

ASMI

Excerpts from Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj's *I AM THAT*

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with

The Nisargadatta Song of I Am and The Nisargadatta Song of Beyond I Am

compiled and edited by Jerry Katz

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1. I am not this person, this body-mind or any thing

As I can't be what I perceive, I am not this body-mind or any thing that I am conscious of.

As body, you are in space. As mind, you are in time. But are you a mere body with a mind in it? Have you ever investigated? (252)

Why not investigate the very idea of body? Does the mind appear in the body or the body in the mind? Surely there must be a mind to conceive the "I-am-the-body" idea. A body without a mind cannot be 'my body'. 'My body' is invariably absent when the mind is in abeyance. It is also absent when the mind is deeply engaged in thoughts and feelings. (434)

You observe the heart feeling, the mind thinking, the body acting; the very act of perceiving shows that you are not what you perceive. (2)

The perceived cannot be the perceiver. Whatever you see, hear or think of, remember - you are not what happens, you are he to whom it happens. (519)

Desire, fear, trouble, joy, they cannot appear unless you are there to appear to. Yet, whatever happens points to your existence as a perceiving centre. Disregard the pointers and be aware of what they are pointing to. (220)

Realize that every mode of perception is subjective, that what is seen or heard, touched or smelt, felt or thought, expected or imagined, is in the mind and not in reality, and you will experience peace and freedom from fear. (201)

When you realize that the distinction between inner and outer is in the mind only, you are no longer afraid. (464)

You are neither the body nor in the body. There is no such thing as body. You have grievously misunderstood yourself. To understand rightly, investigate. (253)

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To myself, I am neither perceivable nor conceivable; there is nothing I can point out to and say: "this I am". You identify yourself with everything so easily; I find it impossible. The feeling "I am not this or that, nor is anything mine" is so strong in me that as soon as a thing or a thought appears, there comes at once the sense "this I am not". (268)

Whatever you may hear, see or think of, I am not that. I am free from being a percept or a concept. (152)

As you cannot see your face, but only its reflection in the mirror, so you can know only your image reflected in the stainless mirror of pure awareness. See the stains and remove them. The nature of the perfect mirror is such that you cannot see it. Whatever you can see is bound to be a stain. Turn away from it, give it up, know it as unwanted. All perceivables are stains. (126)

Having perfected the mirror so that it reflects correctly, truly, you can turn the mirror round and see in it a reflection of yourself - true as far as the mirror can reflect. But the reflection is not yourself - you are the seer of the reflection. Do understand it clearly - whatever you may perceive, you are not what you perceive. You can see both the image and the mirror. You are neither. (330)

Remember, nothing you perceive is your own. (510)

What is really your own, you are not conscious of. (445)

You are nothing that you are conscious of. (458)

As there must be something unchanging to register discontinuity, I am not this body-mind, which is neither continuous nor permanent.

The mind is discontinuous. Again and again it blanks out, like in sleep or swoon or distraction. There must be something continuous to register discontinuity. Memory is always partial, unreliable and > evanescent. It does not explain the strong sense of identity pervading consciousness, the sense "I am". Find out what is at the root of it. (307)

You cannot be conscious of what does not change. All consciousness is consciousness of change. But the very perception of change - does it not necessitate a changeless background? (516)

Changes are inevitable in the changeful, but you are not subject to them. You are the changeless background, against which changes are perceived. (333)

The self based on memory is momentary. But such self demands unbroken continuity behind it. You know from experience that there are gaps when your self is forgotten. What brings it back to life? What wakes you up in the morning? There must be some constant factor bridging the gaps in consciousness. If you watch carefully, you will find that even your daily consciousness is in flashes, with gaps intervening all the time. What is in the gaps? What can there be but your real being, that is timeless? Mind and mindlessness are one to it. (333)

Realize that whatever you think yourself to be is just a stream of events; that while all happens, comes and goes, you alone are, the changeless among the changeful, the self-evident among the inferred. Separate the observed from the observer and abandon false identifications. (215)

The succession of transient moments creates the illusion of time, but the timeless reality of pure being is not in movement, for all movement requires a motionless background. It is itself the background. Once you have found it in yourself, you know that you had never lost that independent being. (409)

What changes is not real, what is real does not change. Now, what is it in you that does not change? As long as there is food, there is body and mind. When the food is stopped, the body dies and the mind dissolves. But does the observer perish? It is a matter of actual experience that the self has being independent of mind and body. It is being-awareness-bliss. Awareness of being is bliss. (210)

You must realize yourself as the immovable behind and beyond the movable, the silent witness of all that happens. (319)

As the person is a changing stream of mental objects that I as the subject take to be my body-mind, I cannot be a person. I am, but I can't be this or that.

Nothing is wrong with you, but the ideas you have of yourself are altogether wrong. It is not you who desires, fears and suffers, it is the person built on the foundation of your body by circumstances and influences. You are not that person. (424)

The person is never the subject. You can see a person, but you are not the person. (64)

Your being a person is due to the illusion of space and time; you imagine yourself to be at a certain point occupying a certain volume; your personality is due to your self-identification with the body. (205)

How does personality come into being? By identifying the present with the past and projecting it into the future. (206)

The body-mind is like a room. It is there, but I need not live in it all the time. (153)

The person is merely the result of a misunderstanding. In reality, there is no such thing. Feelings, thoughts and actions race before the watcher in endless succession, leaving traces in the brain and creating an illusion of continuity. A reflection of the watcher in the mind creates the sense of "I" and the person acquires an apparently independent existence. In reality there is no person, only the watcher identifying himself with the "I" and the "mine". (343)

It is because the "I am" is false that it wants to continue. Reality need not continue -

knowing itself indestructible, it is indifferent of forms and expressions. To strengthen and stabilize the "I am", we do all sorts of things - all in vain, for the "I am" is being rebuilt from moment to moment. It is unceasing work, and the only radical solution is to dissolve the separative sense of "I am such and such <person" once="" and="" for="" good="" being="" remains="" but="" not="" self-being="" (299)="">

It is not the "I am" that is false, but what you take yourself to be. I can see, beyond the least shadow of doubt, that you are not what you believe yourself to be. (458)

What is really your own, you are not conscious of. What you are conscious of is neither you nor yours. Yours is the power of perception, not what you perceive. It is a mistake to take the conscious to be the whole of man. Man is the unconscious, the conscious and the superconscious, but you are not the man. Yours is the cinema screen, the light as well as the seeing power, but the picture is not you. (445) </person">

As it is my presence, which is always here and now, that gives the quality of actual to any event, I must be beyond time and space. I was never born, nor will ever die.

Take the idea "I was born". You may take it to be true. It is not. You were not born, nor will you ever die. It is the idea that was born and shall die, not you. By identifying yourself with it you became mortal. (392)

Your mistake lies in your belief that you were born. You were never born nor will you ever die. (83)

Between the remembered and the actual there is a basic difference which can be observed from moment to moment. At no point of time is the actual the remembered. Between the two there is a difference in kind, not merely in intensity. The actual is unmistakably so. By no effort of will or imagination can you interchange the two. Now, what is it that gives this unique quality to the actual? A moment back, the remembered was actual, in a moment the actual will be the remembered. What makes the actual unique?

Obviously, it is the sense of being present. In memory and anticipation, there is a clear feeling that it is a mental state under observation, while in the actual the feeling is primarily of being present and aware. Wherever you go, the sense of here and now you carry with you all the time. It means that you are independent of space and time, that space and time are in you, not you in them. It is your self-identification with the body, which, of course, is limited in space and time, that gives you the feeling of finiteness. In reality you are infinite and eternal. (516)

2. I am the Self, the Witness of Consciousness, pure Awareness.

I am only the Self, which is universal and imagines itself to be the outer self, a person.

Somebody, anybody, will tell you that you are pure consciousness, not a body-mind. Accept it as a possibility and investigate earnestly. You may discover that it is not so, that you are not a person bound in space and time. Think of the difference it would make!
(441-2)

The personality (vyakti) is but a product of imagination. The self (vyakta) is the victim of this imagination. It is the taking yourself to be what you are not that binds you. The person cannot be said to exist on its own rights; it is the self that believes there is a person and is conscious of being it. (143)

How can there be two selves in one body? The "I am" is one. There is no "higher I-am" and "lower I-am". All kinds of states of consciousness are presented to awareness and there is self-identification with them. The objects of observation are not what they appear to be, and the attitudes they are met with are not what they need to be. If you think that Buddha, Christ or Krishnamurti speak to the person, you are mistaken. They know well that the vyakti, the outer self, is but a shadow of the vyakta, the inner self, and they address and admonish the vyakta only. They tell him to give attention to the outer self, to guide it and help it, to feel responsible for it; in short, to be fully aware of it. Awareness comes from the Supreme and pervades the inner self; the so-called outer self is only that part of one's being of which one is not aware. One may be conscious, for every being is conscious, but one is not aware. What is included in awareness becomes the inner and partakes of the inner. (294)

The self you want to know, is it some second self? Are you made of several selves? Surely, there is only one self and you are that self. The self you are is the only self there is. Remove and abandon your wrong ideas about yourself and there it is, in all its glory.
(516-7)

There is no second, or higher self to search for. You are the highest self, only give up the false ideas you have about your self. (517)

Your own self is your ultimate teacher (sadguru). The outer teacher (guru) is merely a milestone. It is only your inner teacher that will walk with you to the goal, for it is the goal. (51)

Yoga is the work of the inner self (vyakta) on the outer self (vyakti). All that the outer does is merely in response to the inner. It [the outer self] has some control over the body and can improve its posture and breathing. Over the mind's thoughts and feelings it has little mastery, for it is itself the mind. It is the inner that can control the outer. The outer will be wise to obey. The inner is the source of inspiration, the outer is moved by memory. The source is untraceable, while all memory begins somewhere. Thus the outer

is always determined, while the inner cannot be held in words. The mistake of students consists in their imagining the inner to be something to get hold of, and forgetting that all perceivables are transient and therefore unreal. Only that which makes perception possible, call it Life or Brahman, or what you like, is real. (74-5)

The self by its nature knows itself only. For lack of experience whatever it perceives it takes to be itself. Battered, it learns to look out (viveka) and to live alone (vairagya). When right behaviour (uparati) becomes normal, a powerful inner urge (mukmukshutva) makes it seek its source. The candle of the body is lighted and all becomes clear and bright. (110)

You can observe the observation, but not the observer. You know you are the ultimate observer by direct insight, not by a logical process based on observation. You are what you are, but you know what you are not. The self is known as being, the not-self is known as transient. But in reality all is in the mind. The observed, observation and observer are mental constructs. The self alone is. (219)

The self is universal and its aims are universal. There is nothing personal about the self. (212)

I am not an object in Consciousness but its source, its Witness, pure shapeless Awareness.

You are and I am. But only as points in consciousness; we are nothing apart from consciousness. (92)

You are not the body. You are the immensity and infinity of consciousness. (264)

The source of consciousness cannot be an object in consciousness. To know the source is to be the source. When you realize that you are not the person, but the pure and calm witness, and that fearless awareness is your very being, you are the being. It is the source, the inexhaustible Possibility. (65)

Discard all you are not and go ever deeper. Just as a man digging a well discards what is not water, until he reaches the water-bearing strata, so must you discard what is not your own, till nothing is left which you can disown. You will find that what is left is nothing which the mind can hook on to. You are not even a human being. You just are - a point of awareness, co-extensive with time and space and beyond both, the ultimate cause, itself uncaused. If you ask me "Who are you?", my answer would be: "Nothing in particular. Yet, I am." (318)

I am not my body, nor do I need it. I am the witness only. I have no shape of my own. You are so accustomed to think of yourself as bodies having consciousness that you just cannot imagine consciousness as having bodies. Once you realize that bodily existence is but a state of mind, a movement in consciousness, that the ocean of consciousness is infinite and eternal, and that, when in touch with consciousness, you are the witness only,

you will be able to withdraw beyond consciousness altogether. (327)

Do realize that it is not you who moves from dream to dream, but the dreams flow before you, and you are the immutable witness. No happening affects your real being - that is the absolute truth. (333)

The witness is not a person. The person comes into being when there is a basis for it, an organism, a body. In it, the absolute is reflected as awareness. Pure awareness becomes self-awareness. When there is a self, self-awareness is the witness. When there is no self to witness, there is no witnessing either. It is all very simple; it is the presence of the person that complicates. See that there is no such thing as a permanently separate person and all becomes clear. Awareness, mind, matter - they are one reality in its two aspects as immovable and movable, and the three attributes of inertia, energy and harmony. Awareness becomes consciousness when it has an object. The object changes all the time. In consciousness there is movement; awareness by itself is motionless and timeless, here and now. (233)

The difference between the person and the witness is as between not knowing and knowing oneself. The person is in unrest and resistance to the very end. It is the witness that works on the person, on the totality of its illusions, past, present and future. (358)

[The person and the witness] both are modes of consciousness. In one, you desire and fear; in the other, you are unaffected by pleasure and pain, and are not ruffled by events. You let them come and go. (190)

The pleasure to be is the simplest form of self-love, which later grows into love of the self. Be like an infant with nothing standing between the body and the self. The constant noise of the psychic life is absent. In deep silence, the self contemplates the body. It is like the white paper on which nothing is written yet. Be like that infant, instead of trying to be this or that, be happy to be. You will be a fully awakened witness of the field of consciousness. But there should be no feelings and ideas to stand between you and the field. (216)

Only the feeling "I am", though in the World, is not of the World nor can be denied.

A reflection of the watcher in the mind creates the sense of "I" and the person acquires an apparently independent existence. In reality there is no person, only the watcher identifying himself with the "I" and the "mine". The teacher tells the watcher: you are not this, there is nothing of yours in this, except the little point of "I am", which is the bridge between the watcher and his dream. "I am this, I am that" is dream, while pure "I am" has the stamp of reality on it. (343)

That which makes you think that you are a human is not human. It is but a dimensionless point of consciousness, a conscious nothing. All you can say about yourself is "I am". You are pure being-awareness-bliss. To realize that is the end of all seeking. You come to it when you see all you think yourself to be as mere imagination, and stand aloof in pure

awareness of the transient as transient, imaginary as imaginary, unreal as unreal. (316)

Only your sense "I am", though in the world, is not of the world. By no effort of logic or imagination can you change the "I am" into "I am not". In the very denial of your being you assert it. (200)

It [the "I am"] is unreal when we say: "I am this, I am that". It is real when we mean "I am not this, nor that". (395)

To identify oneself with the particular is all the sin there is. The impersonal is real, the personal appears and disappears. "I am" is the impersonal Being. "I am this" is the person. The person is relative, and the pure Being fundamental. (71)

3. The World exists only as a dream in my Consciousness: Part One

As I only know the contents of my consciousness, and an outside world is unprovable, all perceivables are only in my mind.

You know only what is in your consciousness. What you claim exists outside conscious experience is inferred. (449)

Is there a world outside your knowledge? Can you go beyond what you know? You may postulate a world beyond the mind, but it will remain a concept, unproved and unprovable. Your experience is your proof, and it is valid for you only. Who else can have your experience, when the other person is only as real as he appears in your experience? (533)

Whatever happens, happens to you, by you, through you; you are the creator, enjoyer and destroyer of all you perceive. (468)

You are the maker of the world in which you live, you alone can change it, or unmake it. (380)

The world appears to you so overwhelmingly real because you think of it all the time; cease thinking of it and it will dissolve into thin mist. (505)

All perceivables are stains. The entire universe is a stain. (126)

That you hear is a fact. What you hear is not. The fact can be experienced, and in that sense the sound of the word and the mental ripples it causes are experienced. There is no other reality behind it. (450)

All happens in consciousness. The world is but a succession of experiences. (404)

Your conviction that you are conscious of a world is the world. The world you perceive is made of consciousness; what you call matter is consciousness itself. (286)

As all waves are in the ocean, so are all things physical and mental in awareness. Hence awareness itself is all-important, not the content of it. (261)

There is only one mistake you are making: you take the inner for the outer, and the outer for the inner. What is in you, you take to be outside you, and what is outside you take to be in you. The mind and feelings are external, but you take them to be intimate. You believe the world to be objective, while it is entirely a projection of your psyche. That is the basic confusion. (240)

You have projected onto yourself a world of your own imagination, based on memories, on desires and fears, and you have imprisoned yourself in it. Break the spell and be free. (200)

The idea of responsibility is in your mind. You think there must be something or somebody solely responsible for all that happens. There is a contradiction between a multiple universe and a single cause. Either one or the other must be false. Or both. As I see it, it is all day-dreaming. There is no reality in ideas. The fact is that without you, neither the universe nor its cause could have come into being. (502)

Before the world was, consciousness was. In consciousness it comes into being, in consciousness it lasts and into pure consciousness it dissolves. At the root of everything is the feeling "I am". The state of mind "there is a world" is secondary, for to be, I do not need the world, the world needs me. (98)

The world comes into being only when you are born in a body. No body - no world. (207)

All the universe of experience is born with the body and dies with the body; it has its beginning and end in awareness, but awareness knows no beginning, nor end. (262)

To be born means to create a world round yourself as the centre. (208)

Your own little body too is full of mysteries and dangers, yet you are not afraid of it, for you take it as your own. What you do not know is that the entire universe is your body, and you need not be afraid of it. You may say you have two bodies: the personal and the universal. The personal comes and goes, the universal is always with you. The entire creation is your universal body. You are so blinded by what is personal, that you do not see the universal. This blindness will not end by itself - it must be undone skilfully and deliberately. When all illusions are understood and abandoned, you reach the error-free and perfect state in which all distinctions between the personal and the universal are no more. (308)

Who was born first, you or the world? As long as you give first place to the world, you are bound by it; once you realize, beyond all trace of doubt, that the world is in you and not you in the world, you are out of it. Of course your body remains in the world and of the world, but you are not deluded by it. (207)

The pure mind sees things as they are - bubbles in consciousness. These bubbles are appearing, disappearing and reappearing - without having real being. Each bubble is a body and all these bodies are mine. (138)

You see yourself in the world, while I see the world in myself. To you, you get born and die, while to me the world appears and disappears. Our world is real, but your view of it is not. There is no wall between us, except the one built by you. There is nothing wrong with the senses, it is your imagination that misleads you. It covers up the world as it is with what you imagine it to be - something existing independently of you and yet closely following your inherited or acquired patterns. (264)

This must be well grasped: the world hangs on the thread of consciousness. No

consciousness, no world. (92)

You are the infinite potentiality, the inexhaustible possibility. Because you are, all can be. The universe is but a partial manifestation of your limitless capacity to become. (121)

Once you realize that the world is your own projection, you are free of it. You need not free yourself of a world that does not exist, except in your own imagination! However is the picture, beautiful or ugly, you are painting it and you are not bound by it. Realize that there is nobody to force it on you, that it is due to the habit of taking the imaginary to be real. See the imaginary as imaginary and be free of fear. (200)

All scriptures say that before the world was, the Creator was. Who knows the Creator? He alone who was before the Creator, your own real being, the source of all the worlds with their creators. (207)

Transient things only appear and have no substance.

What begins and ends is mere appearance. The world can be said to appear, but not to be. The appearance may last very long on some scale of time, and very short on another, but ultimately it comes to the same. Whatever is time-bound is momentary and has no reality. (16)

What contradicts itself has no being. Or it has only momentary being, which comes to the same. For what has a beginning and an end has no middle. It is hollow. It has only name and shape given to it by the mind, but it has neither substance nor essence. (314)

However great and complete is your world, it is self-contradictory and transitory and altogether illusory. (533)

Transiency is the best proof of unreality. (334)

The final answer is this: nothing is. All is a momentary appearance in the field of the universal consciousness. Continuity as name and form is a mental formation only, easy to dispel. (415)

Trace the world to its source and you will find that before the world was, you were, and when the world is no longer, you remain. (493)

What changes has no reality. Time and space are imagined, ways of thinking, modes of perception. Only timeless reality is, and it is here and now.

Once you accept time and space as real, you will consider yourself minute and short-lived. But are they real? Do they depend on you, or you on them? (252)

There can be no continuity in existence. Continuity implies identity in past, present and future. No such identity is possible, for the very means of identification fluctuate and

change. Continuity, permanency, these are illusions created by memory, mere mental projections of a pattern where no pattern can be. (467)

Don't talk to me about past and future. They exist only in your mind. (259)

Time is in the mind, space is in the mind. The law of cause and effect is also a way of thinking. (115)

In reality time and space exist in you; you do not exist in them. They are modes of perception, but they are not the only ones. Time and space are like words written on paper; the paper is real, the words merely a convention. (205)

Your body is short of time, not you. Time and space are in the mind only. You are not bound. Just understand yourself - that itself is eternity. (260)

The whole of it is [imagination]. Even space and time are imagined. All existence is imaginary. (355)

Existence and non-existence relate to something in space and time, here and now, there and then, which again are in the mind. (460)

Time is endless, though limited, eternity is in the split moment of the now. We miss it because the mind is ever shuttling between the past and the future. It will not stop to focus the now. It can be done with comparative ease, if interest is aroused. (528)

In your world everything must have a beginning and an end. If it does not, you call it eternal. In my view, there is no such thing as beginning and end - these are all related to time. Timeless being is entirely in the now. Being and not-being alternate and their reality is momentary. The immutable Reality lies beyond space and time. (454)

In reality nothing happens, there is no past nor future; all appears and nothing is. (406)

All depends on you. It is by your consent that the world exists. Withdraw your belief in its reality and it will dissolve like a dream. Time can bring down mountains; much more you, who are the timeless source of time. For without memory and expectation there can be no time. (452)

You are the space (akash) in which it moves, the time in which it lasts, the love that gives it life. (286)

"I am" is an ever present fact, while "I am created" is an idea. Neither God nor the universe have come to tell you that they have created you. The mind, obsessed by the idea of causality, invents creation and then wonders "who is the creator?" The mind itself is the creator. Even this is not quite true, for the created and its creator are one. The mind and the world are not separate. Do understand that what you think to be the world is your own mind. All space and time are in the mind. (502)

There is only imagination. It has absorbed you so completely that you just cannot grasp how far from reality you have wandered. No doubt imagination is richly creative. Universe upon universe are built on it. Yet they are all in space and time, past and future, which just don't exist. (288)

It is you who are in movement and not time. Stop moving and time will cease. Past and future will merge in the eternal now. (405)

I am nowhere to be found. I am not a thing to be given a place among other things. All things are in me, but I am not among things. (327)

In reality all is here and now and all is one. Multiplicity and diversity are in the mind only. (115)

Truly, all is in me and by me. There is nothing else. The very idea of "else" is a disaster and a calamity. (205)

4. The World exists only as a dream in my Consciousness: Part Two

Whatever has a form is only limitations imagined in my consciousness.

By itself nothing has existence. Everything needs its own absence. To be is to be distinguishable, to be here and not there, to be now and not then, to be thus and not otherwise. Like water is shaped by the container, so is everything determined by conditions (gunas). (15)

Pure being, filling all and beyond all, is not existence, which is limited. All limitation is imaginary, only the unlimited is real. (355)

The World is but a show, a make-belief.

The world is but a show, glittering and empty. It is, and yet it is not. It is there as long as I want to see it and take part in it. When I cease caring, it dissolves. It has no cause and serves no purpose. It just happens when we are absent-minded. It appears exactly as it looks, but there is no depth in it, nor meaning. Only the onlooker is real, call him Self or Atma. To the Self, the world is but a colourful show, which he enjoys as long as it lasts and forgets when it is over. Whatever happens on the stage makes him shudder in terror or roll with laughter, yet all the time he is aware that it is but a show. Without desire or fear, he enjoys it, as it happens. (178-9)

The universe is a stage on which a world drama is being played. The quality of the performance is all that matters; not what the actors say or do, but how they say and do it. Sportsmen seem to make tremendous efforts: yet their sole motive is to play and display. (95)

All happens as it needs, yet nothing happens. I do what seems to be necessary, but at the same time I know that nothing is necessary, that life itself is only a make-belief. (191)

You see me apparently functioning. In reality, I only look. Whatever is done, is done on the stage. Joy and sorrow, life and death, they all are real to the man in bondage; to me, they are all in the show, as unreal as the show itself. I may perceive the world just like you, but you believe to be in it, while I see it as an iridescent drop in the vast expanse of consciousness. (179)

All that lives, works for protecting, perpetuating and expanding consciousness. This is the world's sole meaning and purpose. It is the very essence of Yoga - ever raising the level of consciousness, discovery of new dimensions, with their properties, qualities and powers. In that sense, the entire universe becomes a school of Yoga. (275)

Out of a lump of gold, you can make many ornaments - each will remain gold. Similarly, in whatever role I may appear and whatever function I may perform - I remain what I am: the "I am" immovable, unshakable, independent. What you call the universe, nature, is

my spontaneous creativity. Whatever happens, happens. But such is my nature that all ends in joy. (138)

The World I perceive is entirely private, a dream.

The world you can perceive is a very small world indeed. And it is entirely private. Take it to be a dream and be done with it. Is not the idea of a total world a part of your personal world? The universe does not come to tell you that you are a part of it. It is you who have invented a totality to contain you as a part. In fact all you know is your own private world, however well you have furnished it with your imaginations and expectations. (23)

This world is painted by you on the screen of consciousness and is entirely your own private world. (200)

To know the picture as the play of light on the screen, gives freedom from the idea that the picture is real. (388)

Consider. The world in which you live, who else knows about it? Within the prison of your world appears a man who tells you that the world of painful contradictions, which you have created, is neither continuous nor permanent and is based on a misapprehension. He pleads with you to get out of it. You got into it by forgetting what you are, and you will get out of it by knowing yourself as you are. There is no reality in it. It cannot last. (45)

The world has no existence apart from you. At every moment it is but a reflection of yourself. You create it, you destroy it. Your personal universe does not exist by itself. It is merely a limited and distorted view of the real. (94)

You are not of the world, you are not even in the world. The world is not, you alone are. You create the world in your imagination like a dream. As you cannot separate the dream from yourself, so you cannot have an outer world independent of yourself. You are independent, not the world. Don't be afraid of a world you yourself have created. (453)

Search and you shall discover the Universal Person, who is yourself and infinitely more. Anyhow, begin by realizing that the world is in you, not you in the world. Your personal body is a part in which the whole is wonderfully reflected. But you have also a universal body. You cannot even say that you do not know it, because you see and experience it all the time. Only you call it "the world" and are afraid of it. Both anatomy and astronomy describe you. You know the world exactly as you know your body - through your senses. It is your mind that has separated the world outside your skin from the world inside and put them in opposition. (309-10)

The world is but a reflection of my imagination. Whatever I want to see, I can see. But why should I invent patterns of creation, evolution and destruction? I do not need them. The world is in me, the world is myself. I am not afraid of it and have no desire to lock it up in a mental picture. (28)

Imagine a dense forest full of tigers and you in a strong steel cage. Knowing that you are well protected by the cage, you watch the tigers fearlessly. Next, you find the tigers in the cage and yourself roaming about in the jungle. Last, the cage disappears and you ride the tigers! (476-7)

What I appear to be to you exists only in your mind. I am a dream that can wake you up. You will have the proof of it in your very waking up. (181)

Give up all and you gain all. Then life becomes what it was meant to be: pure radiation from an inexhaustible source. In that light the world appears dimly like a dream. (257)

Desire and fear come from seeing the World as separate from my-Self.

