

Wings of Love and Random Thought

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Wings of Love and Random Thought

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REAL TRUTH IS WHAT IS EXPERIENCED AS SUCH

Realization of Truth, of the Supreme Soul, and of what we really are, is not a matter of intellectual deliberation or mental reflection. Only those of us are able to comprehend Truth who nurture their worthiness and receptivity by ceaseless practice. Inasmuch as our knowledge of things is restricted by the extent of our capacity to know, it is necessary to remember that the bounds of Truth are not limited to the extent of our knowledge. The frontiers of Truth are ever beyond our ken, because the more we know the more remains yet to be known. What we know need not necessarily be Truth since Truth is much too large for our capacity to comprehend which is neither complete nor perfect. One who identifies the limits of one's knowledge with those of Truth stops thereat, and does not go further. Even in the case of worldly objects we find our knowledge restricted by our sense-organs. To a person bereft of eyesight there is, indeed, no object like light in his world of experience. A true conception of light cannot find a place in the community that consists entirely of blind persons. Nor can darkness be truly comprehended by them, because an experience of light is essential to a thorough understanding of darkness. If we are devoid of the auditory faculty, sound becomes non-existent for us. Virtually, the existence of only those things is revealed to us which are intelligible to our senses. Our world of experience co-extends with our perceptive ability. We cannot, however, say that the real world is only that much. The frontiers of the world we experience and the real world are not identical. Our world is thus restricted by us ourselves. Surely, there are many worlds within one world. There are as many worlds as there are living organisms. Examining still more minutely, we can say that there are as many worlds as there are individuals constituting the different species. Thus in the universe the individual worlds are numberless, because those who know, perceive, and experience are likewise numberless. Hence, the universe is subdivided into as many imaginary pieces as there are individual cogs in the wheel. Far behind men are quite a large number of animals whose sensory faculty is far inferior to that of man. We know that many of them do not possess the faculty of seeing or hearing. Some are denied the gustatory faculty and some the

olfactory. Those beings do not, really, have the experience of light, sound, taste or smell. The world of experience of man extends as far as his sense-organs allow it to do, and it will be sheer ignorance if the real world were to be restricted by us to what is projected by our limited knowledge. Were we blessed with more sense-organs, we might possibly have extended our world of experience still further. Scientific appliances have enabled us to do so. This is mentioned only to emphasize that our knowledge is commensurate with our capacity to know, with the powers of our senses to understand and grasp. What is true of the visible world is also true of the existence of the invisible one. Whenever people ask me, "Does God exist?", "Does the soul exist?", I put this counter-question to them, "Do you possess the ability to experience the soul and God?" The real question is that of ability and not of the existence, or otherwise, of God. If you have the ability you will surely experience those truths which are beyond your reach now; in the absence of that ability, those truths will necessarily seem untruths. If some vague fear compels us to accept truths they cannot be real truths, for real Truth is what is experienced as such. Twenty-five centuries ago a seeker after Truth fell at the feet of Lord Buddha, beseeching his guidance. "How do you visualize it?" he said. "What is your conception?" The Enlightened One said, "What I have conceived may not help you much since you don't have the eyes competent enough to visualise Truth. Whatever I may say will be taken as untruth because you cannot realize the reality of what you cannot experience." Narrating an anecdote the Buddha continued, "I had been to a village where they brought me a blind man, requesting me to convince him of the existence of light. I told them it was no better than madness since he hadn't the instrument of vision, namely the eyes. They should rather take him to a doctor who could rectify his eyes. Where there are eyes to see there is light." I say the same to you. Your concern need not be Truth. It should rather be whether you do have the eyes competent enough to see beyond the object. What is seen is nothing but matter and whatever there is, besides and beyond it, falls outside the range of our experience. Its sympathetic impulses, its waves of reaction fail to have any impact on us. When you meet a friend, your contact with him is confined only to his physical being. You do not come into close touch with his soul. When you see a tree in the open yard, you stop at the outer limits of its physical presence, but you do not have any access to its inner soul. Why? That is because one who has had no close contact with one's own soul and one who has had no experience of the sentient energy within, cannot hope to realize the all-pervasive Sentient Being. The question, therefore, is not of God, Truth or light but of vision. In my view, Dharma is more a remedy, a means of cure, than an object of deliberation. Fresh vistas of experience will open out within us if the slumbering impulses are goaded into activity, leaving at our disposal the knowledge of those things without which there is no purpose, no aim, and no meaning in life. Matter recedes into the background, leaving the impalpable behind, as our sensibility grows finer and our receptivity keener. A point is reached when the entire universe ceases to appear as a gross object of perception, and the pure unclouded vision of the Supreme Soul alone remains. In order to achieve this we shall have to prepare ourselves. The farmer prepares the soil before sowing seeds. Persons seeking the realization of the supreme must keep the ground in readiness and tune themselves within in order to hear the all-pervasive divine music without. The sun is visible because our eyes perceive it. The sun may leave its impact on us, because we have both, the visual organ and sufficient receptive capacity. I am speaking and my voice enters your heart, producing a responsive echo, because you

have a sense-organ which enables the sound to come up to you. The Supreme Soul never ceases to exist even for a moment. Our vital breaths are all His; every limit is His; but we do not realize it because our own hands keep the passage of entrance closed to Him.

THREE VITAL LINKS

There are three stages in the process of keeping this passage ever open -- three vital links that bring about your unison with the Supreme Soul. I am going to discuss them here. I shall tell you how that power of sympathetic reaction can be generated in you whereby the gross gets dissolved and the subtle comes to the fore. The empiric object vanishes and the Supreme Soul becomes visible. The links I am going to enumerate take you from the visible to the invisible, from the gross to the subtle, from the worldly object to the Supreme Soul.

FIRST LINK: SELF-LOVE

The first link in the chain is self-love. Let us love ourselves. Let this love be unhindered and unconditional. He who cannot love himself is incapable of loving others. In the absence of love it is impossible to go beyond the mundane, the physical, and the temporal. The power of love is the only power in man that is spiritual and unearthly. The steps leading up to the benign presence of the Supreme Soul can be climbed only by holding on to the unearthly link of love. But let me sound a note of caution. Surely some difficulty will be experienced on hearing this advocacy of love of oneself, because the so-called scriptural tradition is against it. Its tenets and injunctions lay down, directly or indirectly, what is hostile to the self. Is it possible to suppress the self without being hostile or inimical to it? The edifice of righteousness and virtue has been built by man on the mutual struggle and conflict between the pair of opposites into which the self had been split. No one need be surprised if life founded on illusion turns out to be ugly and uninspiring. The beauty of life can never fructify through the process of self-conflict, for the individual coming into conflict with himself loses his power, his prop and stay which would have ensured success in his life. Himself at the back, he makes his hands fight each other. In that case, who can conquer whom? Neither success, nor defeat is possible. What is possible is only a mutual conflict leading to the birth of an individual utterly depleted of strength, and finally to death. Since, in this manner all the faculties of the individual conspire together to bring about self-destruction, life becomes ugly, uninspiring, and futile. Beauty, Truth and blessedness are attainable only if life were to be engaged in the creative cultivation of the self. Sermons on the suppression of the self cannot, however, produce notes of harmony within. On the other hand, they generate discord and disharmony and lead to misery, anxiety and frustration. The person who is filled with mutual conflicts, he who begins to fight with himself, he who splits himself into a friend and a foe, he who considers some of his faculties to be his adversaries and pits some others against them, actually creates a hell for himself. The pity is that we had been considering such a life of conflict, a righteous one, a virtuous life! In my view, a virtuous life is entirely different. It is not a life of internal conflict but that of internal peace, harmony and music. It is not a life of 'self-hostility' but that of unison and integration. Those who wish to acquire this harmony of the soul have to lay its foundation

at the very outset. Those who start with a conflict cannot dream of reaching a state of bliss without conflict, for the end is already present in the beginning itself. Let it be remembered therefore that the first stage is far more valuable than the final one. The Supreme Soul is perfect harmony -- is perfection itself. If I wish to be merged into that Divine Harmony, it is essential that I should have a note of harmony within me. How can this note of harmony be produced? Never by treating the self with contempt, nor by self-reproach and self-hostility. It can be produced by love of oneself.

SELF-LOVE VERSUS SELF-SUPPRESSION

The very first foundations of a life of spiritual endeavour are love of oneself and spiritual harmony. Surely you will be confounded to hear this, because you have been often advised to suppress something within you. But I say that there is nothing within you that needs suppression or extirpation. There are certain drives within every man that need to be harnessed, not extirpated; certain forces that must needs be awakened and loved, not suppressed. They should be controlled and directed along the proper course. But those who consider them hostile can never be successful in transforming them. A man of understanding can transform even poison into nectar, but one who has no understanding whatever is sure to turn his nectar into poison. I call understanding nectar and deficiency in it poison. We see that putrefying things, things that emit foul smell, are used as fertilizers. Just now some one presented me with a bunch of flowers. How fragrant they are! When their fragrance stirred my heart, I remembered the source of this fragrance. The foul smell of the muck has been transformed into an endearing fragrance in its course through the seeds and stems. If you simply heap up the manure in your yard, the foul smell will vitiate the whole atmosphere, but if you spread it over your garden round your house, it will be filled with pleasing smell. What you call "foul smell" is only the undeveloped form of "fragrance," not hostile to it. A discordant note is nothing but the undeveloped and disarranged form of the harmonious notes that blend so well in perfect music.

There is nothing in human life which deserves to be shattered to pieces, to be annihilated. But there is much in human life, to be sure, which should be transformed, sublimated and raised up. Man possesses certain powers which are intrinsically neutral. They are neither auspicious nor inauspicious, neither good nor bad. They are neutral. They assume the form in which we utilize them. What is called sexual potency, the power of passionate lust against which the so-called spiritual leaders have waged an interminable war is but a neutral potentiality, because that power, when transformed, evolves itself into a divine force. It is the primordial creative power, and what it is competent to do depends upon how you use it. What it can be, does not depend on it alone but on our understanding and on the art of living our lives. Does it not, on being transformed, attain the nature of brahmacharya, the power of the celibate? This brahmacharya is not hostile to the power of lust; verily it is its sublimation. Similarly the power that manifests itself in fury becomes peace, calmness and quiescence. It is only a question of transformation. In our life the process of creation possesses greater importance than the process of destruction. If this fact is clearly understood, the question of a struggle with, or a hostility towards the Self, will scarcely arise, for the creation of the Self is possible only in an atmosphere of

self-love. I would also like to add the the physical body should not be excluded from the Self.

THE BODY NOT TO BE SHUNNED

Give the body abundant love, on getting which it becomes vibrant, alive. Its slumbering potentialities are awakened. But remember that neither the so-called debauchee nor the so-called abstainer loves the body in the real sense. The contempt of the libertine for his own body is manifest in the lack of his own self-restraint. It is out of this contempt that he is inclined to waste away his body. The abstainer too, recoiling from the other extreme, is no less backward in his hostility to the body. Of course, the directions they turn to are different. The abstainer tortures and torments the body in the name of self-restraint, in the name of renunciation, and the other in the name of licentiousness; but both of them are wanting in thankfulness to and ardent love for the body. The characteristic feature of a person of healthy mental poise is a favourable attitude towards the body with a loving vision. Torturing the body in any manner whatsoever reveals an unhealthy and sick mentality. It amounts to the fact that we can be tormented by two kinds of mental infirmities, one of unrestrained enjoyment and the other of unthinking renunciation. Hence the libertine makes a volte face and comes to the point of renunciation. How much does one wish that he is able to stop in the middle! But, unfortunately, it is very easy to proceed from one sickness to another, such sick-minded persons have taught us a lot. This is what they teach: the body is our enemy, we have to fight with it. As a result of these baneful teachings religion and piety have become body-obsessed. Opposition to the body must perforce be body-centred. Hence I say that if you wish to go beyond the body, if you wish to rise above it, do not fight with it, harbour no hostility towards it. Love it and seek its friendship. The body is not our enemy. It is an instrument, a wonderful instrument, ready to be used. It is incumbent upon you to stretch your hand of friendship towards that which you wish to use. Prior to everything else, it is necessary to extend a friendly hand towards your own body which is a fine specimen of God's adroitness as a skilled craftsman. It is a ladder full of secrets that leads you up to the Supreme Soul. He is certainly mad who comes into conflict with the ladder instead of climbing up through its rungs. Unfortunately, we are surrounded by the fraternity of such incorrigible bedlamites. Beware of them. It is difficult to estimate the extent of havoc wrought by such madmen among us. You do not fully realize the thousands of secrets lying hidden in this body naturally bestowed on you. Even if one learns all the secrets of one's own body, one can easily secure the key to the endless mysteries of the Supreme Soul. How small is this body but how many wonderful mysteries lie embedded in it! The mind is hidden in the body. The soul is hidden in the mind. The Supreme Soul is hidden in the soul.

A sage was about to die. He took leave of his disciples and devotees present there. He thanked them all and stood up with his folded hands, and said, 'Oh, my beloved body! It is you who led me to God. I thank you for it. I could not do anything for you. On the other hand, I had subjected you to untold sufferings and pain. I had extracted work out of you without paying you anything in return. I am indebted to you very much, for endless has been the help you rendered me. At this hour of farewell I seek your pardon. For all

my acts of omission and commission, I request you to excuse me. But for you, it would have been impossible for me to reach God!"

You have to see the body in this way. This attitude of thankfulness, this loving fervour is essential. The sage had said, "Oh, my beloved body!" These words stir up a wonderful bliss in me. Cannot a similar sympathetic understanding brighten up your life too? May I ask you whether you have at any time looked upon the body with an overflow of such loving sympathy? Have you ever felt yourselves blessed with its acts of service? Have you ever expressed your gratefulness to it? If not, how great had been the ingratitude! What an unbecoming discourtesy! What a misdemeanour!

