universal precedes the particular, whereas in the West, the particular precedes the Universal. Here is the great difference between Western thinking and Eastern thinking.

30th November

GOD IS ALL PERFECTION

God has not created distractions. He has created a universe which is complete in itself. And so, you have to see the whole world as God Himself would see it, as a total whole, in which all distractive elements find a proper place. And in their own place, they are perfectly all right. If you take them out of context, they look irregular and undesirable. Put everything in its own context and everything is all right. The whole world is perfect, and you are also perfect, because you are a part of that. This kind of meditation is what I have suggested in my little book *The Problems of Spiritual Life*. Think over that. God's creation is full of contradictions. Nothing is like something else. One leaf in the tree is not like another leaf in the same tree. One person is not like another person. Everything is different. There is so much contradiction; yet, it is a perfect blend of harmony and beauty of creation. This is symbolised in the contradictions of the family of Lord Siva, and the perfect harmony also that He maintains. The worst poison of the snake is the nectar on His body. Nothing will harm Him. So, God is all perfection, and in Him every contradiction that you see in life is harmonised beautifully.

DECEMBER

from The Philosophy of Religion

1st December

NO ONE CAN BE FULLY SATISFIED WITH THINGS

No one in the world can be said to be fully satisfied with things. In whatever condition one may be placed, there is a kind of dissatisfaction. Nothing is complete in life anywhere. There are some complaints to make against everything. Nothing can satisfy anybody, though the reason why cannot be easily understood. One is likely to imagine that all the difficulties are socially constructed. Man looks around and sees people, and is thoroughly dissatisfied with the way they are behaving. "What a wretched society it is!" he often complains under the impression that society is the source of the evil that he sees in life. He believes his sorrows are caused by other people. It is the cursedness of man's nature that is the source of his sorrows. Man is not behaving as man. "What man has made of man," says the poet. Society is not directing itself in the way it ought to. There is something dead wrong in the structure of human society. So, one looks up to the skies and exclaims, "What can I do?"

2nd December

THE SCIENCE OF ETHICS AND MORALITY

There is the science of ethics, often called morality, on which people hang very much for a safe conduct of human life. This is another of man's attempts at trying to tackle his feeling of inadequacy, insecurity, and bondage. A standard or a norm is framed for the behaviour of people, and, if the norm is broken, that behaviour is called unethical, immoral, and so on. Thus, the religions of the world today, especially those which have leant too much on these norms of ethics and morality, have turned out to be nothing but mechanisms of dos and don'ts, a different set of mandates that compel men to behave in a particular manner. While man is forced to behave in a particular manner only, willy-nilly, by the regulations of the government, the mandates of ethics and morality compel him in another way and force him to behave in a standardised manner, whether he wants it or not. So, again, he is in a state of bondage. Not even a ray of freedom can be seen in life. There are always compulsions from every side. Religion compels everyone to say, do, and think in this manner or that manner; society forces in its own way; and so do political governments.

3rd December

EVERY INDIVIDUAL ASKS FOR FREEDOM

It appears that man is a bound soul pressed into a concentration camp, and it further appears that he just cannot hope to discover what he is internally aspiring for. The world does not seem to have the capacity to deliver the goods. There is no freedom in this world. It cannot be seen anywhere. Everybody is tied down by the shackles of some system, regulation, law, ethics, morality—whatever they may be. Governmental laws are external mandates which force man to behave in a given manner. But man cannot be forced like that. Nobody wishes to be compelled to do, or even to think, something by force. There is a spontaneity in man. Every single individual asks for freedom and not bondage, be it of any kind whatsoever. Even to be subjected to the law of a government is a bondage, and to think what man aspired for was freedom! So, when men asked for freedom, they got bondage! From one kind of bondage they have entered into another kind; in the bargain, no freedom has come. Man, now, has a fear of a different type. While he was afraid of one individual or one group of individuals then, now he is afraid of a larger spectre that is before him, which he has himself created, and he does not seem to be any the better for it.

