

The Non-Dualistic Teachings of Sri Nisargadatta

(Sir Nisargadatta was a fully awakened mahatma, who with no schooling and no previous spiritual knowledge prior to his awakening, lived as a poor, illiterate, low-caste family man making his living as a street vendor rolling and selling cigarettes from a stall in a Bombay slum. After his awakening he taught from a garret room located over a public urinal near his stall. He departed this world in the early 1980's when he was in his 80's. The following is taken, with no particular order or temporal organization, from published and private sources of answers given by Nisargadatta to questions posed to him by visitors, during his final years.)

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Grace of the Guru

It is the intensity of the faith you have in the guru's words that is most important; once that is there, the grace flows automatically. The faith in the guru is based on the consciousness within, faith in your Self. My association with my guru was scarcely for two and a half years. The words he gave me touched me very deeply. I abided in one thing only: that the words of my guru are the truth, and he said "*You are the Absolute, You are the Parabrahman*". After that there were no more doubts and no more questions. Once my guru conveyed to me what he had to say I never bothered about other things - I hung on to the words of the guru. I know exactly how transient this present state of affairs is, and I also know the eternal state. I have no use for this ephemeral state. I understand the false as false. Since I have found my true permanent state I have no need for any of this; it has come on its own and it will go on its own. In that fullness there is no need of any kind. I've had that state of fullness after I met my guru; if I hadn't met him I would have lived and died as an ordinary man. The deep, dark blue state, the shade that you can take rest in, that is the grace of the guru. The darkness that you see when you close your eyes, that is the shadow of the guru's grace. Always keep it in mind; take rest in that shade of guru's grace.

Through the concepts of others you have built up so many things around you that you are lost. You are decorated and embellished by the concepts of others. The purpose of the guru is to tell you what you were like prior to the building up of all those concepts. Your present spiritual storehouse is filled up with the words of others - demolish those concepts. You must find out for yourself your own truth. Guru means the eternal state which will never change... what you truly are. You are that immutable, eternal, unchangeable Absolute. Guru tells you to get rid of all the walls built around you by the hearsay and concepts of others, which have kept you from your true nature.

Understand that the consciousness has arisen spontaneously in you, the Absolute. Once you are conscious of yourself you know you exist and you love this beingness; you do not want this beingness to depart from you, and it is this that makes you strive

all day until sleep overcomes you, in order to keep the beingness satisfied. Then the guru tells you the true state of affairs, *that this consciousness which you love so much is only an illusion. It is the basic cause of all unhappiness and your true state is before this consciousness arose.* Understand this thoroughly, intuitively, beyond all words and concepts, but also know that if this understanding is just something happening in the intellect it will be of no use to you, because it will be at the level of phenomenal consciousness... concepts... and that consciousness is nothing but illusion. Whatever you know is imperfect, fraudulent. Go where you do not know. Recede into the source, into no form, no beingness; there you are perfect. Whatever you witness will not remain with you; it is imperfect. The one who recognizes the imperfect as imperfect is perfect; that one is complete in himself.

Have firm faith in the words of the guru. Nothing, nobody existed prior to you. When your beingness appeared then everything appeared. Understand that first moment when you understood that you are, the point at which everything arose. The source and the end are the same point. In the spiritual hierarchy going from the grossest to the subtlest, you are the subtlest. The very base is you, full and complete, without need for knowledge of who you are. Suddenly the space-like, all-pervading 'I amness' appears. Spontaneously, uncalled for, the beingness has come and is being witnessed by you, the Absolute. Later, this space-like 'I amness' disappears and the beingness goes back into oblivion. You remain in the eternal state, your true unchanging state. Prior to your beingness, nothing was... but you, the Absolute. After the beingness comes, still all there is is you, the Absolute. Without the beingness you, the Absolute, don't know you are. You are without any stigma, not covered by anything. You are the Paramatman, the core Self, the highest Self, the Absolute, subtler than space, beyond consciousness, beyond the 'I amness'.

In meditation, let your beingness merge in your Self, the non-dual state. Remain still. Do not struggle to come out of the mud of your concepts, you will only go deeper. Simply abide in the stillness. The Self has no occasion to say it exists; it is in eternity. When there is no body-mind there can be no practice; only the stillness of the Self remains.

The Pseudo-Entity - The Individual

Now, you still think that you are one individual and that the guru is another individual, but it is not so. There can be no individuals separate from one another, no knowledge separable as worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge. There is no guru and no disciple, there is no God and no devotee, there are no opposites, there is no second, always there is only one. Guru is you, guru is the One, he is the knower of consciousness, he is the witness of that illusion which is only temporary.

All your worldly and unworldly activities are based on the individual identification. You, as an individual, want to have liberation. You remain as an individual, that is the difficulty. You want the knowledge of the Self without giving up identification with the body; but the two are contradictory. You consider your presence as a phenomenon related to the body. You come here as individuals expecting something from me, but there is no individual so how can I do something for non-existing individuals? Your

true nature is in no way different from mine. Your true nature is not circumscribed by time and space. You are prior to all these things. You might be a very great person but when you go to sleep you forget yourself as a separate entity. Give up this limited identification as an individual and everything becomes very simple.

When is there an ego? The ego is there when you have a reaction, when you register and take delivery of whatever is being observed spontaneously. Only when you cling to the observation, then there is an ego. For example, you see some building material lying on the road. You think you know something about how to use that material and you start figuring out various possibilities... that way the thought process develops and ego starts. If you are nobody, you will not bother about the building material... you will just observe it and go on your way. Once it is out of sight it is out of mind. But, if instead, you receive delivery and cogitate over it, then ego will start.

Don't say that you are an individual, just stay in the beingness; that is true bliss. You fill the world with selfishness due to your association with the body; but that selfishness vanishes once you understand the underlying principles and dissolve the personality. With the rising of the 'I am' the whole manifestation took place. In any activity that which witnesses the play is the 'I am'; that which concocts the play is maya, illusion. The 'I amness', the universal consciousness gives sentience to all beings whereas the life force, the vital breath performs all the actions through the gunas – tamas, rajas and satva, the three qualities associated with maya. That pure knowledge, 'I am', is the God of this universe, but it is not the Real; the Real I cannot tell you because words negate that. Whatever I am telling you is not the Truth. The Truth is beyond expression. You can never have knowledge about your Self because Parabrahman cannot be witnessed. You know what you are not... what you truly are you cannot know.

Now you are taking all this down, going over it, still thinking of yourself as individuals amassing knowledge, but this amassing of knowledge is not going to help you, because it is all in a dream. Don't be under the misapprehension that you are doing anything useful. It is impossible for a phenomenal object to achieve something. The seeker must disappear in the seeking, and once he does there is no question of doing. If at all you want to do something, do that which you cannot do at all... that is the state of no-being.

It is a very complicated riddle. You have to discard whatever you know, whatever you have read, and have a firm conviction about That about which nobody knows anything. You can't get any information about That, and yet about That you must have a firm conviction. Many people may reach that stage which is, but it is very, very rare that one reaches that stage which is not. It transcends all knowledge. His position is secure and stable and eternal. That which you don't know that is the right state. But this no-knowingness is not available right off.

Most essential, to begin with, is that knowledge 'I am'. Claim it. Appropriate it as your own. If that is not there nothing is. Knowledge of all the stages will be obtained only with the aid of that knowledge 'I am'. From the Absolute, no-knowing state spontaneously this consciousness 'I am' has appeared... there is no reason, no cause. This 'I amness' contains the entire cosmos. Spontaneously it comes, and along with it

come the waking and the deep sleep states, the five elements, the three qualities, everything. Then this 'I amness' embraces the body made up of the elements as its self, and identifies itself with it. This 'I amness' has its own love to be. It wants to remain, to perpetuate itself, but it is not eternal. It is just a passing show, an illusion that comes and goes on the Real.

When this play comes, it happens spontaneously. The sum total of all this is illusion and nobody is responsible for creation - it has come spontaneously and there is no question of improvement in that - it will go on its own way. When you are ignorant, you think that you are playing a part in this manifest world. In the realm of beingness the fragmentation begins; it is limited, conditioned, because in this beingness we all try to claim the actions as ours. But there is no one working deliberately; you cannot claim anything in the process. Just realize that all phenomena, all concepts take place in the play of consciousness. There is no question of an independent entity; everything is an appearance in consciousness only. Just as in a piece of cloth the main element is the thread, so in any appearance the essence is consciousness. This must be deeply understood. Whatever natural experiences you encounter, just accept them. Don't try to alter them, just accept them as they come. But this understanding will not happen as long as there is identification with the body. As long as that identification is there you will think of benefiting this pseudo-personality. The whole universe is alive as long as you have this consciousness; once gone from you nothing is there. While it is there, fix your identity firmly on this beingness; but do not reserve exclusive identity for this physical bundle. Whatever identity you have is the play of the five elements; it is universal. Do not give that beingness limbs, shape or form, for once you have given it form you have limited it. Understand this energy which is behind the entire manifestation of the universe.

The "I Amness"

Where has the experience of being alive come from which started all this trouble? The 'I' consciousness appeared spontaneously and the experiences started. When you got yourself separated from the Absolute with this identity, 'I am', your demands started. In the Absolute there are no needs of any kind, not even the need to know Itself. Brahman is the total truth; there is nothing else but Brahman. In That, the touch of beingness, 'I am', started, and then the separation and the sense of otherness appeared. Coming down into this world from the Absolute is like the appearance of a dream. Along with that appearance comes the primary ignorance, the false notion that you are the body. That is illusion, maya. Maya is very powerful; she will get you completely wrapped up. She will make you do all her tricks, and that light of yours, the beingness gets extinguished. But, although she might be your greatest enemy, if you propitiate her properly, she will turn around and lead you to the highest state.