As you think yourself to be, so you think the world to be. If you imagine yourself as separate from the world, the world will appear as separate from you and you will experience desire and fear. I do not see the world as separate from me and so there is nothing for me to desire or fear. (123)

There is no chaos in the world, except the chaos which your mind creates. It is self-created in the sense that at its very centre is the false idea of oneself as a thing different and separate from other things. In reality you are not a thing, nor separate. (121)

While I see the dream as real, I'll suffer being its slave.

Both sleep and waking are misnomers. We are only dreaming. True waking and true sleeping only the gnani knows. We dream that we are awake, we dream that we are asleep. The three states are only varieties of the dream state. Treating everything as a dream liberates. As long as you give reality to dreams, you are their slave. By imagining that you are born as so-and-so, you become a slave of the so-and-so. The essence of slavery is to imagine yourself to be a process, to have past and future, to have history. In fact, we have no history, we are not a process, we do not develop, nor decay; so see all as a dream and stay out of it. (189)

To know that you are a prisoner of your mind, that you live in an imaginary world of your own creation is the dawn of wisdom. (426)

The cause of suffering is in the identification of the perceiver with the perceived. Out of it desire is born, and with desire blind action, unmindful of results. Look around and you will see - suffering is a man-made thing. (381)

Nobody suffers in a play, unless one identifies himself with it. Don't identify yourself with the world and you will not suffer. (156)

While it lasts, the dream has temporary being. It is your desire to hold on to it, that creates the problem. Let go. Stop imagining that the dream is yours. (257)

Let the dream unroll itself to its very end. You cannot help it. But you can look at the dream as a dream, refuse it the stamp of reality. (258)

At present you are drifting, and therefore in danger, for to a drifter any moment anything may happen. It would be better to wake up and see your situation. That you are, you know. What you are, you don't know. Find out what you are. (474)

My intention to wake you up is the link [between our respective dreams]. My heart wants you awake. I see you suffer in your dream and I know that you must wake up to end your woes. When you see your dream as dream, you wake up. But in your dream itself I am not interested. Enough for me to know that you must wake up. You need not bring your dream to a definite conclusion, or make it noble, or happy, or beautiful; all you need is to realize that you are dreaming. Stop imagining, stop believing. See the contradictions, the incongruities, the falsehood and the sorrow of the human state, the need to go beyond. In dream you love some and not others. On waking up you find you are love itself, embracing all. Personal love, however intense and genuine, invariably binds; love in freedom is love of all. (258)

This is the heart of the matter: As long as you believe that only the outer world is real, you remain its slave. (424) Just understand that what you see is not what is. Appearances will dissolve on investigation, and the underlying reality will come to the surface. You need not burn the house to get out of it. You just walk out. It is only when you cannot come and go freely that the house becomes a jail. I move in and out of consciousness easily and naturally, and therefore to me the world is a home, not a prison. (479)

Nothing in the dream is done by me.

As long as you believe yourself to be a body, you will ascribe causes to everything. I do not say things have no causes. Each thing has innumerable causes. It is as it is, because the world is as it is. Every cause in its ramifications covers the universe. There are no causes, but your ignorance of your real being, which is perfect and beyond causation. For whatever happens, all the universe is responsible and you are the source of the universe. (347)

All that happens is the cause of all that happens. Causes are numberless; the idea of a sole cause is an illusion. (398)

Why do you talk of action? Are you acting ever? Some unknown power acts and you imagine that you are acting. You are merely watching what happens, without being able to influence it in any way. (238)

Stop imagining yourself being or doing this or that, and the realization that you are the source and heart of all will dawn upon you. (3)

The wise man counts nothing as his own. When at some time and place some miracle is

attributed to some person, he will not establish any causal link between events and people, nor will he allow any conclusions to be drawn. All happened as it happened because it had to happen; everything happens as it does, because the universe is as it is. (270)

You imagine being and doing as identical. It is not so. The mind and the body move and change and cause other minds and bodies to move and change, and that is called doing, action. I see that it is in the nature of action to create further action, like fire that continues by burning. I neither act nor cause others to act; I am timelessly aware of what is going on. (398)

Nothing is done by me, everything just happens. I do not expect, I do not plan, I just watch events happening, knowing them to be unreal. (191)

It is just like your tape-recorder. It records, it reproduces - all by itself. You only listen. Similarly, I watch all that happens, including my talking to you. It is not me who talks, the words appear in my mind and then I hear them said. (433)

The deed is a fact, the doer a mere concept. Your very language shows that while the deed is certain, the doer is dubious; shifting responsibility is a game peculiarly human. Considering the endless list of factors required for anything to happen, one can only admit that everything is responsible for everything, however remote. Doership is a myth born from the illusion of "me" and "mine". I do not have the feeling that I am talking. There is talking going on, that is all. Do you [really talk]? You hear yourself talking and you say: I talk. I have no objections to the conventions of your language, but they distort and destroy reality. A more accurate way of saying would have been: "There is talking, working, coming, going". For anything to happen, the entire universe must coincide. It is wrong to believe that anything in particular can cause an event. Every cause is universal. Your very body would not exist without the entire universe contributing to its creation and survival. I am fully aware that things happen as they happen because the world is as it is. To affect the course of events, I must bring a new factor into the world and such factor can only be myself, the power of love and understanding focussed in me. (389)

5. There is only one dreamer, the one Self, dreaming many dreams

In every body there is a dream, but the dreamer is the same, the one Self, which reflects itself in each body as "I am".

To me all [persons] are equal. Differences in appearance and expression are there, but they do not matter. Just as the shape of a gold ornament does not affect the gold, so does man's essence remain unaffected. (301)

There is absolutely no difference between me and others, except in my knowing myself as I am. I know it for certain and you do not. The difference is only in the mind and temporary. I was like you, you will be like me. (123)

My self and your self are one. I know it, but you don't. That is all the difference - and it cannot last. (88)

This [helping people] is mere imagination. In truth you do not help others, because there are no others. (313)

In reality there are no others, and by helping yourself you help everybody else. (383)

I am the other person, the other person is myself; in name and shape we are different, but there is no separation. At the root of our being we are one. (511)

Where are the many points [of consciousness]? In you mind. You insist that your world is independent of your mind. How can it be? Your desire to know other people's minds is due to your not knowing your own mind. First know your own mind and you will find that the question of other minds does not arise at all, for there are no other people. You are the common factor, the only link between the minds. Being is consciousness. "I am" applies to all. (257)

The dreams are not equal, but the dreamer is one. I am the insect, I am the poet - in dream. But in reality I am neither. I am beyond all dreams. I am the light in which all dreams appear and disappear. I am both inside and outside the dream. Just as a man having a headache knows the ache and also knows that he is not the ache, so do I know the dream, myself dreaming and myself not dreaming - all at the same time. I am what I am before, during and after the dream. But what I see in dream, I am not. (117)

Ultimately nothing is mine or yours, everything is ours. Just be one with yourself and you will be one with all, at home in the entire universe. (462)

Even to talk of re-uniting the person with the self is not right, because there is no person, only a mental picture given a false reality by conviction. Nothing was divided and there is nothing to unite. (143)

There is no "my self" and "his self". There is the Self, the only Self of all. Misled by the

diversity of names and shapes, minds and bodies, you imagine multiple selves. We both are the self. (137)

The one witness reflects itself in the countless bodies as "I am". As long as the bodies, however subtle, last, the "I am" appears as many. Beyond the body there is only the One. (157)

I am one, but appear as many. (529)

Delve deeply into the sense "I am" and you will surely discover that the perceiving centre is universal, as universal as the light that illumines the world. All that happens in the universe happens to you, the silent witness. On the other hand, whatever is done, is done by you, the universal and inexhaustible energy. (519)

All the dreams are of a common imaginary World and influence each other.

The variety of personal worlds is not so great. All the dreams are superimposed over a common world. To some extent, they shape and influence each other. The basic unity operates in spite of all. At the root of it all lies self-forgetfulness; not knowing who I am. In a hospital there may be many patients, all sleeping, all dreaming, each dreaming his own private, personal dream, unrelated, unaffected, having one single factor in common - illness. Similarly, we have divorced ourselves in our imagination from the real world of common experience, and enclosed ourselves in a cloud of personal desires and fears, images and thoughts, ideas and concepts. (92-93)

Love is seeing the unity under the imaginary diversity.

When all the false self-identifications are thrown away, what remains is all-embracing love. (195)

To see myself in everybody, and everybody in myself, most certainly is love. (91)

The consciousness in you and the consciousness in me, apparently two, really one, seek unity and that is love. (70)

6. I alone am, the One, the Supreme.

Not only the multiplicity of selves is false: even the duality I / World, Subject / Object, Spirit / Matter is a transient appearance in my Consciousness.

There can be no universe without the witness, there can be no witness without the universe. (351)

Look closely and you will see that the seer and the seen appear only when there is seeing. They are attributes of seeing. When you say "I am seeing this", "I am" and "this" come with the seeing, nor before. You cannot have an unseen "this" nor an unseeing "I am". Knowing is a reflection of your true nature along with being and loving. The knower and the known are added by the mind. It is in the nature of the mind to create a subject-object duality, where there is none. (404)

All thinking is in duality. In identity, no thought survives. (335)

The painter is in the picture. You separate the painter from the picture and look for him. Don't separate and don't put false questions. (416)

In reality there is only perception. The perceiver and the perceived are conceptual, the fact of perceiving is actual. The Absolute is the birthplace of perceiving. It makes perception possible. (340)

Even the experiencer is secondary. Primary is the infinite expanse of consciousness, the eternal possibility, the immeasurable potential of all that was, is and will be. (201)

The moment you say "I am", the entire universe comes into being along with its creator. (362)

There is no "I" apart from the body, nor the world. The three appear and disappear together. At the root is the sense "I am". Go beyond it. The idea "I am not the body" is merely an antidote to the idea "I am the body" which is false. What is that "I am"? Unless you know yourself, what else can you know? (295)

What you see is nothing but your self. Call it what you like, it does not change the fact. Through the film of destiny, your own light depicts pictures on the screen. You are the viewer, the light, the picture and the screen. Even the film of destiny (prarabdha) is self-selected and self-imposed. (480)

[Between vyakta and avyakta] there is no difference. It is like light and daylight. The universe is full of light which you do not see; but the same light you see as daylight. And what the daylight reveals is the vyakti. The person is always the object, the witness is the subject, and their relation of mutual dependence is the reflection of their absolute identity. You imagine that they are distinct and separate states. They are not. They are the same consciousness at rest and in movement, each state conscious of the other. In chit,

man knows God and God knows man. In chit, the man shapes the world and the world shapes man. Chit is the link, the bridge between extremes, the balancing and uniting factor in every experience. The totality of the perceived is what you call matter. The totality of all perceivers is what you call the universal mind. The identity of the two, manifesting itself as perceptibility and perceiving, harmony and intelligence, loveliness and loving, reasserts itself eternally. (251)

You are [lonely] as a person. In your real being you are the whole. (533)

I have realized once and for good that I am neither object nor subject. (268)

There is only seeing; both the seer and the seen are contained in it. Don't create differences where there are none. (266)

There is only my-Self, Consciousness.

Who is there to be conscious of unconsciousness? As long as the window is open, there is sunlight in the room. With the windows shut, the sun remains, but does it see the darkness in the room? Is there anything like darkness to the sun? There is no such thing as unconsciousness, for unconsciousness is not experienceable. (263)

In reality there is only consciousness. All life is conscious, all consciousness -alive. Even the stones are conscious and alive. (47)

[My guru] told me: "You alone are, deny existence to everything except your self" and I did not doubt him. I was merely puzzling over it, until I realized that it is absolutely true. I found that I am conscious and happy absolutely, and only by mistake I thought I owed being-consciousness to the body and the world of bodies. (83-84)

Nothing exists by itself. All is the Self, all is myself. (91)

All is you and yours. There is nobody else. This is a fact. (161)

You, the self, being the root of all being, consciousness and joy, impart your reality to whatever you perceive. This imparting of reality takes place invariably in the now, at no other time, because past and future are only in the mind. "Being" applies to the now only. (528)

Outside the Self there is nothing. All is one and all is contained in "I am". In the waking and dream states it is the person. In deep sleep and turiya [samadhi] it is the Self. Beyond the alert intentness of turiya lies the great, silent peace of the Supreme. But in fact all is one in essence and related in appearance. In ignorance the seer becomes the seen, and in wisdom he is the seeing. (68)

One and all are the same to me. The same consciousness (chit) appears as being (sat) and as bliss (ananda): Chit in movement is Ananda; Chit motionless is Being. (104)

I am not even Consciousness, which is dual and perceivable: I am the unknown Reality beyond.

Neither your body nor your mind, nor even your consciousness is yourself. (520)

The "I am" is at the root of all appearance and the permanent link in the succession of events that we call life; but I am beyond the "I am". (458)

Before the mind, I am. "I am" is not a thought in the mind; the mind happens to me, I do not happen to the mind. And since time and space are in the mind, I am beyond time and space, eternal and omnipresent. (525)

The outer self and the inner both are imagined. The obsession of being an "I" needs another obsession with a "super-I" to get cured, as one needs another thorn to remove a thorn, or another poison to neutralize a poison. All assertion calls for a denial, but this is the first step only. The next is to go beyond both. (374)

Go beyond. Neither consciousness nor the "I am" at the centre of it are you. Your true being is entirely unselfconscious, completely free from all self-identification with whatever it may be - gross, subtle or transcendental. (371)

Only reality is, there is nothing else. The three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping are not me, and I am not in them. (191)

As long as one is conscious, there will be pain and pleasure. You cannot fight pain and pleasure on the level of consciousness. To go beyond them, you must go beyond consciousness, which is possible only when you look at consciousness as something that happens to you, and not in you, as something external, alien, superimposed. Then, suddenly you are free of consciousness, really alone, with nothing to intrude. And that is your true state. Consciousness is an itching rash that makes you scratch. Of course, you cannot step out of consciousness, for the very stepping out is in consciousness. But if you learn to look at your consciousness as a sort of fever, personal and private, in which you are enclosed like a chick in its shell, out of this very attitude will come the crisis which will break the shell. (382)

He [Buddha] must have meant that all consciousness is painful, which is obvious. (382)

I am conscious and unconscious, both conscious and unconscious, neither conscious nor unconscious - to all this I am witness, but really there is no witness, because there is nothing to be a witness to. I am perfectly empty of all mental formations, void of mind, yet fully aware. This I try to express by saying that I am beyond the mind. (328)

When you realize that all is in your mind and that you are beyond the mind, that you are truly alone, then all is you. (457)

Where there is a universe, there will also be its counterpart, which is God. But I am beyond both. (264)

Even faith in God is only a stage on the way. Ultimately, you abandon all, for you come to something so simple that there are no words to express it. (469-70)

Consciousness and life - both you may call God; but you are beyond both, beyond God, beyond being and not-being. (475)

You cannot know the knower, for you are the knower. The fact of knowing proves the knower. You need no other proof. The knower of the known is not knowable. Just like the light is known in colours only, so is the knower known in knowledge. (360)

Before you can say "I am", you must be there to say it. Being need not be self-conscious. You need not know to be, but you must be to know. (452)

You need not know what you are. Enough to know what you are not. What you are you will never know, for every discovery reveals new dimensions to conquer. The unknown has no limits. (372)

Do understand that you cannot ask a valid question about yourself, because you do not know whom you are asking about. (452)

The known is accidental, the unknown is the home of the real. To live in the known is bondage, to live in the unknown is liberation. (446)

Discontinuity is the law when you deal with the concrete. The continuous cannot be experienced, for it has no borders. Consciousness implies alterations, change following change, when one thing or state comes to an end and another begins; that which has no borderline cannot be experienced in the common meaning of the word. One can only be it, without knowing, but one can know what it is not. It is definitely not the entire content of consciousness which is always on the move. To realize the immovable means to become immovable. I am talking of immovability, not of immobility. You become immovable in righteousness. You become a power which gets all things right. It may or may not imply intense outward activity, but the mind remains deep and quiet. (531)

When you go beyond awareness, there is a state of non-duality, in which there is no cognition, only pure being, which may be as well called non-being, if by being you mean being something in particular.
(409)

Your true home is in nothingness, in emptiness of all content. (487)

[I can describe your supreme, natural state] only by negation, as uncaused, independent, unrelated, undivided, uncomposed, unshakable, unquestionable, unreachable by effort. Every positive definition is from memory and, therefore, inapplicable. And yet my state is supremely actual and, therefore, possible, realizable, attainable. (16)

How can I put it into words, except in negating them? Therefore, I use words like timeless, spaceless, causeless. These are words too, but as they are empty of meaning, they suit my purpose. Because you want words where no words apply. (458)

Though unknown and unknowable, my real being is concrete and solid like a rock.

[The supreme state] is not perceivable, because it is what makes perception possible. It is beyond being and not being. It is neither the mirror nor the image in the mirror. It is what is - the timeless reality, unbelievably hard and solid. (36)

The timeless knows the time, the time does not know the timeless. All consciousness is in time and to it the timeless appears as unconscious. Yet, it is what makes consciousness possible. Light shines in darkness. In light darkness is not visible. Or you can put it the other way: in the endless ocean of light, clouds of consciousness appear, dark and limited, perceivable by contrast. There are mere attempts to express in words something very simple, yet altogether inexpressible. (379-89)

Turn your mind inside out. Overlook the movable and you will find yourself to be the ever-present, changeless reality, inexpressible, but solid like a rock. (162)

When all distinctions and reactions are no more, what remains is reality, simple and solid. (410)

It is solid, steady, changeless, beginningless and endless, ever new, ever fresh. (63)

This reality is so concrete, so actual, so much more tangible than mind and matter, that compared to it even diamond is soft like butter. This overwhelming actuality makes the world dreamlike, misty, irrelevant. (484)

To me nothing ever happens. There is something changeless, motionless, immovable, rock-like, unassailable; a solid mass of pure being-consciousness-bliss. I am never out of it. Nothing can take me out of it, no torture, no calamity. (191)

My world is free from opposites, of mutually destructive discrepancies; harmony pervades; its peace is rocklike; this peace and silence are my body. (485)

[My condition is] absolutely steady. Whatever I may do, it stays like a rock - motionless. Once you have awakened into reality, you stay in it. It is self-evident and yet beyond description. (192)

I am the light that makes Consciousness possible, pure Awareness, the non-dual Self, the Supreme Reality, the Absolute, the Beingness of being, the Awareness of consciousness.

Who are you? Don't go by formulas. The answer is not in words. The nearest you can say in words is: I am what makes perception possible, the life beyond the experiencer and his experience. (330)

My feeling is that all that happens in space and time happens to me, that every experience is my experience, every form is my form. What I take myself to be becomes my body, and all that happens to that body becomes my mind. But at the root of the universe there is pure awareness, beyond space and time, here and now. Know it to be your real being and act accordingly. (484)

At the root of my being is pure awareness, a speck of intense light. This speck, by its very nature, radiates and creates pictures in space and events in time - effortlessly and spontaneously. As long as it is merely aware, there are no problems. But when the discriminative mind comes into being and creates distinctions, pleasure and pain arise. During sleep the mind is in abeyance and so are pain and pleasure. The process of creation continues, but no notice is taken. The mind is a form of consciousness, and consciousness is an aspect of life. Life creates everything, but the Supreme is beyond all. (180-1)

"Nothing is me" is the first step. "Everything is me" is the next. Both hang on the idea "There is a world". When this too is given up, you remain what you are - the non-dual Self. You are it here and now, but your vision is obstructed by your false ideas about your self. (518)

[The Absolute] gives birth to consciousness. All else is in consciousness. (65)

The entire universe exists only in consciousness, while I have my stand in the Absolute. In pure being consciousness arises; in consciousness the world appears and disappears. All there is is me, all there is is mine. Before all beginnings, after all endings -I am. All has its being in me, in the "I am", that shines in every living being. Even not-being is unthinkable without me. Whatever happens, I must be there to witness it. (15)

I am beyond time. However long a life may be, it is but a moment and a dream. In the same way, I am beyond all attributes. They appear and disappear in my light, but cannot describe me. The universe is all names and forms, based on qualities and their differences, while I am beyond. The world is there because I am, but I am not the world. I know there is a world, which includes this body and this mind, but I do not consider them to be more "mine" than other minds and bodies. They are there, in time and space, but I am timeless and spaceless. (35)

You are the Supreme Reality beyond the world and its creator, beyond consciousness and its witness, beyond all assertions and denials. (425)

You yourself are God, the Supreme Reality. (240)

You are God, but you do not know it. (533)

You are always the Supreme, which appears at a given point of time and space as the witness, a bridge between the pure awareness of the Supreme and the manifold consciousness of the person. Once you realize that whatever appears before you cannot be yourself, and cannot say "I am", you are free of all your "persons" and their demands. The sense "I am" is your own. You cannot part with it, but you can impart it to anything, as in saying: I am young. I am rich, etc. But such self-identifications are patently false and the cause of bondage. (64-5)

The Supreme is the universal dissolvent, it corrodes every container, it burns through every obstacle. Without the absolute denial of everything, the tyranny of things would be absolute. The Supreme is the great harmonizer, the guarantee of the ultimate and perfect balance -of life in freedom. It dissolves you and thus re-asserts your true being. (89)

As long as you deal in terms: real - unreal, awareness is the only reality that can be. But the Supreme is beyond all distinctions, and to it the term "real" does not apply, for in it all is real and, therefore, need not be labelled as such. It is the very source of reality, it imparts reality to whatever it touches. It just cannot be understood through words. Even a direct experience, however sublime, merely bears testimony, nothing more. The Universal Mind (chidakash) makes and unmakes everything. The Supreme (paramakash) imparts reality to whatever comes into being. To say that it is the universal love may be the nearest we can come to it in words. Just like love, it makes everything real, beautiful, desirable. (303)

In reality only the Ultimate is. The rest is a matter of name and form. And as long as you cling to the idea that only what has a name and shape exists, the Supreme will appear to you non-existing. When you understand that names and shapes are hollow shells without any content whatsoever, and what is real is nameless and shapeless, pure energy of life and light of consciousness, you will be at peace -immersed in the deep silence of reality. (37)

The Supreme State is universal, here and now; everybody already shares in it. It is the state of being, knowing and liking. Who does not like to be, or does not know his own existence? But we take no advantage of this joy of being conscious, we do not go into it and purify it of all that is foreign to it. (231)

The real is simple, open, clear and kind, beautiful and joyous. It is completely free of contradictions. It is ever new, ever fresh, endlessly creative. Being and non-being, life and death, all distinctions merge in it. (340)

[It is] single, simple, indivisible and unperceivable, except in its manifestations. Not unknowable, but unperceivable, un-objectival, inseparable. Neither material nor mental,

neither objective nor subjective, it is the root of matter and the source of consciousness. Beyond mere living and dying, it is the all-inclusive, all-exclusive Life, in which birth is death and death is birth. (232)

One thing is quite clear to me: all that is lives and moves and has its being in consciousness, and I am in and beyond that consciousness. I am in it as the witness. I am beyond it as Being. (92)

[You are] the impersonal and unqualified centre of being, love and bliss. (509)

Just like ice turns to water, and water to vapour, and vapour dissolves in air and disappears, so does the body dissolve into pure awareness (chidakash), then into pure being (paramakash), which is beyond all existence and non-existence. (76-77)

Even the sense of "I am" is composed of the pure light and the sense of being. The "I" is there even without the "am". So is the pure light there, whether you say "I" or not. Become aware of the pure light and you will never lose it. The beingness in being, the awareness in consciousness, the interest in every experience - that is not describable, yet perfectly accessible, for there is nothing else. (201)

I am what I am, neither with form nor formless, neither conscious nor unconscious. I am outside all these categories. You cannot find me by mere denial. I am as well everything as nothing. Nor both nor either. These distinctions apply to the Lord of the universe, not to me. I am complete and perfect. I am the beingness of being, the knowingness of knowing, the fulness of happiness. (321)

7. The big cycle: part one

The alternation of manifested (existence, becoming)- unmanifested (pure being).

The three states, sleeping, dreaming and waking, are all in consciousness, the manifested; what you call unconsciousness will also be manifested - in time; beyond consciousness altogether lies the unmanifested. And beyond all, and pervading all, is the heart of being which beats steadily: manifested-unmanifested, manifested-unmanifested (saguna-nirguna). (450)

It is the instinct of exploration, the love of the unknown, that brings me into existence. It is in the nature of being to seek adventure in becoming, as it is in the nature of becoming to seek peace in being. This alternation of being and becoming is inevitable; but my home is beyond. (417)

With being arising in consciousness, the ideas of what you are arise in your mind as well as what you should be. This brings forth desire and action and the process of becoming begins. Becoming has, apparently, no beginning and no end, for it restarts every moment. With the cessation of imagination and desire, becoming ceases and the being this or that merges into pure being, which is not describable, only experienceable. (505)

All that lives, works for protecting, perpetuating and expanding consciousness. This is the world's sole meaning and purpose. It is the very essence of Yoga - ever raising the level of consciousness, discovery of new dimensions, with their properties, qualities and powers. In that sense, the entire universe becomes a school of Yoga. (275)

Once you realize that the road is the goal and that you are always on the road, not to reach a goal, but to enjoy its beauty and its wisdom, life ceases to be a task and becomes natural and simple, in itself an ecstasy. (426)

After all, what do you really want? Not perfection; you are already perfect. What you seek is to express in action what you are. For this you have a body and a mind. Take them in hand and make them serve you. (212)

The manifestation of the Absolute.