4th December

MAN HAS PROBLEMS WITHIN HIS OWN SELF

What are man's problems? What does he lack finally? It is an ocean of problems, and no one can easily give an answer offhand indicating the source of these difficulties. Man is apparently buffeted from every side. Man has problems within his own self, problems from outside society, and problems and unknown difficulties descending from the heavens like natural cataclysms, catastrophes, etc. In Indian philosophical terminology, these difficulties arising from the three sources are called *tapatraya*, a problem which is threefold in its nature. Inwardly there is some problem, outwardly there is some, and from above there is something else altogether. The fear that man has from things outside him, from men and things, etc., is the external problem. One cannot trust things fully. There is an anxiety about everything. This is the difficulty that he faces from the phenomena outside. There are also fears of a different type whose causes are unknown, which are capable of descending on man from above, like floods, droughts, earthquakes, cyclones, tempests and thunderstorms, and other such natural calamities. But over and above these, there are inward difficulties of one's own. Man is a psychological derelict in himself. There is a conflict in his own personality.

5th December

ENTERING RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

When one enters the religious consciousness, in any degree whatever, one gets transported totally. The soul is in a state of rapture. One is then in a large sea of delight because the whole that is above is trying to pull one out from the lower levels in which one is encased. It is as if

the pith of one's individuality is being drawn out of its shell. Whatever image or description we can employ in understanding this process of the rise of one's being into the levels of religion, we will find that words cannot touch the spirit. No prophet has endeavoured to describe the universal dimension of religion in its essentiality, except in terms of the requirements of a particular time historically, or of a place geographically. The universal can be comprehended only by itself.

6th December

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS SOCIETY

A philosopher must be able to stretch his mind beyond what merely appears to the eyes, into the field of what is not substantial and tangible, even if it may be of notions or concepts. Most of the matters that are important to man are mere concepts. Without these concepts and notions, he cannot live. They are necessary notions. For example, human society is a phenomenon that can be cited. Really, there is no such thing as society. It does not exist. What is there is only a heap of individuals. There are men and women and children. Nothing else is seen. Society cannot be touched. It cannot be even seen with the eyes. A society is a psychological interpretation of relational circumstance, so that it becomes a relation and not a substance. So are administrations, governments, etc. They are not visible to the eyes. Only people can be seen. The building bricks of administrative organisations, even of the human society for that matter, are the individuals which are the substances. So, when an attempt is made to define the content of philosophy, one would be landed in the definition of a substance, an existent something, rather than a notion.

7th December

NOTHING CAN STAND IN THE SAME CONDITION FOREVER

No human institution survives for eternity. All empires came and fell. No kingdom succeeded for eternity, and no institution can, because all institutions which are humanly organised are conditioned by the evolutionary factors to which the minds of people are subject, and, as there is an advance in evolution, there is, naturally, a change in the setup of psychic actions and reactions. Therefore, human institutions cannot be perpetually established in the world. No family, no nation, no empire can stand for ever, because it is not permitted by the law of evolution, just as one cannot be a baby always, though one was a baby once upon a time. A baby becomes a mature person, and advances. The systems of organisation in the form of social institutions grow into maturity, and they become old like the individual; then they decay, and they perish. The law of growth and decay that is seen in the individual personality and things operates even in institutions. This is so because institutions are only manufactured goods psychologically projected by the characteristics of the individual, which are subject to this evolutionary process of growth, decay, and final

extinction. The whole world seems to be subjected to this law of evolution. Nothing can stand in the same condition forever.