First, know that you are the manifest consciousness, the 'I am'. Then go to the source and find out where this 'I am' came from. When you have knowledge you see the 'I am' as all-pervasive, so long as that consciousness is there. But then, this knowledge merges into no-knowledge, the Parabrahman, the witness of the consciousness. That has no 'I am'; that is your true eternal nature. It is on this true, whole, homogeneous state that a

small ripple appeared. Then the news came, "I am". That news made all the difference, for then all this started. You must know your true state, and know that this ripple comes and goes on your true state. Beingness witnesses all this manifestation, but the eternal principle, the Absolute, witnesses the beingness. The universal Absolute understands the play of the attributes, the projection of the mind, but the play cannot understand the Absolute.

Prior to taking this form you were formless; then spontaneously the form came. But, once the form came there arose a natural longing to return to the formless, the desireless state. Consciousness has to know consciousness. When it realizes itself, then you wake up and return to normal. In this waking up you have only the sense of being, without words; this is the primary principle... the prerequisite. A little later on, you know fully that you are and, therefore, the world is, but you also know that to be an illusion like the horns of a hare; the world is only a dream. This consciousness of being 'I am', has created and sustained all the wonders in the world for which men take credit. It has tremendous powers. This beingness is itself Lord Krishna. It is whatever name you give to the Divinity. Be devoted to this beingness. Always remember this 'I am' principle, and without the command or direction of this principle, do nothing. In the initial stages your devotion is of the surrendering type. In the final stages you become the entire universe. Take it that this 'I amness' of yours is the unadulterated form of Godhood. The pure divine state is your beingness. Have full faith in It, give It its full importance, pray to It, and it will flower in you as the direct experience of Godliness. Think: "The entire manifest beingness is myself and each being is a sample of myself. The knowledge 'I am' in each species is myself. The life force, luminous, bright, radiant, indwelling principle is myself."

On the World

The world is nothing but the picture of your own 'I' consciousness. It is as if you had received a phone call telling that you are, and immediately the world appeared. The moment you awaken out of deep sleep the world appears simultaneously. When there is the 'I am' the world appears, whether it be in the waking or the dream states. When you know that you are, the world is. If you are not then your world is not. The reason that the world appeared is that you came to know that you are.

Just as wherever the sun is, its light will also be there, because light is the manifestation of the sun and you cannot separate the sun from the light, so also, because you are, your world will be there. First get to know you, then get to know what the world is.

The Mind

Now, you are trying to understand all this but you cannot, because you have on the swaddling clothes of 'I am this or that'. Remove them. The ultimate point of view is that there is nothing to understand. So, trying to understand is just indulging in mental acrobatics. Whatever you have understood you are not. Spit it all out. Whatever you understand is not the truth. Throw it overboard. Do not try to catch hold of any concepts and cling to them. Don't employ any words, but look at yourself as you are. Throw away every thought, every experience, everything that happens after the

consciousness, the beingness comes. Other than throwing it away as useless, there is nothing to be done beyond this firm understanding in which you become more and more absorbed. Before the beingness was there, look at that, be in that state. Do not get lost in words and thoughts and ideas. Do not crave for mind knowledge and concepts in the name of spirituality. Anything that is seen and interpreted by the mind is only an appearance in consciousness, and, therefore, cannot be true. The knowledgeable one just witnesses whatever experiences are obtainable through the mind, viewing them as without substance. The mind may be sprouting, expressing itself with various concepts. But, don't identify with that, let it go. Don't be a customer to your mind concepts. The knower of the mind is just a witness. He does not interfere in anything.

All this world play is in the realm of the mind. In your worldly work you can use the mind but don't get lost in the mind. Just observe the mind, be a witness to the mind-flow. Once you understand that you are not the mind then in what way are you concerned about all this? This is a temporary phase, it is imperfect, inadequate. Your true nature is that which was there before the body and mind, and before the consciousness which has identified itself with this bundle, came into being. Give up your fondness for this dwelling-place in the world, your body, and your fondness for this beingness state, your false concept of existing as an entity. In the world of beingness every worm, bird, being is taken care of; every species knows the art of living. But, why should that concern you? Lose your fascination for this ephemeral life, this burden; there is no truth at all in this fraud. Get stabilized in the eternal. Go to the state which is beyond all this, prior to all this, which is not affected by all this. Only when you have the firm conviction that you are the highest will you be able to stabilize in the Ultimate.

When you move from the deep sleep to the waking state, the 'I am' with no words first appears. Later the words start flowing and you get involved with the words and carry-out your worldly life with the meaning of those words - that is mind. But before this 'I am' and the word-flow of the waking state, that borderline... there is where you have to be, without words, without concepts. When words emanate from the consciousness, don't embrace those words, don't champion the meaning of those words. You have a mountain of concepts and words. To get rid of these you use other concepts. But, when you throw out all concepts, including your primary concept, then whatever is, is. Stay put in that quietude. To abide in that place, in that original state between deep sleep and waking before the 'I amness' comes, you must have an intensely peaceful state.

The Reality is You

What brings you here to me is that you want to 'reach reality'. Who is this 'I' that wants to reach reality? Is it this body complex, this psychosomatic apparatus? And are you sure that reality will accept you? And how will you reach it, is it by taking a high jump or perhaps by a rocket or through a mental leap? And where exactly out there is this reality, and what will it do for you, that you are so anxious to reach it? Don't you realize how funny all this is? The truth is that this entity which you think you are, based on this body complex and consciousness is totally false. When you see the false as false, then what remains is true. That which was prior to this body and consciousness, that

which is ever-present... that is your true identity... that is reality. It is here and now. It is what you really are... the relative absence, the absolute presence. Where is the question of reaching it? You are the reality. Be it.

The desire for freedom, which arises in the heart of the seeker in the initial stages gradually disappears when he realizes that he himself is what he has been seeking. But if this desire continues to persist then it implies two blocks. It assumes the presence and continuance of an entity wanting 'freedom', whereas for a phenomenal object there can be no question of freedom because it has no independent existence, and so can never be separated from the total functioning of the manifestation. And it also assumes that reality can somehow be captured at the mind-level, trying to capture the unknown and unknowable within the parameters of the known. But that is impossible.

When the impersonal consciousness personalized itself by identification with the sentient object, thinking of it as 'I', the effect was to transform the 'I', which was essentially the subject, into an object. It is this objectivizing of pure subjectivity, this false identifying of the unlimited with the limited, which can be called bondage. It is from this entity-fication that freedom is sought. Liberation, therefore, can be nothing other than the immediate understanding that self-identification is false. The situation can be likened to a five-year old girl who has been decked out in fine clothes and lovely ornaments. The same child three years earlier would have either ignored the fine clothes or would have accepted them as a nuisance forced on her by the doting parents. But now, after the conditioning that she has received, the child cannot wait until she can go out and gloat over the envy of her little friends who don't possess such fineries. What has happened between infancy and childhood is exactly that which is the obstacle to your seeing your true nature. The infant, unlike the child, still retains its subjective personality and identity. Before the conditioning, it refers to itself by its name, not as 'me', functions naturally as part of the total functioning without seeing itself as a separate personal entity, an object posing as a subject? Personal entity and enlightenment cannot go together; indeed there is neither entity nor enlightenment... understanding this deeply is itself enlightenment. Freedom is the unshakeable knowledge of your real nature; it is the total negation of entity-ness.

Once it is understood that an entity is merely a conceptual notion, then what follows is a reintegration into universality. Then you just watch life 'being lived', realizing that relatively speaking, you as manifestation are but a puppet being manipulated in a dream-world. When you apperceive this intuitively, spontaneously, thoughtlessly, then this itself will be the awakening from this Maya-dream. Having understood that there can never be any individual entity with independent choice of action, then how could 'you' entertain any intentions? And in the absence of intentions how could there be any involvement with Karma? Then, you become perfectly aligned with whatever happens, accepting events without any feeling either of achievement or frustration. Such living would then be non-volitional living, an absence of doing and deliberate non-doing, going through your allotted span of life wanting nothing and avoiding nothing, free of conceptualizing and objectivizing. Then, when this phenomenal life disappears in due course it leaves you in absolute presence.

The Jnani State - the Highest State of the Wise One

The state of jnani has transcended the beingness, but the beingness is still there. Together with the beingness is the Absolute... the deep blue, benign state, without eyes. Knowledge takes rest in that deep blue, quiet, peaceful, benign shade. When that shade is shifted aside, then he sees the various manifestations in the form of universes and worlds. But when the shade is there, it is the deep, dark blue state, fully relaxed.

The consciousness which is born thinks that it is the body and works through the three gunas; but I have nothing to do with this. The whole thing is an illusion. The happenings are just happening; they have come and they will go. Prior to this experiential state I was perfect in every respect. With the arrival of the beingness this imperfect state started. Beingness does everything for the continuance of that beingness, but there is nothing at all that I would like to continue. I merely watch the body, mind, consciousness laugh or suffer. In suffering it may cry out, all right, let it cry out. If it is enjoying it may laugh. I know it's a temporary thing. If it wants to go, let it go. It can do what it likes, I am not concerned. This consciousness is time-bound. Once the body is gone, that knowledge which experienced itself as Krishna or Buddha or Christ subsides and becomes one with the total. Whatever tangible or visible world there is, that knowledge merges into nothingness, but the knower remains eternal. The knowledge and the no-knowledge both merge into the Absolute.

I am That which represents the absence of what is seen. In spite of listening to all I have said, most of you will continue to identify yourself as a body, and you will look on me as an individual, but I am not that. My real presence is the absence of the phenomena that you see. The question of what one is comes only in manifestation, when one compares with other phenomena. In my state there is no phenomenon; my existence is prior to any manifestation. There can be no question of what I am.