The attitude towards the body should be one of understanding and deep sympathy. One should have knowledge enough to protect it and view it with friendliness. It is our fellow-traveller in a long uphill journey, sharing with us our joys and sorrows. It is an instrument; it is a means and a ladder. Hence, in my view, no man with an iota of sense in him can come into conflict with it or be wicked towards it. But, as ill luck would have it, there have been in the world, and there still are, many men of warped, distorted vision whose high-handedness, violence, unrelenting suppression and cruel tactics towards their own physical body provoke in our mind feelings of remorse and sorrow and eventually a fervent prayer, "Oh God! save mankind from such stupid spirituality!" Activities of this magnitude and seriousness go only to prove a total loss of intelligence in them. But alas! the evil influences of such people still linger and haunt us even today. Let us keep ourselves away from such sickening sermons. Such preachers do not deserve our reverence; they deserve to be cured instead. Certainly I hope we will be able to cure them.

This hostility to the physical body, as I said, is but a reaction to the weakness, failure and dissatisfaction resulting from unregulated sensual enjoyment. Thus the innocent physical body has been blamed for the sinfulness of the Self itself. I appeal to you to be alert in regard to agonizing self-denials based on hostility to the physical body. In view of the fact that you have been playing havoc with your body, you may feel tempted towards all forms of self-discipline. If on seeing the enormous wealth possessed by some one, one becomes greedy or on seeing someone's beauty, one is charmed, one does not normally puncture one's eyes; if one were to do so, I would definitely call him a madcap, for the eyes never ask you to be greedy, nor do they want you to be passionate; they don't command you to do anything of the sort. They are ever ready to carry out your bidding in the manner you deem fit to make use of them. As for the physical body, it is your slave, a whole time follower. Wherever you wish to take it, it is ever ready to follow you. Should you say, "Go to hell", it is ready to go to hell; should you say, "Go to heaven" you will find it ready to go to heaven. The question, then, is not of the physical body, but of your volition. Let it not be forgotten that the physical body reels along behind the will. We will be committing a great blunder if, instead of modifying the will, we were to torture the body, victimize it or even destroy it. Subjecting the body to harassment and suffering is another form of violence, and I never approve of violence to the self or to the physical body. I advocate self-love, and it appears to me that there cannot be anything more foolish than self-violence. But what I call self-love has nothing to do with ego-centred individuality. An ego-centred individual never loves himself, for should he love himself he would have been free from egotism, for there is nothing more diabolical and dispiriting than egotism. It is the ego-centred-individual who indulges in activities of self-

violence in the garb of a holy man, for the ego does not attain as much satisfaction and nourishment in any other manner as in this. That is why a kind of haughtiness is visible in the so-called abstainers, ascetics and semifledged sages. They are egotistical because they are saints; and they are saints because they are egotistical.

AVOID HOSTILITY

In the vast universe created by God there cannot be anything unfriendly or inimical to you. It is a different matter, however, if you do not make use of it or misuse it. Men of wit and understanding convert a stone lying on the ground into a stepping-stone, while men devoid of common sense, turn even a stepping stone into a stumbling-block on their way. In life, it is the way of looking at things that matters. If the vision is distorted, it makes a lot of difference. We need not be surprised if the physical body eventually becomes hostile to the person who has been considering it so from the outset. Let us start with the belief that it is our friend. Then it remains our friend for ever. If the hostility, the grudge, vanishes, a load is taken off from the self; we are relieved of a tension; we experience peace and restfulness. Let us experiment with it. Let it be remembered that the body is only a medium. It does not take anyone anywhere. Let there be no ill-will towards it. If we look at it without any prejudice, our heart is naturally filled with thankful love for the silent service it renders us. Again, we are not to stop with the body. We have to go further deep. The physical body is only the starting point of our journey of love towards the Self.

LOVE THE MIND

When we go deep down, we see the mind. We have to love it too and seek its friendship. Normally we are aware of only these two planes of the individual self, namely, the body and the mind. If we wish to go far above these or deeper than these, we have to make use of them. The campaign against the mind has, no doubt, been carried on with greater intensity than against the body. This has been the central target of attack from the spiritual quarters. It is necessary to free ourselves from this hostility. The mind is a power, and, like all powers, it is also a divine power. It is a highly developed subtle power. Censuring it, being hostile to it or abusing it is sheer stupidity fraught with fatal consequences. It is but proper for us to realize that even today man is not thoroughly acquainted with all the mysteries of the mind; nay, he does not know how to use his mental power. The mind, now, is more or less in the same state as that of electricity. Once there was a time when electricity was only a destructive agent. But it is being employed today in colossal creative projects. Men's understanding of his own mental powers in their entirety will usher in one of the most creative and blessed moments in human history. The mind is the receptacle of limitless potentialities. Those who are hostile to it clash with these potentialities and seek annihilation at their own hands. They say that they censure and oppose the mind for its fickleness and unsteadiness. But inconstancy is a sign of life. Those who are afraid of life and eagerly wait for death, welcome sluggishness, since they see peace and restfulness in it. But let me tell you that peace resulting from sluggishness is unreal. The sluggishness of the mind is self-destructive. What appears as peacefulness there is but the quietness and desolation of the

cemetery. The restlessness of life is definitely preferable to the stillness and quiet of the cemetery. It is not the quietness enforced by suppressing the mind, but the peace that evolves itself by a thorough understanding of the mind, that is worthwhile, that is worth having. Only such a peace can lead us on to greater heights. Dead quietness leads to matter, to the earthly and the material, not to God. It is essential to have a lively placidity, an active silence. Only that which is lively can become the doorway leading to the sublime life. That is why I do not advocate suppression of the mind or approve of the efforts to subdue its restlessness to attain peace. Never sink into such a mire of stupidity and stagnation. There is already enough sluggishness in the world and you can graciously avoid augmenting it further. I want a mind that is lively and peacefully calm as well. As we saw earlier, only that peacefulness can be live and quick which you acquire without losing the unsteadiness which I call mobility. Where the quietude of the lake is futile, that of the flowing river -- of the river that is conti-nuously flowing towards the multitudinous seas -- is worth striving for. If that is possible, man can reach the Supreme Soul. I assert therefore that you need not be sorry that the mind is unstable; never censure it; never consider it your enemy. You should rather be thankful to it, for, but for it, you would have long since become a stagnant lake. If the mind had not been fickle you would have taken up a seat on the top of some rubbish heap engrossed in concentration. If the mind had not been fickle, the greedy would be hovering for ever over the object of their greed, the deluded over the object of their delusion and the sensual over the object of their senses. Then the road to God would be closed for ever. Since the mind is restless all unreal gods are eliminated, and it goes ahead. Since the mind is unsteady, it does not allow us to be stationary; it goads us on and on. I wish to tell you a great mysterious secret underlying this fickleness of the mind:

Unless and until it finds a final resting-place befitting it, the mind will never allow you to take peaceful rest. That is why it is fickle. The mind finds its heaven of refuge only in God where it sheds its fickleness, but never before. Bear this in mind that your mind is kind and benevolent to you. Otherwise you would get stuck-up in some worldliness and your endeavour to reach God will be shelved for ever.

Do not, therefore, censure and abuse your mind for its unsteadiness. Accept this unsteadiness as a favour shown to you, and utilize it. Let it be remembered that if the mind fails to be steady and firm, that is because of some error on your part, some misdeed for which you are responsible. That is why the mind does not wish to stay there. You do your utmost to concentrate, but your mind does not. Certainly, that is your mistake. By being inconstant the mind warns you, but unfortunately, instead of taking the hint, you consider the mind your enemy!

I have heard a story. Once upon a time when Egypt was ruled by a great emperor, a great sage highly respected by the emperor lived in a small Egyptian village. One day, without any previous intimation, the emperor paid a visit to the village. He wished to invite the sage to this palace. The sage, however, had gone out somewhere when the emperor reached the hut. His young disciple could not recognize the emperor in his simple clothes. He asked the visitor to sit on the ridge of the field and said that he would go to the village and fetch his preceptor. The emperor not only refused to sit, but also began to pace up

and down the field. On seeing this, the disciple requested the visitor to go and sit under a tree where there was ample shade. Still unwilling to sit, the emperor began pacing up and down beneath the tree. This set the disciple thinking, and he requested the emperor to step into the hut and sit down there. Still the visitor would not oblige him. He continued to walk up and down inside the hut. In this perplexed state of mind the disciple went out to fetch his preceptor. On the way the young man could not restrain himself from recounting this rather odd behaviour of the visitor from the city. The aged sage who had understood who the visitor could be, said, "Son, he is our emperor. There is no place in and around our hut befitting his status where he can sit. That is why he has been walking up and down."

I wish to tell you that the mind too is restless for the same reason. It does not find a worthy place where it can abide for ever. It is our duty to seek a throne befitting its dignity. Instead of doing so, you are getting ready to fight with its restlessness. Did you ever think what those places are which you have assigned to your mind? Can you really expect it to sit in one of those? Friends, it is a favour shown to you that the mind is fickle. You may continue to assign it different places with the entreaty, "Sit here, please," but it will not sit there. The mind cannot and will not sit anywhere except in God, and that is its unlimited bounty. Remember that the so-called restlessness of your mind helps you a lot. If it cannot be held in one place, know it to be a place unworthy of it. I would also add that your success in pinning it down to a place unworthy of it amounts to nothing, for no sooner does one succeed in forcing it to sit somewhere for a while than one finds it getting up and running elsewhere. This excited drift and flutter will continue until the ultimate point of rest is reached. And this ultimate point of rest is God.

People say that concentration of mind is essential to the realization of the Supreme Soul. But I say that if the Supreme Soul is realized, the mind will at once have the desired concentration. People say, "Keep the mind steady so that God can be realized." I say, "As soon as God is realized, the mind comes to rest." The mind rushes to the place where it gets pleasure, not to anything that gives it pain, and the moment the prospects of pleasure disappear, it quits it and flees. Hence we never see it pinned down to one object. Gather together a sum of ten thousand rupees. At the outset, the mind may say, "Perhaps there is pleasure here." But alas! the very next moment it moves away. Hardly does it begin to sit at rest when it finds itself disillusioned. Accumulate ten lakhs, then ten millions. Again you experience the same disappointment. Even ten crores heaped up by you will not make any difference. We cannot prevent the rambling propensities of the mind which rushes on, as I said, to the place where it gets a glimpse of pleasure. It flees as soon as the glimpse, too, vanishes, but is a little constant so long as the image of possible happiness lingers. The day it gets the never-vanishing glimpses of Eternity, of real pleasure, it winds up its inclination to flee and is filled with plenitude and absolute stillness.

I will not, therefore, advise you to enforce steadiness of mind. Forced steadiness causes sluggishness and leads rather to stagnation than to the attainment of the ultimate goal. When the final goal is reached, the mind remains steadfast. This fact, when misinterpreted, gives rise to the wrong notion that, once the mind is kept steady the final goal can be reached. This is as absurd as putting the cart before the horse. The fact that eyes remain closed when we are asleep does not justify the reasoning that the advent of sleep is assured in merely shutting the eyes. My advice to you is that you should make your mind move in the direction in which the fragrance of real pleasure spreads; slowly

and lovingly should you lead the mind to the abode of real felicity. Set your eyes on real happiness and the mind is sure to follow it up. But use no force, no compulsion even unconsciously. Compulsion is sure to provoke resistance from the mind contrary to your expectation. Your inhibitions become invitation and your taboos attraction. If you evince a desire to restrain it from doing anything, the mind takes to it with added avidity. This is but natural. It is your ignorance of this simple fact that involves you in what are, normally, not unavoidable sufferings. The fundamental point is that your mind is not your enemy. You are not to suppress its natural inclinations and instincts but to lead them with love and to comprehend them, with our common sense to awaken them. Only that which is auspicious survives in the light of reason, in the light of common sense. An unforgettable rule of life is contained in the phrase *amor vincit omnia* -- love conquers all. We can never dream of conquering anyone by means of hatred. No, never. It is impossible to conquer those whom we hate, those whom we consider our enemies. We can conquer only those whom we love. Hence those who wish to win over their mind must love it. There is no other way than the way of love leading to victory. So the first link, the first golden rule, is that let us love ourselves. Let us transform and sublimate ourselves, and not suppress ourselves. Let there be no split personalities within us. Let us marshal our faculties into one single, integrated unit: all unified single units are born out of love. If I am filled with abundant love for what I am, good or bad, if all hate and slander disappear from my mind, if I cease to oppose myself which may be noble or contemptible and fall in love with all that I am in my totality, then a compact, indivisible personality will emerge within me. Such is the formation of personality, for love, a cementing force, amalgamates heterogeneous elements, and when my different faculties are amalgamated into one unified whole, a wonderful energy is generated within me. The power that is severed and split flows in different directions and is wasted away, but in an amalgamated form its force is immense. The most wonderful achievement of this energy, the outcome of this fusion, is its capacity to transform those insignificant things which it could not overcome in spite of constant struggle. This it could achieve the moment love for those seemingly insignificant things is aroused. This unbrokenness or compactness of personality is the foundation of this self-transformation. If one wishes to improve oneself, to renovate oneself, one has necessarily to become a single unified whole. The individual, split into several wee pieces, wastes his entire energy in pitting one piece against another, in controlling them and in maintaining the balance of power among them. There is no surplus energy left with him for the transformation of the self, for its sublimation. Only he who loves himself and retains this undivided and unsplit unity possesses that surplus energy.

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Chapter #2

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SECOND LINK -- LOVE OF OTHERS

What is the second link in this upward flight of love? The first link, as we have seen, is the love of oneself. The second one is loving others. You will never be successful in your progress towards that love which takes you to God, unless you have abundant good will, unlimited love, overflowing kindness and plenty of grace towards all living beings.

"When thou goest unto the church for thy daily prayer," said Jesus Christ, "and kneelest down and raisest thy hand up unto the Lord, if thou rememberest that thy neighbour is angry unto thee, go thou first unto him and love him. Leave the Lord here and go thou thither, love him and crave his pardon. Make peace with him. For, how can he who has not succeeded yet in making peace with men, succeed in making peace with himself and the Lord?" Certainly, the person who refuses to love on the human level, cannot be expected to extend his fervent prayer to the level of God.