8th December

THERE IS A MYSTERY HANGING ABOVE OUR HEADS

Philosophy is a study of causes behind events, or, rather, the causes of effects, or, to push it further, it may be said to be a study of the ultimate cause of things. This is the subject of philosophy. Why should there be anything at all, and why should it behave the way it behaves? It is often said that science is distinguished from philosophy in this: that, while science can tell the 'how' of things, it cannot explain the 'why' of things. That is not its field. The 'why' of anything is investigated into by the study known as philosophy. Unless the question as to the 'why' of a thing is answered from within oneself, one cannot feel finally contented. There is a mystery hanging above our heads, and everything seems to be a mist before us. Why should anything conduct itself or behave in the way it does? Social philosophies of different types study the nature of human behaviour. The science of sociology, again, confines itself to the 'how' rather than the 'why' of human behaviour. "How do people conduct themselves, and how do they behave in human society?" it asks. But we have a different faculty within us which puts the question: "Why do these people behave in this manner?" We often say, "I do not know why people are behaving in that way."

9th December

ONLY THE MATERIAL WORLD IS SEEN

There are two aspects of experience—the real and the unreal; and everything can be divided into two camps—that which really is, and that which is an appearance. That which does not partake of the characteristics of reality is called appearance. One of the philosophers has defined reality as that which persists in the three periods of time, that which existed in the past, that which exists in the present, and that which shall exist in the future also, without any change. But, with our eyes, we have not seen any such thing. There is nothing in the world which will stand this kind of a test of indestructibility, unchangeability, and permanence. All the same, the inherent instinctive feeling of man that there exists such a reality, along with the urge to find a solution to the human predicament, motivates the search for reality, which, quite naturally and understandably, starts with the analysis of the immediately available human experience, which is the world. There is only the material world seen, and generally this is regarded as the reality. The world is the reality before man—the physical world of the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. The philosophical and scientific minds analyse this fivefold elemental existence into several bits of components, which may be called chemical compounds.

10th December

THE SUPREME AIM OF LIFE IS THE ATTAINMENT OF MOKSHA

Ultimately, the supreme aim of life is not the fulfilment of any desire, but the attainment of liberation, moksha. The evolutionary process of the cosmos is the movement of all phenomena towards Self-realisation, not of any given individual, but of all things uniformly. It is the Self-realisation of the universe. The universe is struggling to become aware of its own existence as a total whole. The cosmos is endeavouring to regain its integrality in an all-inclusive Self-awareness. Towards this end, every part of it is moving, like the parts of a machine when it is operating. The goal of life is the attainment of God, the realisation of the Absolute, the unity of the individual with the cosmos. This is Moksha. This is the final aim of all life.

11th December

EVERY THOUGHT IS A WHOLE THOUGHT

The spirit of religious worship and meditation has to saturate and seep into the secular life, if life is to become a healthy whole. Even as cloth soaked in water absorbs into its very fibre the whole of water, the apparently secular life has to become a living step to the more organised dimension of religious experience. Meditation need not necessarily mean a withdrawal in an antisocial or unsocial manner. Nothing can be more natural than meditation. Meditation need not suggest the shutting oneself off psychologically from certain other functions of life. The psyche is a whole, a Gestalt, as they usually call it. It is not a partitioned house divided against itself. The psychological organ is a compact indivisibility. Every thought is a whole thought. Thus, when we enter into meditation, the entire psychic wholeness gets charged, even those aspects which are connected with the well-known secular engagements.

12th December

IT IS NOT THAT ONE MOUNTAIN IS HERE, ANOTHER THERE

Generally, we have the feeling that matter is contained as a substance inside space. Very rarely does one feel that there is such a thing called time. Man is inviolably connected with the process of time. Yet, he thinks very little of it, but is acutely conscious of space. The dimensions of matter, which man identifies with the substances of the world, are due to the extensions of space. There is what is called distance, and that principle of distance is due to the existence of space. Man has an intuitional apperception of the characteristic of space, such that he does not bother much about its nature. He thinks that it is all clear. Everyone knows what space is—it is a kind of emptiness, we think, which contains every blessed thing. This was the original eighteenth or nineteenth century conclusion of even physics, which led to the notion that the universe of astronomy is an arrangement of material bodies which were formed out of the galaxies, and which constituted the solar system, the Earth, the planets, etc. However, it is not evidently easy to accept that bodies are scattered independently in

space, as if they have no connection whatsoever among themselves. It is not that one mountain is here, another there, or one tree is here and another there, without any connection between the two.