Child Consciousness

The root of this manifest world is the consciousness which appeared when you were a child. The root of whatever activities you are now doing is that moment when you were a child. From that moment you started gathering knowledge and from that your present activities are happening. The consciousness you have now is the same as that child consciousness... that is the seed. As long as this consciousness is there so many things seem to be important to you, but when that consciousness vanishes, what is the worth of the whole world to you? Nothing? Give attention to how this seed, this consciousness, this beingness, this 'I amness'... has appeared. Find out how this universal, all-pervasive consciousness has limited itself and identified with the body, when the body appeared.

You must come to a firm conviction, and once the decision is taken there is no moving away from it. You must forget the thought that you are a body and be only the knowledge 'I am', which has no form, no name. Just be. Accept this identification only: that you are pure beingness, the very soul of the universe and that for now you are just wearing this bodily attire. Look at the moon and know that the moon is there provided you are there... because you are, the moon is. It is out of you, this beingness, the primordial concept, 'I am', that this whole web of creation is woven. The entire

manifestation is just an appearance in you. When you stabilize in that beingness it will give you all its secrets. Once you liquidate this yardstick of body-mind as your identity then you are the highest God, you are Brahman. But here there is no question of elevating yourself to a higher level; here it is only a question of understanding. God is the 'I amness', the consciousness, the beingness, that which witnesses this manifestation of the five elements, the universe. Brahman, the Self, the Absolute, witnesses this 'I amness'. The Absolute state cannot be obtained. It is your state now and always. To the Absolute state the witnessing of the consciousness happens.

The fruition of your spirituality is to fully understand your own true nature, to stabilize in your true identity. Ultimately, everything merges in the Self. You will transcend that beingness, and you, the Absolute, will know that you are also not that beingness, that consciousness. Beingness is transcended, but beingness will still be available. In the deep sleep state the beingness, the 'I amness' goes into oblivion, you forget yourself. The 'I amness' comes and goes in the waking and deep sleep states, but the Absolute remains unaffected by that. The true state, which is whole, undifferentiated, is beyond birth and death. Be friendly with your undifferentiated state, your true Self. There was never any division, but you are under the delusion that you are not one with it. You are never bound by body and mind. You are limitless. You, the Absolute are aloof, you are beyond any experience. In the absence of the basic concept 'I am' there is no thought, there is no consciousness. Immortality is beyond time and space; in that timeless, spaceless existence there is no entry for the five elements, for light or darkness. Timeless, spaceless existence doesn't know that it is; it has never felt the creation or destruction of the universe. That is your reality, that is your truth.

Knowingness and No-Knowingness

Suppose you started knowing yourself at the age of four. Whatever actions took place prior to that happened without your knowing and there is no record in your memory of that. You will have heard of some happenings from others, but you directly do not know. In those first few years, the primary concept 'I am' is there, but in a dormant condition. Later on it started knowing itself. The jnani is like the child-state when the child was not knowing itself. The apparatus is different but the principle is the same.

To start with, when you were born, only reactions such as hunger and thirst took place. These are physical things when life is there, but inside the state of knowingness had not yet developed. Then after three or four years the process of knowingness dawned and you came to know yourself - the knowledge 'I am' had been attained. You did not know who you were but you knew you were something. Later on, you started collecting concepts and ideas which other people fed you, and you developed images about yourself and others. Thus the mind developed. In the waking state you knew the world together with your concepts, but then this knowledge vanished when you fell asleep, and reappeared again when you woke up. Daily this went on, with the knowledge of 'I am' cycling between these active and dormant phases. The consciousness was there throughout, provided the waking state and sleep states were also there. But, before you were born, where was that consciousness? Where were you? What was

your experience then? You don't know. It was a no-knowing state. In that no-knowing state suddenly knowingness appeared and created all this mischief. If you had the capacity to know before birth that you were being born, would you have jumped into this pit? Could anything have induced you to get into this wearisome cycle of waking and sleeping?

One day you met the guru. The guru told you, "Get rid of all your concepts and just be yourself." Having understood what the guru said, you gave up your concepts and abided in pure beingness, in the universal consciousness without words. Now you were established in the knowingness 'I am', and you knew that because of this knowingness the world was. But then, in your meditation, this knowingness went into no-knowingness. The 'I am' forgot itself. You know you are but you forget that you are - that forgetfulness is no-knowingness; it is the highest state in the spiritual hierarchy. When you know you are, duality is there; when you do not know you are, you are in unity, you are perfect. This state cannot be captured with words.

When you are in the stage of knowingness, of beingness without words, there will be a lot of powers and many allurements; you will become very powerful. But give up these powers, don't possess them. You must recede into the state of no-knowingness, into that original state before the 'I amness' came. Knowingness and no-knowingness are the expressions of the bodily consciousness. The destination is transcendence of both knowingness and no-knowingness. When this food instrument body, together with the consciousness is totally transcended - then you are home in the Absolute.

When you look out into the night sky, you see the light and the dark that are there. But what is the background? Space. It is the basis of both light and darkness; they change but it remains unchanged. To abide in that space, to stabilize in it you have to transcend both the light and the dark. Similarly, you have to transcend both knowingness and no-knowingness - the aspects of bodily consciousness - to abide in that unchanging state when you are just watching the consciousness and the no-consciousness. That is called sahaja-samadhi. In that state, as soon as somebody comes, the psychosomatic instrument of body and consciousness go into operation. Otherwise you revert to your natural state, the Absolute.

The Path Inward

Go within. Your normal inclination is to come out through the senses and see the world. Now reverse: "I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the senses." Then you are stabilized in consciousness. After that, all further things happen automatically. Know that in this world nothing is permanent; search out what you were before this temporary state came and what you are after it goes. During that temporary state everything appeared to be correct; the plot was totally believable, but the story is completely fictitious.

When the waking state is gone, sleep begins; when sleep is gone, the waking state begins. When both are gone you are at home. Why should these states leave you? Because they are foreign to you, because they are not you. There is no question of being

responsible for anything that happens in the world. It is only by taking delivery of responsibility that suffering comes.

Just be as you are, don't imagine or picturize. Your body and your image have changed continuously all during your life; any experience you have is not real. Whether you are crying or laughing, this is the image for that moment only - the next moment it will be changing. So long as the body is there this passing show will be there. Finally, that very consciousness through which you see the world will quit. The days are numbered of this body and consciousness.

Consciousness is a great fraud; it is the cause of all suffering. It all begins with self-love, the need to be present. This love of being, love of self is the nature of the seed, the sperm. Consciousness is latent in that, in the condition we call birth. Then, out of the food essence comes the taste 'I am' and consciousness flowers. You are and so the world is. But, don't get entangled in the branches and the leaves - go to the seed. Without the seed the tree will not be there. Find out where that seed came from. That state cannot be witnessed by you... only what is other than you can be witnessed by you. Still, in that state of no-knowingness, without eyes, you must abide.

This is real liberation: to know that you are nothing. All your knowledge, including yourself, is liquidated; then you are liberated. When the devotee subsides into nothingness, the world and God also subside into nothingness. You come to the conclusion that in the final analysis your balance sheet is nil.

The Noumenon and the Phenomenon

Whatever was prior to the knowledge of the consciousness of 'I am' is truth; whatever is subsequent to that knowledge of 'I am', is false. The truest statement you can ever make is 'I don't know', because that is the true position before the consciousness manifested itself. You are That which cannot be known, which is prior to the arrival of the 'I amness'. What has come upon your true nature is something like an illness, or an eclipse, lasting for a certain duration. The 'I amness', the conscious sense of presence has been given various laudatory names like Ishvara, Krishna, Maya, but nevertheless it is ignorance, complete illusion. It gives rise to the world, and peoples it with innumerable physical forms, and then mistakenly believes that it itself is those forms. Thus consciousness assumes the identity of the appearance, the illusory form, and for some time forgets its own true nature. At the end of the allotted time, the physical form returns to the five elements, the life-force mingles with the air, consciousness is freed from the limitations of the body and the three gunas, and the illusion that has come upon your true nature comes to an end.

To abide in your true nature, prior to consciousness, you must go to the source of your beingness. You must go to the seed, the root, and find out how the knowledge 'I am' first appeared. When you find out the seed of your beingness you know the seed of the whole universe. To begin with, consider: Is this phenomenon of the human being any different from that of the other creatures, or even the grass which sprouts up from the earth? Suppose a little water accumulates somewhere; after a time the body of an insect forms itself there, it begins to move and knows itself to exist. Or suppose that a

piece of stale bread is left in a corner for some days; a worm makes its appearance in it and begins to move, and it knows that it exists. An egg is hatched and a little chick appears; it begins to move about and it knows that it exists. A sperm germinates in the womb of a woman and nine-months later a baby is delivered; it goes through the stages of sleeping and waking, carries out its various physical functions and knows that it exists.

In all these cases what is it that is really born? Is it not the knowledge of 'I am' that has remained latent from conception to delivery, and in due course, is born? This beingness, identical in all these four cases, mistakenly identifies itself with the form it has assumed, and although itself without any shape or form, it limits itself to that particular form. Thereby it accepts its own birth, and being anxious to preserve itself in that form, it exists from that time on in the constant shadow of the terror of death. Thus is born the notion of an individual personality or ego. Its support is food, made up of the five elements, its energy comes from the life-force, its destiny is determined by the play of the gunas, its character is consciousness and its true parent is ignorance.

As for the conceptual individual so also for the conceptual universe. The thought 'I am' which is the seed that is 'born' as the phenomenal individual, is also the seed that projects the phenomenal world of the waking and dream states. The thought 'I am' creates the sense of duality in the original state of unity, by separating that fundamental unity into the notion of subject and object. The objective universe arises from the 'I am' through the primordial sound of creation, the OM, which consists of the three sounds, a, u and m. These represent the three gunas, satva, rajas and tamas, which produce the three states of waking, dream and sleep, wherein all worlds are found... namely, the phenomenal worlds of the waking and dream states, and the unmanifested worlds of the causal or deep-sleep state.