A sage living in a certain village was once approached by a devotee who expressed his desire to realize God. He asked the sage what he should do. Surveying him from head to foot and probably understanding his ins and outs, the sage said, "Well, son, shall I ask you, to tell me whether you love anyone? Then I may be able to say something." The devotee, assuming that love is a disqualification for seekers of God, said that he did not love anyone and that his sole aim was the realization of God. Thereupon the sage said, "Son, think well; search your heart. Don't you love your wife, children, family or friends?" The devotee was emphatic. "No, I don't love anyone. I only want to realize God." The sage kept quiet as tears welled up in his eyes. Surprised, the devotee asked the sage: "Father, why are you crying? Why don't you speak?" The sage said, "Oh son, if only you had loved some one, I could have transformed that love into love of God. But love which leads to God is dead in you -- love which is the direct way to Heaven."

In the name of religion, thousands of people have taught you not to love anyone! Their teachings are centred round your egotism, and they cannot take you to God, for love is the power nearest to our Lord Himself.

LOVE IS NOT A FETTER

Why should one be afraid of love? Perhaps because it may bind us? But love binds only when we are unable to radiate more and more love. The implication is that it is only the inadequacy of love that binds us and not love itself. Insufficient love, love that is neither full nor frank, becomes a bondage. Only love shrivelled in size can bind the lover. Love that is brimful expanding and extensive breaks all barriers and begins to flow. It knows no frontiers when it develops, and assumes the unlimited immensity of the sky. Hence I say, increase and multiply your love, widen the sphere of its activity, place no restrictions on it, stipulate no conditions for its functioning. Let it expand steadily, let it go beyond the person on whom it has splashed itself. Let it not stop anywhere. Let it not halt in its course. The fear that love may linger on its way makes the so-called spiritualist suspicious of love. But if my love stops in the middle, it is my own fault, not that of love. There is therefore no valid excuse for my hostility towards it, Love's fault is really the

lover's fault. If the lover is coarse and narrow-minded, love cannot but be immobile. If one is hostile to it for this reason alone, one becomes meaner still and more narrow-minded. What little width and amplitude it possesses is lost due to the narrow-mindedness of our so-called religious leaders. In my view, we have to increase our love and let ourselves be submerged into it. On the other hand, he who loses love can save only his ego. So I say, stretch and spread your love. When we throw a pebble into the pond it sinks no doubt, but circular wavelets set in motion by it extend as far as the banks all round. Similarly, when love is generated, let it produce waves of throbbing vibrations like those in the ocean, till it reaches the ultimate shore of God's benign presence. Such a love is nothing less than a fervent prayer.

I would not say that you should hate your parents, hate your wife and children, hate anyone at all. In fact, you must love them so much that they cannot contain it within themselves; they must have it in overflowing abundance. Let your love spread everywhere, over-flooding everything, so that nothing can hold it anywhere. Let it be your aim to generate so much love within that none except God is able to put up with it. Only the unlimited can sustain the unlimited. No finite receptacle can hold the infinite overflow. The unlimited love will flow over and beyond it. No doubt, it will have its share but far beyond its expectation, far more than it can hold. As far as you are concerned, it can never be a hindrance: love becomes a hindrance when it stops somewhere on the way. Lingering love is no true love; it is lust, sensuous attachment. Expanding, ever-widening love, on the other hand, is fervent prayer. Let it not be forgotten that the love that stops midway becomes a delusion, lust, and bondage, but the love that marches ahead like the waves in the ocean is nothing less than a fervent prayer, nothing less than God Himself, nothing less than the beatitude of absolute salvation. If love does not stop but marches on, it sets us free. Let there be no cessation in its march ahead until the last man too is brought into its fold when the communion with the Soul Supreme takes place. Let me repeat for the sake of emphasis. I advocate love of self. I advocate love of others. Never consider love unholy or evil. Take care that it does not stop halfway. It is the stoppage that is unholy and not love. Those who consider love unholy and view it in a narrow sense never try to understand that this restricted love is but lingering love. The more it is restricted the shabbier it becomes. The person who withholds love from others becomes centred round egotism. He stops with his ego -- the "I-ness" and "My-ness" of life. In the whole universe of existence the two points that are poles apart are those of the ego and the Supreme Soul.

Cessation of progress or even intermission at the point of 'I' leads to hell. There is no end to the egotist's pain and misery because all the doors of bliss are closed to him. Only love can open them. Similarly, the 'I-centred' man finds all the doors of beauty and harmony closed. Our love can open them. Love is the mysterious secret key to the abode of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Whatever is excellent and perfect in life can be opened up by means of this wonderful key. It is egotism that shuts it up.

Egotism, however, opens up another door, the door opening on to hell, the only door it can open. Let it be remembered that there is no other Key except these two. No man can have both the keys simultaneously. It is divinely ordained that a man can have only one key in his possession at a time. He who is willing to lose one gets the other. The key of love opens up not only the hearts of men but also the heart of every object under the sun,

whether it be that of a rock, plant, animal, or the Supreme Soul Himself. Luther Burbank, the celebrated botanist, is remembered throughout the world for an incident wrought by his profound love for the vegetable kingdom. He was able to make plants react favourably to his request, he who had spoken thus to the thorny shrubs, "Friends, you need not be afraid of anyone. These thorns are not necessary for self-protection. Isn't my abundant love enough to protect you?" In the end those thorny shrubs of the desert did listen to him and as a token of their love yielded to him a new variety of plants entirely devoid of thorns. Whenever anyone asked him, "How did you achieve this impossible task?" he would promptly say, "Out of love." I, too, would tell you that even the impossible becomes possible through love. A greater impossibility than God cannot be conceived but he too yields to love.

LOVE -- NEVER AN IMPOSSIBILITY

And love is never an impossibility: it is very simple: it is present in everyone. It has to be developed and widened, Though its seeds have been sown in every one it is the fortunate alone who live to enjoy the flowers of love. Why? We never allow the seeds of love to germinate and grow. We seek love but we don't show it. Love grows when offered, not obtained, for remember that love is an unconditional offer. He who is capable of offering such a love does get it in plenty. Moreover, love offered freely creates the capacity to receive it too. It qualifies the receiver to receive it. The measure of love offered is commensurate with the amount of love received. Only in this manner is further depth achieved and gradually the very vital breaths are transformed into love, into nothing but love wholesome and furl. The beginning of the perfection of love must always be traced to the readiness to offer, not to the eagerness to demand. Peremptory demand will never enable them to make a beginning. Love's state is imperial, not that of a beggar. Those who demand it never get it, and this failure, so dispiriting to them, gradually renders them incapable of offering it too. As the failure increases, the difficulty to secure it increases as well. Please remember therefore that love implies offering without any desire to obtain, to get back in return, to demand. Let us free it from the expectation of obtaining something in return. There can never be a commercial transaction in the affairs of love. Its pleasure, its bliss, its fullness lie in giving away and not in securing anything in return. The giving up is so satisfying and blissful that even the question of gaining anything in return does not arise. That is why the person who gives love is ever obliged to the person who accepts it. Only in the act of giving love abundantly -- an entire, unbounded gift, do the vital breaths develop the wings that take them unto God. Friends, let us spread out the wings of love and soar up in the vast firmament of the Supreme Soul. With our wings of love full-fledged, our consciousness of things belonging to us and of those belonging to others -- our awareness of what is mine and what is yours -- disappears, and what is left is the consciousness -- nay, the very being of God. It is in the absence of love that man has of necessity to be on the hard ground of egotism full of thorny shrubs of hatred, violence and anger. Where is the necessity of being stuck in this rocky ground, once the wings of love are grown? Then the flight to the wonderful world of beauty -- limitless, inexhaustible and immaculate beauty -- becomes easy. So let us be filled with love -- towards all love unconditional, love selfless. Standing or sitting, sleeping or waking, let us be submerged in love, love which is the very breath of our existence, love with its

waves ever surging in our hearts. You have now reached the precincts of the sacred temple of the most divine. Visiting ordinary temples is not obligatory. Those temples with idols of stone cannot claim perfection and reality. Would it be surprising if the hearts of those who frequent these stone temples become adamant and hard? No doubt, discussions and discourses on Divine Love do take place in these temples, but what is disseminated from there is nothing but hatred. Hatred and violence disguise themselves in the gaudy clothes of false love. Verily I say that to no other temple should recognition be accorded than to the temple of love, the only temple of our Lord. I am afraid that these other temples have been designed and devised to prevent men from reaching the temple of love. Satan is definitely engaged in this!

Love is itself a temple and a sacred scripture. "The man who has had a smattering of love's language," says Kabir, "is a scholar." Certainly nothing remains to be learnt if one has learnt all about love. Mastery of love implies mastery of all learning. He who hasn't learnt the art of loving is ignorant of everything. No knowledge, no sensation, no experience is superior to love. Love's eye scans what is written on leaves, carved on stones or, hidden waves. Friends, the Lord's autograph can be seen everywhere. Of what real use are the works of mortals? What can we gain from the words of ordinary mortals? Where will they lead us? Indeed man's words cannot take us above and beyond man. To be able to go beyond man we have to leave him behind. In fact, man's words, scriptures and principles are obstacles in the pathway to God. We have to read, learn and comprehend what is God's to reach God. That can be read in love. We have to learn human languages to read what man has written, his shastras. Similarly, the Lord's language is to be learnt to read the Lord's Book. And his language is love. Learn the art of love which is so necessary if you wish to attain the Lord. The whole creation of the Lord is all around you. Behold it, for your eyes will not fail you, but in the absence of love it can neither be seen nor known. A mysterious miracle takes place when love's eye begins to scan. What was being seen vanishes and what had escaped our notice comes into view. Then nothing remains save the divine form.

I affirm that where the scholar loses, the lover wins; what learning misses, love lights upon. In the case of the scholar having a smattering of love's language, the matter is different. Entry into the depths of life is impossible without love. Mere knowledge loses itself in its peregrinations round the border, and it is incorrect to say that knowledge annihilates distance. Only through love can distance disappear. Knowledge does not go deeper than the physical body, but love does not stop before it reaches the soul. Hence all knowledge divorced from love is unreal and incomplete: Knowledge contained in love is the only real knowledge.

What is the importance of love? How is it to be realized? Shall one incessantly repeat the word 'love' as some zealots repeat the names of Ram and Krishna. Will such loud repetitions of the word 'love' help us realize love. Never. Mere repetitions of names does not achieve anything. Love should be lived; it should be part and parcel of our very being. Life will be purposeful, meaningful, when there is liveliness of love in it. Let the energy of love be vigilant and vibrant and awake in the self. Let no occasion for ardent, sincere love find it slumbering there. Let no challenge offered to love be left unanswered. For every challenge, for every call, let your love give a befitting reply. Even when there is no challenge from any quarter, let love continue to flow as light flows from the lamp or as sweet fragrance flows from the flower. A calm unbroken current of love should always

be present. When the heat is continuously kept moving by means of love-currents, all the obstacles on its way are kept at bay. We find the gentle hill-stream eroding off the hardest rock from its path by means of its constant flow. Can anyone deny the presence of huge stumbling blocks in the path of love? There are, no doubt, hard rocks, but the power of love is equally boundless. Let us make this boundless energy function effectively and be ever active. Utterly slow and silent are its activities, but in that quiet briskness, huge rocks are worn off into fine particles of sand. Much fuss and ado indicates weakness. Powerful forces function silently. How quiet, silent and free from fuss is the creative activity of God!

Friends, let us give love an opportunity to transform you from the very root. Love's potion can instil a new life in you a life which will never perish. For that reason alone is love free from fear even in the presence of death, because love knows no death.

LOVE DEFIES DEATH

In 1857, when Indians revolted against their rulers, the English speared to death a silent sage who had not spoken a word for years; thinking him to be a spy, an instigator of rebels. The sage who had been silent for years laughed and said TAT TWAM ASI (Thou art that). The man who had speared him was also that -- the Absolute soul. Even at the moment of death he had embraced his murderer while love and fervent prayerfulness had shone in his eyes. No doubt he had discarded verbosity and selfishness from his self but filled it with pure love. Otherwise how could it have gushed out of him when struck with the spear? During all these years when his heart appeared to be mute, it was only filling it up with love. It had become a veritable fountainhead of love, making him incapable of seeing an enemy in his murderer. He only saw his beloved in him. Love had transformed an enemy into a loving friend, death into salvation. Love changes darkness into brilliance, poison into nectar. Can there be a miracle more stupendous than love? More magical than the magic of love? Love can transform everything because it transforms our very visions, and the vision is a creative force. What we see is our world, and the world is what our eyes make of it. If there is love in the vision, there is also the lover all around us. If there is no love there is no God and, to crown all, there is no lover either. There are our enemies instead wherever we see.

One early morning a traveller entered a village. Finding an old man sitting at the threshold, the visitor said, "Sir, what sort of people are the villagers here? I have left my village for good and wish to stay here." The old man surveyed the stranger from head to foot, and said, "May I too ask you what sort of people live in that village which, you say, you have left?" As soon as he heard this, the stranger's eyes became red with anger and he said, "The very thought of these people fills me with anger. Please make no mention of these wretched people. It is because of them that I had to leave that village. Nowhere else in the world can you see such wicked persons as are in that village." The old man said, "Brother, I am sorry. The villagers here are no better than they. You will find only wicked people here, too. You had better go and live in some other village". Hardly had he left when another stranger entered the village and asked the old man the same question, "Sir, what sort of people live in the village here? I wish to stay here. I had

to leave my village." The old man said, "Before I answer your question, may I ask you what sort of people live in the village that you left?" The second stranger said, "Although I never saw such nice people anywhere else, I had to leave the village for some compelling personal reasons." Having said this, he shed tears of loving memory. The old man hastened to reply, "You are welcome to this village, son. You will find the people here even better than your former friends. There are many good people here." After a pause the old man continued, "To whichever village you go, you will be welcomed heartily. In every village you will find good and nice people. The world is what your eyes make of it!" The world is nothing; it is nothing other than what you see. If the vision is full of love, only hearts throbbing with love will come into your field of vision. When you see the entire world thus throbbing with love, know that to be the hour of realization -- the realization of your Master, of the Divine Form. Reaching the precincts of God does not mean that Rama will be waiting there for you in his cloud-coloured splendour and armed with bow and arrows. Reaching the divine presence does not imply that some Krishna like figure will be awaiting you there blowing notes of melody in his divine flute. Attaining the supreme soul does not indicate that some elderly gentleman with flowing white beard can be seen there controlling the universe. Arriving near God means attaining that experience wherein the entire universe ceases to be mere object and identifies itself with that supreme soul; the object vanishes, the power alone remains. It means the attainment of supreme bliss. It means the attainment of Truth, Beauty, and Eternity. God is not a person but an experience. He is Bliss, a boundless Ocean of Bliss. Before merging into that ocean a preliminary realization of that ocean must be generated within ourselves.