13th December

THERE IS, PERHAPS, A COSMIC SOCIETY

The deeper does one go into the world of matter, and the further does one move in the direction of space, the more is the insight one gains into the secret of the operation of nature, the secret being an organic relation among bodies, which appears to be outwardly scattered in space. It is humanly impossible to imagine how the Earth, for instance, can move along the same track which it was following for aeons up to this time, as if there is a set of rails laid down on its path in space. Man is used to thinking that things, like the planet Earth, are inorganic, inanimate, incapable of thought, without eyes to see and minds to think. But the precision with which bodies work surpasses even the best mathematical imagination. Perhaps, man has invented the system of mathematics only on the observation of the way in which material bodies operate. We are not intending to refute the opinion of rationalists like Kant, however, in connection with the grounds of mathematical intuition. It cannot be explained how such a precision can be possible at all, where the action of the mind is not even apparent. Though this is difficult to understand because of man's habit of thinking, probably, finally, he will have to come round to attribute an intellect or a reason to what goes as inanimate existence. There is, perhaps a cosmic society, even as man has his own little small human society.

14th December

MAN IS NOT OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSE

What does the modern scientist say? Matter has been dematerialised. Matter is no more considered to be a hard, solid substance. Man is gradually evaporating into thin air—so thin, so ethereal, and so fine that a time has come now when it is not possible to distinguish his own presence from the wider atmosphere of the universe. The observing scientist, or the philosopher, is inside the universe. This is important to remember. How can man look at the universe when he is a part of it? How can man study anything in this world? How can he make an analysis of any object, if he is not really outside it? From the fact of the conclusions that one arrives at through the consequences following from the law of gravitation, it follows that the universal structure cannot exclude the contents thereof. Man is not outside the universe. This should be a simple fact. If he is not outside the universe, how can he study the universe? Where comes the need, and the necessity, or even the possibility of his observing anything? Here is the crux of the whole situation. The problem that hangs like an iron curtain

in front of the modern scientist is this difficulty of his inability to disentangle himself from the object of his observation.

15th December

MAN IS A CONCENTRATED POINT OF ENERGY

Human personality is not a granite or flint pillar. Man is not a solid object. Your personality or my individuality —whatever it may be called—is not a solid object like a stone, a brick, or a heavy substance. It is a movement, a continuous transition, rather than a thing that exists exclusively. Man is a concentrated point of movement. This is an important thing to remember. Movement can be higgledy-piggledy, chaotic action, running about in any direction, or like the cyclone or the wind that blows, but the movement that is human personality is not a jumble of agitation. It is not a tempest that blows in any direction as it wills. It is a well-organised purposive movement. There is a system even in madness, as they usually say. In this transitoriness that the human personality is, in this movement that man is, in this complex of forces rather than of substances that he seems to be, there is an order, a system, a method, and a logic of its own. That is why human beings are actually sane and not wild sceneries. If man were to blow like wind, and the components of his personality were to go anywhere they willed like a storm in the ocean, he would be torn to pieces; a part of him would be there, and another part of him would be anywhere else.

16th December

THE NEED FOR MEDITATION ON CONSCIOUSNESS

The philosophical foundations and the religious consequences of the analysis lead to the need for a meditation on consciousness as the quintessence of the whole adventure. All study, all endeavour, and every enterprise, in every walk of life, results in the fixing of oneself in a type of reality. This is precisely the function of meditation. To recognise one's true relationship with the Ultimate Reality is to place oneself in the context of the highest form of meditation. Meditation is, in fact, not a psychological act or a physical movement, or even a social adjustment, but a trans-empirical attitude of the whole of what one is, a perfection of outlook one adopts in the light of the nature of the facts of life. From the beginning of this study, an attempt has been made to understand what reality is, how it manifests itself by degrees of expression in the universe and in the individuals who form themselves into groups, societies, or organisations for the purpose of self-fulfilment. There is a gradual descent of the character of reality in the process of creation, and the aim of meditation is just the opposite of this descending series. Meditation leads to the gradual ascent of self by degrees of expansiveness.