But, rather than get lost in the bewildering diversity of the play of Maya, let us look at the overall picture. Manifestation comes into existence through the basic concept 'I am'. This 'existence' is nothing but a projection and for this the screen or the basis is the noumenon. The impersonal 'I am' is the mirror which reflects the noumenon into the phenomenal world, projecting all phenomena as images of the noumenon, appearing to be outside of it. This objectification happens through the medium of space and time, which are conceptual mind-constructs that create the notion of objects. The impersonal consciousness then identifies itself with each physical form and the personal I-notion arises. This I-notion, forgetting that it has no independent existence, converts its original subjectivity into an object with intentions, wants and desires, and thereby becomes vulnerable to suffering. This mistaken identity is precisely the bondage from which liberation is sought.

Liberation or awakening, then, is nothing other than understanding profoundly...

that the seed of all manifestation is the impersonal consciousness...

that what is being sought is the unmanifested subjective aspect, and...

that, therefore, the seeker himself is the sought.

Space, Time, Matter and Consciousness

Consciousness and matter come into appearance simultaneously, along with the concepts of time and space, with time giving the illusion of duration to matter, and with space giving the illusion of extension to matter; all of these come together and go together. For consciousness to arise there must be matter, since consciousness is a reflection of the absolute Awareness against the surface of matter. And matter itself is but a manifestation, a limitation of consciousness. The objective universe is in continuous flux, constantly projecting and dissolving innumerable forms, all appearing within consciousness. Whenever a form is created and is infused with life (Prana), consciousness identifies itself with that form and gives rise to the illusion of duality.

Consciousness is time-bound and disappears as soon as the physical construct it inhabits comes to an end. In the absence of the physical form it cannot survive. In the case of a physical body, consciousness is sustained by the food material made up of the five elements, which comprise that body. As distinguished from the temporal character of consciousness dependent on matter for its existence, the Absolute is pure Awareness without beginning and end, and without the need of any support other than itself. This absolute Awareness becomes conscious of itself as the 'I am' when it has an object to reflect against. Between pure Awareness and its reflection as consciousness there is an unbridgeable gap which the mind cannot cross; mind itself is the obstacle to Awareness. When mind is extinguished Awareness is.

In deep sleep consciousness retires into a state of repose. When consciousness is absent, the concept of 'I' is also absent, and there is no sense of one's existence or the existence of a world. In the dream state a speck of consciousness begins to stir, and then in a split-second, an entire world is created, including the dream 'I', all fabricated out of memory and imagination by that single movement in the speck of consciousness. When one first wakes up, there is the immediate sense of presence; then the mind takes over and creates the individual 'I' concept and awareness of the body.

We think of ourselves as bodies having consciousness, but the real position is that consciousness has manifested itself as body. It is consciousness that is born; it gives itself an apparent existence as an organism with a separate sense of 'I'. Birth and death are nothing but the beginning and end of a stream of movements in consciousness, perceived as events in time-space. Obviously, the one who is perceiving this cannot be the object of perception; but, neither is he the subject opposed to the object, or the perceiver opposed to the perceived. He is the perceiving itself, he is the witnessing, the seeing. In our original state, we are pure being-awareness-bliss; when we come in touch with consciousness we are the witnessing of the various movements in consciousness.

The person that one falsely thinks one is, is only a product of the imagination. The consciousness which has projected all this has become a victim of its own illusion. Mistakenly identifying itself with its own projection, it comes to believe that there is an individual person there. But, this person that you imagine yourself to be, is just one of the shadow parts being played out in a dream world, which appears in consciousness. The truth is that you are timeless, spaceless, unaffected by any experience; you are the observer of time and space at the point of the now and here, witnessing all that is

happening from the outside, as one looks at a play on the screen, admiring and enjoying and perhaps even suffering, but deep down remaining unaffected.

We speak of three 'I's'. There is the absolute, unmanifested, impersonal 'I', pure Awareness, beyond all sensory perception, aware of itself only when manifestation arises. There is the super-personal, manifested 'I', the conscious presence which is the reflection of the Absolute appearing as 'I am'. And there is the individual, personal 'I', appearing to be separate, the apparent doer and enjoyer and sufferer of actions, but which really is just an imaginary construct of the psychosomatic apparatus into which consciousness has manifested itself, and with which it has mistakenly identified itself. This third 'I' is totally false; it has no existence except in the imagination, in ignorance. And the second 'I', the manifested, in actuality is one with and indistinguishable from the first 'I', the unmanifested, in which it is but an appearance, a reflection. The first 'I' is the Reality, the one basis on which the manifested 'I' appears as a movement.

Consciousness arises in pure Being for no particular cause or reason other than that it is its nature to do so - like waves on the surface of the sea. Simultaneous with its appearance the world appears within it, and when it disappears the world also disappears. But, before all beginnings and after all endings, the 'I' (the first 'I'... the real 'I') is there to witness all that happens. All is 'I'... in truth, there are no objects, there is only this pure subjectivity. The first 'I', the absolute Awareness, prevails when the other two 'I's' disappear... when the mind becomes absolutely motionless and all conceptualization ceases. Then only the Reality remains. When the mind fasts, Reality enters; when the mind feasts, Reality disappears.

Awareness when it is in contact with an object becomes witnessing. When, at the same time, there is self-identification with the object, the absolute Awareness becomes a person, the pseudo-entity associated with the ego. But, in reality there is only the one all-prevailing state of Awareness. When, with the appearance of consciousness, the absolute Awareness is tinted with self-awareness it becomes the witnessing; when it is further corrupted with the psycho-physical self-identification it becomes a person; but, when it remains in its pristine purity, untainted and untinted, it is the Supreme. In this one all-prevailing state is the whole truth... dual in presence, non-dual in absence, separate in concept, united when unconceived.

Since the time when we were small children to the present moment, the body-personality-image with which we have been identifying ourselves has been undergoing countless changes. But, the sense of existence, of being consciously present, of being aware of oneself as the 'I am'... the subjective feeling from which the personal pronoun 'I' has arisen by which we refer to ourselves... all this has never changed throughout our life. That sense of 'I am' is our constant image. It is unaffected by space and time; it is outside of space and time. The idea of a separate personality and separate objects is due to the illusion of space and time. The concepts of space and time are the media by which manifestation becomes cognizable; without these mental concepts, no manifestation could possibly arise in consciousness. What happens when we see an object, which is really just an appearance in consciousness, is that the senses react to a stimulus coming from this source outside the body apparatus and the mind objectifies it as an event extended in space and time.

Objects are considered objects only because they are perceived that way. It is a false projection arising from the manner in which the mind carries on its conceptualization and objectification. When we analyze this further, we find that all phenomenal existence is nothing but a continuous process of mental objectification. When objectification ceases, as in deep-sleep, the objective universe disappears. Because of this mental process of objectifying all sensory stimuli, we exist as each other's objects in the consciousness that cognizes us. To ourselves we are the unchanging 'I am', the subjective sense of conscious presence; to others we appear as objects in a mentally-conceived spatial framework. Therein lies the mistake... cognizing the subjective as objective, and thereby seeing only separation and difference.

This mistake of perception arises because the seeing is partial, because the seeing is only with the outer senses and a divided mind; it is not whole seeing from the source of seeing. That sense of existence, that sense of presence, that 'I amness', the unchanging subjective experience of self, cannot be seen by the senses, and, therefore, does not enter into the conceptions projected by the mind, which unceasingly carries on its objectification of everything. But, when the subjective is apprehended intuitively, then the concept of separate objects becomes untenable. Can the consciousness in you and the consciousness in me be different? Are they not separate only as concepts projected by the mind, and are they not in perfect unity when unconceived, when free of mind? And is not that knowing of the underlying unity, the very basis of love? And if all is subjective, if there is only unity, can there be any room for the objective? So-called objects are just illusory appearances in consciousness, appearances in the universal 'I amness', which by its name and its very nature is wholly subjective and permits no room for another, other than self.

At any one time, only one feeling or perception can be reflected in consciousness, but thoughts, feelings and perceptions move on in succession giving the illusion of duration. In that way, a personality comes into being simply because of memory - because we identify an objectified appearance in the present with similar objectified appearances remembered from the past, and also, with similar appearances projected into the future. These memories and anticipations are the cause of misery. The pure Awareness of here and now is a feeling of being awake and present, being light, being alert and alive to every new moment, feeling a sense of immediacy without the intervention of thoughts, like a child at play, each moment a new surprise. It is seeing things intuitively, perceiving directly, without thinking, without conceptualizing. It is being alive without the need to think or conceptualize that you are alive. But when memories enter of past impressions or when anticipation enters about the future, then the feeling is one of mental functioning beladen with thoughts, weighted down by attachments to the past and uncertainties in the future.

If you give up this memory and anticipation, and think of yourself as momentary, without a past or future, being the 'I am', the one who is, then there is no room for personality and you are free of this error of misidentification and limitation of space and time. When you realize that what you have falsely thought yourself to be was based on memory and anticipation, then you can stand aloof from the objectifying nature of the mind and remain unaffected by its concepts of space and time. When you

are in full awareness of the present and your own unchanging sense of isness, and freed of the shackles of memory and anticipation, then your search is over. In this state there is neither subject nor object, there is no division of the mind into one that sees and one that is seen; there is only the seeing. It is pure perception without any interpretations based on memory - it is merely the witnessing of the functioning of consciousness, the seeing without any objectifying quality.

Whatever is experienced, whatever is known has its roots in consciousness. Ever since you knew you were conscious, from the time you were a few years old, the entire gamut of opposites, such as pain and pleasure, heat and cold, day and night, knowledge and ignorance, waking and sleeping... all the various interdependent polarities which cannot exist without each other... were all there in this knowledge 'I am', this consciousness which came in with this psychosomatic apparatus. What was the position before that? The answer is that you do not know. These interrelated opposites must have existed but only in unity, in wholeness. This unity must then be what you truly are. But then, this unity, this wholeness could not know itself, because, until consciousness and the sense of 'I am' arose within it spontaneously, there existed in it no subject separate from an object, no medium or instrument through which knowing or seeing could take place. The eye cannot see itself, taste cannot taste itself, sound cannot hear itself, mind cannot be used to transcend itself. Noumenon cannot be aware of itself without phenomenon. So it objectifies itself, appearing to be outside of itself, in order to know itself.