THE THIRD LINK

I have already discussed the first two links that lead you there step by step. The first link is self-love. The second link is love of others. Let us now discuss the third link, love of God, which enjoins on us the necessity for going beyond the first two. The second link is a step beyond the first, and the third is a step beyond both. The first link involves the admission that "I am." Although it is not reality, it is nevertheless a fact. To the ignorant it is a fact more important than everything else. It may be a means to your awakening, but never to your flight. Those who flee it will find it coming close upon their heels. Can you really run away from your own shadow. I'm sure you can't. The more you try to escape it the speedier does its pursuit become. Therefore accept the fact of 'I am' and engage yourselves in seeking love. When love grows, egotism diminishes and wears off. If one who has accepted the existence of the shadow seeks light, one naturally and necessarily becomes free from all sorts of shadows. Egotism and love stand in the same relationship with each other as shadow and light. The impenetrable darkness of egotism disappears with the advent of the illuminating light of love. Acceptance of the "I" gives rise to "He the other." "Since I am 'I', others are others'. In the light of love, however, the consciousness of "I" as well as that of "the other" vanishes. In the end love alone remains. Neither "I" nor "you" nor "the other" -- only love. Such a state of love I would call love of God. Actually it is not directed towards anyone in particular, nor from or on behalf of anyone in particular. It simply is. This pure and simple love I call love of God.

What can be the implication of this love of God? It means the suspension of the illusion which had been there continually that I am something, that I am what I am. This is entirely untrue, unreal. You really are not! You have no personal existence. Consider the phenomenon of breathing. Breath is drawn into my body and sent out. If I think I am breathing I am wrong. For, if the air that has gone out does not return, how can I take breath. If I think I am living, I am in the wrong. For, the day life goes away from within me, it would not be possible for me to stay behind even a moment. If I think I am born, I am in the wrong. If I think I will die, I am still in the wrong. I have not had a birth nor will I die. Neither the breath is mine nor do I have any control over the breath. Neither life nor death is mine. Some mysterious drama is being enacted within me. Some one is sporting inside. Some one is speaking within me. Some one is passing through me. Some one is born within me. Some one dies within me. I am a mere play-ground, a field, where figures come and go. I am a mere flute on which someone plays. "I am no better than a hollow piece of bamboo," says Kabir. "Songs of Love directed towards God are thine." The man who realizes this understands well. The person who has crossed the first two stages with the help of the two rungs of the ladder mentioned above, can without any difficulty comprehend this easily and know that there is nothing like individuality in this world. Whatever exists, exists together, collectively, jointly. Nothing exists in isolation. This breath which I consider mine had already been the breath of millions and millions. This air that I exhale now will constitute the breath of millions and millions yet to be born. The millions and millions of cells that form and rear my physical body had once been part and parcel of millions and millions of other physical bodies. How can they be called mine? When I cast off this body these cells may constitute the physical bodies of millions and millions. Even when I have not sloughed off this body, every minute it is undergoing change and old cells are being discarded and new cells are being formed. The new cells that enter your body are verily the old ones that have come away from others. This body which I call mine has already belonged to thousands of men, millions of animals and billions of other living organisms and will henceforth constitute countless similar bodies. How can it be mine?

Nor is the mind alone. For the constituent parts of the mind too come and go like those of the physical body. There is nothing that is mine. This attitude is the primary stage in the love of God. When we actually realize that there is nothing that is ours, when this attitude further deepens, we feel that we ourselves do not exist since there is nothing that is ours. As long as the idea "I have something" persists in us, we have the delusion that we are and we begin to desire acquisition measure my greatness in accordance with the largeness of my house. I measure my greatness in accordance with the height of the position I occupy. I measure my greatness in accordance with the extent of my property. I measure my greatness in accordance with the influence of the position I hold. Why? Because my "I-ness" increases in proportion to the increase of my possessions. "I-ness" develops with acquisition. "I-ness" grows in the company of "my-ness". The frontiers of "I-ness" and "my-ness" are coterminous. Hence, if the delusion of "my-ness" is exterminated, the basis for "I-ness" disappears. If there is nothing that is mine where can I be? If "my-ness" sinks, "I-ness" becomes feeble, void.

A question often asked of me is this, "Are we to leave off everything and run away in order to efface this wrong notion of 'I-ness'?" My usual reply is that this is not a problem of abnegating or not abnegating what you possess. The crux lies in the attitude of "my-

ness" { towards those things. Even if you lay aside things, the attitude of "my-ness" can linger. That is why the so-called renunciators keep an account of what they have renounced and measure the greatness or smallness of their renunciation in accordance with the value and quantity of the things renounced. Once a saintly man told me, "I have kicked off lakhs of rupees". I said, "Pray, when did you kick it off?" He said, "About thirty years back." On hearing this I was not at all impressed. I submitted, "Sir, the kick does not seem to have achieved much; otherwise these lakhs would have been entirely forgotten in thirty years."

Hence the question is not that of renunciation but is that of realization. In the absence of realization even renunciation may feed your egotism and cause it to swell. The assumption that things are mine is wrong, not the assumption that things exist. There are two phases of misguided attitude. One is that of the hedonist who says, "These are mine I will enjoy them." The other is that of the renouncer who says, "These are mine. I will leave them off." But both say, "These are mine." Real knowledge reveals a third fact. It says, "Whatever is, is God's. Neither mine nor thine. We ourselves are not ours. I really am not. Egotism is thus a delusion. Everything is taking place. I am only a part of that process." If this attitude is maintained, life becomes as natural and easily accessible as water and air. Such a life is a life of sacrifice. Such a life is a life of love. Love of God means forsaking egotism.

Malukadasa has said: birds do not work, the python does not seek a job, and that Rama gives them plenty. People have misunderstood these lines. They say that Malukadasa wants us not to do anything. This, however, is not the correct interpretation. Birds do work from sunrise to sunset. They build nests, peck at grains. What Maluka means is that birds are not self-conscious. If the idea of "I am" must disappear, desire to acquire -- possessiveness -- must go. The attitude that these are mine should vanish. If this attitude develops, love of God too develops. When the development is complete and the feeling "I really am not" is generated, the revolution of which I have been talking takes place. There is a Sufi song. A lover knocks at the door of the beloved. He hears a question coming from within, "Who are you?" He says, "I am your lover." Silence prevails within. Again he knocks and says, "Please answer." After a long pause a reply is heard, "You may go back. There is no space in this house sufficient for two." The lover goes back. Years pass off. Rains set in. Summer and winter come and go. The moon rises and sets. The lover returns again and knocks at the door. The same question is heard once again, "Who are you?" He says, "You yourself". The song narrates that the door then opens. If I were to compose this song, I would have thought that the time had not come for the door to open. The awareness of "you are" indicates the existence of "I am". I would have compelled the lover to go back once again, and the story would progress a little further thus: when the lover says "you yourself", silence prevails again. After waiting for a long time the lover says, "Let the door be opened now. It is not me; you alone are." To this she replies, "He who is conscious of oneness is conscious of both. He who remembers 'you' does remember 'I'. In this room only one can stay. "The lover retires. Days glide into years but he does not come back, for he has no idea that he has to go anywhere, to return to his beloved, then the beloved herself goes to him and says, "My love! come on. The door is open." Just as "I" vanishes, 'you' too vanishes. What remains alone is present -- that which is sought. After the elimination of "I" and "you" what remains is "God". Where "I" and "you" disappear, the resultant is the Eternal Being, the Beginningless and the endless

Existence. It is an ocean of consciousness, the Supreme Being who can be known and lived. We are in it, we stand in it and we live in it. But we do not realize it. We do not feel it within. We do not recognize it. We are full of this "we" or "I" in us. We are not relieved of it. He who is void of "I-ness" is indeed full. Eliminate this "I-ness". It is for this that I have mentioned the three links. He who merges himself into love steps into the void of fullness. Move on step by step. Get lost in love drop by drop. In the end lose yourself into it even as a drop of water loses itself into the ocean. Are you not aware that the tiny drop becomes the vast ocean once it loses itself?

Wings of Love and Random Thought

Chapter #3

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1. To which religion do I belong? To none. Dharma in the sense of virtue, piety, justice, equity, decorum etc. has a real existence. But in the sense of religious cults and sects it has no existence whatsoever. The unreal existence of the so-called cults and sects has obstructed the manifestation of the real dharma. To foster the true religious spirit what is necessary is the dissolution of all cults. That is why I do not belong to any particular religion, sect, or cult. He who aspires to belong to real virtue need not belong to religions. Establishment of organized religions is verily to encourage evil that lives and flourishes in the name of religion. Evil is possibly worried on account of virtue: but it is jubilant over religions. I do not belong to any religion because I would not be of the Devil's party. I have been told that one fine morning Satan and his disciples were pursuing some one engaged in the quest of Truth. Hence it was natural for Satan to be worried over him. His disciples informed him that Truth had been attained by that devout seeker. Seeing his disciples bewildered, Satan consoled them saying. "Oh, don't worry yet. Let this fact be known in every city. Let the people flock to him and make strenuous efforts to see that they frame codes and canons and organize themselves into a sect. You need no longer worry about anything."

2. What connection do "I" and "mine" have with "Truth"? With dharma? How can Truth be my Truth? How can dharma be my dharma? Truth cannot be my Truth and my truth cannot be Truth.

3. Thought cannot transcend the known. Howsoever high it may soar up, it is impossible for it to go beyond the frontiers of the known. Thought is the source of all that is known, and the extent of the known is its life. It is the essence of our past experiences, and recollection is its dwelling-place. But while recollection is dead and defunct and thought

too is lifeless, Truth, though unknown, is life. That is precisely why thought is incompetent to lead anyone to Truth. Its entry into the living and the unknown is forbidden. Well may fishes live for a few moments out of water but it is impossible for thought to take even a step beyond the ambit of the dead recollections and of the 'known'.

4. In order to realize 'existence' one has necessarily to face 'non-existence'. Encompassed by it, one realizes that existence can be known, recognized and lived. Surrounded by the vast ocean of non-existence, one can have the intense experience of existence. For the same reason those who thirst for the realization of Truth have, of necessity, to enter the orbit of the void and those who are desirous of living their lives in their perfection and completeness must necessarily woo death. I am reminded of an event that took place one evening. I was then in an out-of-the-way village. The earthen lamps had been lit towards the evening. As darkness had not yet set in, it appeared as if the lamp had no flicker at all. Had the lamp been sentient enough it could have realized at once that it did not have any light of its own. In the presence of the blazing midday sun it would not possibly have the faintest idea that it was itself luminous. But as the darkness advanced the lamps began gradually to shed their brilliance. The nocturnal darkness was steadily thickening, making this brilliance more and more lustrous. As the new-moon night gathered intensity, I continued to engage myself in observing liveliness and vitality developing in the flame of the lamp. Now, if the lamp had known itself, it would have realized that it was no less than the sun. This event kindled a thought in me. Both the lamp and the flame were the same, there being no change in the lamp. The change had been in the darkness. But in the background of the developing gloom the brilliance of the lamp clearly manifested itself. The darkness had helped the lamp to manifest and assert itself completely. This is true of the existence of the self. If it is encompassed by existence, it is not clearly realized; when the mind becomes a void in every respect, the full refulgence of the soul becomes manifest. Only through the door of non-existence can one gain access to existence.

5. Where does this mad race after wealth, fame, renunciation and knowledge lead man? Where does the ambitious mind that rushes headlong take man? When I reflect on this, I am reminded of a dream which I have never been able to forget. In this dream which I had seen quite a number of times, a long ladder made its appearance with its upper end invariably lost in the clouds. It seemed as though the ladder was one that led to the sky. Urged by an irrepressible desire to reach the sky, I began to climb the rungs. Each rung was climbed with great difficulty. Breathing was hard, and beads of sweat flowed from my forehead. Filled as I was with the desire to reach the sky, I went on climbing the ladder, but suffocation soon set in, and the desperate heart was about to give up the attempt. But at the psychological moment it was realized that I was not the sole climber, nor was mine the only ladder. There were infinite numbers of such ladders and endless was the number of persons climbing them. An intense sense of rivalry surges up on seeing them climbing on, and I too climb with accelerated rapidity. This mad race of ascending and employing all our might in the endeavour continues till it culminates in the fading away of the dream which was always the same. The ultimate rung was at last reached. There was no rung beyond! Turning round, it was realized that there was no ladder at all. The descent, the fall from that great height, more arduous and painful than the ascent, set in. It appeared that death was inevitable, and, to be sure, death it was. The

shock of that death invariably wrecked my sleep, but the dream pointed to a great truth. Thenceforward our so-called life in its entirety began to appear as an extension and continuation of that dream. Is there not in dreams something reminiscent of every mad rush in which mankind is involved? Do not all mad rushes terminate in death? Again, what does death mean? Does it not mean that there is no higher rung in the ladder? Death is the end of the rush of life. It concludes futurity. It means the impossibility of further possibilities. The racing, rushing mind leads a person to great heights. What more can death be than a downfall from that height? Death inevitably steps in wherever there is a mad rush. No matter whether the rush is after wealth, or religion, after enjoyment or renunciation. Moreover, where there is rush there is dream; where there is no rush, or racing mind there is truth. Life too is only there, such a life as has no death.