[The centre of consciousness] cannot be given name and form, for it is without quality and beyond consciousness. You may say it is a point in consciousness, which is beyond consciousness. Like a hole in the paper is both in the paper and yet not of paper, so is the supreme state in the very centre of consciousness, and yet beyond consciousness. It is as an opening in the mind through which the mind is flooded with light. The opening is not even the light. It is just an opening. From the mind's point of view, it is but an opening for the light of awareness to enter the mental space. By itself the light can only be compared to a solid, dense, rocklike, homogeneous and changeless mass of pure awareness, free from the mental patterns of name and shape. The supreme gives existence to the mind. The mind gives existence to the body. (34)

There can be no experience of the Absolute as it is beyond all experience. On the other hand, the Self is the experiencing factor in every experience and thus, in a way, validates the multiplicity of experiences. The world may be full of things of great value, but if there is nobody to buy them, they have no price. The Absolute contains everything experienceable, but without the experiencer they are as nothing. That which makes the experience possible is the Absolute. That which makes it actual is the Self. (334)

In the Supreme the witness appears. The witness creates the person and thinks itself as separate from it. The witness sees that the person appears in consciousness, which again appears in the witness. This realization of the basic unity is the working of the Supreme. It is the power behind the witness, the source from which all flows. It cannot be contacted, unless there is unity and love and mutual help between the person and the witness, unless doing is in harmony with the being and the knowing. The Supreme is both the source and the fruit of such harmony. As I talk to you, I am in the state of detached but affectionate awareness (turiya) . When this awareness turns upon itself, you may call it the Supreme State (turiyatita). But the fundamental reality is beyond awareness, beyond the three states of becoming, being and not-being. (296)

The body appears in your mind, your mind is the content of your consciousness; you are the motionless witness of the river of consciousness which changes eternally without changing you in any way. Your own changelessness is so obvious that you do not notice it. The universe is in you and cannot be without you. The world exists in memory, memory comes into consciousness; consciousness exists in awareness and awareness is the reflection of the light on the waters of existence. (199)

Nobody can say "I am the witness". The "I am" is always witnessed. The state of detached awareness is the witness-consciousness, the "mirror-mind". It rises and sets with its object and thus it is not the real. Whatever its object, it remains the same, hence it is also real. It partakes of both the real and the unreal, and is therefore a bridge between the two. (395-6)

Consciousness arising, the world arises. When you consider the wisdom and the beauty of the world, you call it God. Know the source of it all, which is in yourself, and you will find all your questions answered. (266)

The absolute precedes time. Awareness comes first. A bundle of memories and mental habits attracts attention, awareness gets focalized and a person suddenly appears. Remove the light of awareness, go to sleep or swoon away, and the person disappears. The person (vyakti) flickers, awareness (vyakta) contains all space and time, the absolute (avyakta) is. (255)

Awareness is not of time. Time exists in consciousness only. Beyond consciousness, where are time and space? (31)

Mahadakash is nature, the ocean of existence, the physical space with all that can be contacted through the senses. Chidakash is the expanse of awareness, the mental space of

time, perception and cognition. Paramakash is the timeless and spaceless reality, mindless, undifferentiated, the infinite potentiality, the source and origin, the substance and the essence, both matter and consciousness, yet beyond both. It cannot be perceived, but can be experienced as ever witnessing the witness, perceiving the perceiver, the origin and the end of all manifestation, the root of time and space, the prime cause in every chain of causation. (251)

Just like in a cinema all is light, so does consciousness become the vast world. Look closely and you will see that all names and forms are but transitory waves on the ocean of consciousness, that only consciousness can be said to be, not its transformations. In the immensity of consciousness a light appears, a tiny point that moves rapidly and traces shapes, thoughts and feelings, concepts and ideas, like the pen writing on paper. And the ink that leaves a trace is memory. You are that tiny point, and by your movement the world is ever re-created. Stop moving and there will be no world. Look within and you will find that the point of light is the reflection of the immensity of light in the body, as the sense "I am". There is only light, all else appears. To the mind, it [that light] appears as darkness. It can be known only through its reflections. All is seen in daylight - except daylight. To be the point of light tracing the world is turiya. To be the light itself is turiyatita. But of what use are names when reality is so near? (392-3)

Don't say "everybody is conscious". Say "there is consciousness", in which everything appears and disappears. Our minds are just waves on the ocean of consciousness. As waves they come and go. As ocean they are infinite and eternal. Know yourselves as the ocean of being, the womb of all existence. These are all metaphors of course; the reality is beyond description. You can know it only by being it. (221)

Neither comes first [matter or mind], for neither appears alone. Matter is the shape, mind is the name. Together they make the world. Pervading and transcending is Reality, pure being-awareness-bliss, your very essence. (405)

When the self-identification with the body is no more, all space and time are in your mind, which is a mere ripple in consciousness, which is awareness reflected in nature. Awareness and matter are the active and passive aspects of being, which is in both and beyond both. (483)

Consciousness is always of movement, of change. There can be no such thing a changeless consciousness. Changelessness wipes out consciousness immediately. A man deprived of outer or inner sensations blanks out, or goes into the birthless and deathless state. Only when spirit and matter come together, consciousness is born. (479)

In reality you were never born and never shall die. But now you imagine that you are, or have, a body and you ask what has brought about this state. Within the limits of illusion the answer is: desire born from memory attracts you to a body and makes you think as one with it. But this is true only from the relative point of view. In fact, there is no body, nor a world to contain it; there is only a mental condition, a dream-like state, easy to dispel by questioning its reality. (427)

8. The big cycle: part two

The return to the Absolute.

There is the body and there is the Self. Between them is the mind, in which the Self is reflected as "I am". Because of the imperfections of the mind, its crudity and restlessness, lack of discernment and insight, it takes itself to be the body, not the Self. All that is needed is to purify the mind so that it can realize its identity with the Self. When the mind merges in the Self, the body presents no problems. It remains what it is, an instrument of cognition and action, the tool and the expression of the creative fire within. The ultimate value of the body is that it serves to discover the cosmic body, which is the universe in its entirety. As you realize yourself in manifestation, you keep on discovering that you are ever more than what you have imagined. (274)

Consciousness as such is the subtle counterpart of matter. Just as inertia (tamas) and energy (rajas) are attributes of matter, so does harmony (sattva) manifest itself as consciousness. You may consider it in a way as a form of very subtle energy. Wherever matter organizes itself into a stable organism, consciousness appears spontaneously. With the destruction of the organism, consciousness disappears. (265)

The mind produces thoughts ceaselessly, even when you do not look at them. When you know what is going on in your mind, you call it consciousness. This is your waking state - your consciousness shifts from sensation to sensation, from perception to perception, from idea to idea, in endless succession. Then comes awareness, the direct insight into the whole of consciousness, the totality of the mind. The mind is like a river, flowing ceaselessly in the bed of the body; you identify yourself for a moment with some particular ripple and call it "my thought". All you are conscious of is your mind; awareness is the cognizance of consciousness as a whole. (221)

Consciousness comes and goes, awareness shines immutably. When there is a person, there is also consciousness. "I am", mind, consciousness denote the same state. If you say "I am aware", it only means "I am conscious of thinking about being aware". There is no "I am" in awareness. Witnessing is of the mind. The witness goes with the witnessed. In the state of non-duality, all separation ceases. (488)

It [the witness] is both [real and unreal]. The last remnant of illusion, the first touch of the real. To say: "I am only the witness" is both false and true: false because of the "I am", true because of the witness. It is better to say "there is witnessing". The moment you say "I am", the entire universe comes into being along with its creator. (362)

The witness is merely a point in awareness. It has no name and form. It is like the reflection of the sun in a drop of dew. The drop of dew has name and form, but the little point of light is caused by the sun. (399)

Watch yourself closely and you will see that whatever be the content of consciousness, the witnessing of it does not depend on the content. Awareness is itself and does not

change with the event. The event may be pleasant or unpleasant, minor or important, awareness is the same. Take note of the peculiar nature of pure awareness, its natural self-identity, without the least trace of self-consciousness, and go to the root of it and you will soon realize that awareness is your true nature, and nothing you may be aware of, you can call your own. When the content is viewed without likes and dislikes, the consciousness of it is awareness. But still there is a difference between awareness as reflected in consciousness and pure awareness beyond consciousness. Reflected awareness, the sense "I am aware" is the witness, while pure awareness is the essence of reality. Reflection of the sun in a drop of water is a reflection of the sun, no doubt, but not the sun itself. Between awareness reflected in consciousness as the witness and pure awareness there is a gap, which the mind cannot cross. (437-8)

Consciousness does not shine by itself. It shines by a light beyond it in which it appears, which gives it being. Don't be all the time immersed in your experience. Remember that you are beyond the experiencer, ever unborn and deathless. In remembering it, the quality of pure knowledge will emerge, the light of unconditional awareness. (190)

By its very nature, the mind is outward turned; it always tends to seek for the source of things among the things themselves; to be told to look for the source within, is, in a way, the beginning of a new life. Awareness takes the place of consciousness; in consciousness there is the "I", who is conscious, while awareness is undivided; awareness is aware of itself. The "I am" is a thought, while awareness is not a thought; there is no "I am aware" in awareness. Consciousness is an attribute while awareness is not; one can be aware of being conscious, but not conscious of awareness. God is the totality of consciousness, but awareness is beyond all - being as well as not-being. (263)

The totality of conscious experience is nature. As a conscious self you are a part of nature. As awareness, you are beyond. Seeing nature as mere consciousness is awareness. There are levels in consciousness, but not in awareness. It is of one block, homogeneous. Its reflection in the mind is love and understanding. There are levels of clarity in understanding and intensity in love, but not in their source. The source is simple and single, but its gifts are infinite. Only do not take the gifts for the source. Realize yourself as the source and not as the river, that is all. Of course, you are [the river too]. As an "I am" you are the river, flowing between the banks of the body. But you are also the source and the ocean and the clouds in the sky. Wherever there is life and consciousness, you are. Smaller than the smallest, bigger than the biggest, you are, while all else appears. (403)

Awareness is primordial; it is the original state, beginningless, endless, uncaused, unsupported, without parts, without change. Consciousness is on contact, a reflection against a surface, a state of duality. There can be no consciousness without awareness, but there can be awareness without consciousness, as in deep sleep. Awareness is absolute, consciousness is relative to its content; consciousness is always of something. Consciousness is partial and changeful, awareness is total, changeless, calm and silent. And it is the common matrix of every experience. Since it is awareness that makes consciousness possible, there is awareness in every state of consciousness. Therefore, the very consciousness of being conscious is already a movement in awareness. Interest in

your stream of consciousness takes you to awareness. It is not a new state. It is at once recognized as the original, basic experience, which is life itself, and also love and joy. (29)

Awareness with an object we call witnessing. When there is also self-identification with the object, caused by desire or fear, such a state is called a person. In reality there is only one state; when distorted by self-identification it is called a person, when coloured with the sense of being, it is the witness; when colourless and limitless, it is called the Supreme. (401)

One word may convey several and even contradictory meanings. The "I am" that pursues the pleasant and shuns the unpleasant is false; the "I am" that sees pleasure and pain as inseparable sees rightly. The witness that is enmeshed in what he perceives is the person; the witness who stands aloof, unmoved and untouched is the watch-tower of the real, the point at which awareness, inherent in the unmanifested, contacts the manifested. (351)

The "I am" in movement creates the world. The "I am" at peace becomes the Absolute. Of course you can [change the world you project]. But you must cease identifying yourself with it and go beyond. Then you have the power to destroy and re-create. (351)

As long as you are ignorant of yourself as the creator, your world is limited and repetitive. Once you go beyond your self-identification with your past, you are free to create a new world of harmony and beauty. Or you just remain, beyond being and non-being. (389)

The world has only as much power over you as you give it. Rebel. Go beyond duality. (351)

The person merges into the witness, the witness into awareness, awareness into pure being, yet identity is not lost, only its limitations are lost. It is transfigured and becomes the real Self, the sadguru, the eternal friend and guide. (447)

When I look through the mind, I see numberless people. When I look beyond the mind, I see the witness. Beyond the witness there is the infinite intensity of emptiness and silence. (355)

Without the one [the witness] the other [the "I am"] cannot be. Yet they are not one. It is like the flower and its colour. Without flower, no colours; without colour, the flower remains unseen. Beyond is the light which on contact with the flower creates the colour. Realize that your true nature is that of pure light only, and both the perceived and the perceiver come and go together. That which makes both possible, and yet is neither, is your real being, which means not being a "this" or "that", but pure awareness of being and not-being. When awareness is turned on itself, the feeling is of not knowing. When it is turned outward, the knowables come into being. To say "I know myself" is a contradiction in terms for what is "known" cannot be "myself". (395)

There must be love in the relation between the person who says "I am" and the observer of that "I am". As long as the observer, the inner self, the higher self, considers himself apart from the observed, the lower self, despises it and condemns it, the situation is hopeless. It is only when the observer (vyakta) accepts the person (vyakti) as a projection or manifestation of himself and, so to say, takes the self into the Self, the duality of "I" and "this" goes, and in the identity of the outer and the inner the Supreme Reality manifests itself. This union of the seer and the seen happens when the seer becomes conscious of himself as the seer; he is not merely interested in the seen, which he is anyhow, but also interested in being interested, giving attention to attention, aware of being aware. Affectionate awareness is the crucial factor that brings Reality into focus. When the vyakti realizes its non-existence in separation from the vyakta, and the vyakta sees the vyakti as his own expression, then the peace and silence of the avyakta state come into being. In reality the three are one: the vyakta and the avyakta are inseparable, while the vyakti is the sensing-feeling-thinking process. (292-3)

[Between vyakta and avyakta] there is no difference. It is like light and daylight. The universe is full of light which you do not see; but the same light you see as daylight. And what the daylight reveals is the vyakti. (251)

The state of identity is inherent in reality and never fades. But identity is neither the transient personality (vyakti), nor the karma-bound individuality (vyakta). It is what remains when all self-identification is given up as false - pure consciousness, the sense of being all there is, or could be. Consciousness is pure in the beginning and pure in the end; in between it gets contaminated by imagination which is at the root of creation. At all times consciousness remains the same. To know it as it is, is realization and timeless peace. (395)

Beyond the self (vyakta), lies the unmanifested (avyakta), the causeless cause of everything. (143)

All happens in consciousness and you are the root, the source, the foundation of consciousness. The world is but a succession of experiences and you are what makes them conscious, and yet remain beyond all experience. It is like the heat, the flame and the burning wood. The heat maintains the flame, the flame consumes the wood. Without heat there would be neither flame nor fuel. Similarly, without awareness there would be no consciousness, nor life, which transforms matter into a vehicle of consciousness. (404)

What relationship can there be between what is and what merely appears to be? Is there any relationship between the ocean and its waves? The real enables the unreal to appear and causes it to disappear. The succession of transient moments creates the illusion of time, but the timeless reality of pure being is not in movement, for all movement requires a motionless background. It is itself the background. Once you have found it in yourself, you know that you had never lost that independent being, independent of all divisions and separations. But don't look for it in consciousness, you will not find it there. Don't look for it anywhere, for nothing contains it. On the contrary, it contains everything and manifests everything. It is like the daylight that makes everything visible while itself remaining

invisible. (410)

The seeker is he who is in search of himself. Soon he discovers that his own body he cannot be. Once the conviction "I am not the body" becomes so well grounded that he can no longer feel, think and act for and behalf of the body, he will easily discover that he is the universal being, knowing, acting; that in him and through him the entire universe is real, conscious and alive. This is the heart of the problem. Either you are body-conscious and a slave of circumstances, or you are the universal consciousness itself - and in full control of every event. Yet consciousness, individual or universal, is not my true abode; I am not in it, it is not mine, there is no "me" in it. I am beyond, though it is not easy to explain how one can be neither conscious nor unconscious, but just beyond. I cannot say that I am in God or I am God; God is the universal light and love, the universal witness: I am beyond the universal even. (320)

Ultimately you will come to see that you are neither the particular nor the universal, you are beyond both. As the tiny point of a pencil can draw innumerable pictures, so does the dimensionless point of awareness draw the contents of the vast universe. Find that point and be free. (389)

The enlightened (gnani) is neither [conscious or unconscious]. But in his enlightenment (gnana) all is contained. Awareness contains every experience. But he who is aware is beyond every experience. He is beyond awareness itself. (265)

There can be no experience beyond consciousness. Yet there is the experience of just being. There is a state beyond consciousness, which is not unconscious. Some call it super-consciousness, or pure consciousness, or supreme consciousness. It is pure awareness free from the subject-object nexus. Consciousness is intermittent, full of gaps. Yet there is the continuity of identity. What is this sense of identity due to, if not to something beyond consciousness? (310)

To take appearance for reality is a grievous sin and the cause of all calamities. You are the all-pervading, eternal and infinitely creative awareness -consciousness. All else is local and temporary. (42)

Creation - reflection - rejection: Brahma - Vishnu - Shiva : this is the eternal process. All things are governed by it. After the stage of creation, comes the stage of examination and reflection, and finally the stage of abandonment and forgetting. The consciousness remains, but in a latent, quiet state. Understand that the One includes the Three and that you are the One, and you shall be free of the world process. (394)

There are no real differences. Only the One is real.

There is the body. Inside the body appears to be an observer, and outside a world under observation. The observer and his observation as well as the world observed appear and disappear together. Beyond it all, there is void. This void is one for all. (378)

The knower comes and goes with the known, and is transient; but that which knows that it does not know, which is free of memory and anticipation, is timeless. (395)

The known is but a shape and knowledge is but a name. The knower is but a state of mind. The real is beyond. All knowledge is in memory; it is only recognition, while reality is beyond the duality of the knower and the known. How misleading is your language! You assume, unconsciously, that reality also is approachable through knowledge. And then you bring in a knower of reality beyond reality! Do understand that to be, reality need not be known. Ignorance and knowledge are in the mind, not in the real. (423)

To become free, your attention must be drawn to the "I am", the witness. Of course, the knower and the known are one, not two, but to break the spell of the known the knower must be brought to the forefront. Neither is primary, both are reflections in memory of the ineffable experience, ever new and ever now, untranslatable, quicker than the mind. (424)

They [the person and the witness] appear to be two, but on investigation they are found to be one. Duality lasts as long as it is not questioned. The trinity: mind, self, spirit (vyakti, vyakta, avyanta) , when looked into, becomes unity. These are only modes of experiencing: of attachment, of detachment, of transcendence. (363)

They [matter and spirit] are one, or two, or three. On investigation, three become two, and two become one. Take the simile of face - mirror - image. Any two of them presuppose the third which unites the two. In sadhana, you see the three as two, until you realize the two as one. (479)

You are really in search of yourself, without knowing it. You are love-longing for the love-worthy, the perfect lovable. Due to ignorance you are looking for it in the world of opposites and contradictions. When you find it within, your search will be over. (401)

Pain and pleasure, good and bad, right and wrong: these are relative terms and must not be taken absolutely. They are limited and temporary. (264)

What you see is yours, and what I see is mine. The two have little in common. To find the common factor you must abandon all distinctions. Only the universal is in common. (533)

When you look at anything, it is the ultimate you see, but you imagine that you see a cloud or a tree. (201)

We love variety, the play of pain and pleasure, we are fascinated by contrasts. For this we need the opposites and their apparent separation. We enjoy them for a time and then get tired and crave for the peace and silence of pure being. (416)

My world is free from opposites, of mutually destructive discrepancies; harmony

pervades; its peace is rocklike; this peace and silence are my body. (485)

In the mirror of your mind, images appear and disappear. The mirror remains. Learn to distinguish the immovable in the movable, the unchanging in the changing, till you realize that all differences are in appearance only, and oneness is a fact. This basic identity -you may call God, or Brahman, or the matrix (Prakriti) , the words matter little- is only the realization that all is one. Once you can say with confidence born from direct experience "I am the world, the world is myself", you are free from desire and fear on one hand and become totally responsible for the world on the other. The senseless sorrow of mankind becomes your sole concern. (496)

A man who knows that he is neither body nor mind cannot be selfish, for he has nothing to be selfish for. Or you may say he is equally "selfish" on behalf of everybody he meets; everybody's welfare is his own. The feeling "I am the world, the world is myself" becomes quite natural; once it is established, there is just no way of being selfish. To be selfish means to covet, acquire, accumulate on behalf of the part against the whole. (510-1)

I have no shape, nor name. It is attachment to a name and shape that breeds fear. I am not attached. I am nothing, and nothing is afraid of no thing. On the contrary, everything is afraid of Nothing, for when a thing touches Nothing, it becomes nothing. (88)

Reality is neither subjective nor objective, neither mind nor matter, neither time nor space. These divisions need somebody to whom to happen, a conscious separate centre. But reality is all and nothing, the totality and the exclusion, the fullness and the emptiness, fully consistent, absolutely paradoxical. You cannot speak about it, you can only lose your self in it. When you deny reality to anything, you come to a residue which cannot be denied. (208)

No relation [between Reality and its expressions]. In Reality, all is real and identical. As we put it, saguna and nirguna are one in Parabrahman. There is only the Supreme. In movement, it is saguna. Motionless, it is nirguna. But it is only the mind that moves or does not move. The real is beyond, you are beyond. (489)

Unmanifested, manifested, individuality, personality (nirguna, saguna, vyakta, vyakti), all these are mere words, points of view, mental attitudes. There is no reality in them. The real is experienced in silence. (89)

In reality the three are one: the vyakta and the avyakta are inseparable, while the vyakti is the sensing-feeling-thinking process. How can there be relation when they are one? All talk of separation and relation is due to the distorting and corrupting influence of "I-am-the-body" idea. The outer self (vyakti) is merely a projection on the body-mind of the inner self (vyakta) , which again is only an expression of the Supreme Self (avyakta) , which is all and none. (293)

All attributes are personal. The real is beyond all attributes. (528)

As water remains water regardless of the vessels, as light remains itself regardless of the colours it brings out, so does the real remain real regardless of conditions in which it is reflected. (15)

If I ask you what is the taste of your mouth, all you can do is to say: it is neither sweet nor bitter, nor sour nor astringent; it is what remains when all these tastes are not. Similarly, when all distinctions and reactions are no more, what remains is reality, simple and solid. (410)

When all names and forms have been given up, the real is with you. You need not seek it. Plurality and diversity are the play of the mind only. Reality is one. (38)

In reality there is only the source, dark in itself, making everything shine. Unperceived, it causes perception. Unfelt, it causes feeling. Unthinkable, it causes thought. Non-being, it gives birth to being. It is the immovable background of motion. Once you are there, you are at home everywhere. (381)

9. The goal: Liberation through Self-Realization.

The gospel of self-realization

The idea of enlightenment is of utmost importance. Just to know that there is such possibility changes one's entire outlook. It acts like a burning match in a heap of saw dust. A spark of truth can burn up a mountain of lies. The very hearing of it is a promise of enlightenment. (100-101)

The possibility becomes a certainty when the notion of enlightenment appears in the mind. Once a living being has heard and understood that deliverance is within his reach, he will never forget it, for it is the first message from within. It will take roots and grow and in due course take the blessed shape of the Guru. (275)

The gospel of self-realization, once heard, will never be forgotten. Like a seed left in the ground, it will wait for the right season, and sprout and grow into a mighty tree. (182)

Just puzzling over my words and trying to grasp their full meaning is a sadhana quite efficient for breaking down the wall. (192)

All your going and coming, seeking pleasure, loving and hating - all this shows that you struggle against limitations, self-imposed or accepted. In your ignorance, you make mistakes and cause pain to yourself and others, but the urge is there and shall not be denied. The same urge that seeks birth, happiness and death, shall seek understanding and liberation. It is like a spark of fire in a cargo of cotton. You may not know about it, but sooner or later the ship will burst in flames. Liberation is a natural process and, in the long run, inevitable. But it is within your power to bring it into the now. (474)

Without it [self-realization], you will be consumed by desires and fears, repeating themselves meaninglessly in endless suffering. Most of the people do not know that there can be an end to pain. But once they have heard the good news, obviously going beyond all strife and struggle is the most urgent task that can be. You know that you can be free and now it is up to you. Either you remain forever hungry and thirsty, longing, searching, grabbing, holding, ever losing and and sorrowing, or go out wholeheartedly in search of the state of timeless perfection to which nothing can be added, from which nothing taken away. In it all desires and fears are absent, not because they were given up, but because they have lost their meaning. (331)

To know that the known cannot be me nor mine, is liberation. Freedom from self-identification with a set of memories and habits, the state of wonder at the infinite reaches of the being, its inexhaustible creativity and total transcendence, the absolute fearlessness born from the realization of the illusoriness and transiency of every mode of consciousness - flow from a deep and inexhaustible source. To know the source as source and appearance as appearance, and oneself as the source only is self-realization. (395)

There can be progress in the preparation (sadhana). Realization is sudden. The fruit

ripens slowly, but falls suddenly and without return. (332)

The preparation is gradual, the change itself is sudden and complete. Gradual change does not take you to a new level of conscious being. You need courage to let go. [If you lack courage,] it is because you are not fully convinced. Complete conviction generates both desire and courage. And meditation is the art of achieving faith through understanding. In meditation you consider the teaching received, in all its aspects and repeatedly, until out of clarity confidence is born and, with confidence, action. Conviction and action are inseparable. (492)

There are no steps to self-realization. There is nothing gradual about it. It happens suddenly and is irrevocably. You rotate into a new dimension, seen from which the previous ones are mere abstractions. Just like on sunrise you see things as they are, so on self-realization you see everything as it is. The world of illusion is left behind. (331)

With some, realization comes imperceptibly, but somehow they need convincing. They have changed, but they do not notice it. Such non-spectacular cases are often the most reliable. (291)

The experience [of self-realization] is unique and unmistakable. It will dawn on you suddenly, when the obstacles are removed to some extent. It is like a frayed rope snapping. Yours is the work at the strands. The break is bound to happen. It can be delayed, but not prevented. (502)

All will come through, not a single soul (jiva) shall be lost. (377)

For some time, the mental habits may linger in spite of the new vision, the habit of longing for the unknown past and fearing the unknown future. When you know these are of the mind only, you can go beyond them. (509)

[When the mind goes] emptiness remains, awareness remains, pure light of the conscious being remains. It is like asking what remains of a room when all the furniture is removed. A most serviceable room remains. And when even the walls are pulled down, space remains. Beyond space and time is the here and now of reality. (423)

You will recognize that you have returned to your natural state by a complete absence of all desire and fear. After all, at the root of all desire and fear is the feeling of not being what you are. Just as a dislocated joint pains only as long as it is out of shape, and is forgotten as soon as it is set right, so is all self-concern a symptom of mental distortion which disappears as soon as one is in the normal state. (332)

[On realization] That which cannot change, remains. The great peace, the deep silence, the hidden beauty of reality remain. While it cannot be conveyed through words, it is waiting for you to experience for yourself. (476)

Then, even in the body, you are not born. To be embodied or bodyless is the same to you.

You reach a point when nothing can happen to you. Without body, you cannot be killed; without possessions, you cannot be robbed; without mind, you cannot be deceived. There is no point where a desire of fear can hook on. As long as no change can happen to you, what else matters? (469)

On realization, you feel complete, fulfilled, free from the pleasure-pain complex, and yet not always able to explain what happened, why and how. You can put it only in negative terms: "Nothing is wrong with me any longer". It is only by comparison with the past that you know that you are out of it. Otherwise, you are just yourself. Don't try to convey it to others. If you can, it is not the real thing. Be silent and watch it expressing itself in action. (332)

The enlightened one (gnani).