17th December

MEDITATION IS PRACTISING TRUE RELIGION

When one is in a mood of meditation, one is practising true religion, but by so doing one does not belong to any particular religious cult. We live religion when we are in a state of meditation, because religion is the relation between man and God, between the soul and the Absolute. The affirmation of it in life is religion's aim. Religion is not the act of belonging to a creed, a temple, or a church. It is an inward acceptance of one's conscious relation with the Almighty, who presents Himself as the degrees of Deity in the different religions. When we are in a holy mood, we are really in the temple of God. When we are in a state of meditation, we are in the church of Christ. The temple or the church is this very transcendence which is the spirit of religion that occupies a position superior to the empirical subjects and objects of the world. The church does not belong to the world. It is a divine occupation, lifted above the mundane. The temples are trans-earthly atmospheres which have in their precincts whatever is of value. Anyone seated there does not belong to sides or parties, but to the Divine Whole. This world is nothing but a spatio-temporal complex of subjects and objects. And our endeavour is to overcome this limitation. One becomes truly religious only in meditation. In other activities one sinks back into the bodily individuality.

18th December

IT IS NOT TRUE THAT MATTER IS THE SAME AS LIFE

What is meant by *prana*? What is life? The biologists tell us that there is a thing called life which is incapable of identification with matter. Though, many times, mechanistic materialists have held the opinion that life is not different from matter, it has become very difficult to accept this doctrine. How can anyone say that life is the same as brick, or a body with which one is lumbering, and without which also one can exist? It is seen that man can exist even without being conscious of the body. If the body were the same as life, life would be extinct when it is dissociated from the body. But man is alive even in dream, sleep, and states of deep concentration. In deep meditation one is not aware of the body. Man would be dead at one stroke, if it were true that matter is life, in conditions when the body is not an object of his consciousness. It is not true that matter is the same as life. They are two different things. But it is difficult to understand what the relationship is between these two. No one has ever come to a final conclusion as to what life means. It is this life-force that is called *prana-sakti*. There is the *prana-sakti*, the power of the *prana*. *Prana* is vitality, living force, organic energy. It is a living, protoplasmic, organismic, and energising vitality in man. Sometimes *prana* is identified with breath. But it is interior even to breath.

19th December

FOOD IS ALSO A KIND OF MEDICINE

The vital energy within man is the sum total of his strength. Whatever strength or energy that one has is nothing but the *prana*. It does not always come just from the food that one eats. Though fuel is necessary to ignite fire, fuel is not the same as fire; petrol is not fire, though petrol is necessary for ignition. There is a difference between the heat, and that which causes the heat to ignite by means of a fuel. So, while energy is accelerated, accentuated, and enhanced by consumption of food, it is not identical with strength itself. Strength is an impersonal capacity that is within man, the force that is inside. How does man gain strength at all? It is not merely from the almonds that he eats, or the milk that he drinks. A corpse also can have food thrust into it; milk may be poured into its mouth, but it cannot gain strength. Any food that is served to the corpse cannot infuse energy into it. Another principle, called vitality, is necessary for the energisation or the digestion of the food that is eaten. Vitality is that which helps the working of the medicine that is taken, but if the vitality is gone, medicine is dead matter. It helps no one. So is the case with food. Food is also a kind of medicine that is taken for the illness of hunger, but it itself cannot provide the energy, unless there is vitality within.