6. Words, scriptures, cults and tenets are meant to keep the soul fettered to the shore which is no other than slavery. He who gets tied up in the shackles of slavery is denied the freedom of limitless ocean. To enjoy the voyage in the sea one has to get released from the shores. Bonds have to be broken for attaining freedom. Anglers fix a lump of dough to the hook for catching the fish. Tempted by the dough, the fish is caught in the hook. Similar are the hooks of mental slavery which are invariably coated with the dough of apparent security. In the name of security people are always divested of freedom. This is an old conspiracy. And he who is not vigilant and alert in the face of this conspiracy will never attain that life and bliss which lie embedded in the freedom of consciousness. There is no greater value, experience, or acquisition than freedom, because Truth can be realized only through it. Whoever is opposed to the freedom of man's soul is his enemy. Temptation of security is the principal enemy. Excessive desire for security turns out to be a prison for the soul. This craving for security leads to superstitions and blind traditions which grip the mind. On eschewing these, we are seized with a vague fear because the well-known ground shifts and treading on strange grounds becomes inevitable. That is why, vampires, whether they be political leaders or religious priests, never wish to see us free from fear, because fear alone is the mainstay for their activities of extortion. For fear alone people cling to what is well-known and most popular even if it happens to be untrue. With an eye on his own safety no such man dares stray even an inch from the accepted traditions and recognized values of the rabble and the organized society, even though those traditions and values may be founded on blind belief and ignorance. Ultimately this fear deadens and blunts his capacity to think. For thought leads him to the realm of revolt. Thought is not faced with any more important activity than that of saving the freedom of the individual as long as the dragnet of extortion is spread around him and a well-planned and neatly executed conspiracy to destroy his individuality is going on. Political and economic slavery is nothing in comparison to the slavery that fetters the conscience of the individual to words and scriptures in the name of Truth. Being subtle, this slavery cannot be seen or felt. It is so deep that the individual accepts it to be as thick as his blood or bones. I oppose this slavery, because of it millions of souls have been deprived of the solar brilliance of Truth. Their hearts have not realized that liberation the absence of which deprives a man of experiencing the bliss and harmony of his own existence. A subservient mind and the supreme soul can never meet together since the supreme soul is brilliance and the subservient mind is the dense darkness.

7. Once I stayed in a building that had no window. it was a pretty old building. I said to the landlord, "Your building is like the mind of man. There is no window in it. You have not made arrangements for the convenient entry of light, of the open sky, and of fresh air." He said, "The building is very old." I said, "The mind of man too is very old." In fact, being old is itself an evidence of its incapacity to grapple with the problems of life. Closure is death. It is a preparation for being entombed for ever. Yet, if you will, you can be in contact with the open sky by demolishing the wall that hides it. Is it not proper for what is within the walls to be in touch with what is without? Are the walls so precious that to reach the sky by pulling them down will be costlier? Verily the person encircled by walls cannot realize the real horizon of life. How fatal is it to be isolated from the sky owing to these old walls! How self-ruinous it is to be isolated from soul owing to the old mind!

8. That individual is not alive at all who at the time of crisis does not feel the existence of the self. Somehow he goes on living, or, rather, dying. In regard to the existence of the self he is not yet infused with deliberation. Deliberation on life, at the very outset, makes a man wake up to the truth of death. The possibility of death deepens into a crisis. And the crisis ushers in the auspicious beginning of a search after the self. The beginning of the quest in the direction of Truth is marked by a crisis. A crisis also marks the moment of transit from death to immortality. That is exactly why I say, "Has a crisis in your life set in?" If not, how can the search after Truth be inaugurated? Man's consciousness must of necessity meet with a crisis. Crisis means meeting face to face the possibility of the cessation of the self. It is from this that the desire to attain supreme existence is generated and a campaign for its acquisition is inaugurated. Never has anyone set forth on a quest after life without peeping into the eyes of death, nor can he do so. Life is a quest; but until death is faced, this quest does not become the quest of life. Until then man goes on searching for insignificant trifles and goes on dying in vain. While he is still involved in trifles, death comes to gather him. But the moment his eyes face death, an unprecedented crisis is experienced. This shock is an impediment in his dreamy drowsiness. It becomes impossible to sleep any longer. This hour -- this hour of crisis -- wakens him to the possibilities of life. Then his consciousness becomes engaged in surmounting death. That is precisely why I say, go ahead and ferret out death. Better that you go in quest of it before it comes in quest of you. There is no other matter of everlasting import than this.

9. A sage had come. He used to say, "I am thinking about immortality." T told him, "it is not possible to think about immortality because whatever comes within the ambit of thinking cannot be immortal. Thought is mortal. How can it have any contact with the immortal? It would be better if you think about mortality. Search for death and recognize it. Facing death squarely takes the soul to immortality. But we are frightened of death and begin to deliberate on immortality. Is not our deliberation on immortality evolved out of the fear of death? Can that mind succeed in the acquisition of immortality, the mind that is scared of death? Friend, there is no fear in death; death is in fear. Death is unknown, unfamiliar. How then, can you fear it? How can you fear that of which you have no idea at all? One is afraid of missing and losing the known, the familiar. "Fear of death" is actually not "of death" but of losing what we know and recognize as life. This fear when

solidified is transformed into death. That is why I say, "Search for death." This quest is fruitful, because at the end of that it is not death that is obtained. What is obtained is immortality itself.

10. I am opposed to blind belief and superstition. In fact, every belief is blind. The power of discrimination cannot become keen and fiery, should there be beliefs. If a healthy child is made to walk on crutches rather than on his legs, his legs would not function properly when he grows old. They would become lame. Similarly habitual dependence on beliefs makes the intellect lame. Can there be a greater adversity in man's life than the crippled intellect? But this is what beliefs bring about. In reality neither the society nor the nation ever wishes that the individuals should develop their faculty of thinking. All active tyrants and oppressors holding the reins of administration feel their existence endangered if men develop their faculty of thinking. There is a possibility of revolution in all successful quests after Truth. The so-called organized societies, religions, and kingdoms have their edifices founded on untruths. Hence? collective effort is made the moment a baby is born to fetter him in bondage and make him dependent on beliefs. All types of educational systems so far have been doing only this. The avowed aim of education is to liberate man. But actually what is achieved is this. In the mind of the individual, restraints of subtle mental slavery are shrewdly infused. The system does not impart thinking but it inculcates beliefs. Since it does not encourage doubts and revolts, the products of such a system of education are usually incompetent to think independently. The active, lively quest for Truth springs from doubts, and not from beliefs. There is no healthier motive power than healthy doubts that help in quest for truth. Faith does not encourage quest; it is the outcome at the end. A well-planned investigation begins with doubts and concludes with faith and belief. The ill-organized investigation sets out with faith but lives and concludes in doubts. The faith in this instance cannot be founded on reality. How can the faith founded on belief be true? Perfect knowledge gives birth to true faith. Perfect knowledge and true faith go together. Belief is ignorance and True faith is perfect knowledge. Faith that is bought is only belief. Faith that is thrust and superimposed upon you is only belief. Faith that is practised is only belief. But faith that spontaneously wakes up within us, faith that voluntarily and naturally comes to us illuminated by perfect knowledge, can alone be the true faith. Such a faith need not be fetched from outside nor need it be learnt. It comes of itself. What has to be learned is doubt, the right kind of doubt. Right doubt marks the mode and process of attaining true faith. Doubt does not mean disbelief because disbelief is merely the negative aspect of belief. If doubt were to be disbelief it becomes unhealthy and incomplete. Doubt is neither belief nor disbelief. It is unfettered inquisitiveness. It is the irrepressible predilection for quest. It is the desire to attain knowledge. It is incessant investigation. It is the firm resolve not to stop anywhere before reaching Truth, the truth that falls within the ambit of one's own experience. As far as I can see, both belief and disbelief, are impediments. Doubt is the means of achievement. Only doubt can lead one ultimately to Truth. There was a person in quest after Truth. After years of search he came to a sage. The cave of the sage was filled with tomes and tomes of sacred scriptures. The topics were infinite in number. Scriptures and scriptures alone were seen as far as the eyes could reach. The sage said to him, "The entire knowledge of the universe is preserved in these scriptures. The texts full of mysterious secrets have been collected and preserved here, only for those who come here

in their search for Truth. Every one of these searchers can take any single scripture of his choice. What is the scripture you wish to have?" The aspirant young man saw the endless chain of tomes, pondered over it for a while and said -- "Please give me that Text which supplies everything that all other texts profess to contain". The old sage laughed on hearing this and said -- "Of course have such a text but rarely does anyone come in search for it." Then the sage handed over to him a scriptural text whereon it was written "Scripture of the greatest doubt!" I too wish to give everyone the self-same scripture because it is only this scripture that can liberate the searcher after truth from the tangled mass of other scriptures and lead him to Eternal Truth.

11. I was standing on the bank of a river. It was a small stream. In the gathering gloom of the dusk, the village belles were hastening homeward with their earthen pitchers filled with water. I observed that one has to stoop down before one can draw water from the river. One has to know the art of stooping to fill oneself with water from the fountain of life. But man is gradually forgetting the art of bending down. His powerful ego does not let him stoop. Hence all love and fervent prayer are vanishing slowly. In fact, whatever is of any significance has begun to be evanescent. Life has become a sheer struggle instead of the sweet harmony and exquisite beauty that it ought to be. Only struggle remains where the mysterious secret of bending and yielding is unknown. It is not surprising at all if unrelenting and unlimited egotism becomes the source of unbearable pain where the hearty sympathy of bending down is unrecognized. Yielding and relenting links up the individual and the group. Eagerness not to yield and relent separates him from the universal existence. Of course this bending down must be spontaneous and natural. Otherwise it too becomes an affectation, an effusion of rank egotism. Relenting, which is the outcome of deliberate thinking, is not real and complete because behind it, in some hidden corner, there is an element of resistance as well. Inasmuch as it springs from the intellectual level, it is unreal, for the full force of the heart, of all the vital parts is not a witness to it. Further, this type of yielding brings in a subsequent remorse, because, the ego feels hurt. (When one bends in opposition to the ego, the latter takes revenge on one in the form of remorse.) Only when the human heart is devoid of egotism does it bend naturally and perfectly. This stooping should be as natural and complete in every detail as the bending down of tiny blades of grass in a violent storm. They identify themselves with the stormy gusts of wind, as it were. They have no hostility towards the raging storm nor are they conscious of any egotism within themselves. The day when man assimilates this type of spontaneous bending and yielding, the mysterious secrets of the supreme soul lie bare in front of him. A certain young man once said to a Fakir, "Formerly there had been such persons as had seen the supreme Godhead with their own eyes. How is it that we do not have such persons now?" The venerable gentleman had replied, "Because now-a-days no one is ready to bow down so low!" Certainly, stooping down is necessary to have one's fill at the fountain of the Supreme Soul. How can they who stand near the bank with nose haughtily lifted up fill their pitchers with water?

12. There is nothing more essential and inevitable than a humble and free brain for the acquisition of perfect knowledge. But, as a rule, the brain is neither humble nor free. It is stricken with egotistical pride and imprisoned rigorously by obsessions and prejudices. Egotism fetters it from within and bias and obsession from without. Thus imprisoned, the

human intellect gradually loses its entire capacity to rip open the seal covering Truth. Someone said to Albert Einstein, "What is that paramount principle without which scientific investigation is impossible?" Do you know what Einstein said in reply? The questioner could not have imagined even in his dream the ready reply that was offered. We said, "Absence of egotism".

Certainly the key to perfect knowledge is absence of egotism. Egotism is ignorance. The mind which is filled with the notion of "I" is so occupied that it has barely any space left in it worthy of receiving the guest, Truth. If it is free from "I-ness", Truth could reside there. The house of the heart is too narrow. Two entities cannot get adequate accommodation in it. Friend, Kabir was not wrong in what he had said. That street, that pathway is certainly narrow. It is egotism that collects together obsessions and complexes. What an easier way can there be to appear wise though living in ignorance? It is for further growth and development that egotism gathers knowledge. Armed with it, it assumes that it is well-protected. Holding steadfastly to pet ideas and notions is the means to guard egotism. Hence disputes on thoughts very soon turn out to be fights amongst egotisms. Thereafter, the entire force rests round the centre of "My Truth", "My Religion", "My Scripture", "My God" and not on Truth, Religion, Scripture and God. Is it not "I" that rests on these, centres round these? How can there be Truth where "I" asserts itself? How can there be "Religion?" How can there be perfect knowledge? Truth removes itself to the extent to which "I" asserts itself. In this situation the ego accepts the tenets and the words of the scripture as Truth and remains content. There is an element of fear in this contentment. There is the possibility of what has been accepted as Truth turning out to be untruth and suspicion. For the same reason, the ego begins to proclaim the accepted Truth in order to stabilize its own belief. It is prepared even to die for its sake. It is afraid of even listening to anything controverting the accepted Truth because of the possibility at any time of such facts emerging as would make the accepted Truth an untruth. In these circumstances he does not wish to hear nor even to think. He wishes to remain complacent in the blind belief in what he has already accepted. But this attitude is fatal to his search for Truth. In accepting cheap contentment he cannot find real Truth. For the sake of reaching Truth he has to eschew complacency. The aim is Truth and not this satisfaction. When Truth is acquired, satisfaction too follows in its wake like a shadow. He who girds up his loins to seek Truth at any cost certainly attains satisfaction too but he who begins to seek satisfaction is denied access to Truth and eventually to satisfaction as well.

13. Love is liberation. Love's bondage itself is liberation. He who binds himself with the infinite bonds of love attains liberation. I say, seek not liberation; seek love. Because the search for liberation often leads to the fetters of egotism; on the other hand, the search for love cannot even start before the destruction of egotism. Search for love means getting ready to destroy egotism. And the destruction of egotism is itself liberation. The egotist dreams of acquiring the world. Afraid of death, it dreams of attaining salvation. He who does not understand it, falls into self-deception. This world, its slavery and bondage co-exist with egotism. Isn't egotism itself a bondage? Isn't that the source of all bondages? How can the seeds of salvation spread on that land? What can be more stupid and absurd than the desire of egotism to get liberated? For salvation, it is not the ego that has to be liberated but we have to be liberated from the ego. That is why egotism is not afraid of

renunciation, self-sacrifice, religion, perfect knowledge or even salvation. It is afraid of love. It can escape from renunciation, self-sacrifice or aspiration for salvation. But it is impossible for it to escape from love. Love is its death. Love is not its salvation, it is liberation from it.

14. I do not live in a different world. I live, in that world alone where everyone lives. But, certainly, my way of seeing life is altogether changed. And this change is, as it were, the change of the world itself, because in our vision we see what we are. Our vision alone is our world and our life. As is the vision, so is the creation. If life seems to be miserable, know that the creation is miserable. Then try to alter the vision and not the life.