For noumenon to manifest itself objectively as the phenomenal universe, the concept of space-time must come into the picture, because objects cannot be cognized unless they are extended in space and stretched out in duration. But, note that the phenomenon is merely the mirrorization of the noumenon? there is no real duality between them. The difference is purely notional; phenomenon is just noumenon conceptualized or objectivized, in which the original unity is projected into the duality of subject and object. The inseparableness of noumenon and phenomenon is the key to realizing your true nature. For, when you realize that the noumenon is all that you really are, and the phenomenon is only what you appear to be in the relative world of separate objects, then there can be no individual entity except as an illusory appearance; and the idea of a shadow-entity seeking liberation, yearning to understand the substance of which it is but a shadow, is seen to be preposterous.

The Process of Awakening

Let us again summarize the whole process:

In the original state there prevails the pure Awareness, the I - I, without any knowledge or conditioning, without attributes, without form or identity.

Then, for no apparent reason other than that it is its nature to do so, there arises the thought or concept 'I am', the impersonal consciousness, on which the waking and the dream worlds appear with their many forms.

Consciousness identifies itself with these forms and thus starts the concept of bondage with an imaginary objectivization of the 'I am' into the duality of subject and object.

The phantom object, the individual, now seeks some other object, 'God', 'The Reality', 'The Absolute' to awaken it from the living-dream; but it is a futile search, completely misconceived, for there can be no objects with an independent existence outside of the dream world which would have the power and could be appealed to for help in breaking free of the dream state.

If nothing can be found outside then the only solution lies in reversing the process and going back to find out what is inside, who one originally was and always has been, before consciousness and the Maya-dream arose.

Then comes the 'awakening' and you realize that you are neither the body nor even the consciousness, but the unnamable state of total potentiality prior to the arrival of consciousness. While you are yet in consciousness, that Absolute state can only remain another concept. The thought that there is something that you are not is only a concept, and this concept is seeking the concept of what you really are. But, what you really are has mistakenly identified itself in relativity with what you are not, and the 'bondage' has arisen from this misidentification. Clearly, you cannot be that which you really are until you wake up from the dream of phenomenality, understand the dream as such, and stop conceptualizing and objectivizing. Here, no amount of knowledge can help. All knowledge is conceptual and, therefore, untrue. To abide in that pure state you must be that state, itself... non-dual, devoid of knowledge, devoid of conceptualizations.

Now the circle has completed itself. It becomes clear that what is being sought is the seeker himself, the pure subjectivity, the limitless potentiality, the unalloyed unity.

What, then, must be done to reach that state, to stop your unceasing conceptualizing and abide in the unity? Nothing can be done. What effort can an illusory, conceptual 'I' make to know its true nature? What effort can a shadow make to know its substance? Realizing your true nature requires no phenomenal effort. It will happen when it is given an opportunity to do so, when obstruction by conceptualization ceases. It will appear when it is given a vacant space to appear in. If someone else is to occupy this house, the conceptual 'I' must first vacate it and give enlightenment a chance to enter in. But any effort to stop thinking as a method of getting rid of conceptualizing is an exercise in futility... and so is any other kind of effort.

The only effective way is instant, direct apperception of the truth, without thought and conceptualization. There is no point in searching for truth through the medium of your proud intellect. Indeed, you will realize that the very effort of searching is an obstruction, because the instrument with which you are searching is the divided mind... a conceptual subject seeking a conceptual object. Give up the search and let the impersonal consciousness take over, and it will let you in on the mystery of its own source, the pure 'I', the essential subjectivity, the nameless, formless, limitless, timeless, spaceless, imperceptible One, without a second. Then you will realize that all phenomena, all experiences, all ideas, all thoughts, all words, all knowledge, all conceptualizations, all efforts, all time and all space, all teachings, all hierarchies, all paths,

anything and everything you can conceive of... is patently false. When you see the false as false, then what remains is true. What is absent now will appear when what is present now disappears. Negation is the only answer.

The Fantastic Play

What a crazy comedy life is? Look, here you are in your house, bothering no one, doing what comes naturally to you. Then one day a policeman suddenly appears at your doorstep and charges you with assault and robbery in Calcutta on such and such a day. You know that you've never been out of your home town, let alone being in Calcutta and taking part in an assault and robbery, and if he were to conduct a few inquiries he would soon convince himself that you were speaking the truth. You want to tell him all this, but suddenly you find yourself so much overawed by the presence of the policeman that you are unable to speak in your defense and you allow him to arrest you. Later, when you are behind bars, you lament about your bondage and cry for liberation? Is this not ridiculous?

In your original state of unity and wholeness you didn't even know you existed. Then one day, you were told that you were born, that a particular body was 'you', that a particular couple were your parents. Thereafter, you began accepting further information about 'you', day by day, and built up a whole pseudo-personality, but only because you had accepted the charge that you had been born, although you were fully aware that you had no experience of being born, that you had never agreed to be born, and that your body was being thrust upon you. Gradually the conditioning became stronger and stronger and grew to such an extent that not only did you accept the charge that you were born as a particular body, but that you would at some future date 'die', and the very word 'death' became a dreaded word to you, signifying a traumatic event. What a bad joke has been played on you? Now, not only do you fail to see that you are merely an actor playing a role in this farce, but you go on to assume that you have a choice of decision and action in the play, a play which must obviously unfold strictly according to the pre-written script. And when events thus take place naturally in the ordinary course, this conceptual entity takes responsibility for them and lets himself get affected, and suffers. But, all suffering is nothing but the acceptance of a false arrest, allowing the impersonal, subjective, timeless, universal beingness to be apprehended and bound up into the mistaken identity of the personal, objective, temporal, limited phenomenon. When you get some inkling of this farce then you start thinking of 'liberation' and release from 'bondage'.

What is liberation? Liberation is seeing life as a play and perceiving that the 'you' who is without the slightest touch of objectivity cannot be an entity in any shape, name or kind. Liberation is the realization that sentient objects are part of the manifestation of the total phenomena, without separate identities... that what you are is the sentience in all sentient objects... you are the conscious presence. Liberation is apperceiving that you, the Absolute, in your phenomenal expression are the functioning, the seeing, the hearing, the smelling, the tasting, the thinking, without the presence of anyone else or anything, other than you. There was never a subject that saw another as an object, there was

only you, the seeing, functioning spontaneously as an aspect of your noumenal potential.

A Ripple Merging in the Sea of Awareness

In the absence of consciousness there is no conceptualization; the concept of 'I am' is not there. The all-enveloping wholeness of the Absolute in its pure, pristine state, cannot have even a touch of the relative imperfection. But then this consciousness with its manifestation in matter, comes like a disease onto the Absolute. Consciousness will go through its allotted span and disappear. In the end all these conceptualizations dissolve into the no-knowing state of the Absolute... the temporary condition 'I know' merges into the eternal state 'I don't know'...which is your highest truth.

While this consciousness is here, it is your constant companion, and continuous attention to the stream of consciousness will take you on to the Awareness, the basic existence. This being conscious of consciousness is itself a movement towards Awareness. Let yourself see everything from the point of view of the animating consciousness, the Krishna consciousness, not from the point of view of the phenomenal apparatus to which it gives sentience. See yourself as the source of all manifestation, the universal 'I am'; then the consciousness which has mistakenly identified itself with the body-mind construct, will become aware of its true nature and merge with its source. To see yourself this way does not involve a thought process but happens only through an intuitive seeing from within, when the mind becomes introverted. The natural tendency of the mind is to look outwards and seek the source of things in the things themselves. But when the mind is turned inwards and is directed towards the source within, the flow of thoughts dries up, and finally, even the 'I am', the primary thought in consciousness ceases, and the pure Awareness which is the source of consciousness, remains.

Start by being within yourself, in the 'I amness', remaining as a dispassionate witness, quietly watching the flow of the mind, observing whatever comes to the surface. What we call thoughts are like ripples on the surface of water. Just as water is serene when free of ripples, so is the mind serene when free of thoughts, when it is passive and fully receptive. In the mirror of your mind all kinds of pictures will appear; they will stay for awhile and then disappear. Silently watch them come and go. Be alert but do not get involved; be neither attracted nor repelled, neither interfering nor judging. This attitude of silent witnessing will have the effect, gradually, of driving away all useless thoughts, like unwanted guests who are being ignored. Then the deep unknown will be encouraged to come to the surface of consciousness and release its unused energies to enable you to understand its mystery.

But, the Awareness will not reveal itself as long as you are still identified with this pseudo-entity. You still seem to be convinced that you live a life of your own, according to your own wishes and hopes and ambitions, according to your own plans and design, and through your own individual efforts. But is it like that, or are you being dreamed and lived without volition as a mere puppet, exactly as in a dream of the night? When you think about it you will realize that this psycho-physical apparatus is only an appearance and as such has no independent existence. Therefore, it cannot act on its own independently, despite all appearances to the contrary. When you understand that

you are the conscious presence and not the outer casing of consciousness, when you apprehend the total manifestation, not with the dichotomized mind of the individual but with the whole mind of the universal, then you realize that whatever the appearance does and whatever happens to it is of no real importance. Its life is being lived; happenings are taking place. That is all.

The fundamental fact is that no phenomenal object can have any independent existence of its own, and without this autonomy it has no choice of action. As a sentient being you think that you act and react, but the real functioning all happens in consciousness without your consent or consultation. As an actor in this living drama you can only play your role, nothing more. Whatever you may think of yourself, you cannot but be an integral part of the total manifestation and the total functioning, without any separate choice. All phenomena are mere appearances in space-time, conceived and perceived in consciousness. You can comprehend this when from the waking state you look back into your dream of the night before.