Somehow it was very simple and easy in my case. My guru, before he died, told me: "Believe me, you are the Supreme Reality. Don't doubt my words, don't disbelieve me. I am telling you the truth, act on it". I could not forget his words and by not forgetting, I have realized. Once the guru told me: "You are the Supreme Reality", I ceased having visions and trances and became very quiet and simple. I found myself desiring and knowing less and less, until I could say in utter astonishment: "I know nothing, I want nothing." (390-1)

I was undeceived, that is all. I used to create a world and populate it. Now I don't do it any more. [Now I live] in the void beyond being and non-being, beyond consciousness. This void is also fulness; do not pity me. The mind ceased producing events. The ancient and ceaseless search stopped - I wanted nothing, expected nothing, accepted nothing as my own. There was no "me" left to strive for. Even the bare "I am" faded away. The other thing that I noticed was that I lost all my habitual certainties. Earlier I was sure of so many things, now I am sure of nothing. But I feel that I have lost nothing by not knowing, because all my knowledge was false. My not knowing was in itself knowledge of the fact that all knowledge is ignorance, that "I do not know" is the only true statement the mind can make. (392)

By looking tirelessly, I became quite empty and with that emptiness all came back to me except the mind. I find I have lost the mind irretrievably. I am neither conscious nor unconscious, I am beyond the mind and its various states and conditions. Distinctions are created by the mind and apply to the mind only. I am pure Consciousness itself, unbroken awareness of all that is. I am in a more real state than yours. I am undistracted by the distinctions and separations which constitute a person. As long as the body lasts, it has its needs like any other, but my mental process has come to an end. My thinking, like my digestion, is unconscious and purposeful. I am not a person in your sense of the word, though I may appear a person to you. I am that infinite ocean of consciousness in which all happens. I am also beyond all existence and cognition, pure bliss of being. There is nothing I feel separate from, hence I am all. No thing is me, so I am nothing. Life will escape, the body will die, but it will not affect me in the least. Beyond space and time I am, uncaused, uncausing,

yet the very matrix of existence. (221-2)

Having realized that I am with, and yet beyond the world, I became free from all desire and fear. I did not reason out that I should be free, I found myself free, unexpectedly, without the least effort. This freedom from desire and fear remained with me since then. Another thing I noticed was that I do not need to make an effort; the deed follows the thought, without delay and friction. I have also found that thoughts become self-fullfilling; things would fall in place smoothly and rightly. The main change was in the mind; it became motionless and silent, responding quickly, but not perpetuating the response. Spontaneity became a way of life, the real became natural and the natural became real. And above all, infinite affection, love, dark and quiet, radiating in all directions, embracing all, making all interesting and beautiful, significant and auspicious. (269)

The person is what I appear to be to other persons. To myself, I am the infinite expanse of consciousness in which innumerable persons emerge and disappear in endless succession. (528)

The person, the "I am this body, this mind, this chain of memories, this bundle of desires and fears" disappears, but something you may call identity remains. It enables me to become a person when required. (488)

Nothing troubles me. I offer no resistance to trouble - therefore it does not stay with me. On your side there is so much trouble. On mine there is no trouble at all. Come to my side. (192)

What is added to memory cannot be erased easily. But it can surely be done, and in fact I am doing it all the time. Like a bird on its wings, I leave no footprints. (399)

The world is like a sheet of paper on which something is typed. The reading and the meaning will vary with the reader, but the paper is the common factor, always present, rarely perceived. When the ribbon is removed, typing leaves no trace on the paper. So is my mind - the impressions keep on coming, but no trace is left. (225)

Your world is transient, changeful. My world is perfect, changeless. You can tell me what you like about your world - I shall listen carefully, even with interest, yet not for a moment shall I forget that your world is not, that you are dreaming. In mine, the words and their contents have no being. In your world nothing stays, in mine nothing changes. My world is real, while yours is made of dreams. My world has no characteristics by which it can be identified. You can say nothing about it. My silence sings, my emptiness is full, I lack nothing. In your world I appear so [with a name and shape, displaying consciousness and activity]. In mine I have being only. Nothing else. I am my world. My world is myself. It is complete and perfect. I need nothing, not even myself, for myself I cannot lose. In your world I would be most miserable. To wake up, to eat, to talk, to sleep again - what a bother! (79-81)

To me nothing ever happens. There is something changeless, motionless, immovable, rock-like, unassailable; a solid mass of pure being-consciousness-bliss. I am never out of it. Nothing can take me out of it, no torture, no calamity. (191)

[My condition is] absolutely steady. Whatever I may do, it stays like a rock - motionless. Once you have awakened into reality, you stay in it. It is self-evident and yet beyond description. (192)

All the three states [waking, sleeping, dreaming] are sleep to me. My waking state is beyond them. As I look at you, you all seem asleep, dreaming up worlds of your own. I am aware, for I imagine nothing. It is not samadhi, which is but a kind of sleep. It is just a state unaffected by the mind, free from the past and future. In your case it is distorted by desire and fear, by memories and hopes; in mine it is as it is - normal. To be a person is to be asleep. (453)

The world of mind and matter, of names and shapes, continues, but it does not matter to me at all. It is like having a shadow. It is there, following me wherever I go, but not hindering me in any way. It remains a world of experiences, but not of names and forms related to me by desires and fears. The experiences are qualityless, pure experiences, if I may say so. I call them experiences for the lack of a better word. They are like the waves on the surface of the ocean, the ever-present, but not affecting its peaceful power. (406)

I can see with the utmost clarity that you have never been, nor are, nor will be estranged from reality, that you are the fulness of perfection here and now and that nothing can deprive you of your heritage, of what you are. You are in no way different from me, only you do not know it. (424) Be fully aware of your own being, and you will be in bliss consciously. Because you take your mind off yourself and make it dwell on what you are not, you lose your sense of well-being, of being well. (96)

You people do not know how much you miss by not knowing your own true self. (213)

The moment you know your real being, you are afraid of nothing. Death gives freedom and power. To be free in the world, you must die to the world. Then the universe is your own, it becomes your body, an expression and a tool. The happiness of being absolutely free is beyond description. (139)

The ordinary man is personally concerned, he counts his risks and chances, while the gnani remains aloof, sure that all will happen as it must; and it does not matter much what happens, for ultimately the return to balance and harmony is inevitable. The heart of things is at peace. (527)

The particular is born and reborn, changing name and shape, the gnani is the Changeless Reality, which makes the changeful possible. The entire universe is his body, all life is his life. As in a city of lights, when one bulb burns out, it does not affect the network, so the death of a body does not affect the whole. With me, all is one, all is equal. (184)

The Guru is basically without desire. He sees what happens, but feels no urge to interfere. He makes no choices, takes no decisions. As pure witness, he watches what is going on and remains unaffected. Victory is always his, in the end. He knows that if the disciples do not learn from his words, they will learn from their own mistakes. Inwardly he remains quiet and silent. He has no sense of being a separate person. The entire universe is his own, including his disciples with their petty plans. Nothing in particular affects him, or, which comes to the same, the entire universe affects him in equal measure. In reality, the disciple is not different from the Guru. He is the same dimensionless centre of perception and love in action. It is only his imagination that encloses him and converts him into a person. (342)

He [the gnani] is alone, but he is all. He is not even a being. He is the beingness of beings. Not even that. No words apply. He is what he is, the ground from which all grows. (181)

A gnani commands a mode of spontaneous, non-sensory perception, which makes him know things directly, without intermediary of the senses. He is beyond the perceptual and the conceptual, beyond the categories of time and space, name and shape. He is neither the perceived nor the perceiver, but the simple and the universal factor that makes perceiving possible. (532)

His [the gnani's] state tastes of the pure, uncaused, undiluted bliss. He is happy and fully aware that happiness is his very nature and that he need not do anything, nor strive for anything to secure it. It follows him, more real than the body, nearer than the mind itself. To me, dependence on anything for happiness is utter misery. Pleasure and pain have causes, while my state is my own, totally uncaused, independent, unassailable. (179)

As he [the gnani] gets older, he grows more and more happy and peaceful. After all, he is going home. Like a traveller nearing his destination and collecting his luggage, he leaves the train without regret. The reel of destiny is coming to its end - the mind is happy. The mist of bodily existence is lifting - the burden of the body is growing less from day to day. (180)

10. The way to Realization: Part One

Not through activity. No effort is necessary, but there is a precondition: earnestness now.

Not through activity.

Where is the need of changing anything? The mind is changing anyhow all the time. Look at your mind dispassionately; this is enough to calm it. When it is quiet, you can go beyond it. Do not keep it busy all the time. Stop it, and just be. If you give it rest, it will settle down and recover its purity and strength. Constant thinking makes it decay. (311)

Nothing you do will change you, for you need no change. You may change your mind or your body, but it is always something external to you that has changed, not yourself. Why bother at all to change? Realize once for all that neither your body nor your mind, nor even your consciousness is yourself and stand alone in your true nature beyond consciousness and unconsciousness. No effort can take you there, only the clarity of understanding. (520)

Don't try to reform yourself, just see the futility of all change. The changeful keeps on changing while the changeless is waiting. Do not expect the changeful to take you to the changeless - it can never happen. Only when the very idea of changing is seen as false and abandoned, the changeless can come into its own. (521)

Most people's activities are valueless, if not outright destructive. Dominated by desire and fear, they can do nothing good. Ceasing to do evil precedes beginning to do good. Hence the need for stopping all activities for a time, to investigate one's urges and their motives, see all that is false in one's life, purge the mind of all evil and then only restart work, beginning with one's obvious duties. (345)

If you are earnest, you will find that in the end you will get fed up with roaming and regret the waste of energy and time. To find your self you need not take a single step. (334)

The self-styled gurus talk of ripeness and effort, of merits and achievements, of destiny and grace; all these are mere mental formations, projections of an addicted mind. Instead of helping, they obstruct. (422)

Do not rush into activity. Neither learning nor action can really help. (260)

It is not what you do, but what you stop doing that matters. (483)

Activity is not action. Action is hidden, unknown, unknowable. You can only know the fruit. (354)

Action does not lead to perfection; perfection is expressed in action. (419)

There is a difference between work and mere activity. All nature works. Work is nature, nature is work. On the other hand, activity is based on desire and fear, on longing to possess and enjoy, on fear of pain and annihilation. Work is by the whole for the whole, activity is by oneself for oneself. (219)

Your mind is steeped in the habits of evaluation and acquisition, and will not admit that the incomparable and unobtainable are waiting timelessly within your own heart for recognition. All you have to do is to abandon all memories and expectations. Just keep yourself ready in utter nakedness and nothingness. (498-9)

Do nothing, just be. In being all happens naturally. (227)

Be nothing, know nothing, have nothing. This is the only life worth living, the only happiness worth having. (499)

You can do nothing. What time has brought about, time will take away. This is the end of yoga, to realize independence. All that happens, happens in and to the mind, not to the source of the "I am". Once you realize that all happens by itself (call it destiny, or the will of God, or mere accident), you remain as witness only, understanding and enjoying, but not perturbed. You are responsible only for what you can change. All you can change is only your attitude. There lies your responsibility. (451)

You cannot change your circumstances, but your attitudes you can change. (480-1)

There is nothing we can do, we can only let things happen according to their nature. Clarity and charity is action. Love is not lazy and clarity directs. You need not worry about action, look after your mind and heart. Stupidity and selfishness are the only evil. (496)

In reality things are done to you, not by you. Your desire just happens to you along with its fulfilment or non-fulfilment. You can change neither. You may believe that you exert yourself, strive and struggle. Again, it all merely happens, including the fruits of the work. Neither is by you and for you. All is in the picture exposed on the cinema screen, nothing in the light, including what you take yourself to be, the person. You are the light only. (481)

Life itself is desireless. But the false self wants to continue - pleasantly. Therefore, it is always engaged in ensuring one's continuity. Life is unafraid and free. As long as you have the idea of influencing events, liberation is not for you: the very notion of doership, of being a cause, is bondage. (298)

Everybody wants to be active, but where do his actions originate? There is no central point: each action begets another, meaninglessly and painfully, in endless succession. The alternation of work and pause is not there. First find the immutable centre where all movement takes birth. Just like a wheel turns round an axle, so must you be always in the

centre and not whirling at the periphery. (349)

The witness is that which says "I know". The person says "I do". Now, to say "I know" is not untrue, it is merely limited. But to say "I do" is altogether false, because there is nobody who does; all happens by itself, including the idea of being a doer. The universe is full of action, but there is no actor. There are numberless persons small and big and very big, who, through identification, imagine themselves as acting, but it does not change the fact that the world of action (mahadakash) is one single whole in which all depends on, and affects all. The stars affect us deeply and we affect the stars. Step back from action to consciousness, leave action to the body and the mind; it is their domain. Remain as pure witness, till even witnessing dissolves in the Supreme. (400-1)

Liberation is not the result of some means skilfully applied, nor of circumstances. It is beyond the causal process. Nothing can compel it, nothing can prevent it. (456)

The Self is near and the way to it is easy. All you need doing is doing nothing. (236)

Stay open and quiet, that is all. What you seek is so near you that there is no place for a way. (196)

Having realized that you cannot influence the results, pay no attention to your desire and fears. Let them come and go. Don't give them the nourishment of interest and attention. (481)

There is nothing to do. Just be. Do nothing. Be. No climbing mountains and sitting in caves. I do not even say: "be yourself", since you do not know yourself. Just be. Having seen that you are neither the "outer" world of perceivables, nor the "inner" world of thinkables, that you are neither body nor mind, just be. (331)

No effort is necessary.

Do not imagine that you can change through effort. Violence, even turned against yourself, as in austerities and penance, will remain fruitless. (498)

Your needs are unreal and your efforts are meaningless. (339)

There is no place for effort in reality. It is selfishness, due to self-identification with the body, that is the main problem and the cause of other problems. And selfishness cannot be removed by effort, only by clear insight into its causes and effects. Effort is a sign of conflict between incompatible desires. They should be seen as they are - then only they dissolve. (476)

Unless you make tremendous efforts, you will not be convinced that effort will take you nowhere. The self is so self-confident that unless it is totally discouraged it will not give up. Mere verbal conviction is not enough. Hard facts alone can show the absolute

nothingness of the self-image. (523)

The people who begin their sadhana are so feverish and restless that they have to be very busy to keep themselves on the track. An absorbing routine is good for them. After some time, they quieten down and turn away from effort. In peace and silence, the skin of the "I" dissolves and the inner and the outer become one. The real sadhana is effortless. (483)

In each [school of yoga], one can progress up to the point when all desire for progress must be abandoned to make further progress possible. Then all schools are given up, all effort ceases; in solitude and darkness, the last step is made which ends ignorance and fear for ever. (477)

Abandon every attempt, just be; don't strive, don't struggle, let go every support, hold on to the blind sense of being, brushing off all else. This is enough. (494)

You can also grow like this [effortlessly, like a child], but you must not indulge in forecasts and plans, born of memory and anticipation. (285)

It is your idea that you have to do things that entangle you in the results of your efforts - the motive, the desire, the failure to achieve, the sense of frustration - all this holds you back. Simply look at whatever happens and know that you are beyond it. (148)

It has nothing to do with effort. Just turn away, look between the thoughts, rather than at the thoughts. When you happen to walk in a crowd, you do not fight every man you meet, you just find your way between. When you fight, you invite a fight. But when you do not resist, you meet no resistance. When you refuse to play the game, you are out of it. (349)

A quiet mind is all you need. All else will happen rightly, once your mind is quiet. As the sun on rising makes the world active, so does self-awareness affect changes in the mind. In the light of calm and steady self-awareness, inner energies wake up and work miracles without any effort on your part. (311)

The window is the absence of the wall, and it gives air and light because it is empty. Be empty of all mental content, of all imagination and effort, and the very absence of obstacles will cause reality to rush in. (260)

Deepen and broaden your awareness of yourself and all the blessings will flow. You need not seek anything, all will come to you most naturally and effortlessly. (261)

Keep the "I am" in the focus of awareness, remember that you are , watch yourself ceaselessly and the unconscious will flow into the conscious without any special effort on your part. (447)

There is no effort in witnessing. You understand that you are the witness only, and the understanding acts. You need nothing more, just remember that you are the witness only. (303)

Having realized that I am with, and yet beyond the world, I became free from all desire and fear. I did not reason out that I should be free, I found myself free, unexpectedly, without the least effort. (269)

[I can describe the supreme, natural state] only by negation, as uncaused, independent, unrelated, undivided, uncomposed, unshakable, unquestionable, unreachable by effort. (16)

But there is a precondition: earnestness now.

All waiting is futile. To depend on time to solve our problems is self-delusion. The future, left to itself merely repeats the past. Change can only happen now, never in the future. (402)

Action delayed is action abandoned. There may be other chances for other actions, but the present moment is lost, irretrievably lost. All preparation is for the future - you cannot prepare for the present. (493)

Once you realize that the body depends on the mind, and the mind on consciousness, and consciousness on awareness, and not the other way round, your question about waiting for self-realization till you die is answered. It is not that you must be free from the "I-am-the-body" idea first, and then realize the self. It is definitely the other way round - you cling to the false because you do not know the true. Earnestness, not perfection, is a precondition to self-realization. Virtues and powers come with realization, not before. (434)

For this [self-realization], you need a well-ordered and quiet life, peace of mind and immense earnestness. (491)

Earnestness is not a yearning for the fruits of one's endeavours. It is an expression of an inner shift of interest away from the false, the unessential, the personal. (455-6)

[The person is removed] by determination. Understand that it must go and wish it to go - it shall go if you are earnest about it. (441)

It is earnestness that is indispensable, the crucial factor. Sadhana is only a vessel and it must be filled to the brim with earnestness, which is but love in action. For nothing can be done without love. (482-3)

You must find your own way. Unless you find it yourself, it will not be your own way and will take you nowhere. Earnestly live your truth as you have found it, act on the little you have understood. It is earnestness that will take you through, not cleverness - your own or another's. (499)

To find reality you must be real in the smallest daily action; there can be no deceit in the

search for truth. (515)

Try. One step at a time is easy. Energy flows from earnestness. (528)

Your first task is to see the sorrow in you and around you; your next, to long intensely for liberation. The very intensity of longing will guide you; you need no other guide. (236)

It is the absolute in you that takes you to the absolute beyond you - absolute truth, love, selflessness are the decisive factors in self-realization. With earnestness these can be reached. (461)

The remedy lies in clarity and integrity of thinking. Try to understand that you live in a world of illusions, examine them and uncover their roots. The very attempt to do so will make you earnest, for there is bliss in right endeavour. (529)

Mere physical renunciation is only a token of earnestness, but earnestness alone does not liberate. There must be understanding which comes with alert perceptivity, eager enquiry and deep investigation. You must work relentlessly for your salvation from sin and sorrow. (534)

11. The way to Realization: Part Two

Not through knowledge of things, or through experiences, but through self-knowledge.

Not through knowledge of things

A general longing for liberation is only the beginning; to find the proper means and use them is the next step. The seeker has only one goal in view: to find his own true being. Of all desires it is the most ambitious, for nothing and nobody can satisfy it; the seeker and the sought are one, and the search alone matters. (223)

Mere knowledge is not enough; the knower must be known. The pandits and yogis may know many things, but of what use is mere knowledge when the self is not known? It will be certainly misused. Without the knowledge of the knower there can be no peace. (301)

Just as every drop of the ocean carries the taste of the ocean, so does every moment carry the taste of eternity. Definitions and descriptions have their place as useful incentives for further search, but you must go beyond them into what is undefinable and indescribable, except in negative terms. (413)

You may know all the right words, quote the scriptures, be brilliant in your discussions and yet remain a bag of bones. Or you may be inconspicuous and humble, an insignificant person altogether, yet glowing with loving kindness and deep wisdom. (515)

To deal with things, knowledge of things is needed. To deal with people, you need insight, sympathy. To deal with yourself, you need nothing. Be what you are: conscious being, and don't stray away from yourself. (317)

Relatively, yes [there can be true knowledge of things]. Absolutely, there are no things. To know that nothing is is true knowledge. (359)

As long as you are engrossed in the world, you are unable to know yourself: to know yourself, turn away your attention from the world and turn it within. (479)

You can not know perfection, you can know only imperfection. For knowledge to be, there must be separation and disharmony. You can know what you are not, but you can not know your real being. You can be only what you are. The entire approach is through understanding, which is in the seeing of the false as false. But to understand, you must observe from outside. (336)

The discovery of truth is in the discernment of the false. You can know what is not. What is - you can only be. Knowledge is relative to the known. In a way, it is the counterpart of ignorance. Where ignorance is not, where is the need of knowledge? By themselves, neither ignorance nor knowledge have being. They are only states of mind, which again is but an appearance of movement in consciousness. (370)

There is no such state as seeing the real. Who is to see what? You can only be the real, which you are, anyhow. The problem is not mental. Abandon false ideas, that is all. There is no need of true ideas. There aren't any. (359-60)

It is always the false that makes you suffer, the false desires and fears, the false values and ideas, the false relationships between people. Abandon the false and you are free of pain; truth makes happy, truth liberates. (253)

Truth can be expressed only by the denial of the false -in action. For this, you must see the false as false (viveka) and reject it (vairagya). Renunciation of the false is liberating and energizing. It lays open the road to perfection. (314)

You must unlearn everything. God is the end of all desire and knowledge. (336)

Now I know nothing, for all knowledge is in dream only and not valid. I know myself and I find no life nor death in me, only pure being, not being this or that, but just being. (261)

Not through experiences

Most of your experiences are unconscious. The conscious ones are very few. You are unaware of the fact because to you only the conscious ones count. Become aware of the unconscious. Desire and fear are the obscuring and distorting factors. When mind is free of them the unconscious becomes accessible. (406)

An event becomes an experience only when I am emotionally interested. I am in a state which is complete, which seeks not to improve on itself. Of what use is experience to me? (317)

All experience is necessarily transient. But the ground of all experience is immovable. Nothing that may be called an event will last. But some events purify the mind and some stain it. Moments of deep insight and all-embracing love purify the mind, while desires and fears, envies and anger, blind beliefs and intellectual arrogance pollute and dull the psyche. (331)

Above all, we want to remain conscious. We shall bear every suffering and humiliation, but we shall rather remain conscious. Unless we revolt against this craving for experience and let go the manifested altogether, there can be no relief. We shall remain trapped. (328)

At present your being is mixed up with experiencing. All you need is to unravel being from the tangle of experiences. Once you have known pure being, without being this or that, you will discern it among experiences and you will no longer be misled by names and forms. Self-limitation is the very essence of personality. (206)

Experience leaves only memories behind and adds to the burden which is heavy enough.

You need no more experiences. The past ones are sufficient. And if you feel you need more, look into the hearts of people around you. You will find a variety of experiences which you would not be able to go through in a thousand years. Learn from the sorrows of others and save yourself your own. It is not experience that you need, but the freedom from all experience. (317)

Most of the people vegetate, but do not live. They merely gather experiences and enrich their memory. But experience is the denial of Reality, which is neither sensory nor conceptual, neither of the body nor of the mind, though it includes and transcends them both. (318)

All experience is born of imagination. (262)

There is no such thing as the experience of the real. The real is beyond experience. All experience is in the mind. You know the real by being the real. (438)

All experience is illusory, limited and temporal. Expect nothing from experience. Realization by itself is not an experience, though it may lead to a new dimension of experiences. Yet the new experiences, however interesting, are not more real than the old. Definitely realization is not a new experience. It is the discovery of the timeless factor in every experience. It is awareness, which makes experience possible. Just like in all the colours light is the colourless factor, so in every experience awareness is present, yet it is not an experience. (403)

Experience, however sublime, is not the real thing. By its very nature it comes and goes. Self-realization is not an acquisition. It is more of the nature of understanding. Once arrived at, it cannot be lost. On the other hand, consciousness is changeful, flowing, undergoing transformation from moment to moment. Do not hold on to consciousness and its contents. Consciousness held, ceases. To try to perpetuate a flash of insight, or a burst of happiness is destructive of what it wants to preserve. What comes must go. The permanent is beyond all comings and goings. Go to the root of all experience, to the sense of being. Beyond being and not-being lies the immensity of the real. Try and try again. (323)

Be interested in yourself beyond all experience, be with yourself, love yourself; the ultimate security is found only in self-knowledge. The main thing is earnestness. Be honest with yourself and nothing will betray you. (217)

But through self-knowledge

You do not know what you are and therefore you imagine yourself to be what you are not. Hence desires and fear and overwhelming activity in order to escape. (224-5)

If you want to live sanely, creatively and happily, and have infinite riches to share, search for what you are. (221)

Deepen and broaden your awareness of yourself and all the blessings will flow. You need not seek anything, all will come to you most naturally and effortlessly. (261)

Unless you know yourself well, how can you know another? And when you know yourself, you are the other. (429)

The limited only is perfectible. The unlimited is already perfect. You are perfect, only you don't know it. Learn to know yourself and you will discover wonders. (413)

You are what you are, timelessly, but of what use is it to you unless you know it and act on it? Your begging bowl may be of pure gold, but as long as you do not know it you are a pauper. You must know your inner worth and trust it and express it in the daily sacrifice of desire and fear. (508)

Believe me, there is no goal, nor a way to reach it. You are the way and the goal, there is nothing else to reach except yourself. All you need is to understand, and understanding is the flowering of the mind. The tree is perennial, but the flowering and the fruit-bearing come in season. The seasons change, but not the tree. You are the tree. You have grown numberless branches and leaves in the past, and you may grow them also in the future - yet you remain. Not what was, or shall be, must you know, but what is. Yours is the desire that creates the universe. Know the world as your own creation and be free. (380)

There is nothing in the world that you cannot know, when you know yourself. Thinking yourself to be the body, you know the world as a collection of material things. When you know yourself as a centre of consciousness, the world appears as the ocean of the mind. When you know yourself as you are in reality, you know the world as yourself. (380)

Merely assuaging fears and satisfying desires will not remove this sense of emptiness you are trying to escape from; only self-knowledge can help you. By self-knowledge I mean full knowledge of what you are not. Such knowledge is attainable and final; but to the discovery of what you are there can be no end. The more you discover, the more there remains to discover. (480)

The reward of self-knowledge is freedom from the personal self. You cannot know the knower, for you are the knower. The fact of knowing proves the knower. You need no other proof. The knower of the known is not knowable. Just like the light is known in colours only, so is the knower known in knowledge. (360)

Begin from the beginning: give attention to the fact that you are. At no time can you say "I was not". All you can say is "I don't remember". You know how unreliable is memory. Accept that, engrossed in petty personal affairs, you have forgotten what you are; try to bring back the lost memory through the elimination of the known. You cannot be told what will happen, nor is it desirable; anticipation will create illusions. In the inner search, the unexpected is inevitable; the discovery is invariably beyond all imagination. Just as an unborn child cannot know life after birth, for it has nothing in its mind with which to form a valid picture, so is the mind unable

to think of the real in terms of the unreal, except by negation: "Not this, not that". The acceptance of the unreal as real is the obstacle; to see the false as false and abandon the false brings reality into being. (513)

First realize your own being. This is easy because the sense "I am" is always with you. Then meet yourself as the knower, apart from the known. Once you know yourself as pure being, the ecstasy of freedom is your own. (520)

I am only interested in ignorance and the freedom from ignorance. (505)

Intelligence is the door to freedom, and alert attention is the mother of intelligence. (278)

Don't talk of means, there are no means. What you see as false, dissolves. It is the very nature of illusion to dissolve on investigation. Investigate - that is all. You cannot destroy the false, for you are creating it all the time. Withdraw from it, ignore it, go beyond, and it will cease to be. (455)

Do not try to know the truth, for knowledge by the mind is not true knowledge. But you can know what is not true, which is enough to liberate you from the false. The idea that you know what is true is dangerous, for it keeps you imprisoned in the mind. It is when you do not know that you are free to investigate. And there can be no salvation without investigation, because non-investigation is the main cause of bondage. (457-8)

Keep very quiet and watch what comes to the surface of the mind. Reject the known, welcome the so far unknown and reject it in its turn. Thus you come to a state in which there is no knowledge, only being, in which being itself is knowledge. To know by being is direct knowledge. It is based on the identity of the seer and the seen. Indirect knowledge is based on sensation and memory, on proximity of the perceiver and his percept, confined with the contrast between the two. (486)

There is nothing to practise. To know yourself, be yourself. To be yourself, stop imagining yourself to be this or that. Just be. Let your nature emerge. Don't disturb your mind with seeking. You have only to look and see. Look at your self, at your own being. You know that you are and you like it. Abandon all imagining, that is all. (259)

What you take to be the "I" in the "I am" is not you. To know that you are is natural, to know what you are is the result of much investigation. You will have to explore the entire field of consciousness and go beyond. (312)

How do you know that you do not know your self? Your direct insight tells you that yourself you know first, for nothing exists without your being there to experience its existence. You imagine you do not know your self, because you cannot describe your self. You can only say: "I know that I am" and you will refuse as untrue the statement "I am not". But whatever can be described cannot be your self, and what you are cannot be described. You can only know your being by being yourself without any attempt at self-definition and self-description. Once you have understood that you are nothing

perceivable or conceivable, that whatever appears in the field of consciousness cannot be your self, you will apply yourself to the eradication of all self-identification, as the only way that can take you to a deeper realization of your self. (517-8)

To know that you are neither in the body nor in the mind, though aware of both, is already self-knowledge. (518)

So many words you have learnt, so many you have spoken. You know everything, but you do not know yourself. For the self is not known through words, only direct insight will reveal it. Look within, search within. (514)

Learning words is not enough. You may know the theory, but without the actual experience of yourself as the impersonal and unqualified centre of being, love and bliss, mere verbal knowledge is sterile. (509)

12. The way to Realization: Part Three

Not through the mind.