20th December

THE FIVE FUNCTIONS OF PRANA

The *prana* is a common name that is applied to the total capacity in man, the energy of the personality, but it performs different functions. When a man does the work of dispensing justice, he is called a judge; when he is a chief executive of a district, he is called a collector; when he dispenses medicine, he is called a physician, and so on. The same person is known by different names on account of the functions he performs. So is this *prana*, which performs five functions. When one breathes out there is exhalation, and *prana* is operating. *Prana* is a term that is used in a double sense. It indicates the exhaling force, and also the total energy of the system. So, *prana* means two things—the force that expels the breath out in exhalation, and also the total energy. The force by which one breathes in is called *apana*. The force that circulates the blood through every artery, vein and every part of the body equally, is *vyana*. It is known that the body is connected to other parts in such a harmonious manner that if any part of the body is touched, the sensation is felt in every other part also. This sensation that is felt in every part, as a wholeness of one's personality, is due to the *vyana* operating, a particular aspect of the function of the energy which moves throughout the body equally. The energy that digests the food is called *samana*. There is another force which causes the deglutition of food. When food is put into the mouth, it is pushed inside to the oesophagus, through the part of the throat by which food is swallowed. An energy operates here.

21st December

MAN'S STRENGTH DEPENDS UPON THE ENERGY OF THE COSMOS

Prana gets irregularly distributed in the personality on account of desires, primarily. Man is full of desires. No one is free from them. But, if they are wholesome desires, harmonious with the atmosphere or the environment in which one is, they do not cause agitation. There is nothing devilish about desires as such, but, then, there is nothing devilish about anything in the world, ultimately. Everything is right, provided it is in its allotted place. Only when a thing is put out of context, when it is misplaced, or is given an excessive importance, especially when there is intense love and intense hatred, the *prana* is thrown out of gear, and there is a lack of its equidistribution in the body. Love, of course, is good, and man lives only by love—certainly so. But it does not mean that one should pour one's love on a particular object only. The lowest kind of knowledge is that where there is concentration on a finite object, as if it is everything. Love is the source of our vitality, energy, health, and sustenance; but love directed exclusively to a single object is a danger. There, *prana* is directed unwholesomely in one direction only, cutting off its relationship with other objects. Man's strength depends upon the energy of the cosmos.

22nd December

MAN CANNOT MEDITATE ON BRAHMAN

Brahman is the Absolute, and one cannot meditate on Brahman, because it is inclusive of even the meditator himself. Man cannot meditate on God because God includes the human location. Thus, to endeavour to meditate on the omnipresence of God would be a simultaneous attempt to abolish one's own individual existence. When God is, man ceases to be. This is a subtle result that would insinuate itself into the effort at meditation on the supremacy of All-Being. God, thus, ceases to be an object of individual contemplation. God is the Supreme Subject which contemplates Itself as the All. One, generally, regards oneself as the subject, and what is contemplated upon as the object. But in the case of God, conceived in the true sense of the term, the meditating consciousness affiliates itself with the object in such an intimate manner that in this inward association of the meditator with the object of meditation it would appear that the object itself is in a state of meditation.

23rd December

MEDITATION IS GOD BATHING HIMSELF

In a heightened form of meditation, the meditating spirit enters into the body of the object with such force that it dissolves itself in the object, as rivers melt down in the ocean. In a sense, it may be said that no one is meditating on God, because that someone is a part of God's all-comprehensive Being. Then, who would do the meditation? When one goes deep into this investigative spirit, it would be realised that it is a meditation with which God is bathing Himself. It is God becoming conscious of Himself, or the universe getting illumined

into its own self-conscious attitude. One cannot distinguish between the universe and God in the ultimate sense. The distinction has arisen on account of our maintaining an individuality of our own as physical bodies, social units, psychological egos, etc. The Yoga-Vasishtha tells us that the highest form of meditation is an inward affirmation of the cosmic presence of Brahman. This is what is known as Brahma-Abhyasa. The form which the mind takes in this meditation is known as Brahmakara-Vritti, the psychosis which assumes the form of the cosmic substance.