What appeared as yourself in the dream, seemingly an independent entity, is later seen to be devoid of any independent substance, a mere puppet being manipulated. The waking dream is no different. Just as you dream when you are asleep, you also dream when you are awake, but you do not realize that you are dreaming because you are still in the dream... meanwhile, life is being lived, with everything that is happening being a product of the obfuscating, objectifying nature of the mind, spinning its imaginary play within consciousness. And that consciousness itself is but a temporary aberration that came like an eclipse onto the noumenon, remaining there for awhile, and then disappearing.

What you as body-mind are 'doing' all day is nothing but objectivizing, producing illusory images and interpretations. Manifestation itself is nothing but continuous objectivization, keeping the lie of separation and multiplicity alive. The interesting point about this process of objectivization is that in the created duality of subject and object, both of these are, in fact, objects phenomenalized in consciousness like dream-figures. But the one who is cognizing the object assumes the role of the subject, as a separate entity, the individual self, identifying itself as 'I', and viewing the cognized object as the 'other' or 'not-I'. Thus is born the concept of the individual, through the illusion of a false subject playing the part of an object.

When objectivization ceases, as in deep sleep, then the objectified universe disappears. In deep sleep, there is no individual self, there is no world and there is no God. When the mind fasts or rests, when it stops its weaving of illusory objects and calms down, then the absolute Presence reveals itself. Then the manifested universe is not, but you are. When thinking abates and the true position is perceived directly, intuitively, then you know that within relativity, you are the conscious presence, the universal 'I amness' and not the phenomenal object, which you animate with sentience. But, in the realm of the Absolute, you are the noumenon, pure Awareness, that which is... devoid of all concepts and qualities.

You were that absolute Awareness before consciousness arose; you remain that absolute Awareness after consciousness has come, and after it goes. You are what you

have always been and what you will always be. You are all that is. There can be no proof of your Reality other than being it, being what you are. Before all beginnings and after all endings, you are. Whatever happens anywhere, you are there to witness it. When you are already the totality, the all of it, then what else can possibly be left to be done or to be undone? Who is to do it and for what purpose? As long as consciousness and its manifestation as body are there, living continues; but how are you involved? You are and eternally remain the pure, unsullied witness. You were never born and you will never die. There is nothing to be done but to be yourself. Just be.

True Presence is Relative Absence

Remember always the perfect identity of *this that I am* and *that that I appear to be*. Never forget for a moment that non-manifestation and manifestation, the noumenon and the phenomenon, the Absolute and the relative are not different. No object can exist for even a moment apart from its subject. There is an inseparable identity between *this that I am*, the noumenon, and *that that I appear to be*, its phenomenon. Noumenally I am I, and never cease to be That, whereas phenomenally, I neither am nor am not, because all the phenomenal objects are merely appearances, images in a mirror, and have no separate existence.

When, with the thought 'I am', manifestation arises, the mind starts the process of objectifying. It does so through the concept of duality, a notional separation into subject and object and the interrelated contrasts like pleasure and pain. During this process, the purely subjective 'I', the noumenon remains unsplit and whole, as ever. In order to be cognizable, the phenomenal appearances have to be given the two notions of time and space, without which they would not be sensorially perceptible. This space-time element, which is the basis of the notion of Karma and cause and effect, is essentially only a contrivance to make sensorial perception of the phenomena possible.

The world is not illusory, because it is the expression of the unmanifested Absolute, which is your own true reality; what is illusory is your mistaken identity with the limited phenomenon, falsely thinking of yourself as the shadow instead of your real Self. Who is it that is thinking in terms of transformation and self-improvement, changing from one state to another? Surely, it is nothing other than a character in a movie, a dream personality, a pseudo-entity considering itself subject to the law of Karma. How could such a character dreamed in a dream perfect itself into anything other than an 'improved' or 'evolved' dream character? How could a shadow perfect itself and be transformed into its substance? The idea is ludicrous, isn't it?

But, as long as you are still deluded into thinking that you have a free will, then you must give up this active volitional 'I' of the separate entity, and accept the passive role of perceiving and functioning and being a process, rather than an entity...a verb rather than a noun. The least willful effort prevents what otherwise happens naturally and spontaneously. But, deliberately not doing anything also prevents the natural course of events from happening. There must be a total absence of the 'doer' and all volitional actions. This is true surrender.

Intellect is essential for assimilating and evaluating worldly knowledge, and it is also useful, up to a point for spiritual knowledge. But to perceive spiritual truths, what is needed is an innate intuitive capacity. Reasoning involves the process of comparing objects with opposing qualities or characteristics; the process works only on the basis of the subject-object duality. But how can this reasoning apply to the purely subjective? The subject can never conceive of itself as an object. How can it ever find what it already is? Addicted by the drug called intellect, you analyze everything, you cogitate, contemplate and make simple things complicated. You have to get rid of this addiction and surrender yourself to the intuitive process of pure receptivity... this is an openness to consciousness without the intrusion of the personal views of an imaginary individual. In this, the usual kind of perceiving - the seer seeing something - is totally inadequate. What's needed is a very special kind of seeing... intuitive seeing, in-seeing... in which there is no seer and there is nothing to be seen... only the seeing itself is there... only the pure functioning of consciousness, seeing, feeling, talking, listening, thinking, acting, happening... of itself, by itself, for itself. Every action and thought is but a movement in consciousness, observed by consciousness. In this the individual has no place at all; he is nothing but an appearance manifested in consciousness.

There are two kinds of thoughts; one kind is the type of thought which forms the stuff of day-dreams or of remembrances of events in the past or anticipations of events of the future. This type is the indirect, mediated thought of the dualistic mind, associated with the concept of an individual entity thinking itself to be the doer and enjoyer and sufferer. This type of thought should be ignored and avoided. Different from this is the other kind of thought which springs up spontaneously, instantaneously, intuitively from the depths of one's psyche; it comes without the element of duration or 'thinking' which is characteristic of the phenomenalistic mind. Such direct thought is really the process by which the unmanifested Absolute manifests itself. It is immediate and non-conceptual... it just happens. It can neither be ignored nor avoided. This kind of instantaneous pure thought results in pure action without any tinge of bondage, because no entity is involved.

Rebirth Is Just a Concept

In the relative plane, you are the conscious presence and not the phenomenal presence which is the body-mind complex. The so-called individual is 'born' when this consciousness, feeling the need for some support, gives up its unlimited potential and incarcerates itself in the limitation of a particular body, and then mistakenly identifies itself with that body. In the absence of the body, the consciousness cannot be conscious of itself, for then it is no longer manifest. When that is so, then what were you before the body and consciousness came upon you spontaneously?

Before the body-consciousness state arose, 'you' must have been absence rather than presence. For presence to appear it can do so only on a background of total absence. That absolute absence is the 'you' on which the body-consciousness state was superimposed. That is your true original state, free of all conceptualizations. On the original state of total absence spontaneously a speck of consciousness arose - the thought 'I am' manifested itself in a body. Then, on the original state of unity and

wholeness arose the duality of subject-object, right and wrong, pure and impure, reasoning, comparing, judging, etc... all the various aspects of the conceptualizing mind. But 'you' remain, prior to all conceptualizations. What you appear to be as a phenomenon is nothing but a concept. But what you really are is free of all concepts. 'You' cannot be comprehended, for in that state of total absence, of non-conceptuality, there is no one to comprehend and conceptualize who you really are or what you really are. There there is no beingness, no existence, only the noumenal potential of Absolute Awareness, complete and full in itself, without needs of any kind, including the need to know itself.

Instead of the natural process of manifestation taking place, in other words, instead of a phenomenon coming into appearance as merely a manifested image of the unmanifested noumenon, an apparently independent phantom-self gets created which appears to have an autonomous existence. This phantom not only is supposed to be born, to live, to suffer and to die, but also to have the choice of decision and action, and, therefore, to be involved in the process of causality and Karma. Once the mistaken identification with this pseudo-entity has taken place, then it gets loaded up with the concept of having to experience the resultant effects of all its imagined volitional actions - in other words, it is supposed to become subject to Karma, to bondage and to re-birth; and then, eventually, the entity, seeking relief from its suffering, appears to seek an imagined 'liberation'. But, at no time has this shadow-phenomenon ever existed separate from its substance-noumenon; there was never an independent entity doing and suffering and seeking liberation.

It is like the play of wavelets arising on the smooth surface of a calm ocean after the wind spontaneously comes up...the wavelets may think that they exist separate from the water, they may imagine that they are performing independent actions and that they have to experience the imagined consequences of these actions, and that periodically they are being dissolved and reborn again as wavelets taking on specific forms in relation to these past actions. Finally, to escape their misery, they may yearn to merge and become one again with the water, and be liberated from their imagined existence separate from the water... but this is all just a silly mistake. When it is seen in the light of truth, one realizes immediately that the whole concept of rebirth is sheer nonsense; it is just the product of the obfuscating imagination of the mind, seeking to explain a mistaken notion by propounding a further mistaken notion. Wavelets are always water, and phenomena are always noumenon, the unchanging Absolute, which, without being in any way affected, appears in form as images that rise and set in the play of consciousness.