It is only your mind that prevents self-knowledge. (517)

[The cause of suffering is] self-identification with the limited. Sensations as such, however strong, do not cause suffering. It is the mind, bewildered by wrong ideas, addicted to thinking "I am this", "I am that", that fears loss and craves gain and suffers when frustrated. (110)

Nothing can trouble you but your own imagination. (113)

There is no such thing as peace of mind. Mind means disturbance; restlessness itself is mind. (142)

A level of maturity is reached when nothing external is of any value, and the heart is ready to relinquish all. Then the real has a chance and it grasps it. Delays, if any, are caused by the mind being unwilling to see or discard. (514)

You cannot see the true unless you are at peace. A quiet mind is essential for right perception, which again is required for self-realization. (481)

When the mind has been put to rest and disturbs no longer the inner space (chidakash), the body acquires a new meaning and its transformation becomes both necessary and possible. (496-7)

The mirror can do nothing to attract the sun. It can only keep bright. As soon as the mind is ready, the sun shines in. [The light] is uncaused and unvarying by itself, and coloured by the mind as soon as it moves and changes. It is very much like a cinema. The light is not in the film, but the film colours the light and makes it appear to move by intercepting it. (54)

The world is but the surface of the mind and the mind is infinite. What we call thoughts are just ripples in the mind. When the mind is quiet it reflects reality. When it is motionless through and through, it dissolves and only reality remains. (484)

What is going on is a projection of your mind. A weak mind cannot control its own projections. Be aware, therefore, of your mind and its projections. You cannot control what you do not know. On the other hand, knowledge gives power. In practice it is very simple. To control yourself, know yourself. (121)

Deal with your mind first. When you realize that your mind too is a part of nature, the duality will cease. Because nature is in the mind; without the mind, where is nature? (186)

Use your mind to know your mind. It is perfectly legitimate and also the best preparation for going beyond the mind. (520)

Understand your own mind and its hold on you will snap. The mind misunderstands; misunderstanding is its very nature. Right understanding is the only remedy. (520)

All change affects the mind only. To be what you are, you must go beyond the mind, into your own being. It is immaterial what is the mind that you leave behind, provided you leave it behind for good. This again is not possible without self-realization. Self-realization definitely comes first. The mind cannot go beyond itself by itself. It must explode. The explosive power comes from the real. But you are well advised to have your mind ready for it. (522)

Reality is not the result of a process; it is an explosion. It is definitely beyond the mind, but all you can do is to know your mind well. Not that the mind will help you, but by knowing your mind you may avoid your mind disabling you. You have to be alert, or else your mind will play false with you. It is like watching a thief - not that you expect anything from a thief, but you do not want to be robbed. In the same way, you give a lot of attention to the mind without expecting anything from it. (189)

Watch your mind, how it comes into being, how it operates. As you watch your mind, you discover your self as the watcher. When you stand motionless, only watching, you discover your self as the light behind the watcher. The source of light is dark, unknown is the source of knowledge. That source alone is. Go back to that source and abide there. (188)

No state of mind can be more real than the mind itself. Is the mind real? It is but a collection of states, each of them transitory. How can a succession of transitory states be considered real? The illusion of being the body-mind is there only because it is not investigated. Non-investigation is the thread on which all the states of mind are strung. It is like darkness in a closed room. It is there - apparently. But when the room is opened, where does it go? It goes nowhere, because it was not there. All states of mind, all names and forms of existence are rooted in non-enquiry, non-investigation, in imagining and credulity. It is right to say "I am", but to say "I am this", "I am that" is a sign of not enquiring, not examining, of mental weakness or lethargy. Sadhana (practice) consists in reminding oneself forcibly of one's pure being-ness, of not being anything in particular, nor a sum of particulars, not even the totality of all particulars, which make up a universe. All exists in the mind, even the body is an integration in the mind of a vast number of sensory perceptions, each perception also a mental state. Think of yourself. Only don't bring the idea of a body into the picture. There is only a stream of sensations, perceptions, memories and ideations. The body is an abstraction, created by our tendency to seek unity in diversity. (134-135)

Consciousness and unconsciousness, while in the body, depend on the condition of the brain. But the self is beyond both, beyond the brain, beyond the mind. The fault of the instrument is no reflection of its user. (114)

Concern yourself with your mind, remove its distortions and impurities. Once you had the taste of your own self, you will find it everywhere and at all times. Therefore it is so important that you should come to it. Once you know it, you will never lose it. (413)

You are the Self, here and now. Leave the mind alone, stand aware and unconcerned, and you will realize that to stand alert and detached, watching events come and go, is an aspect of your real nature. (19)

A quiet mind is all you need. All else will happen rightly, once your mind is quiet. As the sun on rising makes the world active, so does self-awareness affect changes in the mind. In the light of calm and steady self-awareness, inner energies wake up and work miracles without any effort on your part. Do understand that you are destined for enlightenment. Co-operate with your destiny, don't go against it, don't thwart it. Allow it to fulfill itself. All you have to do is to give attention to the obstacles created by the foolish mind. (311)

Moods are in the mind and do not matter. Go within, go beyond. Cease being fascinated by the content of your consciousness. When you reach the deep layers of your true being, you will find that the mind's surface-play affects you very little. (531)

What was never lost can never be found. Your very search for safety and joy keeps you away from them. Stop searching, cease losing. The disease is simple and the remedy equally simple. It is your mind only that makes you insecure and unhappy. Anticipation makes you insecure; memory, unhappy. Stop misusing your mind and all will be well with you. You need not set it right, it will set itself right, as soon as you give up all concern with the past and the future and live entirely in the now. (230)

Of the unknowable only silence talks. The mind can talk only of what it knows. If you diligently investigate the knowable, it dissolves and only the unknowable remains. But with the first flicker of imagination and interest the unknowable is obscured and the known comes to the fore-front. The known, the changing, is what you live with; the unchangeable is of no use to you. It is only when you are satiated with the changeable and long for the unchangeable that you are ready for the turning round and stepping into what can be described, when seen from the level of the mind, as emptiness and darkness. For the mind craves for content and variety, while reality is, to the mind, contentless and invariable. (436)

What prevents you from knowing yourself as all and beyond all, is the mind based on memory. It has power over you as long as you trust it. Don't struggle with it; just disregard it. Deprived of attention, it will slow down and reveal the mechanism of its working. Once you know its nature and purpose, you will not allow it to create imaginary problems. What problems can there be which the mind did not create? Life and death do not create problems; pains and pleasures come and go, experienced and forgotten. It is memory and anticipation that create problems of attainment or avoidance, coloured by like and dislike. (475)

The problem is not yours - it is your mind's only. Begin by disassociating yourself from your mind. Resolutely remind yourself that you are not the mind and that its problems are not yours. (125)

How can an unsteady mind make itself steady? Of course it cannot. It is the nature of the mind to roam about. All you can do is to shift the focus of consciousness beyond the mind. (18)

Leave your mind alone, that is all. Don't go along with it. After all, there is no such thing as mind apart from thoughts which come and go obeying their own laws, not yours. They dominate you only because you are interested in them. (350)

It is the mind that tells you that the mind is there. Don't be deceived. All the endless arguments about the mind are produced by the mind itself, for its own protection, continuation and expansion. It is the blank refusal to consider the convolutions and convulsions of the mind that can take you beyond it. (321)

Having never left the house you are asking for the way home. Get rid of wrong ideas, that is all. Collecting right ideas also will take you nowhere. Just cease imagining. Don't try to understand! Enough if you do not misunderstand. Don't rely on your mind for liberation. It is the mind that brought you into bondage. Go beyond it altogether. (206)

There is no such thing as mind. There are ideas and some of them are wrong. Abandon the wrong ideas, for they are wrong and obstruct your vision of yourself. Assertions are usually wrong, and denials right. Only by denying can one live. Assertion is bondage. To question and deny is necessary. It is the essence of revolt and without revolt there can be no freedom. (517)

General knowledge develops the mind, no doubt. But if you are going to spend your life in amassing knowledge, you build a wall round yourself. To go beyond the mind, a well-furnished mind is not needed. (50)

The window is the absence of the wall, and it gives air and light because it is empty. Be empty of all mental content, of all imagination and effort, and the very absence of obstacles will cause reality to rush in. (260)

Leave it all behind you. Forget it. Go forth, unburdened with ideas and beliefs. Abandon all verbal structures, all relative truth, all tangible objectives. (340)

All are mere words, of what use are they to you? You are entangled in the web of verbal definitions and formulations. Go beyond your concepts and ideas; in the silence of desire and thought the truth is found. (295)

Too much analysis leads you nowhere. There is in you the core of being which is beyond analysis, beyond the mind. You can know it in action only. The legitimate function of the mind is to tell you what is not. But if you want positive knowledge, you must go beyond

the mind. (341)

Before you can know anything directly, non-verbally, you must know the knower. So far, you took the mind for the knower, but it is not so. The mind clogs you up with images and ideas, which leave scars in memory. You take remembering to be knowledge. True knowledge is ever fresh, new, unexpected. It wells up from within. When you know what you are, you also are what you know. Between knowing and being there is no gap. (520)

Consciousness, being a product of conditions and circumstances, depends on them and changes along with them. What is independent, uncreated, timeless and changeless and yet ever new and fresh is beyond the mind. When the mind thinks of it, the mind dissolves and only happiness remains. (488)

[With self-awareness] you grow more intelligent. In awareness you learn, in self-awareness you learn about yourself. Of course, you can only learn what you are not. To know what you are, you must go beyond the mind. Awareness is the point at which the mind reaches out beyond itself into reality. In awareness you seek not what pleases, but what is true. (346)

Stop making use of your mind and see what happens. Do this one thing thoroughly. That is all. (197)

See everything as a dream, as a show, as a film.

Just remember, nothing perceivable is real. (354)

All you can do is to grasp the central point: that reality is not an event and does not happen, and whatever happens, whatever comes and goes, is not really. See the event as event only, the transient as transient, experience as mere experience, and you have done all you can do. But as soon as there is some like or dislike, you have drawn a screen. (190)

Everyone creates a world for himself and lives in it, imprisoned by one's ignorance. All we have to do is to deny reality to our prison. (208)

Don't be afraid of a world you yourself have created. Cease from looking for happiness and reality in a dream and you will wake up. (453)

This is the mystery of imagination, that it seems to be so real. You may be celibate or married, a monk or a family man; that is not the point. Are you a slave of your imagination, or are you not? Whatever decision you take, whatever work you do, it will be invariably based on imagination, on assumptions parading as facts. (355)

When the body is born, all kinds of things happen to it, and you take part in them because you take yourself to be the body. You are like the man in the cinema house, laughing and crying with the picture, though knowing fully well that he is all the time in his seat and

the picture is but the play of light. It is enough to shift attention from the screen to oneself to break the spell. (389)

When the body dies, the kind of life you live now, succession of physical and mental events, comes to an end. It can end even now, without waiting for the death of the body. It is enough to shift attention to the Self and keep it there. All happens as if there is a mysterious power that creates and moves everything. Realize that you are not the mover, only the observer, and you will be at peace. Of course not [that power is not separate from you]. But you must begin by being the dispassionate observer. Then only will you realize your full being as the universal lover and actor. As long as you are enmeshed in the tribulations of a particular personality, you can see nothing beyond it. (389)

If you stand aloof as observer only, you will not suffer. You will see the world as a show, a most entertaining show indeed. (380)

Stop hurting yourself and others, stop suffering, wake up. When you begin to question your dream, awakening will be not far away. (74)

It [the dream] appears to be beginningless, but in fact it is only now. From moment to moment you are renewing it. Once you have seen that you are dreaming, you shall wake up. But you do not see because you want the dream to continue. A day will come when you will long for the ending of the dream, with all your heart and mind, and be willing to pay the price; the price will be dispassion and detachment, the loss of interest in the dream itself. Wanting it to continue is not inevitable. See clearly your condition, your very clarity will release you. (506)

There is no need of a way out [of the dream]! Don't you see that a way out is also a part of the dream? All you have to do is see the dream as dream. The very idea of going beyond the dream is illusory. Why go anywhere? Just realize that you are dreaming a dream you call the world, and stop looking for ways out. The problem is not the dream. Your problem is that you like one part of your dream and not another. Love all, or none of it, and stop complaining. When you have seen the dream as a dream, you have done all that needs be done. (117)

13. The Way to Self-Realization: Part Four

See that happiness is not pleasure. See that desires and fears create bondage. And be free and happy through detachment.

See that happiness is not pleasure.

Pain and pleasure are the crests and valleys in the ocean of bliss (ananda). Deep down there is utter fulness. (165)

Pain and pleasure go always together. Freedom from one means freedom from the both. If you do not care for pleasure, you will not be afraid of pain. But there is happiness, which is neither, which is completely beyond. (145)

My experience is that everything is bliss. But the desire for bliss creates pain. Thus bliss becomes the seed of pain. The entire universe of pain is born of desire. Give up the desire for pleasure and you will not even know what is pain. (82)

The right state and use of the body and the mind are intensely pleasant. It is the search for pleasure that is wrong. (468)

When the mind is engaged in serving the body, happiness is lost. To regain it, it seeks pleasure. The urge to be happy is right, but the means of securing it are misleading, unreliable and destructive of true happiness. (468)

Do not try to make yourself happy, rather question your very search for happiness. It is because you are not happy that you want to be happy. Find out why you are unhappy. Because you are not happy you seek happiness in pleasure; pleasure brings in pain and therefore you call it worldly; you then long for some other pleasure, without pain, which you call divine. In reality, pleasure is but a respite from pain. (468)

The very desire to live is the messenger of death, as the longing to be happy is the outline of sorrow. The world is an ocean of pain and fear, of anxiety and despair. Pleasures are like the fishes, few and swift, rarely come, quickly gone. A man of low intelligence believes, against all evidence, that he is an exception and that the world owes him happiness. But the world cannot give what it does not have; unreal to the core, it is of no use for real happiness. It cannot be otherwise. We seek the real because we are unhappy with the unreal. Happiness is our real nature and we shall never rest until we find it. (485-6)

Momentary relief from pain we call pleasure - and we build castles in the air hoping for endless pleasure which we call happiness. It is all misunderstanding. (145)

You are like a child with a lollypop in its mouth. You may feel happy for a moment by being totally self-centered, but it is enough to have a good look at human faces to perceive the universality of suffering. Even your own happiness is so vulnerable and

short-lived, at the mercy of a bank-crash, or a stomach ulcer. It is just a moment of respite, a mere gap between two sorrows. Real happiness is not vulnerable, because it does not depend on circumstances. (472-3)

Pleasure depends on things, happiness does not. As long as we believe that we need things to make us happy, we shall also believe that in their absence we must be miserable. Mind always shapes itself according to its beliefs. Hence the importance of convincing oneself that one need not be prodded into happiness; that, on the contrary, pleasure is a distraction and a nuisance, for it merely increases the false conviction that one needs to have and do things to be happy, when in reality it is just the opposite. But why talk of happiness at all? You do not think of happiness except when you are unhappy. A man who says "Now I am happy" is between two sorrows, past and future. This happiness is mere excitement caused by relief from pain. Real happiness is utterly unselfconscious. It is best expressed negatively as: "there is nothing wrong with me, I have nothing to worry about". (486-7)

Once you have grasped the truth that the world is full of suffering, that to be born is a calamity, you will find the urge and the energy to go beyond. Pleasure puts you to sleep and pain wakes you up. If you do not want to suffer, don't go to sleep. You cannot know yourself through bliss alone, for bliss is your very nature. You must face the opposite, what you are not, to find enlightenment. (306)

See that desires and fears create bondage.

As you think yourself to be, so you think the world to be. If you imagine yourself as separate from the world, the world will appear as separate from you and you will experience desire and fear. I do not see the world as separate from me and so there is nothing for me to desire or fear. (123)

Selfishness is the cause of suffering. There is no other cause. It is only with separateness and self-seeking that real suffering appears in the world. (474)

Self-identification with the body creates ever fresh desires, and there is no end to them, unless this mechanism of bondage is clearly seen. It is clarity that is liberating, for you cannot abandon desire unless its causes and effects are clearly seen. (381)

When desire and fear end, bondage also ends. It is the emotional involvement, the pattern of likes and dislikes which we call character and temperament, that create the bondage. Don't be afraid of freedom from desire and fear. It enables you to live a life so different from all you know, so much more intense and interesting, that truly by losing all you gain all. (505)

To act from desire and fear is bondage, to act from love is freedom. (489)

In Hinduism, the very idea of free will is non-existent, so there is no word for it. Will is commitment, fixation, bondage. (356)

All desires are bad, but some are worse than others. Pursue any desire, it will always give you trouble. Why desire at all? Desiring a state of freedom from desire will not set you free. Nothing can set you free, because you are free. See yourself with desireless clarity, that is all. (69)

Freedom from all desire is eternity. All attachment implies fear, for all things are transient. And fear makes one a slave. This freedom from attachment does not come with practice; it is natural, when one knows one's true being. Self-knowledge is detachment. All craving is due to a sense of insufficiency. When you know that you lack nothing, that all there is, is you and yours, desire ceases. (259)

The obstacles to clear perception of one's true being are desire for pleasure and fear of pain. It is the pleasure-pain motivation that stands in the way. The very freedom from all motivation, the state in which no desire arises, is the natural state. (144)

All desires must be given up, because by desiring you take the shape of your desires. When no desires remain, you revert to your natural state. (336)

[One reaches the Supreme state] by renouncing all lesser desires. As long as you are pleased with the lesser, you cannot have the highest. Whatever pleases you keeps you back. Until you realize the unsatisfactoriness of everything, its transiency and limitation, and collect your energies in one great longing, ever the first step is not made. On the other hand, the integrity of the desire for the Supreme is by itself a call from the Supreme. Nothing, physical or mental, can give you freedom. You are free once you understand that your bondage is of your own making and cease forging the chains that bind you. (304)

Be free and happy through detachment.

Stay without ambition, without the least desire, exposed, vulnerable, unprotected, uncertain and alone, completely open to and welcoming life as it happens, without the selfish conviction that all must yield you pleasure or profit, material or so-called spiritual. (494)

Self-interest and self-concern are the focal points of the false. Your daily life vibrates between desire and fear. Watch it intently and you will see how the mind assumes innumerable names and shapes, like a river foaming between the boulders. Trace every action to its selfish motive and look at the motive intently till it dissolves. Discard every self-seeking motive as soon as it is seen and you need not look for truth; truth will find you. (315)

Weak desires can be removed by introspection and meditation, but strong, deep-rooted ones must be fulfilled and their fruits, sweet or bitter, tasted. (97)

Karma is only a store of unspent energies, of unfulfilled desires, and fears not

understood. The store is being constantly replenished by new desires and fears. It need not be so for ever. Understand the root cause of your fears -estrangement from yourself; and of desires -the longing for the self, and your karma will dissolve like a dream. (411)

Desirelessness comes on its own when desire is recognized as false. You need not struggle with desire. Ultimately, it is an urge to happiness, which is natural as long as there is sorrow. Only see that there is no happiness in what you desire. Each pleasure is wrapped in pain. You soon discover that you cannot have one without the other. (455)

Nothing stands in the way of your liberation and it can happen here and now but for your being more interested in other things. And you cannot fight with your interests. You must go with them, see through them and watch them reveal themselves as mere errors of judgement and appreciation. (456)

Fearlessness comes by itself, when you see that there is nothing to be afraid of. When you walk in a crowded street, you just bypass people. Some you see, some you just glance at, but you do not stop. It is the stopping that creates the bottleneck. Keep moving! Disregard names and shapes, don't be attached to them; your attachment is your bondage. (351)

Break the bonds of memory and self-identification and the shell [of the person] will break by itself. There is a centre that imparts reality to whatever it perceives. All you need is to understand that you are the source of reality, that you give reality instead of getting it, that you need no support and no confirmation. Things are as they are because you accept them as they are. Stop accepting them and they will dissolve. Whatever you think about with desire or fear appears before you as real. Look at it without desire or fear and it does lose substance. Pleasure and pain are momentary. It is simpler and easier to disregard them than to act on them. (344)

Giving up desire after desire is a lengthy process with the end never in sight. Leave alone your desires and fears, give your entire attention to the subject, to him who is behind the experience of desire and fear. Ask: who desires? Let each desire bring you back to yourself. (144)

Freedom comes through renunciation. All possession is bondage. If you do not have the wisdom and the strength to give up, just look at your possessions. Your mere looking will burn them up. If you can stand outside your mind, you will soon find that total renunciation of possessions and desires is the most obviously reasonable thing to do. You create the world and then worry about it. Becoming selfish makes you weak. If you think you have the strength and courage to desire, it is because you are young and inexperienced. Invariably the object of desire destroys the means of acquiring it and then itself withers away. It is all for the best, because it teaches you to shun desire like poison. No need of any acts of renunciation. Just turn your mind away, that is all. Desire is merely the fixation of the mind on an idea. Get it out of its groove by denying it attention. Whatever may be the desire or fear, don't dwell upon it. Here and there you may forget, it does not matter. Go back to your attempts till the brushing away of every desire and fear,

of every reaction, becomes automatic. (338)

Whenever a thought or emotion of desire or fear comes to your mind, just turn away from it. I'm not talking of suppression. Just refuse attention. (349)

Increase and widen your desires till nothing but reality can fulfil them. It is not desire that is wrong, but its narrowness and smallness. Desire is devotion. By all means be devoted to the real, the infinite, the eternal heart of being. Your longing to be happy is there. Why? Because you love yourself. By all means, love yourself -wisely. What is wrong is to love yourself stupidly, so as to make yourself suffer. Love yourself wisely. Both indulgence and austerity have the same purpose in view - to make you happy. Indulgence is the stupid way, austerity is the wise way. Once you have gone through an experience, not to go through it again is austerity. To eschew the unnecessary is austerity. Not to anticipate pleasure or pain is austerity. Having things under control at all times is austerity. Desire by itself is not wrong. It is the choices that you make that are wrong. To imagine that some little thing - food, sex, power, fame - will make you happy is to deceive yourself. Only something as vast and deep as your real self can make you truly and lastingly happy. (211-2)

Your true home is in nothingness, in emptiness of all content. You face it most cheerfully when you go to sleep! Find out for yourself the state of wakeful sleep and you will find it quite in harmony with your real nature. Words can only give you the idea, and the idea is not the experience. All I can say is that true happiness has no cause, and what has no cause is immovable. Which does not mean it is perceivable, as pleasure. What is perceivable is pain and pleasure; the state of freedom from sorrow can be described only negatively. (487-8)

Nothing can make you happier than you are. All search for happiness is misery and leads to more misery. The only happiness worth the name is the natural happiness of conscious being. (317)

All I plead with you is this: make love of your self perfect. Deny yourself nothing - give your self infinity and eternity, and discover that you do not need them; you are beyond. (414)

The desire to find the self will be surely fulfilled, provided you want nothing else. But you must be honest with yourself and really want nothing else. If, in the meantime, you want many other things and are engaged in their pursuit, your main purpose may be delayed until you grow wiser and cease being torn between contradictory urges. Go within, without swerving, without ever looking outward. (145)

You are concerned with your own happiness and I am telling you that there is no such thing. Happiness is never your own, it is where the "I" is not. I do not say it is beyond your reach; you have only to reach out beyond yourself, and you will find it. (439)

When you demand nothing of the world, nor of God, when you want nothing, seek

nothing, expect nothing, then the Supreme State will come to you uninvited and unexpected. (195)

The Supreme is the easiest to reach, for it is your very being. It is enough to stop thinking and desiring anything but the Supreme. (66)

The cause of suffering is dependence, and independence is the remedy. Yoga is the science and the art of self-liberation through self-understanding. (473)

Self-surrender is the surrender of all self-concern. It cannot be done, it happens when you realize your true nature. (478)

As long as you identify yourself with them [body and mind], you are bound to suffer; realize your independence and remain happy. I tell you, this is the secret of happiness. To believe that you depend on things and people for happiness is due to ignorance of your true nature; to know that you need nothing to be happy, except self-knowledge, is wisdom. (504)

A man who is given a stone and assured that it is a priceless diamond will be mightily pleased until he realizes his mistake; in the same way, pleasures lose their tang and pains their barb when the self is known. Both are seen as they are - conditional responses, mere reactions. (144-5)

Be aware that whatever happens, happens to you, by you, through you; that you are the creator, enjoyer and destroyer of all you perceive and you will not be afraid. Unafraid, you will not be unhappy, nor will you seek happiness. (468)

You can become a night watchman and live happily. It is what you are inwardly that matters. Your inner peace and joy you have to earn. It is much more difficult than earning money. No university can teach you to be yourself. (318)

You have to give up everything to know that you need nothing, not even your body. Your needs are unreal and your efforts are meaningless. You imagine that your possessions protect you. In reality they make you vulnerable. Realize yourself as away from all that can be pointed at as "this" or "that". You are un-reachable by any sensory experience or verbal construction. (339)

Don't you see that it is your very search for happiness that makes you feel miserable? Try the other way: indifferent to pain and pleasure, neither asking nor refusing, give all your attention to the level on which "I am" is timelessly present. Soon you will realize that peace and happiness are in your very nature and it is only seeking them through some particular channels that disturbs. Avoid the disturbance, that is all. (240)

Just turn away from all that occupies the mind; do whatever work you have to complete, but avoid new obligations; keep empty, keep available, resist not what comes uninvited. In the end, you reach a state of non-grasping, of joyful non-attachment, of inner ease and

freedom indescribable, yet wonderfully real. (375)

There is trouble only when you cling to something. When you hold on to nothing, no trouble arises. The relinquishing of the lesser is the gaining of the greater. Give up all and you gain all. Then life becomes what it was meant to be: pure radiation from an inexhaustible source. In that light the world appears dimly like a dream. (257)

Pain is physical, suffering is mental. Beyond the mind there is no suffering. Pain is essential for the survival of the body, but none compels you to suffer. Suffering is due entirely to clinging or resisting; it is a sign of our unwillingness to move on, to flow with life. As a sane life is free of pain, so is a saintly life free from suffering. A saint does not want things to be different from what they are; he knows that, considering all factors, they are unavoidable. He is friendly with the inevitable and, therefore, does not suffer. Pain he may know, but it does not shatter him. If he can, he does the needful to restore the lost balance, or he lets things take their course. (270)

You need not be attached to the non-essentials. Only the necessary is good. There is peace only in the essential. (481)

As long as you are interested in your present way of living, you will not abandon it. Discovery cannot come as long as you cling to the familiar. It is only when you realize fully the immense sorrow of your life and revolt against it that a way out can be found. (509)

Whatever may be the situation, if it is acceptable, it is pleasant. If it is not acceptable, it is painful. What makes it acceptable is not important; the cause may be physical, or psychological, or untraceable; acceptance is the decisive factor. Obversely, suffering is due to non-acceptance. Why [shouldn't pain be acceptable]? Did you ever try? Do try and you will find in pain a joy which pleasure cannot yield, for the simple reason that acceptance of pain takes you much deeper than pleasure does. The more we are conscious, the deeper the joy. Acceptance of pain, non-resistance, courage and endurance - these open deep and perennial sources of real happiness, true bliss. (277-8)

The light of consciousness passes through the film of memory and throws pictures on your brain. Because of the deficient and disordered state of your brain, what you perceive is distorted and coloured by feelings of like and dislike. Make your thinking orderly and free from emotional overtones, and you will see people and things as they are, with clarity and charity. (416)

To see reality is as simple as to see one's face in a mirror. Only the mirror must be clear and true. A quiet mind, undistorted by desires and fears, free from ideas and opinions, clear on all the levels, is needed to reflect the reality. Be clear and quiet, alert and detached, all else will happen by itself. (397)

[Your world] is true in essence but not in appearance. Be free of desires and fears and at once your vision will clear and you shall see all things as they are. (533)

Nature is neither pleasant nor painful. It is all intelligence and beauty. Pain and pleasure are in the mind. Change your scale of values and all will change. Pleasure and pain are mere disturbances of the senses; treat them equally and there will be only bliss. And the world is what you make it; by all means, make it happy. Only contentment can make you happy, desires fulfilled breed more desires. Keeping away from all desires and contentment in what comes by itself is a very fruitful state, a precondition to the state of fullness. Don't distrust its apparent sterility and emptiness. Believe me, it is the satisfaction of desires that breeds misery. Freedom from desires is bliss. (249)

You must not indulge in forecasts and plans, born of memory and anticipation. It is one of the peculiarities of a gnani that he is not concerned with future. Your concern with future is due to fear of pain and desire for pleasure; to the gnani all is bliss: he is happy with whatever comes. (285)

14. The Way to Self-Realization: Part Five

As self-identification with the body-mind is the poison that brings bondage, seek liberation by seeing that oneself is not any thing personal or perceivable.