Transformation of vision means transformation of the self. Everything depends on our own self. Hell and heaven live in our own self. The worldly existence and salvation too abide in our own self. What is there remains the same for ever, but while one vision makes it a bondage, another makes it a salvation. Seen from the point of egotism, life becomes hell, for that vision is all-opposing. I can remain "I" only by being different from and opposed to universal existence. The endeavour to become "I" is an attempt at opposing and struggle with the "All". The endeavour results in worry and distress. It leads to the fear of destruction and death. There is no wonder if misery steps in as the result of attaining what is untrue and impossible. But we can view the world from the point of egolessness too. The "I" is in opposition to the "All". The "not I" is a combination of the "All". Know that existence is unsevered and indivisible. All severed pieces and divisions are the products of human fancy, of the intellect. If "I am", I am only a piece, a part. If "I am not", I am in the undivided whole. Being in a part is bondage, being in a whole is liberation. If "I am", I am in misery, because that existence is an eternal conflict, an endless war. If "I am not", I am in bliss because not-being is infinite peace. Liberated from "I", our consciousness is released from tradition. The separation from the "I" is the merger into the Supreme Soul.

15. It is sheer foolishness to oppose nature. We cannot attain the Supreme Soul by opposing nature for the simple reason that the Supreme Soul lies hidden in nature. For the same reason, we shall have to co-operate with it. Nature is a curtain to be raised up. It is part and parcel of the godhead, his manifestation. He sits there, deeply embedded in it. By quarrelling with nature we can never hope to approach Him, to attain enlightenment. But God is always pitted against Nature. We are pitted against life itself, against all that sustains us. Man's spiritual poverty is the result of this quarrel. He has been told to seek God by fighting Nature, while God is in Nature and Nature is in God. There is no God apart from Nature. God is co-extensive with Nature. Educational systems antagonistic to nature have snatched away from man's life the ladder that takes him to God. Nature is the bridge. We are not to stop on it. We have certainly to pass over it, not to quarrel with it. It assists us. It is the road that leads us to our destination. There is no other way apart from it. We have to love Nature, with all our heart. Love alone can throw open its gates, through which we can see Him who is known as the Supreme Soul. But we have been told that Nature is a bondage, a prison, a sin. These wrong teachings have poisoned man's mind, spoiling his love of nature and preventing the possibility of perfect knowledge. This has resulted in widening the gulf between him and God. It is incumbent to bring back Nature to man's life before attempting to bring God to his life. It is impossible to

instal God in the heart of man before installing Nature in it. Love of Nature eventually transforms itself into a prayer unto God. Liberation is not from Nature but in Nature.

16. We were seated near a mountain stream. Just below it there was a water-logged pool with varieties of fish swimming about. On the nearby sand-bank there were many shells and conches. I took some of these and said to those near by, "See, there are many unborn creatures in these shells. When they are strong enough to break open the shells, they will be born." Are there not similar unborn creatures within us? Is there no hard coating like this shell encompassing us? Is not our egotistic self like the shell? Can't we too give birth to that unborn life by breaking this ego? The "I" stands opposed to the birth of that life. It knows very well how to protect itself. Of course, it protects itself by worldly assets, status, position, and fame. But in a more subtle form, it protects itself by religion, polity, merit, ideal, salvation etc. It wishes to survive, flourish and prosper. But let us remember that the stronger it grows, the dimmer becomes the chance of that life of which it is but the sheath. The ruthless hardness of egotism brings about the death of the unborn soul in the womb itself. It is necessary that egotism should die for bringing about the birth of the soul.

17. What is it that I say? Words? No. No. Those who hear my words alone cannot understand what I talk about. Are we engaged in intellectual deliberations? No. No. We are not doing anything of the sort. In fact, we are not deliberating at all. Instead, we are seeking a situation in life, an aspect of existence. We are seeking entry into pure existence.... But then certainly understanding means an entry, a penetration, besides understanding. Life can be understood only after penetrating into it. Love can be felt only by passing through love, not through deliberation. We have to live life. Do I make you understand my word? Do not worry to understand it. Worry will not let you understand. Just think and see. Flowers blossom on the trees. Just look out. What wonderful flowers adorn the Gulmohur trees. Do we ponder over them or see them? The cuckoo is cooing. Do we ponder over it or hear it? Similarly listen and see what I say. It is not deliberation but sharp and penetrating vision that can take you as far as its meaning. Deliberation shudders at words. But vision pierces through silence. Deliberation goes on pondering in vain. But vision unfolds the meaning. Vision becomes deeper to the extent that it is free from deliberation. Deliberation entails time. It is an action. On the other hand, there is no element of time in realization, in inner vision. It is the stage of understanding excessively developed. Has it not been realized in the moments of experiences of beauty, love or bliss? Is it not profound consciousness alone that remains at the moment? Do not thoughts bid good-bye then? Truth, beauty, happiness, whatever is there in life, can only be known in the quietude and waveless stillness of thoughtlessness and not in the restless billows of thoughts.

18. I consider the so-called renunciation no better than ignorance. As far as I can see, how can there be renunciation where there is knowledge? In ignorance, there is detachment because there is attachment too; there is merit because there is sin also. But he who knows it becomes free from the tangle of attachments and detachments. In that state of realization there is no clash between attachments and detachments. That is the state of non-dual realization of truth where there are no worldly pleasures, no

renunciation. That is the state of absolute truth and pure existence. Ignorance thrives on duality, letting the mind wander from one extreme to another. When enjoyments leave us, renunciation steps in. And what is this renunciation? Is it not the opposite of enjoyment? What is detachment? Is it not the opposite of attachment or escape from the world in the opposite direction? But let us remember that it gets entangled with whatever it is inimical to. For the same reason, enmity can become a new form of slavery. But it is not independence. Independence is not attained by opposing untruth or running away from it. Independence lies in the knowledge of Truth. Truth and truth alone makes us liberated.

19. What is Truth? Any tenet? Any cult? Any association? Any scripture? Any word? No, because tenet is death and Truth is life itself. Truth is not a cult, because there is no path leading to it. How can a known or unknown path lead to the unknown? Truth is not an association too; because it is an experience transcending time... extremely individualistic and personal.... How can it be put in a limited circle in the current of Time? Truth is not a scripture because all scriptures are man-made whereas Truth is unformulated, uncreated, beginningless and endless. Truth is not a word or sound. Sounds are born and they disappear whereas Truth exists for ever. It is eternal and permanent. Then, what is it? In fact, there is no truth in the language of "what?" It exists and what exists, that alone is that. It cannot be thought of or pondered about, although it can be lived in. Thoughts and ponderings alone are obstacles to being in it. In the cadence of music, in the fullness of love, in the beauty of nature, the individual practically ceases to exist. What exists then is Truth. The individual himself is untruth. The non-individual is truth. The "I" is untruth. The Brahman is Truth.

20. The individual is enmeshed. So, too, is society. The problem of the world is the same as the problem of the individual. How is the individual faced with a problem? The individual is not in the problem, he himself is the problem His individualistic consciousness itself is the problem. His egotistic consciousness itself is the problem. If from "I am" the "I" ceases to exist and the experience "am" alone persists, the problem vanishes; the solution knocks at the door. Really life is a sheer existence. It is a natural flow of the current. The "I" is a superimposition on that flow. The "I" is a unnatural attempt to dam up that natural flow. Seek the "I" in yourself. It is nowhere to be found. There is life, there is being, but there is no "I"? We build up our entire life on this "I". What wonder is there if we are unable to experience peace in this life? Our religion, our civilization, everything stands on this "I". Is it not then natural if worry, tension, madness and bewilderment are generated by them. Whatever is built up on the site of "I" is unsound and unsafe. It is only the life built up round the "I" that undergoes transmigration. It is the "I" that is born and dies. Only dreams are born and disappear. What exists cannot have birth or death. It merely exists -- exists -- exists. Forget the "I". Leave it off. Wake up in the existence. Live in it. The "I" does not let you wake up in the existence. It does not let you live in it. It lingers either in the past or in its echo, the future, whereas life is the eternal present... always here and now. He who wakes up in the present shaking off the "I" realizes that the nectar of life, truth, beauty and music have encompassed him from all sides, from all quarters, from within and without, just as the fish is encompassed by the sea.

21. I know only two types of men -- those who have turned their backs on Truth and those who have opened their eyes to it. There is no other type apart from these two.

22. The power of thinking is exactly like the power of electricity or gravitation. We are familiar with the utility of electricity but all of us are not equally aware of the power of thinking. And those of us who have known it cannot utilize it, because for utilizing it, it becomes necessary to transform the individuality of the self from its very root.

23. Between Truth and the Self there is no gulf which we cannot bridge except that of cowardice.

24. How wonderful is man! Within him there abides the dirt of filthy rubbish as well as the precious store of gold. What we receive is entirely in our hands.

25. The moment we realize the Lord within, visions of Him begin to emerge everywhere. We have the external experience of only that which is within us. If the Lord is invisible, understand that you have not sought Him yet, within.

26. Truth is not to be created. If the creation of anything is possible, know that it is untruth. Vision of truth is possible but not its creation. Truth is always present if only the self has eyes to see it.

27. It is necessary to transform the self into a mirror and to know that which exists. The shadows of thoughts cause the mind to be deformed. As thoughts subside and the mind becomes void, that mirror is acquired which is capable of reflecting Truth.

28. What has become existent can also become non-existent. What is done can also be undone. If man is capable of being entangled in action, he is also capable of being liberated. In his dependence lies his freedom.

29. Freedom is the form of the soul. If there is the will, one can rid of one's dependence in a moment. Freedom is in proportion to the will.

30. I die every day.... In fact, I die every moment. I have known this as the secret of life, of long life. He who bears the burden of the past becomes dead as the result of bearing the burden of the dead.

31. Even for the longest journey of life, it is enough if one has the courage to take one step, because no one can walk more than one step at a time. Even a journey of thousands of miles begins and ends with but one step.

32. What is this search for the Lord? It the search for the lost home. In this world man but a homeless stranger.

33. Do you ask me how Truth is defined? I say there is no definition of Truth, for how can there be the definition of the Self through the self?

Pilate had asked Christ, "What is Truth?" Christ just looked at him and kept quiet. Truth is no tenet, no sound. It is an experience of the extreme depth of the self. It is the identification with "what exists".

Wings of Love and Random Thought

Chapter #4

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34. We live life only when we touch our ultimate depth.... Otherwise we simply exist. The difference between simple existence and living life is as much as the difference between dying and living.

35. What is the meaning of dharma? It means the movement from the mud to the lotus. Where there is mud there is lotus too. But what a lot of difference!

36. Dharma is not a formless conception. It is a perceptible function. It is not a thought; it is an experience. The cultivation of the attitude that those things that cause misery to us should not torment others, is dharma.

37. Do not keep dharma in the mouth. Allow it to go into the belly and be absorbed in the blood. The belly cannot be filled if the morsel of bread is kept only in the mouth.

38. Dharma means death -- death of the self. How can he whose self is dead attain the universal? Shake off the ego. Give up self-worship. Eschewing self-worship is the worship of the Supreme Soul.

39. I urge you to light the lamp of free thinking. Do not behave like a slave to anybody by accepting his thoughts. Truth belongs to those who are their own masters.

40. Life is like a flute, hollow and void within but possessing infinite latent possibilities of music. The extent of music produced therefrom depends on the extent to which one plays on it.

41. I do not ask you to believe in others, for that is the result of the want of belief in your own self.

42. There is an invisible fire that scorches the self incessantly. It is the fire of avarice, which burns like a torch when one holds it aloft against the gust of wind and allows oneself to be burnt and then begins to blame the gust of wind.
43. A very small lamp dispels the mass of darkness accumulated over years. Similarly the tiniest ray of self-understanding removes the ignorance accumulated through hundreds of births.
44. Do you wish to serve? But remember that a person drowning in the vast ocean cannot rescue another person drowning similarly.
45. If you wish to know God, the path is silence. Whatever is said about God becomes untruth exactly for the reason that it is said after all.
46. Man is a journey, journey to the infinite, the eternal. Neitzsche has said, "The greatness of man lies in this that he is the bridge, not the goal." I, too, say the same.
47. Friend, do not bind yourself to disciplinary measure. Real discipline sets in when discrimination wakes up and one is liberated -- not by binding oneself.
48. Education aims at bringing out what lies hidden in the individual. It is not an external ideal or behest but a revelation of the inner being.
49. I am against that education which moulds and shapes individuals according to predetermined ideals. Such educational methods do not develop individuality, they just blunt it. I do not favour that education too which is based on fear, fear of punishment or of failure. What else can be more poisonous than fear? I am averse to a superimposed discipline too because what more is it than a mere preparation for slavery?
50. There is nothing simpler than greatness. In fact, simplicity itself is greatness.
51. Remember one truth for ever. Deception practised on others is eventually the deception practised by one on oneself, because what we do to others eventually returns to us.
52. Do you know that no man has ever been deceived by others so much as he has been deceived by himself.
53. Light travels in a straight line. Truth and dharma too travel in straight lines. If the line of your life's travel is not straight, know that your life is moving towards darkness, evil, and untruth.
54. Dharma is a path. No path can be traversed by merely knowing it, but it can be traversed by realizing what it is -- by actually treading on it.