24th December

CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE FULLNESS OF THE UNIVERSE

Meditation is our graduated participation in the consciousness of this enveloping fullness. It is achieved by degrees. The divine consciousness manifests itself in stages in the evolutionary processes of the universe. Even the little individual mind here, as a person, is a degree of that very consciousness. But here, in the case of man, it has descended to so low a state that it has identified itself with the physical form and is unable to feel its presence in other forms. The all-pervading consciousness has come down to the physical forms and has become individual bodies and objects. The lowest descent has taken such a morbid shape that it cannot recognise its kinship with the rest of the world. It has got tied up to the four walls of this tiny body and it cannot visualise itself in other such bodies. But, though it cannot consciously feel its presence in others, yet, subconsciously, or unconsciously, it is pulled towards other things, for it is, after all, present there at the invisible depths and centres of things. Consciousness cannot be destroyed; it is immortal and undividedly present. The unconscious pull exerted by its own presence in other things is the reason behind attractions, affections, loves and spirits of organisation in creation, from the lowest forms of the gyration of the atoms to the galaxies that spin through endless space.

25th December

MAN IS A GREATER MYSTERY AND SECRET

Space and time are supposed to be one complex whole. They are proved to be not two different things in the end. The objects, including human bodies, being placed in the context of space-time are conditioned by the nature of the space-time complex. If man were to be living in a different order of space-time, he would certainly not be a human being as he is now. But, man is a greater mystery and secret than can be observed on the outer surface. The analysis that Indian philosophers have made here is astounding. The study of philosophy in India began by a study of the nature of man. However, philosophy in the West, in its empirical meanderings, was confined to the study of the human individual as a subject from the point of view of experiences available in the waking life. Everyone, in the waking condition, is aware of the presence of the world outside, through the operation of the sense organs. What does man learn when he is awake? He sees a world. But how does he see a

world? He is aware of the existence of the world by means of various factors that work together in bringing about this knowledge.

26th December

OCCULT MEDITATIONS

Meditations which are more occult in nature consist mainly in the exercise of the will, charged with a determined understanding. This system, too, has a philosophical basis, though it takes an intensely practical turn when the exercise commences. This type of meditation is psychic in the beginning though spiritual in the end, a process by which one places oneself in a closer affinity with the objects of the world. By continued habituation to the subsisting relationship between oneself and the things of the world one gets into their substance and, in a sense, embraces the very roots of objectivity. The meditational techniques prescribed in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali border upon a cosmic association of oneself with objects, stage by stage, commencing with particular things chosen for the purpose of meditation, and gradually expanding the area of action into other objects, culminating in the concentration of consciousness on that great reservoir of all things, the universe of elements and forces.

27th December

I CANNOT DOUBT THAT I AM DOUBTING

The great philosopher of India, Acharya Sankara, and another reputed philosopher of the West, Rene Descartes, thought on equal terms at different times in regard to the nature of the self. The doubting of the existence of one's own self has been regarded as impossible, because scepticism, while it can be applied to the nature of things outside, cannot be applied to the conclusions arrived at by the sceptic himself. The doubting of everything is an acceptance of the doubtless position which the sceptic maintains. The conclusions of a sceptical argument are not subject to the very same scepticism to which other things are subject. "I cannot doubt that I am doubting." This is the basic conclusion one finally lands upon. One can doubt everything but cannot doubt that one is doubting, because if one doubts the doubting, such doubting would have no sense. There is some peculiarity in man which defies the grasp at ordinary logical analysis. And this was the stand taken finally by most of the Indian philosophers. This mystery, this secret, may form the key to unlock the secrets of all nature. This "I am," or "I exist" is uncontradictable, undeniable, and is infallible knowledge.