You are the timeless, spaceless, imperceptible being, and not what appears as a separate object... time-bound, finite and perceptible to the senses. 'Bondage' arises because you have forgotten your real being, the noumenon, and you identify yourself with the body, the phenomenon. But 'bondage' is not caused merely by identification with the body, which as an instrument is necessary for consciousness to remain in manifestation. Body and consciousness are naturally bound together and remain inextricably linked until the life-breath leaves the body at death, and the consciousness is released from its phenomenal form. What causes 'bondage' is not the association of the

body with consciousness, but the imagined conception of an independent, autonomous entity which assumes doership, and takes responsibility for actions and their consequences. It is the apparent volition that brings into motion the process of causality and Karma, and thereby, of bondage. Since the phenomenon is always integrally latent in the noumenon, the misidentification should really not arise at all. But it comes about because the noumenon appears to manifest itself into separate phenomenal objects. These objects then, having gained sentience from their association with consciousness, appear to perceive each other and relate to each other as the cognizer and the cognized, or as subject and object; in that way, a false dichotomy arises. It is because of this subjective function as subject or cognizer, that the illusion of an independent and autonomous 'self' with volition and choice, comes in. This phantom-entity then further pursues the principle of dualism by comparing, choosing and making judgments between the different objects from the standpoint of the various inter-related opposites like right and wrong, good and bad, acceptable and not-acceptable. And in that way the illusion of duality becomes deeply embedded. But both this subject and its objects are just objects... interdependent, and existing only in the consciousness within which all manifestation takes place... in the same way that the subject and objects of the dream are both images projected and appearing in consciousness.

You are neither the limited dream objects nor the limited dream ego. In relativity, you are the totality of the dream, you are the consciousness through which all manifestation appears. But in truth, you are that which remains when this consciousness and all its busy-making disappears. Only when the false is seen as false and is removed, will the truth shine forth. Eliminate the false and what remains is true.

The Nature of Consciousness

In the body the consciousness does the witnessing; the behavior is done by the three gunas. Consciousness is all-pervading, spacelike, without form. If one has an illness or a pain it is only a movement in consciousness, a disturbance in the balance of the five elements in the body. It is because consciousness has identified itself with the body that the pain is felt in the consciousness. When there is complete disidentification with the body one can put his hand in the fire; the effect of the fire will be there but the pain will not be felt. By nature, consciousness is pure but by identification with the body, it becomes polluted, conceptually.

What is born is the waking and sleep states, the concept of time which go with them, and the consciousness. Once that consciousness is conscious of itself, then, because of conditioning by others, it identifies itself with certain items as its own, and with other items as not its own, and it will fight for and try to protect that which it considers its own. When consciousness realizes its potential power, its universality, the 'me' and 'mine' concept is lost. That universal consciousness is known as God, the Almighty, the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent... all the attributes. These attributes are given to God, the universal consciousness, not to the Absolute. The Absolute is without attributes.

Whatever natural experiences you encounter, just accept them, don't try to alter them, just take them as they come. Don't arrogate to yourself the doership of anything.

It is all just happening. Nature will take its course. It is only to be observed and understood. Nothing is to be done. All manifestation is conceptual. The 'I amness', the primary concept, which has remained unchanged at all times, is the highest God as far as this manifestation is concerned. But it has come in with time and will go out with time. Ultimately consciousness is temporary; your true reality is prior to the senses... spaceless, timeless, without attributes. Consciousness is a temporary condition which has come upon the total, timeless, spaceless, changeless state. It is a happening which has come and which will disappear. This psychosomatic bundle which is born will suffer or enjoy during its allotted span; so long as you know that you are not the one who experiences, but you are the knower, how are you concerned? You have been separate from this bundle from before conception, and you continue to be separate from it and will be separate from it after its death, and after the birth and death of any other concept that is projected in the consciousness. Time has brought all this about and time will end it. All you can say is that it has happened, it will continue for a while and then it will go away.

That which was conceived and born is the same even now. That 'I' has not changed from the conception until the present moment. It has come for a particular length of time. What was conceived and born has grown physically, and some of the expressions of this knowledge 'I am' have achieved tremendous things. Some have become Avatars. But, at the end of the time span all the magnificent personalities and all they have achieved, have all disappeared. This 'I amness' may have remained existent for hundreds of years in some cases; still, however long the time, they all come to an end.

In your original state there is no awareness of awareness. As the Absolute you are infinite, timeless. As infinity you express yourself as space. As timelessness you express yourself as time. Unless there is space and time you cannot be conscious of yourself. When space and time are present there is consciousness. You descend into this consciousness and express yourself in manifold ways, in innumerable forms. In that total manifestation various phenomena come into being; but there is nothing separate. When the universal consciousness manifests itself as a phenomenon, the phenomenon is that limited form which thinks that it is independent; but it is not. There is never an independent entity; there can be no separate individual. Eventually, the one who gets liberated is the consciousness.

After listening to these talks you still want to gain some profit for yourself; what a pity. Have you understood? You may think you have, but anything that you know is not the truth. The body is made up of the five elements and so long as you are identified with these five elements it is impossible to understand, because what is trying to understand is a pseudo-entity. Mind is of the nature of material. You are not material. Do you identify yourself with the dirt which you blow from your nose? Is the stuff making up this body-mind any different? You are neither the material from which the body-mind is created nor the consciousness which is immanent in it. The biggest drawback to understanding is that you believe that you are an entity, and secondly, that any concept you have is truth. It is only when it is understood with the greatest conviction that what is happening is merely the functioning of universal consciousness, the 'I amness'... that no entity is causing and no entity is suffering... only then can the disidentification take

place. You have not really understood until you have solved the riddle of who it is who thinks he has understood.

To find knowledge you must not look in books and words, but in your own intuitive experience. Knowledge springs from the consciousness without effort, of its own accord. Whatever happens, happens by itself. All this is the dance of the conscious presence. Its nature is change. There are so many ways in which this consciousness entertains itself, many different forms, abilities, plays... but the functioning is all merely to entertain itself. Each appearance in consciousness lasts according to its own duration, but basically, nothing that happens has any validity or importance. When the consciousness is tired it rests in sleep; when it is awake it needs some kind of entertainment, some movement, some doing. Until the understanding looms, you think that you are the doer, but once this awakening takes place you know there is no entity that is working.

The Basic Truth

Once more, let us review the fundamentals:

The entire manifested universe is an appearance in consciousness. If you are not conscious the world does not exist for you, since then you cannot cognize anything. This consciousness in which you cognize the phenomenal universe is all that you are. As long as you are in the phenomenal world, you can perceive only that. You cannot be that which you are until you wake up from the dream of phenomenality and stop objectivizing and conceptualizing. This is the basic essential. Noumenon is the substance, the phenomenon is mere reflection - they are not different.

The next point to understand is this: In the phenomenal world when 'you' see 'him', both are objects seen by each other as appearances in consciousness. But, there is no subject that sees the other as an object. There is only seeing, functioning. This functioning takes place through the medium of the physical form which is itself only a manifestation and, therefore, also an aspect of noumenon, much like the shadow is of its substance. So long as there is no question of an individual entity assuming choice of action, all phenomenal functioning takes place spontaneously and the question of bondage and liberation does not arise. But what happens is that with the consciousness (the 'I amness') having identified itself with the psychosomatic form, the form now gets bestowed with a spurious subjectivity as a separate entity. Although the form itself is only a phenomenon, a reflection of the noumenon, an object in relativity, it, instead of the noumenon, appears to be the subject, cognizing everything perceivable to its senses as objects. Thus is created the pseudo-entity which appears to be born, to live and to die. This pseudo-entity also appears to have independent authority to choose and to decide; and with this authority it assumes responsibility for what happens to it, including its suffering, its sins and merits, and its consequent bondage and need for liberation.

We see that what we are has mistakenly identified itself in relativity with what we are not, the pseudo-entity. The concept of bondage arises from this mis-identification. The pseudo-entity suffers guilt and bondage and seeks liberation. The real 'I', the

noumenon, pure subjectivity, cannot possibly suffer because it is not equipped with any instruments with which sensation could be experienced. Any experience, pleasant or unpleasant, could only be experienced by the phantom object. In the case of the Jnani, the wise man, he has understood the basic illusion of the manifested universe and his apparent role as a phenomenon in the spontaneous functioning of the manifestation. He has adapted himself smoothly to whatever happens to the phenomenon as it goes through its allotted journey of life, and thereafter 'returns home'. He seems to be living his life like any other man, but the significant difference is that he has not identified himself with the body complex, and, therefore, there is no pseudo-entity that can experience suffering. The ignorant person continues to go through the dream world thinking of himself as an independent entity with apparent volition. He involves himself in the notion of doership and causality and suffers the results, becoming bound by the concept of Karma, including the concept of rebirth.

The Absolute nounemality manifests itself through millions of forms which are created and destroyed every moment, and in this spontaneous functioning there is no place at all for the notion of any entity. Therefore, any action taken based on the notion that you are an autonomous, independent entity seeking 'liberation' will only lock you further into 'bondage'. When you analyze the situation you will discover that it is but consciousness seeking the unmanifested source of manifestation, and not finding it, because this consciousness, ever-moving, ever-active, is actually just seeking itself, in its serene, inactive, potential state. It is the seeker that is being sought. When this is deeply, intuitively perceived then the seeker will disappear and the Source will remain.

What you appear to be, what you are conditioned to think you are but are not, is temporal. But what you are is intemporality. What you think you are is some thing in time, a river of time flowing from infancy to old age, from birth to death, like any other manifested phenomenon, but what you subjectively are is timeless, here and now... where 'here' means the absence of space and 'now' means the absence of time. The past is only a memory and the future is only a hope; both past and future are conceptual, rooted in duality. But, the now, the present is intemporal, spontaneous and ever new, free of conceptualization, and that is what you are.

When Consciousness is Awake it Dreams

The manifestation of the entire universe is just like a dream and all the various beings in it are just dreamed objects... mere appearances going through their assigned parts, not really living but being lived and being dreamed by the dreamer. However, there is not one dreamer. Through each psychosomatic apparatus associated with consciousness, the universally shared dream is being dreamed; and so each sentient being is both a dreamed figure and the dreamer. Through the divided mind, each being appears to exist apart from the 'others' and the world, but when you reflect on the process of the dream you soon realize that every object in this dreamed universe is 'you', in the same way that every object in your personal dream is nothing but 'you'. The 'you' of your dream has no real control over the objects in your personal dream, including the object that 'you' are in your dream. Everything appears to happen in and around you spontaneously, without a patent cause.