Self-identification with the body-mind is the poison that brings bondage.

There is no point in fighting desires and fears which may be perfectly natural and justified; it is the person, who is swayed by them, that is the cause of mistakes, past and future. This person should be carefully examined and its falseness seen; then its power over you will end. After all, it subsides each time you go to sleep. (448)

All your preoccupations with yourself are only during waking hours and partly in your dreams; in sleep all is put aside and forgotten. It shows how little important is your waking life, even to yourself, that merely lying down and closing the eyes can end it. Each time you go to sleep, you do so without the least certainty of waking up and yet you accept the risk. (443-4)

Before you go further you must accept, at least as a working theory, that you are not what you appear to be, that you are under the influence of a drug. Then only will you have the urge and the patience to examine the symptoms and search for their common cause. All that a guru can tell you is: "My dear sir, you are quite mistaken about yourself. You are not the person you think yourself to be." Trust nobody, not even yourself. Search, find out, remove and reject every assumption till you reach the living waters and the rock of truth. Until you are free of the drug, all your religions and sciences, prayers and yogas are of no use to you, for, based on a mistake, they strengthen it. (443)

Something prevents you from seeing that there is nothing you need. Find it out and see its falseness. It is like having swallowed some poison and suffering from unquenchable craving for water. Instead of drinking beyond all measure, why not eliminate the poison and be free of this burning thirst? The sense "I am a person in time and space" is the poison. In a way, time itself is the poison. In time all things come to an end and new are born, to be devoured in their turn. Do not identify yourself with time, do not ask anxiously "what next, what next?" Step out of time and see it devour the world. Say: "Well, it is in the nature of time to put an end to everything. Let it be. It does not concern me. I am not combustible, nor do I need to collect fuel." (351)

As long as there is the body and the sense of identity with the body, frustration is inevitable. Only when you know yourself as entirely alien to and different from the body, will you find respite from the mixture of fear and craving inseparable from the "I-am-the-body" idea. (480)

All changes in consciousness are due to the "I-am-the-body" idea. Divested of this idea, the mind becomes steady. There is pure being, free of experiencing anything in particular. (346)

You are accustomed to dealing with things, physical and mental. I am not a thing, nor are you. We are neither matter nor energy, neither body nor mind. The way to truth lies through the destruction of the false. To destroy the false, you must question your most inveterate beliefs. Of these, the idea that you are the body is the worst. (302)

While alive, it [the body] attracts attention and fascinates so completely that rarely does one perceive one's real nature. It is like seeing the surface of the ocean and completely forgetting the immensity beneath. (484)

As long as you take yourself to be a person, a body and a mind, separate from the stream of life, having a will of its own, pursuing its own aims, you are living merely on the surface, and whatever you do will be short-lived and of little value, mere straw to feed the flames of vanity. (492)

When you desire and fear, and identify yourself with your feelings, you create sorrow and bondage. When you create, with love and wisdom, and remain unattached to your creations, the result is harmony and peace. But whatever be the condition of your mind, in what way does it reflect on you? It is only your self-identification with your mind that makes you happy or unhappy. Rebel against your slavery to your mind, see your bonds as self-created and break the chains of attachment and revulsion. Keep in mind your goal of freedom, until it dawns on you that you are already free, that freedom is not something in the distant future to be earned with painful efforts, but perennially one's own, to be used! Liberation is not an acquisition but a matter of courage, the courage to believe that you are free already and to act on it. (518)

We are free 'here and now', It is only the mind that imagines bondage. Once you know your mind and its miraculous powers, and remove what poisoned it -the idea of a separate and isolated person- you just leave it alone to do its work among things for which it is well suited. (456)

Memory is a good servant but a bad master. It effectively prevents discovery. There is no place for effort in reality. It is selfishness, due to self-identification with the body, that is the main problem and the cause of other problems. And selfishness cannot be removed by effort, only by clear insight into its causes and effects. Effort is a sign of conflict between incompatible desires. They should be seen as they are - then only they dissolve. (476)

The body is made of food, as the mind is made of thoughts. See them as they are. Non-identification, when natural and spontaneous, is liberation. (372)

Have your being outside this body of birth and death, and all your problems will be solved. They exist because you believe yourself born to die. Undeceive yourself and be free. You are not a person. (147)

There is no such thing as a person. There are only restrictions and limitations. The sum total of these defines the person. The person merely appears to be, like the space within the pot appears to have the shape and volume and smell of the pot. (204)

As long as we imagine ourselves to be separate personalities, one quite apart from another, we cannot grasp reality, which is essentially impersonal. First we must know ourselves as witnesses only, dimensionless and timeless centres of observation, and then realize that immense ocean of pure awareness, which is both mind and matter and beyond both. (205)

Nothing stops you from being a gnani here and now, except fear. You are afraid of being impersonal, of impersonal being. It is all quite simple. Turn away from your desires and fears and from the thoughts they create and you are at once in your natural state. (349)

[If you are still dreaming] it is because you have not really understood that you are dreaming. This is the essence of bondage - the mixing of the real with the unreal. In your present state, only the sense "I am" refers to reality; the "what" and the "how I am" are illusions imposed by destiny, or accident. (506)

At present, you are moved by the pleasure-pain principle which is the ego. You are going along with the ego, you are not fighting it. You are not even aware how totally you are swayed by personal considerations. A man should be always in revolt against himself, for the ego, like a crooked mirror, narrows down and distorts. It is the worst of all the tyrants, it dominates you absolutely. (444)

The problem arises only when the memory of past pains and pleasures, which are essential to all organic life, remains as a reflex, dominating behaviour. This reflex takes the shape of "I" and uses the body and the mind for its purposes, which are invariably in search for pleasure or flight from pain. When you recognize the "I" as it is, a bundle of desires and fears, and the sense of "mine" as embracing all things and people needed for the purpose of avoiding pain and securing pleasure, you will see that the "I" and the "mine" are false ideas, having no foundation in reality. Created by the mind, they rule their creator as long as it takes them to be true; when questioned, they dissolve. The "I" and "mine", having no existence in themselves, need a support which they find in the body. The body becomes their point of reference. When you talk of "my" husband and "my children", you mean the body's husband and the body's children. Give up the idea of being the body and face the question: Who am I? At once a process will be set in motion which will bring back reality, or rather, will take mind to reality. (386)

It is the person you imagine yourself to be that suffers, not you. Dissolve it in awareness. It is merely a bundle of memories and habits. From the awareness of the unreal to the awareness of your real nature there is a chasm which you will easily cross, once you have mastered the art of pure awareness. (517)

You are not what you think yourself to be, I assure you. The image you have of yourself is made up from memories and is purely accidental. You have never been, nor shall ever be, a person. Refuse to consider yourself as one. But as long as you do not even doubt yourself to be Mr So-and-so, there is little hope. (339)

Having seen that you are a bundle of memories held together by attachment, step out and look from the outside. You may perceive for the first time something which is not memory. You cease to be Mr-so-and-so, busy about his own affairs. You are at last at peace. You realize that nothing was ever wrong with the world, you alone were wrong and now it is all over. Never again will you be caught in the meshes of desire born of ignorance. (390)

Exactly as a shadow appears when light is intercepted by the body, so does the person arise when pure self-awareness is obstructed by the "I-am-the-body" idea. And as the shadow changes shape and position according to the lay of the land, so does the person appear to rejoice and suffer, rest and toil, find and lose according to the pattern of destiny. When the body is no more, the person disappears completely without return, only the witness remains and the Great Unknown. (400)

It is like washing printed cloth. First the design fades, then the background, and in the end the cloth is plain white. The personality gives place to the witness, then the witness goes and pure awareness remains. The cloth was white in the beginning and is white in the end; the patterns and colours just happened - for a time. (401)

Seek liberation by seeing that oneself is not any thing personal or perceivable.

Understand first that you are not the person you believe yourself to be. What you think yourself to be is mere suggestion or imagination. You have no parents, you were not born, nor will you die. Either trust me when I tell you so, or arrive to it by study and investigation. The way of total faith is quick, the other is slow but steady. (399)

I ask you only to stop imagining that you were born, have parents, are a body, will die and so on. Just try, make a beginning -it is not as hard as you think. (71)

It is in the nature of creative imagination to identify itself with its creations. You can stop it any moment by switching off attention. Or through investigation. First you create a world, then the "I am" becomes a person, who is not happy for various reasons. He goes out in search of happiness, meets a guru who tells him: "You are not a person, find who you are". He does it and goes beyond. (344)

Discover all you are not. Body, feelings, thoughts, ideas, time, space, being and not-being this or that -nothing concrete or abstract you can point out to is you. A mere verbal statement will not do -you may repeat a formula endlessly without any result whatsoever. You must watch yourself continuously -particularly your mind - moment by moment, missing nothing. This witnessing is essential for the separation of the self from the not-self. (27)

To know that you are neither body nor mind, watch yourself steadily and live unaffected by your body and mind, completely aloof, as if you were dead. It means you have no vested interests, either in the body or in the mind. Just remain unaffected. This complete aloofness, unconcern with mind and body is the best proof that at the core of your being

you are neither mind nor body. What happens to the body and the mind may not be within your power to change, but you can always put an end to your imagining yourself to be body and mind. Whatever happens, remind yourself that only your body and mind are affected, not yourself. (210)

You can do what you like, as long as you do not take yourself to be the body and the mind. It is not so much a question of actual giving up the body and all that goes with it, as a clear understanding that you are not the body, a sense of aloofness, of emotional non-involvement. (467)

It is enough if you do not imagine yourself to be the body. It is the "I am the body" idea that is so calamitous. It blinds you completely to your real nature. Even for a moment do not think that you are the body. Give yourself no name, no shape. In the the darkness and the silence reality is found. (305)

Both faith and reason tell you that you are neither the body, nor its desires and fears, nor are you the mind with its fanciful ideas, nor the role society compels you to play, the person you are supposed to be. Give up the false and the true will come into its own. (517)

Wet cloth looks, feels, smells differently as long as it is wet. When dry it is again the normal cloth. Water has left it and who can make out that it was wet? Your real nature is not like what you appear to be. Give up the idea of being a person, that is all. You need not become what you are anyhow. (442)

First of all, abandon all self-identification, stop thinking of yourself as such-and-such, so-and-so, this or that. Abandon all self-concern, worry not about your welfare, material or spiritual. Abandon any desire, gross or subtle, stop thinking of achievement of any kind. You are complete here and now, you need absolutely nothing. (316)

There is nothing wrong with you as the Self. It is what it is to perfection. It is the mirror that is not clear and true and, therefore, gives you false images. You need not correct yourself - only set right your idea of yourself. Learn to separate yourself from the image and the mirror, keep on remembering: I am neither the mind nor its ideas. Do it patiently and with conviction and you will surely come to the direct vision of yourself as the source of being-knowing-loving, eternal, all-embracing, all-pervading. You are the infinite focused in a body. Now you see the body only. Try earnestly and you will come to see the infinite only. (330)

Remember to remember that the perceived cannot be the perceiver. Whatever you see, hear or think of, remember - you are not what happens, you are he to whom it happens. (519)

See that you are not what you believe yourself to be. Fight with all the strength at your disposal against the idea that you are nameable and describable. You are not. Refuse to think of yourself in terms of this or that. (204)

In deep sleep you are not a self-conscious person, yet you are alive. When you are alive and conscious, but no longer self-conscious, you are not a person any more. During the waking hours you are, as if on the stage, playing a role, but what are you when the play is over? You are what you are; what you were before the play began you remain when it is over. Look at yourself as performing on the stage of life. The performance may be splendid or clumsy, but you are not in it, you merely watch it; with interest and sympathy, of course, but keeping in mind all the time that you are only watching while the play -life- is going on. (448)

Just see the person you imagine yourself to be as a part of the world you perceive within your mind, and look at the mind from the outside, for you are not the mind. After all, your only problem is the eager self-identification with whatever you perceive. Give up this habit, remember that you are not what you perceive, use your power of alert aloofness. See yourself in all that lives and your behaviour will express your vision. Once you realize that there is nothing in this world which you can call your own, you look at it from the outside, as you look at a play on the stage, or a picture on the screen, admiring and enjoying, but really unmoved. As long as you imagine yourself to be something tangible and solid, a thing among things, actually existing in time and space, shortlived and vulnerable, naturally you will be anxious to survive and increase. But when you know yourself as beyond space and time, in contact with them only at the point of here and now, otherwise all-pervading and all-containing, unapproachable, unassailable, invulnerable, you will be afraid no longer. (485)

There are no conditions to fulfil. There is nothing to be done, nothing to be given up. Just look and remember, whatever you perceive is not you, nor yours. It is there in the field of consciousness, but you are not the field and its contents, not even the knower of the field. It is your idea that you have to do things that entangle you in the results of your efforts - the motive, the desire, the failure to achieve, the sense of frustration - all this holds you back. Simply look at whatever happens and know that you are beyond it. (148)

Once you have understood that nothing perceivable, or conceivable, can be yourself, you are free of your imaginations. To see everything as imagination, born of desire, is necessary for self-realization. We miss the real by lack of attention, and create the unreal by excess of imagination. (489)

You are your self - you cannot be anything but what you are. Is knowing separate from being? Whatever you can know with your mind is of the mind, not you; about yourself you can only say: "I am, I am aware, I like it". (517)

Freedom is from something. What are you to be free from? Obviously, you must be free from the person you take yourself to be, for it is the idea you have of yourself that keeps you in bondage. (441)

As long as you have all sorts of ideas about yourself, you know yourself through the mist of these ideas; to know yourself as you are, give up all ideas. You cannot imagine the

taste of pure water, you can only discover it by abandoning all flavourings. (509)

You need not get at it, you are it. It will get at you, if you give it a chance. Let go your attachment to the unreal and the real will swiftly and smoothly step into its own. Stop imagining yourself being or doing this or that, and the realization that you are the source and heart of all will dawn upon you. (3)

Disregard whatever you think yourself to be and act as if you were absolutely perfect - whatever your idea of perfection may be. (419)

You are already perfect, here and now. The perfectible is not you. You imagine yourself to be what you are not. Stop it. It is the cessation that is important, not what you are going to stop. (339)

Get rid of all ideas about yourself, even of the idea that you are God. No self-definition is valid. (195)

To be, you must be nobody. To think yourself to be something, or somebody, is death and hell. (371)

You know that you are. Don't burden yourself with names, just be. Any name or shape you give yourself obscures your real nature. (196)

Go back to that state of pure being where the "I am" is still in its purity before it got contaminated with "this I am" or "that I am". Your burden is of false-identifications - abandon them all. (239)

Anything you do for the sake of enlightenment takes you nearer. Anything you do without remembering enlightenment puts you off. But why complicate? Just know that you are above and beyond all things and thoughts. What you want to be, you are it already. Just keep it mind. (185)

If you stay with the idea that you are not the body nor the mind, not even their witness, but altogether beyond, your mind will grow in clarity, your desires in purity, your actions in charity, and that inner distillation will take you to another world, a world of truth and fearless love. Resist your old habits of feeling and thinking; keep on telling yourself: "No, not so, it cannot be so; I am not like this, I do not need it, I do not want it", and a day will surely come when the entire structure of error and despair will collapse and the ground will be free for a new life. (443)

When you are bound by the illusion "I am this body", you are merely a point in space and a moment in time. When the self-identification with the body is no more, all space and time are in your mind, which is a mere ripple in consciousness, which is awareness reflected in nature. (483)

The "here" is everywhere, and the now always. Go beyond the "I-am-the-body" idea and

you will find that space and time are in you and not you in space and time. Once you have understood this, the main obstacle to realization is removed. (476)

Once you realize that the person is merely a shadow of the reality, but not reality itself, you cease to fret and worry. You agree to be guided from within and life becomes a journey into the unknown. (33)

Your loss is your gain. When the shadow is seen to be a shadow only, you stop following it. You turn round and discover the sun which was there all the time - behind your back! (374-5)

[Once the person is eliminated] nothing will remain, all will remain. The sense of identity will remain, but no longer identification with a particular body. Being-awareness-love will shine in full splendour. Liberation is never of the person, it is always from the person. A vague memory [of the person] remains, like the memory of a dream, or early childhood. After all, what is there to remember? A flow of events, mostly accidental and meaningless. Is there anything worth remembering? The person is but a shell imprisoning you. Break the shell. (343)

The dissolution of personality is followed always by a sense of great relief, as if a heavy burden has fallen off. (401)

Every existence is my existence, every consciousness is my consciousness, every sorrow is my sorrow and every joy is my joy - this is universal life. Yet, my real being, and yours too, is beyond the universe and, therefore, beyond the categories of the particular and the universal. It is what it is, totally self-contained and independent. (318)

15. The Way to Self-Realization: Part Six

Meditation, Witness attitude, Awareness.

No thought but "I am."

Meditation

With deep and quiet breathing, vitality will improve, which will influence the brain and help the mind to grow pure and stable and fit for meditation. Without vitality, little can be done, hence the importance of its protection and increase. Posture and breathing are a part of yoga, for the body must be healthy and well under control, but too much concentration on the body defeats its own purpose, for it is the mind that is primary in the beginning. When the mind has been put to rest and disturbs no longer the inner space (chidakash), the body acquires a new meaning and its transformation becomes both necessary and possible. (496-7)

Whatever you may have to do, watch your mind. Also you must have moments of complete inner peace and quiet, when your mind is absolutely still. If you miss it, you miss the entire thing. If you do not, the silence of the mind will dissolve and absorb all else. (215)

Keep quiet. Do your work in the world, but inwardly keep quiet. Then all will come to you. Do not rely on your work for realization. It may profit others, but not you. Your hope lies in keeping silent in your mind and quiet in your heart. Realized people are very quiet. (402)

Give all your attention to the question: "What is it that makes me conscious?", until your mind becomes the question itself and cannot think of anything else. (447)

Try to be, only to be. The all-important word is "try". Allot enough time daily for sitting quietly and trying, just trying, to go beyond the personality with its addictions and obsessions. Don't ask how, it cannot be explained. You just keep on trying until you succeed. If you persevere, there can be no failure. What matters supremely is sincerity, earnestness; you must really have had surfeit of being the person you are; now see the urgent need of being free of this unnecessary self-identification with a bundle of memories and habits. This steady resistance against the unnecessary is the secret of success. (509)

The value of regular meditation is that it takes you away from the humdrum of daily routine and reminds you that you are not what you believe yourself to be. (492)

Meditation is a deliberate attempt to pierce into the higher states of consciousness and finally go beyond it. The art of meditation is the art of shifting the focus of attention to ever subtler levels, without losing one's grip on the levels left behind. The final stage of meditation is reached when the sense of identity goes beyond the "I-am-so-and-so", beyond "so-I-am", beyond "I-am-the-witness-only", beyond "there-is", beyond all ideas

into the impersonally personal pure being. But you must be energetic when you take to meditation. It is definitely not a part-time occupation. Limit your interests and activities to what is needed for you and your dependents' barest needs. Save all your energies and time for breaking the wall your mind had built around you. Believe me, you will not regret. (413)

It has nothing to do with effort. Just turn away, look between the thoughts, rather than at the thoughts. When you happen to walk in a crowd, you do not fight every man you meet, you just find your way between. When you fight, you invite a fight. But when you do not resist, you meet no resistance. When you refuse to play the game, you are out of it. (349)

No particular thought can be mind's natural state, only silence. Not the idea of silence, but silence itself. When the mind is in its natural state, it reverts to silence spontaneously after every experience, or, rather, every experience happens against the background of silence. (242)

Keep quiet, undisturbed, and the wisdom and the power will come on their own. You need not hanker. Wait in silence of the heart and mind. It is very easy to be quiet, but willingness is rare. (494)

To go beyond the mind, you must be silent and quiet. Peace and silence, silence and peace - this is the way beyond. Stop asking questions. (450)

To go beyond, you need alert immobility, quiet attention. (217)

These moments of inner quiet will burn out all obstacles without fail. Don't doubt its efficacy. Try it. (217)

Meditation will help you to find your bonds, loosen them, untie them and cast your moorings. When you are no longer attached to anything, you have done your share. The rest will be done for you. (54)

When you are not in a hurry and the mind is free from anxieties, it becomes quiet and in the silence something may be heard which is ordinarily too fine and subtle for perception. The mind must be open and quiet to see. You need not worry about your worries. Just be. Do not try to be quiet; do not make "being quiet" into a task to be performed. Don't be restless about "being quiet", miserable about "being happy". Just be aware that you are, and remain aware. Don't say "Yes, I am. What next?" There is no "next" in "I am". It is a timeless state. (508)

When you sit quiet and watch yourself, all kinds of things may come to the surface. Do nothing about them, don't react to them; as they have come so will they go, by themselves. All that matters is mindfulness, total awareness of oneself, or rather of one's mind.
(219)

Silence is the main factor. In peace and silence you grow. (375)

In peace and silence, the skin of the "I" dissolves and the inner and the outer become one. (483)

Witness attitude

Abandon all ideas about yourself and you will find yourself to be the pure witness, beyond all that can happen to the body or the mind. (226)

There is the identity of what you are, and there is the person superimposed on it. All you know is the person. The identity, which is not a person, you do not know, for you never doubted, never asked yourself the crucial question: "Who am I". The identity is the witness of the person, and sadhana consists in shifting the emphasis from the superficial and changeful person to the immutable and ever-present witness. (442)

When the mind is quiet, we come to know ourselves as the pure witness. We withdraw from the experience and its experiencer, and stand apart in pure awareness, which is between and beyond the two. The personality, based on self-identification, on imagining oneself to be something: "I'm this, I'm that", continues, but only as a part of the objective world. Its identification with the witness snaps. (14)

[For a Westerner] the right procedure is to adhere to the thought that he is the ground of all knowledge, the immutable and perennial awareness of all that happens to the senses and the mind. If he keeps it in mind all the time, aware and alert, he is bound to break the bounds of non-awareness and emerge into pure life, light and love. The idea "I am the witness only" will purify the body and the mind and open the eye of wisdom. Then man goes beyond illusion and his heart is free of all desires. (76)

Words can bring you only up to their own limit; to go beyond, you must abandon them. Remain as the silent witness only. (451)

If you are angry or in pain, separate yourself from anger and pain and watch them. Externalization is the first step to liberation. Step away and look. The physical events will go on happening, but by themselves they have no importance. It is the mind alone that matters. If you could only keep quiet, clear of memories and expectations, you would be able to discern the beautiful pattern of events. It is your restlessness that causes chaos. (247)

Watch your thoughts as you watch the street traffic. People come and go; you register without response. It may not be easy in the beginning, but with some practice you will find that your mind can function on many levels at the same time and you can be aware of them all. It is only when you have a vested interest in any particular level that your attention gets caught in it and you black out on other levels. (240)

You need not stop thinking. Just cease being interested. It is disinterestedness that

liberates. Don't hold on, that is all. (241)

Refuse attention [to things], let things come and go. Desires and thoughts are also things. Disregard them. Since immemorial time, the dust of events was covering the clear mirror of your mind, so that only memories you could see. Brush off the dust before it has time to settle; this will lay bare the old layers until the true nature of your mind is discovered. It is all very simple and comparatively easy; be earnest and patient, that is all. Dispassion, detachment, freedom from desire and fear, from all self-concern, mere awareness, free from memory and expectation, this is the state of mind to which discovery can happen. After all, liberation is but the freedom to discover. (494)

In the mirror of your mind all kinds of pictures appear and disappear. Knowing that they are entirely your own creations, watch them silently come and go. Be alert, but not perturbed. This attitude of silent observation is the very foundation of yoga. You see the picture, but you are not the picture. (469)

Witnessing is natural and no problem. The problem is excessive interest, leading to self-identification. Whatever you are engrossed in, you take to be real. (351)

The real exists and is of the nature of witness-consciousness. Of course it is beyond the witness, but to enter it one must first realize the state of pure witnessing. The awareness of conditions brings one to the unconditioned. We can talk only of the unreal, the illusory, the transient, the conditioned. To go beyond, we must pass through total negation of everything as having independent existence. All things depend on consciousness. And consciousness depends on the witness. (176)

Develop the witness attitude and you will find in your own experience that detachment brings control. The state of witnessing is full of power, there is nothing passive about it. (186)

The witness is not indifferent. He is the fulness of understanding and compassion. Only as the witness you can help another. (451)

The outer world neither can help nor hinder. No system, no pattern of action will take you to your goal. Give up all working for a future, concentrate totally on the now, be concerned only with your response to every movement of life as it happens. (333)

Know yourself to be the changeless witness of the changeful mind. That is enough. (507)

Just remember what you are. Use every incident of the day to remind you that without you as the witness there would be neither animal nor God. Understand that you are both, the essence and the surface of all there is, and remain firm in your understanding. (476)

The witness attitude is also faith; it is faith in oneself. You believe that you are not what you experience, and you look at everything as from a distance. There is no effort in witnessing. You understand that you are the witness only, and the understanding acts.