55. Truth is not opposed to untruth. That which is opposed to untruth is only untruth. In fact, all extremes are untruths. Truth is the mean between the extremes, that is, it transcends the extremes.
56. When I peep into myself, what do I realize? I realize that salvation is nearer than the earth.
57. The time and labour spent in seeking Truth, the Self, never goes in vain. Eventually it turns out to be the time saved and labour rendered meaningful.
58. I have realized untruth as a heap of straw. It has no strength at all. The tiniest spark of truth can reduce it to ashes.
59. The greatest respect that we can show to dharma is that we should utilize it and live it. He who only discusses it but does not live it, betrays his disbelief in his own discussion and deliberation.
60. What is the aim of dharma? It is the rousing and awakening of the slumbering superman in man. Well, this and this alone is the aim of dharma.
61. Life is not a problem with solutions lying outside. Life's solution is found in life itself, in living it.
62. The greatest liberation is the liberation of the self from the self. Usually we remain oblivious of the fact that we ourselves are the toughest bondage and the heaviest burden on ourselves.
63. Man does not receive gentlemanliness readymade. He has to build it up himself. This is both a blessing and a bane. It is a blessing because he is free to assume whatever form he chooses; it is a bane because he, by nature indolent, may not do anything at all. There is a possibility that he may die without building up himself.
64. Know precisely that you have to get rid of your ego. Egotism is the source of darkness. It disappears as soon as the lustre of self realization creeps in.
65. Man does not become God by developing himself. If only he opens himself fully, he is God here and now itself. In my view, the complete realization of the self is the only realization worth having.
66. Man has to struggle and fight against his ego, against the "I" of the self. He has to start a revolution against the ego, the self. To remain encompassed by the ego is to live in the world. To get out of the ego is to live in the Supreme Soul. Virtually, man is in a sense the Supreme Soul Itself.
67. Do not try to run away from the "I". It is impossible to run away from it because even if you run away, it is there with you. Rather than run away from it, catch hold of it with

full force. He who dives deep into the self realizes, to the extent to which he penetrates, that it has no real existence whatever.

68. Do you want proofs for the existence of God? Is not the existence of consciousness a sufficient proof? Does not a drop of water prove the existence of all the oceans?

69. Do not say that you were 'in prayer' because it would mean that you can get out of prayer as well. He who is out of prayer cannot be in prayer. Prayer is not an activity. It is the perfection and fullness of love.

70. In the search for life, there is nothing more fatal than self-satisfaction. Those who are satisfied with the self are, in a sense, not alive at all. He who is dissatisfied with the self moves ahead in the direction of Truth. Remember that being determinedly rebellious and aware of one's own limitations is being virtuous.

71. Haven't you invented God on being haunted by the fear of death? There is no other untruth than the concept of God based on fear.

72. That which ever exists in the present is Truth. That which is nearest to us is the ultimate Truth. Understand the nearer one, not the distant one. How can he who is ignorant of the one nearby know the distant one? For him who understands the one nearby, nothing distant remains.

73. "Who am I," you asked. Ask yourself, "Where am I?" Search... seek it in yourself. When you do not find yourself anywhere, you will realize who you are. It is in the oblivion of the "I" that the secret of the "I" lies hidden.

74. If Truth remains known, the knowledge of the scriptures is useless.

75. You are trying to know Truth and yet you allow dust to accumulate on your mind? Know that the mind is like a mirror. Wipe it clean. You will see that Truth stands in front of you and that it has always been there before you.

76. In order to get rid of one illusion, do not create another. It is improper to slip into another dream to get rid of an earlier dream. Do not presume to scan and define God. Abandon all conceptual images of God and look. What you see before you is God.

77. When I enter a river for my bath, I leave my clothes on the bank. He who wishes to have his ablution in the Supreme Soul has to leave his entire clothings on the bank. All the garments, all the raiments of individuality. To that great ocean only those who are stark naked, can have access... only those with whom nothing is left. But blessed are those who can renounce everything because by doing so they can receive that which is more than the sum-total of all.

78. Scriptures and tenets are like dry leaves. The verdure of self-experience is neither present in them nor can it enliven them. Only the tree of self-experience can put forth green leaves and lively blossoms.

79. Although I have been searching, I could not find a greater scripture than silence. When I searched through the scriptures, I realized that while they were futile, silence alone was purposeful.

80. Where are you going? That which you seek is not far off from you. If you walk on to find what is nearby, you will be going astray. Stop and see. To realize what is near by, it is enough to stop and see.

81. Salvation is achieved neither by prayer, nor by worship, nor even by faith in religious precepts. Salvation is achieved by leading a peaceful life. I therefore say that to remain peaceful in thought and action is prayer, worship, and true religious austerity.

82. Think of that of which you cannot think at all, and you will be outside the sphere of thinking. Once out, you will come within the self.

83. Do not seek Nirvana (salvation) in place of life. Let your life itself be Nirvana. They who know it, do this. Work not for salvation, but let all actions yield salvation. This is possible. What I say is based on experience. And the day this becomes possible, life becomes beautiful like a full-blown flower, and is filled with fragrance.

84. Do you wish to meditate? Then bear in mind that while you meditate, nothing is before you and nothing is behind you. Let the past perish. Let the future too die. Let memory and imagination become void. There will be no time, no vacuum. You will know that during this void, this moment of emptiness you are in real meditation. The moment of great death is the moment of eternal life as well.

85. You ask me what you have to do for meditation. I say do not do anything. Just be mindful of your breath. Look at the passage of your breath. bear witness to your inhalations and exhalations. Let it not be a strenuous activity but a quiet, languid, restful consciousness. Then, without your knowledge of it, in a natural, unrestricted manner, you will have access to an excessively pleasant situation. You will not be conscious of your entry into it. Suddenly you will experience that you are where you had never been before. And this is the place where, in fact, the consciousness has been for ever.

86. I forgot what I had learnt. I could realize that which alone was worth learning but could not be taught. In order to realize Truth, are you ready to forget whatever you have learnt about Truth? If you say, "yes, come on, the portals of Truth lie open before you.

87. Truth can very well be realized, but it cannot be understood or explained.

88. Truth is like the firmament -- beginningless, endless, and boundless, Is there any doorway and passage leading to the sky? Then, how can there be one in Truth? But, if our

eyes are closed, there is no sky. The same is true of Truth. The opening of the eyes is the entrance and the closing of eyes is the closing of the door.

89. What is it that is experienced in the course of the ecstatic trance? Nothing. There is no trance at all so long as something remains to be known. Trance is the state of union with existence. There is no distance as whatever between the aspirant and the reality around him.

90. Staying in the world but not belonging to it is renunciation. It has often been interpreted in terms a fable, the fable of three monkeys who have closed their eyes to escape evil scenes, the ears to escape evil sounds, and the mouth to escape evil speech. This may be pardonable in the case of monkeys but ridiculous in human beings. Running away from the world for fear is not liberation; but a very subtle and deep bondage. Don't run away from the world but be mindful of the self. In running away there is fear; in being alert there is safety. Nothing other than fearlessness acquired through knowledge can bring us liberty.

91. Can nirvana or moksha be wished for? There is no greater impossibility than a desire for Nirvana, for Nirvana is there where there is no desire. If desire itself is the absence of liberation, how can moksha be wished for? But there are persons desirous of liberation. Then it is but natural that their so-called renunciation assumes the form of a bondage and becomes a part of the world. Moksha is attained naturally, unsolicitedly and undesiredly at the time when the futility of desire is known and it is recognized that it leads to misery, and when the bondages are known and recognized in their subtlest of subtle forms. Thus when it is recognized that the race has been futile, it comes to all end. In fact, the awareness of the desires racing along in the mind is liberation from them. And that liberation alone is moksha.

92. We are suffering. The whole age is suffering. What is the reason? The reason is not far to seek. We know much more than is needed, but have no experience. The brain is intact, while the heart has dwindled into nothing. True self realization comes not from knowledge but from experience. The eyes that illumine the path of life are not of the brain but of the heart. If the heart is blind, nothing can dispel the darkness of life.

93. The intellect can think, but it cannot experience. Experience originates in the heart, the most vital of the vital parts. Thinking devoid of experience is no more than dead. Such dead words and meanings reverberate in our brains, and we are afflicted by their burden. They do not liberate us. On the contrary, they are our bonds. Experience in the heart is essential for liberation and for freedom from burden. Therefore I say, "Don't seek the meaning of Truth, an exposition of Truth. Seek the experience of Truth. Seek life. Dive deep into Truth and remember that only they who become immersed in Truth with full consciousness are liberated from untruth." The intellect makes us float on the surface but the heart takes us to the bottom. The heart, not the intellect, is the way to liberation.

94. There is a lot of difference between the experience of Truth and the exposition of Truth. In expositions we stand outside Truth but in experience we stand inside and

commune with it. It is, therefore, impossible for those who have experience to define Truth. The readiness to indulge in exposition is an index of the want of experience. People ask me, "What is Truth?" All I do to answer them is to keep silent.

95. Knowledge is the understanding of mystery, the acceptance of mystery, the communion with mystery. When all egotism is destroyed and only mystery remains, know that the entry into the holy land of the Supreme Soul has been achieved. And let us know that there is no greater mystery than the quelling of the 'self' because when the self is annihilated, the existence of the Pure Self, the Supreme Self, becomes manifest in its complete grandeur.

96. It is true that man is not an animal, but is it also true that man has become man? His being an animal has become an event of the past but his becoming a man is yet a possibility of the future. Perhaps we are in the middle. This alone is our affliction, this alone our tension and this alone our distress. Those who endeavour and are dissatisfied with their existence in misery and affliction can become men. Gentlemanliness is not acquired, we have to cultivate it ourselves in our own selves. But to become man it is essential to know that not being an animal is not identical with being a man. Moreover, we should not be satisfied with being what we are. A deep and fierce dissatisfaction with the self would help us in our evolution.

97. I can't tell you how distressed I am to see the state of present-day education? Knowledge that is being imparted destroys the power of thinking. In the crowd of thoughts, this power gets crushed. Memory gets trained, but the springs of knowledge remain unrecognized. This trained memory begins to give the illusion of knowledge. The individual who is educated under this so-called system of education is obliged to learn to think and has to unlearn what he has learnt before. I too was obliged to do this. But this was a tedious job. It was as difficult as stripping the skin off one's body, and not like taking off one's clothes. Except this there was no other way. In order to look at life in my own fashion, it was necessary for me to forget what I had learnt and what I had been taught before. In order to secure my own vision, it was necessary to forget the borrowed views. In order to realize my own thought, it was necessary to be free from borrowed ideas. He who has to learn to walk on his own legs has to abandon the support of another man's shoulder. Only when we cease to see through others' eyes do our own eyes open. And let us remember that the person who sees through the eyes of others is blinder than the person born blind.

98. Moral evolution, personal development, touch of eminence, whatever there is of some moment in life, all result from precipitate and reckless daring. What I mean by 'precipitate and reckless daring' is 'an invitation to insecurity', 'a love for the strange and the unknown', 'joy in peril', etc. He who is not prepared to face peril and embrace it, may exist but does not live. (1) What is the greatest of this precipitate and reckless daring? It is to seek the Supreme Soul. No way is more insecure than the way to the Supreme Soul. There is nothing stranger, more unfamiliar and more unknowable than the Supreme Soul. Is there a greater risk, a more calamitous gamble and a more dreadful peril than seeking the Supreme Soul? No. That is why I say that precipitate daring is the greatest of all

virtues. He who is deficient in it is not meant for religion and religion is not meant for him.

[Footnote: (1) Both Krishnamurti and Rajneesh agree that life is really very beautiful to those who have learnt to discover, to revolt, and not to conform and imitate. See R. C. Prasad, THE MYSTIC OF FEELING (Delhi, 1978), p. 50.]

99. The experience of Truth is neither a thought nor a feeling. It is an agitation and throbbing of all the vital constituents of your entire existence. It is not in you but you are in it. It is your form, not a mere experience. It is also larger than you because the universal existence too is embedded in it.

100. Are you so poor that you are completely devoid of dharma? Economic poverty is not a major consideration. True poverty is the spiritual poverty of dharma. In spite of wealth man remains poor, but if he possesses the wealth of dharma he can no longer remain poor. The greatest event in the life of a man is not his mundane success, the building of an empire, and so on, but the search for that wealth which lies hidden in him. I call that wealth dharma. All material wealth is filthy lucre, all internal, spiritual wealth is divine. They who seek worldly wealth seek poverty and they who seek virtue seek real wealth.

101. I had been to a house where I saw a lute. I was struck with the idea that human mind too is like a lute. Mind is an instrument, producing rhythmical and discordant notes. We are responsible for it whatever note is produced. So make your mind an instrument of harmonious melody and Truth. Keep it ready and rhythmical. Keep it free from egotism. There is no element other than the ego which produces a more discordant note. He alone who is full of melody within can approach Truth. It is not he who is merely intellectual but he whose self is fully melodious, who can approach Truth.

102. I see you repeating and chanting mantras uttering words learnt by rote from scriptural texts. My heart is filled with pity and sympathy. What is it that you are doing? Do you take this doping, this self-forgetfulness, this slumber of the soul for religion and austerity? Certainly the chanting of the mantras, the repetition of words etc. can drown the mind in a pleasant slumber. But do not take this slumber for some spiritual trance. Friends, there is a wide gulf between slumber and trance. In slumber produced by what I call 'soul-fascination' there is an element of experience as well. But this experience is no more than a dream. It is our mind that diffuses such dreams. Even if these be highly pleasing and satisfying, they do not become truths merely because they yield pleasure and satisfaction. But generally it is not Truth that we seek. We seek only satisfaction. Hence it is easy for us to get entangled in all sorts of illusions. The mind that seeks satisfaction is likely to be satisfied with intoxication of any sort. Any kind of self-forgetfulness can yield satisfaction to it. Self-forgetfulness can be achieved through the so-called mantras, chanting of the Lord's Name, and concentration. Any sort of incessant repetition can subdue consciousness. On the other hand, dharma is not at all concerned with stupefaction or self-forgetfulness. It is the state of non-stupefaction, complete soul-memory, and wakefulness.

103. There is no hell other than egotism. Egotism is synonymous with hell. Get rid of egotism. There is no hell.

104. I cannot undertake the voyage to Truth for your sake. Nor can anyone else do the same for me. You yourself have to undertake that journey. Know this precisely, otherwise the precious time of your life is spent in vain. The highway of life is full of darkness. No other light than the luminous understanding of the self can illumine the path. You are the darkness in regard to yourself and only you can be your own light.

105. Learn the technique of surrendering yourself to Truth. Unless you surrender yourself, Truth cannot be realized. The seed crumbles and disintegrates before it germinates into a lovely shoot. Learn to die if you seek to live.

106. Are you in search of bliss? Get ready to purvey it unto everyone. The universe is but an echo; whatever we do comes back to us echoing and rumbling. He who showers blessings on others finds himself delightfully drenched in the blessings poured from every quarter. Words of abuse are paid back with still viler words of abuse. Never expect love in return for the stones you pelt others with. Those who sow thorns for others must be ready to reap a rich harvest of thorns. It is an eternal law that hatred provokes hatred just as love provokes love.