Similarly, in this life-dream of the waking state, all functioning, all actions can only be spontaneous because there are no entities to perform those actions. There can only be happenings functioning; with no principals there to do anything, except in appearance. There are no nouns... only actions... only verbs. This dreaming, this functioning, this dancing that is happening is all 'you' the universal, the one consciousness in which all these happenings appear. As consciousness, when you are 'awake' there will be this dreaming, and as the 'I' of the dream you will be conscious of yourself. But, when you are 'asleep' then there is no dream, and you, the unmanifested potential will not be conscious of yourself. In that state of sleep, there arises spontaneously a desire to awaken and become aware of yourself. Thus the 'I am' emerges and through the apparatus of the mind, becomes the many; actions spontaneously follow the desire, and so the world springs up without apparent cause or intervention by any doer. All actions are of this nature; all actions follow desire (or need or will), and all such desires are spontaneous movements in consciousness, without there being any separate entity which experiences the desire or performs the action.

Now, the perception of this truth must happen suddenly with the deepest conviction and the most urgent immediacy. It is not a matter of developing understanding through reasoning over a period of time, but it is a sudden shock of timeless apprehension, an instantaneous cessation of the mind process in which thinking is suspended and intuitive awareness dawns. Then, after this seed of apprehension has been planted and has taken root, the deliverance from the imagined bondage will proceed on its own course, in its own time. Once you are thoroughly convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that the object with which you had identified yourself all this time is really only a phenomenon, having neither independence nor autonomy... that it is merely a dreamed figure, an appearance without substance, seen as a phenomenal object through the dualistic minds of other sentient objects regarding themselves as subjects... and that this shadow can have neither bondage nor liberation... then you as consciousness have become liberated from the mistaken identification you had been making. But if the least vestige of entity-hood hangs on, and you still think of yourself as a being seeking liberation, then you will not find it. As long as you think you are this apparatus and assume the burden of bondage and seek liberation, then liberation will be meaningless. Is it the apparatus that is to be liberated? Find out who it is that is seeking liberation. Discover the true identity of the seeker. It is not liberation but the seeker who is being sought. Find him and liberation will be waiting for you, for it was always there... it has never left you.

Deep sleep is often mistaken for the non-objective Awareness, the pure Awareness which is not aware of itself, because during deep sleep the consciousness retires into rest and is not conscious of itself. However, this state has a limited duration, after which the waking state (which includes the dream state) again takes over. Both the waking and the deep sleep states are alternating periods of consciousness-in-manifestation. During the waking state there is a sense of presence; during the deep sleep state that sense of presence is absent. But the pure state of Awareness that you really are, is the total absence of both the presence and the absence of the sense of presence. And it is not time-bound. Can you permanently go without sleep now? Yet 100 years ago, before

manifestation, were 'you' concerned about sleep? Consciousness, deep sleep, waking, time-duration are all aspects associated with manifestation. How could this be equated with the unmanifest Awareness which is pure subjectivity and intemporality, and doesn't have the slightest touch of objectivity or phenomenality?

Remember Who You Are

You are not the personal 'I'; You are the impersonal, the absolute. The personal 'I' cannot tolerate the impersonal because it means its end, its death, and so it is afraid. But the eternal 'I', the absolute, knows no fear. As the personal 'I' you are certain to die. With what identity will you die? Will you suffer a lowly death? Why meekly allow yourself to be gobbled up by death? Die nobly and honorably. Now, even before death, be the infinite, be the absolute. Be the highest.

When you meet a lion you can either run away or allow yourself to be eaten by it. But even if you run away he is very likely to catch you and kill you. So, either way you die. Then why die like a coward out of fear? Stand your ground and when he comes at you attack the lion bravely and knock out some of its teeth. Now, for so long you have been watching, nourishing, protecting and guarding this personal 'I'. It is very dear to you. But, in truth, you are not this personal 'I'. It has nothing at all to do with you, and you know that in the end it will be gobbled up by time. The lion which will devour this pet 'I' of yours is time and you are very much afraid of it. When you are afraid of time you become its prey. But, if you are unafraid of time, then time becomes your prey. A jnani consumes time while others are consumed by it. Be a jnani. Transcend time, transcend this beingness and all its attributes. Completely give up this pet of yours even before the lion strikes for the kill. Abide in the absolute, return to your true nature, and this lion called 'time' will slink away and have nothing more to do with you.

In my original non-knowing state I had no sense of being. But, all of a sudden, the beingness was felt spontaneously. Then in a flash I observed this enormous manifest world and also my body. Later, I conceived that the entire universe has manifested in the speck. First, there was no message 'I am' and there was no world. Instantly the message 'I am' and this magnificent world materialized out of nothingness! How amazing. This message 'I am' is nothing other than the advertisement of the eternal truth. To stabilize me in this eternal principle my guru initiated me by pronouncing the sacred words tat-tvam-asi, which means 'I am That'. From that moment onwards I lost all interest in worldly affairs.

The mistake of perception arises because the seeing is partial, because the seeing is only with the outer senses and a divided mind; it is not whole seeing from the source of seeing. That sense of existence, that sense of presence, that 'I amness', the unchanging subjective experience of self, cannot be seen by the senses, and, therefore, does not enter into the conceptions projected by the mind, which unceasingly carries on its objectification of everything. But, when the subjective is apprehended intuitively, then the concept of separate objects becomes untenable. Can the consciousness in you and the consciousness in me be different? Are they not separate only as concepts projected by the mind, and are they not in perfect unity when unconceived, when free of mind? And is not that knowing of the underlying unity, the very basis of love? And if all is

subjective, if there is only unity, can there be any room for the objective? So-called objects are just illusory appearances in consciousness, appearances in the universal 'I amness', which by its name and its very nature is wholly subjective and permits no room for another, other than Self.

On Death

Everyone has to die; so die as your true nature. Why die as a body? Never forget your true nature. It may not be acceptable to many, but it is a fact... this body has nothing to do with you. If you must have an ambition have the highest, so that at least while dying, you will be the Absolute. Decide that now firmly, with certainty and conviction. Giving up the body is a great festival.

Death is generally considered to be a traumatic experience, but understand what happens. That which has been born, the knowledge 'I am' which is the same everywhere, but which has gotten itself limited by the body, again becomes unlimited. A speck of consciousness is given up. Why the fear? How has this fear of death crept in? That which cannot die somehow became convinced that it was going to die. It is based on the concept that one is an individual who is born... all the fear arises from mere words told to you by someone. This is the bondage. It is like someone gives you a drink and then tells you, "I have put poison in that drink, and in six months you will die.? Immediately you become very frightened because you think that you will die. But then you meet a friend and he tells you not to worry. He says, "Here, drink this and there will be no death for you. First there is one concept which fills you full of fright, and then there is another concept which negates the first concept. Like this you get involved with the flow of maya and there are concepts, ideas, creations... pain alternates with pleasure... but all of it is just ignorance and misery. It is only when you search for your Self that you become aware that it is all a fraud.

Be still in your beingness. Then even it will disappear and you will merge in Truth. All that needs to be done is to find out your real source and take up headquarters there. From the Absolute standpoint, your beingness is only ignorance. Nothing comes and nothing goes; it is a mirage. All there is is the Absolute, all there is is the Truth. The witness of the consciousness never comes into the realm of the consciousness. When you pursue this spiritual path of understanding the Self, all your desires just drop off... even the primary desire... to be. When you stay put in the beingness for some time, that drops off. Then you are in the Absolute... there is no movement for you. You are minding the show. Consciousness extinguishes itself, knowingness disappears, and you, the Absolute remains. That is the moment of death.

When this life force leaves the body, it will not seek permission from anything. It came spontaneously and will leave spontaneously. That is all that happens in what is called death. Death is the culmination of the experience 'I am'. After the termination of the 'I amness' there is no experience of knowingness or not knowingness. What did you know prior to your birth? Similarly, after death this instrument is missing; without the body there is no experience. Eternity has no birth and no death, but a temporary state has a beginning and an end. Even when the consciousness goes, you prevail - you always are - as the Absolute. As the consciousness you are everything that comes into

manifestation. Whatever is, is you. But, when you fully understand the knowledge 'I am' and all its manifestations, then you will understand that, in truth, you are not that. You are the unlimited, which is not susceptible to the senses. By limiting yourself to the body you have closed yourself to the unlimited potential which you really are. Treat the body like a visitor or a guest, which has come and which will go. You must know your position as a host very clearly while it is still here, and while it is here you must also know what your position will be after it leaves.

In spirituality there is no question of doing... only observing and understanding. But, if you try to understand spirituality through various concepts, like birth and rebirth, you will get caught up in them in a vicious cycle. And once you are caught up in them you are bound to have them. Out of concepts the forms are created. Right now, think of that last moment when the body will go - at that time with what identity are you going to quit? When you become aware of your true nature, then at the end of your life you will not be prepared to give even one paisa to extend your life. You will have lost all love for this manifested world and you will not want even this consciousness for five minutes more.

The vital breath leaves the body, the 'I amness' recedes and goes to the Absolute. That is the greatest moment, the moment of immortality. The 'I amness' was there, the movement was there, and now it is extinguished. Being alive is never as an individual, but simply being part of the spontaneous manifestation. Now that has subsided in death. The ignorant one will struggle and get frightened at the moment of death; most reluctantly he will give up the consciousness to a concept he has come to call time. But the jnani gives up the beingness to his own true nature; for him it is the happiest of moments.

Hear It Again and Again

You are not a kindergarten student of spirituality, so you must cease to think and speak as if you are a phenomenal object. You are the animating consciousness that provides sentience to the sentient being. But you are this consciousness only in manifestation. In truth you are that which is prior to consciousness itself. You are the pure Awareness. You do not need to be liberated. Liberation is a preposterous idea, for were you an object as you still think you are, then as an object you could never be liberated.

OM TAT SAT