You need nothing more, just remember that you are the witness only. If in the state of witnessing you ask yourself 'Who am I?', the answer comes at once, though it is wordless and silent. Cease to be the object and become the subject of all that happens; once having turned within, you will find yourself beyond the subject. When you have found yourself, you will find that you are also beyond the object, that both the subject and the object exist in you, but you are neither. (303)

[The witness-consciousness] is the reflection of the real in the mind (buddhi). The witness is the door through which you pass beyond. (52)

Awareness

First we must know ourselves as witnesses only, dimensionless and timeless centres of observation, and then realize that immense ocean of pure awareness, which is both mind and matter and beyond both. (205)

The person merges into the witness, the witness into awareness, awareness into pure being, yet identity is not lost, only its limitations are lost. It is transfigured and becomes the real Self, the sadguru, the eternal friend and guide. You cannot approach it in worship. No external activity can reach the inner self; worship and prayers remain on the surface only; to do deeper meditation is essential, the striving to go beyond the states of sleep, dream and waking. In the beginning the attempts are irregular, then they recur more often, become regular, then continuous and intense, until all obstacles are conquered. (447)

For reality to be, the ideas of "me" and "mine" must go. They will go if you let them. Then your normal natural state reappears, in which you are neither the body nor the mind, neither the "me" nor the "mine", but in a different state of being altogether. It is pure awareness of being, without being this or that, without any self-identification with anything in particular or in general. In that pure light of consciousness there is nothing, not even the idea of nothing. There is only light. (387)

The body and the mind are only symptoms of ignorance, of misapprehension: Behave as if you were pure awareness, bodiless and mindless, spaceless and timeless, beyond "where" and "when" and "how". Make your mind and body express the real which is all and beyond all. (255)

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. (221)

True awareness (samvid) is a state of pure witnessing, without the least attempt to do anything about the event witnessed. Your thoughts and feelings, words and actions may also be a part of the event; you watch all unconcerned, in the full light of clarity and understanding. You understand precisely what is going on, because it does not affect you. It may seem to be an attitude of cold aloofness, but it is not really so. Once you are in it,

you will find that you love what you see, whatever may be its nature. This choiceless love is the touchstone of awareness. If it is not there, you are merely interested, for some personal reasons. (382)

There is little difference between the conscious and the unconscious - they are essentially the same. The waking state differs from deep sleep in the presence of the witness. A ray of awareness illumines a part of our mind and that part becomes our dream or waking consciousness, while awareness appears as the witness. The witness usually knows only consciousness. Sadhana consists in the witness turning back first on his conscious, then upon himself in his own awareness. Self-awareness is Yoga. (532)

Don't fight with what you take to be obstacles on your way. Just be interested in them, watch them, observe, enquire. Let anything happen - good or bad. But don't let yourself be submerged by what happens. The mind must learn that beyond the moving mind there is the background of awareness, which does not change. The mind must come to know the true self and respect it and cease covering it up, like the moon which obscures the sun during solar eclipse. Just realize that nothing observable, or experienceable is you, or binds you. Take no notice of what is not yourself. You are aware anyhow, you need not try to be. What you need is to be aware of being aware. Be aware deliberately and consciously, broaden and deepen the field of awareness. You are always conscious of the mind, but you are not aware of yourself as being conscious. (220)

Be aware of being conscious and seek the source of consciousness. That is all. (328)

No thought but "I am".

When I met my guru, he told me: 'You are not what you take yourself to be. Find out what you are. Watch the sense "I am", find your real self'. I obeyed him, because I trusted him. I did as he told me. All my spare time I would spend looking at myself in silence. And what difference it made, and how soon! It took me only three years to realize my true nature. (301)

If you trust me, believe when I tell you that you are the pure awareness that illumines consciousness and its infinite content. Realize this and live accordingly. If you do not believe me, then go within, enquiring "What am I?", or focus your mind on "I am", which is pure and simple being. (26-7)

Distrust your mind and go beyond. [Then you will find] the direct experience of being, knowing and loving. There are many starting points -they all lead to the same goal. You may begin with selfless work, abandoning the fruits of action; you may then give up thinking and end in giving up all desires. Here, giving up is the operational factor. Or you may not bother about any thing you want, or think, or do, and just stay in the thought and feeling "I am", focusing "I am" firmly in your mind. All kinds of experience may come to you -remain unmoved in the knowledge that all perceivable is transient and only the "I am" endures. (50)

You have tasted so many things - all came to naught. Only the sense "I am" persisted, unchanged. Stay with the changeless among the changeful, until you are able to go beyond. (343)

Just look away from all that happens in your mind and bring it to the feeling "I am". The "I am" is not a direction. It is the negation of all direction. Ultimately even the "I am" will have to go, for you need not keep on asserting what is obvious. Bringing the mind to the feeling "I am" merely helps in turning the mind away from everything else. When the mind is kept away from its preoccupations, it becomes quiet. If you do not disturb this quiet and stay in it, you find that it is permeated with a light and a love you have never known; and yet you recognize it at one as your own nature. Once you have passed through this experience, you will never be the same man again; the unruly mind may break its peace and obliterate its vision; but it is bound to return, provided the effort is sustained; until the day when all bonds are broken, delusions and attachments end, and life becomes supremely concentrated in the present. (308)

What prevents the insight into one's true nature is the weakness and obtuseness of the mind and its tendency to skip the subtle and focus the gross only. When you follow my advice and try to keep your mind on the notion of "I am" only, you become fully aware of your mind and its vagaries. Awareness, being lucid harmony (satva) in action, dissolves dullness and quiets the restlessness of the mind, and gently but steadily changes its very substance. This change need not be spectacular; it may be hardly noticeable; yet it is a deep and fundamental shift from darkness into light, from inadvertence to awareness. For this, keep steadily in the focus of consciousness the only clue you have: your certainty of being. Be with it, play with it, ponder over it, delve deeply into it, till the shell of ignorance breaks open and you emerge into the realm of reality. (272)

What was born must die. Only the unborn is deathless. Find what is it that never sleeps and never wakes, and whose pale reflection is our sense of "I". (12)

All I can say truly is: "I am", all else is inference. But the inference has become a habit. Destroy all habits of thinking and seeing. The sense "I am" is the manifestation of a deeper cause, which you may call self, God, Reality or by any other name. The "I am" is in the world, but it is the key which can open the door out of the world. (199)

All you have to do is to understand that you love the self and the self loves you, and that the sense "I am" is the link between you both, a token of identity in spite of apparent diversity. Look at the "I am" as a sign of love between the inner and the outer, the real and the appearance. Just like in a dream all is different, except the sense of "I", which enables you to say "I dreamt", so does the sense of "I am" enables you to say "I am my real Self again. I do nothing, nor is anything done to me. I am what I am and nothing can affect me. I appear to depend on everything, but in fact all depends on me." (388)

You are always the Supreme. But your attention is fixed on things, physical or mental.

When your attention is off a thing and not yet fixed on another, in the interval you are pure being. When through the practice of discrimination and detachment (viveka-vairagya), you lose sight of sensory and mental states, pure being emerges as the natural state. By focusing the mind on "I am", on the sense of being, "I am so-and-so" dissolves; "am a witness only" remains and that too submerges in "I am all". Then the all becomes the One, and the One yourself. (90)

Keep the "I am" in the focus of awareness, remember that you are, watch yourself ceaselessly and the unconscious will flow into the conscious without any special effort on your part. Wrong desires and fears, false ideas, social inhibitions are blocking and preventing its free interplay with the conscious. Once free to mingle, the two become one and the one becomes all. (447)

"I am" is the ultimate fact. "Who am I?" is the ultimate question to which everybody must find an answer; the same in essence, varied in expression. (477)

Give up all questions except one: "Who am I?" After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The "I am" is certain. The "I am this" is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality. (70)

Your dwelling on the fact "I am" will soon create another chance [of self-realization]. For attitude attracts opportunity. All you know is second-hand. Only "I am" is first-hand and needs no proofs. Stay with it. (522)

Realization is but the opposite of ignorance. To take the world as real and one's self as unreal is ignorance, the cause of sorrow. To know the self as the only reality and all else as temporal and transient is freedom, peace and joy. It is all very simple. Instead of seeing things as imagined, learn to see them as they are. When you can see everything as it is, you will also see yourself as you are. It is like cleansing a mirror. The same mirror that shows you the world as it is, will also show you your own face. The thought "I am" is the polishing cloth. Use it. (29)

First of all, establish a constant contact with your self, be with yourself all the time. Into self-awareness all blessings flow. Begin as a centre of observation, deliberate cognizance, and grow into a centre of love in action. "I am" is a tiny seed which will grow into a mighty tree - quite naturally, without a trace of effort. (510)

Just keep in mind the feeling "I am", merge in it, till your mind and feeling become one. By repeated attempts, you will stumble on the right balance of attention and affection, and your mind will be firmly established in the thought-feeling "I am". Whatever you think, say or do, this sense of immutable and affectionate being remains as the ever-present background of the mind. (48)

Relax and watch the "I am". Reality is just behind it. Keep quiet, keep silent; it will emerge, or, rather, it will take you in. (520-1)

Look at yourself steadily - it is enough. The door that locks you in is also the door that lets you out. The "I am" is the door. Stay at it until it opens. As a matter of fact, it is open, only you are not at it. You are waiting at the non-existing painted doors, which will never open. (442)

Refuse all thoughts except one: the thought "I am". The mind will rebel in the beginning, but with patience and perseverance it will yield and keep quiet. Once you are quiet, things will begin to happen spontaneously and quite naturally, without any interference on your part. (18-19)

When I say: 'remember "I am" all the time', I mean: 'come back to it repeatedly'. (242)

Hold on to the sense "I am" to the exclusion of everything else. When thus the mind becomes completely silent, it shines with a new light and vibrates with a new knowledge. It all comes spontaneously, you need only hold on to the "I am". (332)

16. Miscellaneous

Why the ignorance and the illusion? What is the purpose of it all?

* Why the ignorance and the illusion? *

There is nothing like ignorance, only inattention. After all, worry is a mental pain and pain is invariably a call for attention. The moment you give attention, the call for it ceases and the question of ignorance dissolves. Attention brings you back to the present, the now, and the presence in the now is a state ever at hand, but rarely notice. (482)

Neither ignorance nor illusion ever happened to you. Find the self to which you ascribe ignorance and illusion and your question will be answered. You talk as if you know the self and see it to be under the sway of ignorance and illusion. But, in fact, you do not know the self, nor are you aware of ignorance. By all means, become aware, this will bring you to the self and you will realize that there is neither ignorance nor delusion in it. It is like saying: if there is sun, how can darkness be? As under a stone there will be darkness, however strong the sunlight, so in the shadow of the "I-am-the-body" consciousness there must be ignorance and illusion. Don't ask 'why' and 'how'. It is in the nature of creative imagination to identify itself with its creations. You can stop it any moment by switching off attention. Or through investigation. (344)

You have not forgotten [what you really are]. It is in the picture on the screen that you forget and then remember. You never cease to be a man because you dream to be a tiger. Similarly you are pure light appearing as a picture on the screen and also becoming one with it. (481)

* What is the purpose of it all? *

It is the instinct of exploration, the love of the unknown, that brings me into existence. It is in the nature of being to seek adventure in becoming, as it is in the nature of becoming to seek peace in being. This alternation of being and becoming is inevitable; but my home is beyond. (417)

The world is but a show, glittering and empty. It is, and yet it is not. It is there as long as I want to see it and take part in it. When I cease caring, it dissolves. It has no cause and serves no purpose. It just happens when we are absent-minded. It appears exactly as it looks, but there is no depth in it, nor meaning. Only the onlooker is real, call him Self or Atma. To the Self, the world is but a colourful show, which he enjoys as long as it lasts and forgets when it is over. Whatever happens on the stage makes him shudder in terror or roll with laughter, yet all the time he is aware that it is but a show. Without desire or fear, he enjoys it, as it happens. (178-9)

The spirit is a sport and enjoys to overcome obstacles. The harder the task, the deeper and wider his self-realization. (480)

The ultimate value of the body is that it serves to discover the cosmic body, which is the universe in its entirety. As you realize yourself in manifestation, you keep on discovering that you are ever more than what you have imagined. (274)

All that lives, works for protecting, perpetuating and expanding consciousness. This is the world's sole meaning and purpose. (275)

Violence, Evil, Sin.

Was there ever a world without troubles? Your being as a person depends on violence to others. Your very body is a battlefield, full of the dead and dying. Existence implies violence. There is little of non-violence in nature. Do you realize that, as long as you have a self to defend, you must be violent? (507)

Punishment is but legalized crime. In a society built on prevention, rather than retaliation, there would be very little crime. The few exceptions will be treated medically, as an unsound mind and body. (512)

Pain and pleasure, good and bad, right and wrong: these are relative terms and must not be taken absolutely. They are limited and temporary. (264)

There is no evil, there is no suffering; the joy of living is paramount. Look, how everything clings to life, how dear the existence is. (384)

Evil is the shadow of inattention. In the light of self-awareness it will wither and fall off. (510)

The universe is perfect as a whole, and the part's striving for perfection is a way of joy. Willingly sacrifice the imperfect to the perfect, and there will be no more talk about good and evil. (284)

There is no good and no evil. In every concrete situation, there is only the necessary and the unnecessary. The needful is right, the needless is wrong. In my world, even what you call evil is the servant of the good and therefore necessary. It is like boils and fever that clear the body of impurities. Disease is painful, even dangerous, but if dealt with rightly, it heals. In some cases death is the best cure. (283-4)

It is in the nature of all manifestation that the good and the bad follow each other and in equal measure. The true refuge is only in the unmanifested. (325)

Relatively, what causes suffering is wrong; what alleviates it is right. Absolutely, what brings you back to reality is right, and what dims reality is wrong. (326)

Stupidity and selfishness are the only evil. (496)

To understand suffering, you must go beyond pain and pleasure. Your own desires and

fears prevent you from understanding and thereby helping others. In reality there are no others, and by helping yourself you help everybody else. If you are serious about the suffering of mankind, you must perfect the only means of help you have, yourself. (383)

[Sin is] all that binds you. (534)

In the end you know that there is no sin, no guilt, no retribution, only life in its endless transformations. With the dissolution of the personal "I", personal suffering disappears. What remains is the great sadness of compassion, the horror of the unnecessary pain. (496)

I do not know bad people, I only know myself. I see no saints nor sinners, only living beings. (503)

I know no sin, nor sinner. Your distinction and valuation do not bind me. Everybody behaves according to his nature. It cannot be helped, nor need it be regretted. (503)

When ignorance, the mother of sin, dissolves, destiny, the compulsion to sin again, ceases. With ignorance coming to an end, all comes to an end. Things are then seen as they are, and they are good. (503)

Progress.

The world had all the time to get better, yet it did not. What hope is there for the future? Of course, there have been and will be periods of harmony and peace, when sattva was in ascendance, but things get destroyed by their own perfection. A perfect society is necessarily static and, therefore, it stagnates and decays. From the summit all roads lead downwards. Societies are like people - they are born, they grow to some point of relative perfection and then decay and die. (419)

Man does not change much over the ages. Human problems remain the same and call for the same answers. (445)

It was the same ten thousand years ago, and will be the same ten thousand years hence. Centuries roll on, but the human problem does not change - the problem of suffering and the ending of suffering. (459)

The world does not yield to changing. By its very nature it is painful and transient. See it as it is and divest yourself of all desire and fear. When the world does not hold and bind you, it becomes an abode of joy and beauty. You can be happy in the world only when you are free of it. (504)

Causes and results are infinite in number and variety. Everything affects everything. In this universe, when one thing changes, everything changes. Hence the great power of man in changing the world by changing himself. My world has changed completely. Yours remains the same, for you have not changed. [You didn't notice this change]

because there was no communion between us. Do not consider yourself as separate from me and we shall at once share in the common state. (490)

Karma.

Karma is only a store of unspent energies, of unfulfilled desires, and fears not understood. The store is being constantly replenished by new desires and fears. It need not be so for ever. Understand the root cause of your fears -estrangement from yourself; and of desires -the longing for the self, and your karma will dissolve like a dream. (411)

Karma, or destiny, is an expression of a beneficial law: the universal trend towards balance, harmony and unity. At every moment, whatever happens now, is for the best. It may appear painful and ugly, a suffering bitter and meaningless, yet considering the past and the future it is for the best, as the only way out of a disastrous situation. (512)

Most of our karma is collective. We suffer for the sins of others, as others suffer for ours. Humanity is one. (465)

Ignorance is like a fever - it makes you see things which are not there. Karma is the divinely prescribed treatment. Welcome it and follow the instructions faithfully, and you will get well. A patient will leave the hospital after he recovers. To insist on immediate freedom of choice or action will merely postpone recovery. Accept your destiny and fulfil it - this is the shortest way to freedom from destiny. (489)

Death, Suicide, Reincarnation.

* Death *

It is in the nature of consciousness to survive its vehicles. It is like fire. It burns up the fuel, but not itself. Just like a fire can outlast a mountain of fuel, so does consciousness survive innumerable bodies. (327)

You make yourself mortal by taking yourself to be the body. (363)

You may die a hundred deaths without a break in the mental turmoil. Or you may keep your body and die only in the mind. The death of the mind is the birth of wisdom. (362)

I am dead already. Physical death will make no difference in my case. I am timeless being. I am free of desire or fear, because I do not remember the past, or imagine the future. Where there are no names and shapes, how can there be desires and fear? With desirelessness comes timelessness. I am safe, because what is not cannot touch what is. You feel unsafe, because you imagine danger. Of course, your body as such is complex and vulnerable and needs protection. But not you. Once you realize your own unassailable being, you will be at peace. (260)

What is birth and death but the beginning and the ending of a stream of events in

consciousness? (147)

[When an ordinary man dies] according to his belief it happens. As life before death is but imagination, so is life after. The dream continues. The gnani does not die because he was never born. (261)

When somebody dies, nothing happens. Something becomes nothing. Nothing was, nothing remains. (91)

Only the dead can die, not the living. That which is alive in you is immortal. (407)

It is the changing that dies. The immutable neither lives nor dies; it is the timeless witness of life and death. You cannot call it dead, for it is aware. Nor can you call it alive, for it does not change. (433)

Nothing dies. The body is just imagined. There is no such thing. (361)

In reality there is no killing and no dying. The real does not die, the unreal never lived. (234)

I am told I was born. I do not remember. I am told I shall die. I do not expect it. You tell me I have forgotten or I lack imagination. But I just cannot remember what never happened, nor expect the patently impossible. Bodies are born and bodies die, but what is it to me? Bodies come and go in consciousness, and consciousness itself has its roots in me. I am life, and mine are mind and body. (94)

You can't help surviving! The real you is timeless and beyond birth and death. And the body will survive as long as it is needed. It is not important that it should live long. A full life is better than a long life. (315)

Misery is to be born, not to die. (181)

I do not look at death as a calamity, as I do not rejoice at the birth of a child. The child is out for trouble, while the dead is out of it. Attachment to life is attachment to sorrow. We love what gives pain. Such is our nature. (418)

In some cases death is the best cure. A life may be worse than death, which is but rarely an unpleasant experience, whatever the appearances. (283-4)

The more you know yourself, the less you are afraid [of dying]. Of course, the agony of dying is never pleasant to look at, but the dying man is rarely conscious. (469)

It [dying] needn't be so [painful and ugly]. It may be beautiful and peaceful. Once you know that death happens to the body and not to you, you just watch your body falling off like a discarded garment. Once you know that the body alone dies and not the continuity of memory and the sense of "I am" reflected in it, you are afraid no longer. (464-5)

To be a living being is not the ultimate state; there is something beyond, much more wonderful, which is neither being nor non-being, neither living nor not-living. It is a state of pure awareness, beyond the limitations of space and time. Once the illusion that the body-mind is oneself is abandoned, death loses its terror, it becomes a part of living. (122)

One who believes himself as having been born is very much afraid of death. On the other hand, to him who knows himself truly, death is a happy event. (383)

[If I heard that you had died,] I would be very happy to have you back home. Really glad to see you out of this foolishness, of thinking that you were born and will die, that you are a body displaying a mind and all such nonsense. In my world, nobody is born and nobody dies. Some people go on a journey and come back, some never leave. What difference does it make since they travel in dreamlands, each wrapped up in his own dream. Only the waking is important. It is enough to know the "I am" as reality and also love. (182)

* Suicide *

Nothing wrong [with suicide], if it solves the problem. What if it does not? Suffering caused by extraneous factors -some painful and incurable disease, or unbearable calamity- may provide some justification, but where wisdom and compassion are lacking, suicide cannot help. A foolish death means foolishness reborn. Besides there is the question of karma to consider. Endurance is usually the wisest course. (464)

Nobody can compel another to live. Besides, there were cultures in which suicide had its acknowledged and respected place. There is noble virtue in unshakable endurance of whatever comes, but there is also dignity in the refusal of meaningless torture and humiliation. (471)

* Reincarnation ? *

One does not become a disciple by conversion, or by accident. There is usually an ancient link, maintained through many lives and flowering as love and trust. (460)

The memory of the past unfulfilled desires traps energy, which manifests itself as a person. When its charge gets exhausted, the person dies. Unfulfilled desires are carried over into the next birth. I do not say that the same person is reborn. It dies and dies for good. But its memories remain and their desires and fears. They supply the energy for a new person. The real takes no part in it, but makes it possible by giving it the light. (381)

There is no compulsion [to be reborn]. You get what you want. You make your own plans and you carry them out. We grow through investigation, and to investigate we need experience. We tend to repeat what we have not understood. (465)

It [death] is very much like sleep. For a time, the person is out of focus and then it

returns. The person, being a creature of circumstances, necessarily changes along with them, like the flame that changes with the fuel. Only the process goes on and on, creating time and space. (469)

You may believe in whatever you like [about reincarnation] and, if you act on your belief, you will get the fruits of it. But for me it has no importance. I am what I am, and this is enough for me. I have no desire to identify myself with anybody, however illustrious. Nor do I feel the need to take myths for reality. (505)

The question of resistance [to reincarnation] does not arise. What is born and reborn is not you. Let it happen, watch it happen. (469)

Reincarnation implies a reincarnating self. There is no such thing. The bundle of memories and hopes, called the "I", imagines itself existing everlastingly and creates time to accommodate its false eternity. To be, I need no past or future. All experience is born of imagination; I do not imagine, so no birth or death happens to me. Only those who think themselves born can think themselves re-born. All exists in awareness, and awareness neither dies nor is re-born. It is the changeless reality itself. (262)

When the body is no more, the person disappears completely without return, only the witness remains and the Great Unknown. (400)

Religions.

What is religion? A cloud in the sky. I live in the sky, not in the clouds, which are so many words held together. Remove the verbiage and what remains? Truth remains. (512)

Christianity is one way of putting words together and Hinduism is another. The real is, behind and beyond words, incommunicable, directly experienced, explosive in its effect on the mind. It is easily had when nothing else is wanted. The unreal is created by imagination and perpetuated by desire. (512)

Recorded religions are mere heaps of verbiage. Religions show their true face in action, in silent action. To know what a man believes, watch how he acts. For most of the people, service of their bodies and their minds is their religion. They may have religious ideas, but they do not act on them. (513)

Until you are free of the drug [of self-identification], all your religions and sciences, prayers and yogas are of no use to you, for, based on a mistake, they strengthen it. (443-4)

God.

Where there is a universe, there will also be its counterpart, which is God. But I am beyond both. (264)

God attends to this business of managing the universe; but he is glad to have some help. When the helper is selfless and intelligent, all the powers of the universe are for him to command. (385)

Consciousness arising, the world arises. When you consider the wisdom and the beauty of the world, you call it God. Know the source of it all, which is in yourself, and you will find all your questions answered. (266)

God is the totality of consciousness, but awareness is beyond all - being as well as not-being. (263)

I cannot say that I am in God or I am God; God is the universal light and love, the universal witness: I am beyond the universal even. (320)

Without you as the witness there would be neither animal nor God. Understand that you are both, the essence and the surface of all there is. (476)

When you demand nothing of the world, nor of God, when you want nothing, seek nothing, expect nothing, then the Supreme State will come to you uninvited and unexpected. (195)

To love and worship a god is also ignorance. My home is beyond all notions, however sublime. (417)

Even faith in God is only a stage on the way. Ultimately, you abandon all, for you come to something so simple that there are no words to express it. (469-70)

You yourself are God, the Supreme Reality. (240)

You are God, but you do not know it. (533)

How can there be [a God apart from me]? "I am" is the root, God is the tree. (44)

Consciousness and life - both you may call God; but you are beyond both, beyond God, beyond being and not-being. (475)

I cannot say that I am in God or I am God; God is the universal light and love, the universal witness: I am beyond the universal even. (320)

Get rid of all ideas about yourself, even of the idea that you are God. No self-definition is valid. (195)

The real Guru.