28th December

MAN IS NOT ALWAYS WAKING

There are occasions when man passes through states which are different from the waking one. Man is not always waking; he is in other conditions also, when he still exists. Dream is one instance. Man exists even in dream; he is not dead. But here the waking consciousness does not operate; the senses are not active. One does not see with the eyes, does not hear with

the ears. If a sound is made near the ears when one is dreaming, he may not hear it; if a particle of sugar is placed on the tongue, he may not taste it. A mechanism operates even in the state of dream. And, "I dreamt yesterday," is what everyone generally says when one wakes up from dream. Did 'I' exist in dream? Yes, 'I' did exist. In what condition did 'I' exist? Not as the body, for the body was inactive. One was not aware of the existence of the body. One could not identify oneself with the body. Man was not the body at all, for all practical purposes, in his dream. What was he, then? Well, one may say, "I was only the mind." The mind was operating; the mind was existing; the mind was functioning; the mind was experiencing the whole phenomena of what could be regarded as a dream life.

29th December

I KNEW NOTHING, I HAD A GOOD SLEEP

Deeper still, there is a state called sleep. What happens in sleep? Even the mind does not operate here. This is important to note. The intellect, feelings, volitions, and sense organs all cease to operate. But does man exist in sleep? Yes, he does exist. In what capacity? What is man then? "I am" is the assertion that everyone generally makes on waking. But in what way was one existing? In what state was this "I", the self? In the state of deep sleep the "I" did not exist as the body. It did not exist as the intellect which was then not functioning. There was no psychic operation of any kind in the state of sleep. When there is no body, no mind, what remains in man? Nothing remains; it is a vacuum, as it were. Man was in an inexplicable darkness, which is identified with sleep. No one knows anything in sleep. What does everyone say about sleep when one wakes up in the morning? "I knew nothing; I had a good sleep." But when one says, "I knew nothing, I had good sleep," one is making a self-contradictory statement. If nothing was known, how could one know that one slept well? It is not true that one does not know anything, though it appears there is no object of consciousness in sleep. One does not know anything in sleep, because there is no external object there.

30th December

IT IS BEING WHICH IS CONSCIOUSNESS

Everyone was in the state of deep sleep, in a condition of pure being—impersonal, featureless, indeterminate awareness associated with existence. What was everyone in the state of deep sleep? Only existence which is associated with consciousness in an integral manner. It was not existence and consciousness. It was existence which was consciousness, Sat-Chit. The Vedanta philosophy uses the word 'Sat-Chit', which means Existence-Consciousness. The difficulty of language is such that no word can be used at all to designate what Sat-Chit means. They are not two different things or states. It is Being which is Consciousness, or Consciousness which is Being. Being is Consciousness, and Consciousness is Being. So the hyphen is used, Existence-Consciousness, because no other way is known to write it down.

Everyone is only Existence-Consciousness in the state of deep sleep. If the Self is Consciousness, naturally it cannot be divisible. It is not partite, it is impartite. If one imagines a division of Consciousness, theoretically at least, or academically, one has to imagine a space between two parts of Consciousness, because what distinguishes one thing from another thing is space, or time. Now, can one imagine that there is space between two parts of Consciousness?

31st December

EXISTENCE WHICH IS CONSCIOUSNESS IS BLISS

Existence which is Consciousness is of the character of Bliss. Why is it Bliss? Because, all suffering and finitude, every difficulty and penury of any kind, is the result of the finitude of one's nature. When one has become the Infinite, all desires are fulfilled. The desires are not abolished or destroyed in the Infinite, as people may imagine. All wishes are totally fulfilled in their reality. We enjoy at present dream objects, a shadow of the substance, as it were. But there, one becomes the archetype or the original of things, as if one in dream rises into the waking life and beholds the reality of things as they are. Even this Bliss is not separate from Existence-Consciousness. Existence, which is Consciousness, itself is bliss. If the Self is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss in deep sleep, can it be otherwise in the waking and dream states? No, because it is indivisible, thus, infinite; it would be the same always. Thus, essentially, the Self is Sat-Chit-Ananda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Here Infinity and Eternity get blended into All-Being.

Om Tat Sat.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.