Running after saints is merely another game to play. (457)

The self-styled gurus talk of ripeness and effort, of merits and achievements, of destiny and grace; all these are mere mental formations, projections of an addicted mind. Instead of helping, they obstruct. (422)

Teachers there may be many, fearless disciples very few. (509)

The right disciple will always find the right teacher. (461)

Once a living being has heard and understood that deliverance is within his reach, he will never forget it, for it is the first message from within. It will take roots and grow and in due course take the blessed shape of the Guru. (275)

Even if you are quite ignorant of the ways and the means, keep quiet and look within; guidance is sure to come. You are never left without knowing what your next step should be. The trouble is that you may shirk it. The guru is there for giving you courage because of his experience and success. But only what you discover through your own awareness, your own effort, will be of permanent use to you. (510)

The Guru is basically without desire. He sees what happens, but feels no urge to interfere. He makes no choices, takes no decisions. As pure witness, he watches what is going on and remains unaffected. Victory is always his, in the end. He knows that if the disciples do not learn from his words, they will learn from their own mistakes. Inwardly he remains quiet and silent. He has no sense of being a separate person. The entire universe is his own, including his disciples with their petty plans. Nothing in particular affects him, or, which comes to the same, the entire universe affects him in equal measure. In reality, the disciple is not different from the Guru. He is the same dimensionless centre of perception and love in action. (342)

The Guru and man's inner reality are really one and work together towards the same goal - the redemption and salvation of the mind. They cannot fail. Out of very boulders that obstruct them they build their bridges. (506)

Who is the Guru, after all? He who knows the state in which there is neither the world nor the thought of it, he is the Supreme Teacher. To find him means to reach the state in which imagination is no longer taken for reality, for truth, for what is. He is a realist in the highest sense of the term. He cannot and shall not come to terms with the mind and its delusions. He comes to take you to the real; don't expect him to do anything else. The Guru you have in mind, one who gives you information and instructions, is not the real Guru. The real Guru is he who knows the real, beyond the glamour of appearances. What exists for you does not exist for him. What you take for granted, he denies absolutely. He wants you to see yourself as he sees you. Then you will not need a Guru to obey and follow, for you will obey and follow your own reality. (215)

The greatest guru is your inner self. Truly, he is the supreme teacher. He alone can take you to your goal and he alone meets you at the end of the road. Confide in him and you need no outer guru. (149)

Your own self is your ultimate teacher (sadguru). The outer teacher (guru) is merely a milestone. It is only your inner teacher that will walk with you to the goal, for it is the goal. (51)

The inner guru is not committed to non-violence. He can be quite violent at times, to the point of destroying the obtuse or perverted personality. Suffering and death, as life and happiness, are his tools of work. It is only in duality that non-violence becomes the unifying law. (373)

Yoga.

Relinquish your habits and addictions, live a simple and sober life, don't hurt a living being; this is the foundation of yoga. (515)

Posture and breathing are a part of yoga, for the body must be healthy and well under control, but too much concentration on the body defeats its own purpose, for it is the mind that is primary in the beginning. With deep and quiet breathing, vitality will improve, which will influence the brain and help the mind to grow pure and stable and fit for meditation. Without vitality, little can be done, hence the importance of its protection and increase. (496-7)

Yoga is the work of the inner self (vyakta) on the outer self (vyakti). All that the outer does is merely in response to the inner. It [the outer self] has some control over the body and can improve its posture and breathing. Over the mind's thoughts and feelings it has little mastery, for it is itself the mind. It is the inner that can control the outer. The outer will be wise to obey. (74-5)

The cause of suffering is dependence, and independence is the remedy. Yoga is the science and the art of self-liberation through self-understanding. (473)

All that lives, works for protecting, perpetuating and expanding consciousness. This is the world's sole meaning and purpose. It is the very essence of Yoga - ever raising the level of consciousness, discovery of new dimensions, with their properties, qualities and powers. In that sense, the entire universe becomes a school of Yoga. (275)

You can do nothing. What time has brought about, time will take away. This is the end of yoga, to realize independence. All that happens, happens in and to the mind, not to the source of the "I am". (451)

In the mirror of your mind all kinds of pictures appear and disappear. Knowing that they are entirely your own creations, watch them silently come and go. Be alert, but not perturbed. This attitude of silent observation is the very foundation of yoga. You see the picture, but you are not the picture. (469)

The witness usually knows only consciousness. Sadhana consists in the witness turning

back first on his conscious, then upon himself in his own awareness. Self-awareness is Yoga. (532)

In each [school of yoga], one can progress up to the point when all desire for progress must be abandoned to make further progress possible. Then all schools are given up, all effort ceases; in solitude and darkness, the last step is made which ends ignorance and fear for ever. (477)

Until you are free of the drug [of self-identification] , all your religions and sciences, prayers and yogas are of no use to you, for, based on a mistake, they strengthen it. But if you stay with the idea that you are not the body nor the mind, not even their witness, but altogether beyond, your mind will grow in clarity, your desires in purity, your actions in charity, and that inner distillation will take you to another world, a world of truth and fearless love. (443-4)

Love.

Were it so [that we love only ourselves], it would be splendid! Love your self wisely and you will reach the summit of perfection. Everybody loves his body, but few love their real being. Your real being is love itself, and your many loves are its reflections according to the situation at the moment. (483)

That which you are, your true self, you love it, and whatever you do, you do for your own happiness. To find it, to know it, to cherish it is you basic urge. Be true to your own self, love your self absolutely. Do not pretend that you love others as yourself. Unless you have realized them as one with yourself, you cannot love them. Don't pretend to be what you are not, don't refuse to be what you are. Your love of others is the result of self-knowledge, not its cause. Without self-realization, no virtue is genuine. When you know beyond all doubting that the same life flows through all that is and you are that life, you will love all naturally and spontaneously.

When you realize the depth and fullness of your love of yourself, you know that every living being and the entire universe are included in your affection. But when you look at anything as separate from you, you cannot love it for you are afraid of it. Alienation causes fear, and fear deepens alienation. It is a vicious circle. Only self-realization can break it. (213)

Love is not selective, desire is selective. In love there are no strangers. (511)

Once you are in it [true awareness], you will find that you love what you see, whatever may be its nature. This choiceless love is the touchstone of awareness. If it is not there, you are merely interested, for some personal reasons. (382)

In dream you love some and not others. On waking up you find you are love itself, embracing all. Personal love, however intense and genuine, invariably binds; love in freedom is love of all. When you are love itself, you are beyond time and numbers. In loving one you love all, in loving all, you love each. (258)

When all the false self-identifications are thrown away, what remains is all-embracing love. (195)

To see myself in everybody, and everybody in myself, most certainly is love. (91)

I find that somehow, by shifting the focus of attention, I become the very thing I look at, and experience the kind of consciousness it has; I become the inner witness of the thing. I call this capacity of entering other focal points of consciousness, love; you may give it any name you like. Love says "I am everything". Wisdom says "I am nothing". Between the two, my life flows. Since at any point of time and space I can be both the subject and the object of experience, I express it by saying that I am both, and neither, and beyond both. (269)

It is enough to know the "I am" as reality and also love. (182)

The Supreme (paramakash) imparts reality to whatever comes into being. To say that it is the universal love may be the nearest we can come to it in words. Just like love, it makes everything real, beautiful, desirable. (303)

Circumstances and conditions rule the ignorant. The knower of reality is not compelled. The only law he obeys is that of love. (484)

To act from desire and fear is bondage, to act from love is freedom. (489)

Nothing can be done without love. (482-3)

The consciousness in you and the consciousness in me, apparently two, really one, seek unity and that is love. (70)

17. The Nisargadatta Song of I Am

(Edited by Jerry Katz)

I Am That is a book of talks with Nisargadatta, a late-20th-century Guru of the Nath sect. From the book's Introduction: "Uneducated though the Master is, his conversation is enlightened to an extraordinary degree. Though born and brought up in poverty, he is the richest of the rich, for he has the limitless wealth of perennial knowledge, compared to which the most fabulous treasures are mere tinsel. He is warm-hearted and tender, shrewdly humorous, absolutely fearless and absolutely true -- inspiring, guiding and supporting all who come to him." Please buy I Am That, wherever you buy your books. It is a "must."

Quotes specifically referring to 'I am' were excerpted and grouped into four parts, the first two being introductory and the last two relating to ways of knowing 'I am' and to the nature of 'I am'. A fifth part was later added; it includes portions of text that were originally left out.

Part One

Go deep into the sense of 'I am' and you will find.
...focus your mind on 'I am', which is pure and simple being.

Take the first step first. All blessings come from within. Turn within. 'I am' you know. Be with it all the time you can spare, until you revert to it spontaneously. There is no simpler and easier way.

Before all beginnings, after all ending -- I am. All has its being in me, in the 'I am', that shines in every living being.

On a deeper level my experience is your experience. Dive deep within yourself and you will find it easily and simply. Go in the direction of 'I am'.

Part Two

When I met my Guru, he told me: "You are not what you take yourself to be. Find out what you are. Watch the sense 'I am', find your real Self." I obeyed him, because I trusted him. I did as he told me. All my spare time I would spend looking at myself in silence. And what a difference it made, and how soon!

My teacher told me to hold on to the sense 'I am' tenaciously and not to swerve from it even for a moment. I did my best to follow his advice and in a comparatively short time I realized within myself the truth of his teaching. All I did was to remember his teaching, his face, his words constantly. This brought an end to the mind; in the stillness of the mind I saw myself as I am -- unbound.

I simply followed (my teacher's) instruction which was to focus the mind on pure being 'I am', and stay in it. I used to sit for hours together, with nothing but the 'I am' in my mind and soon peace and joy and a deep all-embracing love became my normal state. In it all disappeared -- myself, my Guru, the life I lived, the world around me. Only peace remained and unfathomable silence.

My Guru ordered me to attend to the sense 'I am' and to give attention to nothing else. I just obeyed. I did not follow any particular course of breathing, or meditation, or study of scriptures. Whatever happened, I would turn away my attention from it and remain with the sense 'I am', it may look too simple, even crude. My only reason for doing it was that my Guru told me so. Yet it worked! Obedience is a powerful solvent of all desires and fears.

There is no sense of purpose in my doing anything. Things happen as they happen -- not because I make them happen, but it is because *I am* that they happen. In reality nothing ever happens. When the mind is restless, it makes Shiva dance, like the restless waters of the lake make the moon dance. It is all appearance, due to wrong ideas.

...in whatever role I may appear and whatever function I may perform -- I remain what I am: the 'I am' immovable, unshakable, independent.

When I say 'I am', I do not mean a separate entity with a body as its nucleus. I mean the totality of being, the ocean of consciousness, the entire universe of all that is and knows. I have nothing to desire for I am complete forever.

Words betray their hollowness. The real cannot be described, it must be experienced. I cannot find better words for what I know. What I say may sound ridiculous. But what the words try to convey is the highest truth. All is one, however much we quibble. And all is done to please the one source and goal of every desire, whom we all know as the 'I am'. Just like the sun is reflected in a billion dew drops, so is the timeless endlessly repeated. When I repeat: 'I am, I am', I merely assert and re-assert an ever-present fact. You get tired of my words because you do not see the living truth behind them. Contact it and you will find the full meaning of words and of silence -- both.

...I trusted my Guru. What he told me to do, I did. He told me to concentrate on 'I am' -- I did. He told me that I am beyond all perceivables and conceivables -- I believed. ... You may choose any way that suits you; your earnestness will determine the rate of progress.

Part Three

First of all, establish a constant contact with your self, be with yourself all the time. Into self-awareness all blessings flow. Begin as a centre of observation, deliberate cognizance, and grow into a centre of love in action. 'I am' is a tiny seed which will grow into a mighty tree -- quite naturally, without a trace of effort.

Establish yourself firmly in the awareness of 'I am'. This is the beginning and also the end of all endeavour.

Hold onto the sense of 'I am' to the exclusion of everything else. When thus the mind becomes completely silent, it shines with a new light and vibrates with new knowledge. It all comes spontaneously, you need only hold on to the 'I am'.

Refuse all thoughts except one: the thought 'I am'. The mind will rebel in the beginning, but with patience and perseverance it will yield and keep quiet. Once you are quiet, things will begin to happen spontaneously and quite naturally, without any interference on your part.

Just keep in mind the feeling 'I am', merge in it, till your mind and feeling become one. By repeated attempts you will stumble on the right balance of attention and affection and your mind will be firmly established in the thought-feeling 'I am'. Whatever you think, say, or do, this sense of immutable and affectionate being remains as the ever-present background of the mind.

To know what you are you must first investigate and know what you are not. And to know what you are not you must watch yourself carefully, rejecting all that does not necessarily go with the basic fact: 'I am'. ... Separate consistently and perseveringly the 'I am' from 'this' or 'that', and try to feel what it means to *be*, just to *be*, without being 'this' or 'that'.

Give up all questions except one: 'Who am I'? After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you *are*. The 'I am' is certain. The 'I am this' is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality.

Cling to one thing, that matters, hold on to 'I am' and let go all else. This is sadhana. In realization there is nothing to hold on to and nothing to forget. Everything is known, nothing is remembered.

...just remember yourself. 'I am', is enough to heal your mind and take you beyond. Just have some trust.

Stop searching, and see -- it is here and now -- it is that 'I am' you know so well.

You cannot meaningfully say 'this is what I am'. It just makes no sense.

'I am' is first-hand and needs no proofs. Stay with it.

Be content with what you are sure of. And the only thing you can be sure of is 'I am'. Stay with it, and reject everything else. This is Yoga.

Go back to that state of pure being, where the 'I am' is still in its purity before it got contaminated with 'this I am' or 'that I am'. Your burden is of false self-identifications -- abandon them all.

Don't you see that it is your very search for happiness that makes you miserable? Try the other way: indifferent to pain and pleasure, neither asking nor refusing, give all your attention to the level on which 'I am' is timelessly present. Soon you will realize that peace and happiness are in your very nature and it is only seeking them through some particular channels, that disturbs.

Give your heart and mind to brooding over the 'I am', what is it, how is it, what is its source, its life, its meaning. It is very much like digging a well. You reject all that is not water, till you reach the life-giving spring.

The 'I am' that pursues the pleasant and shuns the unpleasant is false; the 'I am' that sees pleasure and pain as inseparable sees rightly.

Those who practise the sadhana of focussing their minds on 'I am' may feel related to others who have followed the same sadhana and succeeded.

You need not worry about your worries. Just *be*. Do not try to be quiet; do not make 'being quiet' into a task to be performed. Don't be restless about 'being quiet', miserable about 'being happy'. Just be aware that you are and remain aware -- don't say: 'yes, I am; what next?' There is not 'next' in 'I am'. It is a timeless state.

Part Four

On waking up, was it not the sense 'I am' that came first?

The sense 'I am' is always with you, only you have attached all kinds of things to it -- body, feelings, thoughts, ideas, possessions, etc. All these self-identifications are misleading. Because of them you take yourself to be what you are not.

What is mine is mine and was mine even when God was not. Of course, it is a very tiny little thing, a speck -- the sense 'I am', the fact of being.

The light by which you see the world, which is God, is the tiny little spark: 'I am', apparently so small, yet the first and the last in every act of knowing and loving. Without the 'I am' there is nothing. All knowledge is about the 'I am'.

Outside the Self there is nothing. All is one and all is contained in 'I am'.

Give it all up and be ready for the real to assert itself. This self-assertion is best expressed in words: 'I am'. Nothing else has being. Of this you are absolutely certain.

Instead of seeing things as imagined, learn to see them as they are. When you can see everything as it is, you will also see yourself as you are. It is like cleansing a mirror. The same mirror that shows you the world as it is, will also show you your own face. The thought 'I am' is the polishing cloth.

'I am' is ever afresh. You do not need to remember in order to *be*. ... At present your being is mixed up with experiencing. All you need is to unravel being from the tangle of experiences. Once you have known pure being, without being this or that, you will discern it among experiences and you will no longer be misled by names and forms. ...the 'I am' in movement creates the world. The 'I am' at peace becomes the Absolute. In the immensity of consciousness a light appears, a tiny point that moves rapidly and traces shapes, thoughts and feelings, concepts and ideas, like the pen writing on paper. And the ink that leaves a trace is memory. You are that tiny point and by your movement the world is ever re-created. Stop moving and there will be no world. Look within and you will find that the point of light is the reflection of the immensity of light in the body, as the sense 'I am'. There is only light, all else appears.

The 'I am' is at the root of all appearance and the permanent link in the succession of events that we call life... .

Human beings die every second, the fear and the agony of dying hangs over the world like a cloud. No wonder you too are afraid. But once you know that the body alone dies and not the continuity of memory and the sense of 'I am' reflected in it, you are afraid no longer.

People differ, but all are faced with the fact of their own existence. 'I am' is the ultimate fact; 'Who am I?' is the ultimate question to which everybody must find an answer.

Delve deeply into the sense 'I am' and you will surely discover that the perceiving centre is universal, as universal as the light that illumines the world. All that happens in the universe happens to you, the silent witness. On the other hand, whatever is done, is done by you, the universal and inexhaustible energy.

Before the mind -- I am. 'I am' is not a thought in the mind; the mind happens to me, I do not happen to the mind. And since time and space are in the mind, I am beyond time and space, eternal and omnipresent.

...you are not this, there is nothing of yours in this, except the little point of 'I am' 'I am this, I am that' is dream, while pure 'I am' has the stamp of reality on it. You have tasted so many things -- all came to naught. Only the sense 'I am' persisted -- unchanged. Stay with the changeless among the changeful, until you are able to go beyond. When the 'I am myself' goes, the 'I am all' comes. When the 'I am all' goes, 'I am' comes. When even 'I am' goes, reality alone *is*...

Part Five

After the first four parts were edited, more 'I Am' expressions were found and are included here:

There are many starting points -- they all lead to the same goal. You may begin with selfless work, abandoning the fruits of action; you may then give up thinking and in the end giving up all desires. Here, giving up (*tyaga*) is the operational factor. Or, you may not bother about any thing you want, or think, or do and just stay put in the thought and feeling 'I am', focussing 'I am' firmly in your mind. All kinds of experience may come to you -- remain unmoved in the knowledge that all perceivable is transient, and only the 'I am' endures.

What do you love now? The 'I am'. Give your heart and mind to it, think of nothing else. This, when effortless and natural, is the highest state. In it love itself is the lover and the beloved.

Before the world was, consciousness was. In consciousness it comes into being, in consciousness it lasts and into pure consciousness it dissolves. At the root of everything, is the feeling 'I am'. The state of mind: 'there is a world' is secondary, for to *be*, I do not need the world, the world needs me.

Go home, take charge of your father's business, look after your parents in their old age. Marry the girl who is waiting for you, be loyal, by simple, be humble. Hide your virtue, live silently. The five senses and the three qualities (*gunas*) are your eight steps in Yoga. And 'I am' is the Great Reminder (*mahamantra*). You can learn from them all you need to know. Be attentive, enquire ceaselessly. That is all.

Everything is a play of ideas. In the state free from ideation (*nirvikalpa samadhi*) nothing is perceived. The root idea is: 'I am'. It shatters the state of pure consciousness and is followed by the innumerable sensations and perceptions, feeling and ideas, which in their totality constitute God and His world. The 'I am' remains as the witness, but it is by the will of God that everything happens.

In my world nobody is born and nobody dies. Some people go on a journey and come back, some never leave. What difference does it make since they travel in dreamlands, each wrapped up in his own dream. Only the waking up is important. It is enough to know the 'I am' as reality and also love.

As it is natural for the incense stick to burn out, so it is natural for the body to die. Really, it is a matter of very little importance. What matters is that I am neither the body nor the mind. *I am*.

Don't identify yourself with an idea. If you mean by God, the Unknown, then you merely say: 'I do not know what I am'. If you know God as you know yourself, you need not say

it. Best is the simple feeling 'I am'. Dwell on it patiently. Here patience is wisdom; don't think of failure. There can be no failure in this understanding.

That which makes you think you are human is not human. It is but a dimensionless point of consciousness, a conscious nothing; all you can say about yourself is: 'I am'. You are pure being, awareness, bliss. To realize that is the end of all seeking. You come to it when you see all you think yourself to be as mere imagination and stand aloof in pure awareness of the transient as transient, imaginary as imaginary, unreal as unreal.

End

18. The Nisargadatta Song of Beyond I Am

(Edited by Jerry Katz)

INTRODUCTION: One of Nisargadatta's questioners offered the following: "You told me that I can be considered under three aspects: the personal (vyakti), the super-personal (vyakta) and the impersonal (avyakta). The Avyakta is the universal and real pure 'I'; the Vyakta is its reflection in consciousness as 'I am'; the Vyakti is the totality of physical and vital processes. Within the narrow confines of the present moment, the super-personal is aware of the person, both in space and time; not only one person, but the long series of persons strung together on the thread of karma. It is essentially the witness as well as the residue of the accumulated experiences, the seat of memory, the connecting link (sutratma). It is man's character which life builds and shapes from birth to birth. The universal is beyond all name and shape, beyond consciousness and character, pure unselfconscious being." To all this, Nisargadatta agreed it was so on the level of the mind, but that beyond the mental level not a word applies.

As you read the passages that follow, you may be nudged into the avyakta, the universal; you will know you have been so nudged when the words before you disappear. (Please see The Nisardargadatta Song of I Am for further introductory material)

The Nisargadatta Song of Beyond I Am: Selections from I Am That

...you are not this, there is nothing of yours in this, except the little point of 'I am' 'I am this, I am that' is dream, while pure 'I am' has the stamp of reality on it. You have tasted so many things -- all came to naught. Only the sense 'I am' persisted -- unchanged. Stay with the changeless among the changeful, until you are able to go beyond. When the 'I am myself' goes, the 'I am all' comes. When the 'I am all' goes, 'I am' comes. When even 'I am' goes, reality alone is...

By knowing what you are not, you come to know your Self. The way back to your Self is through refusal and rejection. One thing is certain: the real is not imaginary, it is not a product of the mind. Even the sense 'I am' is not continuous, though it is a useful pointer; it shows where to seek, but not what to seek. Just have a good look at it. Once you are convinced that you cannot truthfully say anything except 'I am', and that nothing that can be pointed at, can be your Self, the need for the 'I am' is over -- you are no longer intent on verbalizing what you are. All you need is to get rid of the tendency to define yourself. All definitions apply to your body only and to its expressions. Once this obsession with the body goes, you will revert to your natural state, spontaneously and effortlessly. We discover it by being earnest, by searching, enquiring, questioning daily and hourly, by giving one's life to this discovery.

That in which consciousness happens, the universal consciousness or mind, we call the ether of consciousness. All the objects of consciousness form the universe. What is beyond both, supporting both, is the supreme state, a state of utter stillness and silence. Whoever goes there, disappears. It is unreachable by words, or mind. You may call it

God, or Parabrahman, or Supreme Reality, but these are names given by the mind. It is the nameless, contentless, effortless and spontaneous state, beyond being and non-being.

Perfection is a state of the mind, when it is pure. I am beyond the mind, whatever its state, pure or impure. Awareness is my nature; ultimately I am beyond being and non-being.

The idea -- 'I am the witness only' will purify the body and the mind and open the eye of wisdom. Then man goes beyond illusion and his heart is free of all desires. Just like ice turns to water, and water to vapour, and vapour dissolves in air and disappears in space, so does the body dissolve into pure awareness (chidakash), then into pure being (paramakash), which is beyond all existence and non-existence.

One thing is quite clear to me: all that is, lives and moves and has its being in consciousness; and I am in and beyond that consciousness. I am in it as the witness. I am beyond it as Being.

To be a living being is not the ultimate state; there is something beyond, much more wonderful, which is neither being nor non-being, neither living nor non-living. It is a state of pure awareness, beyond the limitations of space and time. Once the illusion that the body-mind is oneself is abandoned, death loses its terror, it becomes a part of living.

The witness only registers events. In the abeyance of the mind even the sense 'I am' dissolves. There is no 'I am' without the mind.

You live, you feel, you think. By giving attention to your living, feeling and thinking, you free yourself from them and go beyond them. Your personality dissolves and only the witness remains. Then you go beyond the witness. Do not ask how it happens. Just search within yourself.

All I can say truly is: 'I am', all else is inference. But the inference has become a habit. Destroy all habits of thinking and seeing. The sense 'I am' is the manifestation of a deeper cause, which you may call Self, God, Reality or by any other name. The 'I am' is in the world; but it is the key which can open the door out of the world. The moon dancing on the water is seen in the water, but it is caused by the moon in the sky and not by the water.

As long as we imagine ourselves to be separate personalities, one quite apart from another, we cannot grasp reality which is essentially impersonal. First we must know ourselves as witnesses only, dimensionless and timeless centres of observation, and then realize that immense ocean of pure awareness, which is both mind and matter and beyond both.

Have you felt the all-embracing emptiness in which the universe swims like a cloud in the blue sky?

This 'I am' is an announcement: it is not the real. It has come out of something else. What the real is, I am not telling you, because words negate that. Whatever I am telling you is not the truth, because it has come out of that 'I am'. The fact is, I cannot describe reality to you, I cannot explain it, because it is beyond expression.

When you pursue the spiritual path, the path of self-knowing, all your desires, all your attachments, will just drop away, provided you investigate and hold on to that with which you are trying to understand the self. Then what happens? Your 'I-am-ness' is the state 'to be'. You are 'to be' and attached to that state. You love to be. Now, as I said, ... your desires drop off. And what is the primary desire? To be. When you stay put in that beingness for some time, that desire also will drop off. This is very important. When this is dropped off, you are in the Absolute -- a most essential state.

When you are in consciousness, you understand the nature of consciousness and you recede. Your progress continues. This consciousness is slowly extinguishing itself; knowingly it is disappearing. But nothing affects You, because that is the Absolute. Just like when the flame is gone, the smoke is gone, the sky remains.

Take one sentence of what has been said here, and stay with it. That is enough; that will lead you to your source.

The Nisargadatta Song of Beyond I Am: Selections from "The Wisdom of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj", by Robert Powell

Spiritual maturity is being ready to let go everything. Giving up is a first step, but real giving-up is the insight that there's nothing to be given up, since nothing is your property.

When you know thoughts and their wonderful powers, and liberate them from what has poisoned them - the idea of an own, separate person -, you just let them alone, such that they can perform their appropriate work. Letting the thoughts do their own work at their own place is freedom.

When you don't require anything from the world and nothing from God, when you don't desire anything, when you don't strive for anything, don't expect anything, the divine will enter you, unasked and unex-pected.

The wish for truth is the best of all wishes, but it's still a wish. All wishes must be given up, that the truth can enter your life.

When you encounter sorrow and suffering, remain with it and don't try to escape from it. Don't throw yourself into blind activity. Neither learning nor acting can really help. Be with the presence of sorrow and uncover their roots - help with insight is real help.

Understanding confusion means becoming free of it.

The world and the thinking are states of being. The divine is not a state, it penetrates all states, but is no state of anything else.

Nothing extraordinary can happen to a consciousness knowing exactly what it wants.

Delayed reaction is wrong reaction. Thinking, feeling and action must be a unity and happen together with the situation requiring them.

What is the worth of a happiness for which you must strive and work? Real happiness is spontaneous and effortless.

In my view, everything happens by itself, quite spontaneously. But humans think they would work for a win, towards a purpose.

There's nothing from which the world could profit more than from giving up profit. A man who's no longer thinking in terms of winning and losing is truly non-violent man, since he's above all conflicts.

It's the nature of thinking to differentiate things and specialize itself. There's no harm to that, but it isn't true when one thinks of oneself as separate from things. Things and humans are different, but not separate. Nature is one, reality is one. There are opposites, but no contradictions.

You will receive everything you need when you stop asking for what you do not need.

There's no state in which one is seeing reality. WHO is seeing WHAT? You can only BE real. (And that you are always.) The problem exists only in thinking. Let all false ideas go, that's all. There's no need for true ideas. (Since there are none.)

Suffering is exclusively the result of attachment or resistance, it is a sign of lacking readiness to go on, to flow with life.