107. Since rudeness can never let knowledge bloom, knowledge bereft of humility is but delusion. Vain-glorious exhibition of knowledge proclaims that it is borrowed.

108. What is sin? A negation of the divinity in yourself. (1) There is no other virtue greater than the perpetual consciousness of your own divinity.

109. It is needless to go out in search of God. Live a life of godliness; prove it in every action. Nay, godliness must be the very breath of your life, for then alone will you realize God.

110. It is essential to wade through death to conquer death. He who is dead to vulgarity defeats death and wins immortality.

111. It is insanely ridiculous to delve into the shastras for the realization of Truth. (1) The shastras may well be the outcome of Truth but are never known to generate Truth. How funny is the behaviour of people who shelter stark ignorance in the living heart and grope among dead words to cull out Truth!

112. If darkness is within, no external light can serve our purpose.

113. Life is but one unit. The realization of this singleness in its entirety is love.

114. Where is ignorance? Undoubtedly in egotism where lustful inclinations have struck their roots deep.

115. Lustful propensities are endlessly painful because they are insatiable.

116. It is vain to expect peace from what one had been longing to possess and had been yearning to secure; for, even if it comes within reach in this way, it cannot but be evanescent. When the mind that yearns is itself transitory how can the cherished object be everlasting?

117. The entrance door to Truth, Perpetuity and Eternity is neither a pining love, nor an unquenchable thirst, nor an insatiable lust. In fact, the mind itself is not the pathway leading to it. Truth is there where the mind is not.

118. Do you wish to hear the sweet eloquence of the Lord? Turn a deaf ear to the worldly verbiage. Those deaf to the external world hear Him well; those blind and lame and crippled see Him distinct and hear Him and keep pace with Him.

119. Running after lecherous fancies is a wild goose chase, a mirage, a journey from a frigid life to a frozen death. Overwhelmed by such misconceptions, man dies many such deaths, but those who are ready to court death in a fight against such fancies shall find Death itself on its death-bed.

120. Life is only for those who know how to die in the fight against life. Where there is fear there is neither freedom nor intelligence.

121. There was a day when death was awaiting me. Since I was frightened, it lay in ambush for me, but when I advanced to embrace it, it was not there: for death is in the fear of death, and its acceptance is salvation. Fear is death and fearlessness is liberation. Death pursues those who flee it, like their shadow. If you turn and face it, it vanishes. To accept death before its advent is to escape from it.

122. As I stood by the sea, I asked myself, "Why do all the rivers fall eventually into the sea?" Even a child will say, "Because it is far below -- lower than anything else." The thought filled my mind with scintillating rays of light. Blessed is he who is humble since the Lord crowns him with the plenitude of His riches.

123. It is essential to forgo both the good and the bad to be able to realize the Lord. Only then does human consciousness rise above difference and establish itself in identity.

124. Friend, you have forsaken the impure. That's all right. Now, renounce the pure as well. For vanity stays as long as there is a hold on either.

125. Open thy eyes and observe carefully. Don't you see a perpetual change everywhere? Whatever your eyes behold is caught in a perennial flow, in endless flux, and he who wishes to build up his house in the running river is not in his senses.

126. This Physical body is a sacred temple. Instead of putting up a fight with it, delve into it, for the path to the Lord lies through it. The body is a place of holy pilgrimage

inasmuch as God has chosen it as His habitation. It is not surprising that the aspirant for spiritual perfection acknowledges its co-operation with gratitude and diverts its powers towards the Soul Supreme?

127. I was watching the flowers at dawn when the sparkling drops of dew were peacefully and lovingly descending deep in, to them. There was not even the faintest sound of footsteps nearby. When the heart is ready, the Soul Supreme too descends like this. No one gets an inkling of His advent till He manifests Himself.

128. I was atop the hills. What they wanted to convey was transmitted to me through silence. The trees, the fountains, the rivers and the rivulets, the moon and the stars were all communicating in the language of silence that I understood. The gestures of the Lord were clear. I could hear Him only when I became silent, not before.

129. What shall I say? Listen to the stars in the sky. I wish to say what their quiescent diffused light has communicated to me. I would like to say that whatever is, is beyond the reach of speech and hearing.

130. I am the poorest of the poor, for there is nothing I can call mine. Even I myself am not mine. Whatever there is, belongs to the Soul Supreme. The Soul Supreme is Itself All. But the moment I realized this indigence, it at once vanished. I am now the Imperial Majesty, for I am no longer there. The Lord alone exists.

131. Friends, there are who hurl abuses at me and go away. My heart is genuinely thankful to them, for I feel my love flowing towards them through the abuses, spreading an unearthly peace over me.

132. This world itself is a wonder of wonders, for I see that those who apparently seem to live do not live at all. A life enmeshed in lustful fancies is no life at all. I also realize that those who are said to be dead are not dead, for the soul knows no death.

133. Religious leaders make much of their teaching -- "Know thyself". But where does this "self" exist? Is not the existence of this "self" the shadow of the "other self"? Which is why I say, "Know thyself"? I merely repeat -- know, know, know! Know that which is!

134. The physical body naturally grows old. But take care that the mind does not become old along with it. It is a sure sign of the successful completion of the pilgrimage of life, if the mind retains the perfect simplicity of the new-born child when the body reaches the threshold of Death.

135. If you nurse the poison of hatred within, you can never expect the blossoms of bliss to spread their fragrance without. A latent perennial undercurrent of love is a necessity for their efflorescence. Where love's nectar is sprinkled, bliss blossoms in profusion.

136. The portals of beatitude are close at hand; but if one turns about and proceeds ahead nurturing willful violence and seething hatred, one naturally comes to the domain of hell

though one may be in quest of heaven. The path one takes is the criterion; ambition alone leads nowhere.

137. There is no greater affliction than trying to become an entirely different being, other than what you are. Although the desire to become has no end and therefore no fulfilment, the majority of people, do turn to be different. Recognize and realize your own nature. Living in one's own nature is the bliss of heaven.

138. Don't you know that often we search for things close at hand in far-off places? In the case of beatitude, it is wholly true. Understand where it is. Only there can you secure it, not where you seek it.

139. Virtue is happiness.

140. There was a happy man. I found out the secret of his happiness. He did not worry about securing a task according to his taste, but he knew how to love the task that fell to his lot.

141. Two wayfarers took shelter in a squalid rest-house. One of them went on grumbling and brooding over its squalor throughout his stay there. The other one, who set about cleaning the place thoroughly, found immense pleasure in this labour of love. The same resthouse made one extremely miserable and the other immensely glad. Is there a greater pleasure in life than a constructive job lovingly undertaken? No. Is there a pleasure more thrilling than service to others? No. If you seek lasting pleasure, endeavour to leave the rest-house of mundane existence cleaner and more beautiful than ever for the sake of your successors. You will certainly find happiness in the creation of beauty.

142. Brother dear, if the task you are engaged in does not thrill you, nor pleases others, would you like to know why? Evidently because you feel that it is a burden imposed on you. The fact is that pleasure is obtained only from that task which is delightfully undertaken and pursued.

143. Can I you this question, "Wherefore do you live? Is there a goal, an ideal, for which you are prepared to lay down your life?" If the answer is in the negative, know for certain that you are already dead. The powerful energy of a purposeful life is awakened and kept only by an ideal for which one is prepared to court death with smile on one's lips. Remember that you can win life only at the stake.

144. Once when I said somewhere that I am an emperor, someone put the question, "Where is your crown?" I replied, "It is not on my head but in my heart. It is not made of precious metals but of virtuous thoughts and actions; it is not studded with stones usually called diamonds and emeralds but with rays of tranquillity, knowledge and love. In order to get this crown Emperors have to become beggars."

145. The pleasures of the body and the sense-organs are like tender flowers: they fade on being handled or plucked. In your search for the imperishable pleasures, you have to rise far above the physical body and the sense-organs.

146. What shall I present you with? Some valuable precious stone? No, after all it is only a stone. Some beautiful flower? No, I will not give you a flower which will fade away. I shall give you abundant love out of my heart, love that is not hard as a stone or transient like a flower. Love in man's heart is the divine fragrance, the divine music that thrills the very depths of the listener's heart.

147. To live in Truth is to live in God; to live in God is to live in love. But I see that while God is remembered, Truth is forgotten; the story of Truth is remembered but the life of love is forgotten. It would have been better if we had forgotten God but remembered Truth, and it would have been better if we had forgotten the story of Truth but cared to live a life of love. If there is love, Truth steps in, and where Truth abides, God too exists.

148. Would that we all lived as though the world sat observing us! Whether we know it or not, deep at the bottom nothing lies hidden. Man can never be aloof from the collective whole. The echo of all that rises within him reaches everyone else; (1) even as he lives he forms part and parcel of the life about him, of the life flowing around him.

[Footnote (1) Cf: "Our echoes roll from soul to soul, and grow for ever and for ever..." -- Tennyson]

149. Man lives in his deeds, not in his years. Thoughts which bring along actions with them, are deeper than breaths which drag on the years in their wake. The feelings, the sensations, are deeper than thoughts, but there is an unfathomable bottom deeper than the sensations themselves. That is the human soul. He who goes deeper and deeper into himself rises higher and higher in life in the same proportion. The trees that would like to rise high up in the air must of necessity fix their roots deep into the soil.

150. I love beauty, the beauty that lies embedded far below the body. The body is only its border, the frontier of protection with its beauty of thoughts and the beauty of sensations. But there is the perfect beauty of that nullified existence, free of thought, free of sensation. Do not, therefore, stop at the body. It would be death. Wade through the deep waters. You can get only pebbles and shells on the shore. You have to go far into the sea for fishing the pearls.

151. There are mirrors and mirrors in every house; but have you observed that a small thought soaked in truth or a wee wave of love's ebullition or even small task of service gives a fresh beauty to the eyes, to the face, to the entire individual? If not, you are as blind as a bat. In vain do you waste your time facing the mirror. It would have been better if you had smashed the mirror to smithereens since you do not know the proper use of a mirror.

152. It does not matter if I am not recognized in the impenetrable darkness enveloping the path of life; but think of the dire consequences if I fail to know myself. Many of us are, alas! not as eager to know ourselves as we are eager to make others know us. That is why life is more and more enveloped in darkness; for how can one shed light all around if one does not know oneself. Men of real understanding pray thus, "I shall readily accept death, unknown to the world, unrecognized everywhere and uncrowned with renown, but let me understand at least myself." In fact, that modicum of light is adequate enough to take us to the Soul Supreme. Friend, the humble lamp illumined by the knowledge of self is more valuable than a million suns.

153. I say: "Give, give, give. Distribute sympathy. Render service. Give love in abundance, for he who gives shall get it back."

154. I had a bath in the holy Ganges and my body was washed of its dirt. I told my companions, "There is another Ganges. If we have our bath in it, our soul will be cleansed." They asked me, "Which is that Ganges?" I said, "That of Love."

155. A friend of mine was unhappy. When I saw him crying I took him out of the house and said, "Behold the stars!" And drops of tears welled up in his eyes and sparkled like stars. His misery gradually subsiding, he said, "How is it that on looking at the stars my heart became freed of its burden? How is it that my misery vanished when I looked at the sky?" I replied, "It is misery to be away from the Lord. It is sorrow to be alienated from Nature. It is woe to be separated from the Soul's being."

"What is the greatest pleasure in the world?" someone was saying. I replied, "To be and not to be in the world. The only maxim that can ensure happiness is this: 'The feet in the world, the heart in the Lord.'"

156. Accept life, the benign gift of the Lord. Never fight, never flee. Love it, for there is no greater conquest than that of Love.

157. A man seen from outside is definitely what he is inside. Everything without is painted with the colours within. If there is bliss within, everything without is beautiful; if there is misery within, everything without is ugly. In fact, man sees himself everywhere. If you are in hell, know that you are the cause thereof. It is within your powers to be in Heaven as well.

158. You seek my message? Indeed, it is a short one: "Those who were awake lived; those who slept, missed everything."

Wings of Love and Random Thought

Chapter #5

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159. Wherever I cast my eyes I see the thrill and throb of life. Every bit is vibrating with life. And the minutest atom is excited with the love to live. Behold the dance of life and hear the music of being. Even if you neither see nor hear, there is the titillating, pulsating, experience of life. Is not, then, the life we see around us the Lord Himself? The Lord, apart and aloof from life, is dead and unreal. Life is Truth. The Lord does not indulge Himself in creation, sitting afar. Life is the perpetual evolution of creation. This process of life-creation is verily the Lord!

160. I see you visiting the temple every day. You pore over the pages of the scriptural text every day. But I am worried because I have never seen you filled with compassion for Nature. If one does not see the Lord in Nature, how can one see Him elsewhere? Open your self to Nature and let its beauty shine through your eyes. Let its sweet music be resonant in your heart. Welcome that guest and seat him in your heart of hearts. You will see ere long that the guest, hitherto unrecognized, is the Lord Himself.

161. When I roamed over the lofty mountains, I felt my soul raised aloft covered with never-melting blocks of ice even as their peaks; when I came down to the deep ravines I felt as though I too have become deep and low like them with my heart enveloped in mysterious shadows. The same thing took place on the shores of the sea. I was merged in their surging waves because those waves were beating within me. When I gaze upon the sky, I expand unlimitedly, when the countless stars are viewed, endless silence permeates my mind, the myriad flowers fill me with ecstasies of aesthetic pleasure; the chirping songs of the birds re-echo my own inner voice; when I peer into the eyes of the animals I see no difference in them from my own eyes. Thus gradually my separate existence is wiped off and only the Lord remains. Where shall I now seek God? How shall I seek? Only He is, I am not.

162. Am I to proclaim the Lord? Is He not being proclaimed all round? Is not Nature herself a loud proclamation of the Lord?

163. How can I speak when the mountains are silent? How can I speak when the sky is silent. How can I speak when the Lord Himself is silent? Still I speak so that their silence may be heard by you. I speak so that you may understand when I sink into silence. Artists make use of the black background to heighten the effects of a brighter hue. I too use the same device. I am speaking to enable you to understand the language of silence. Words are meaningful inasmuch as they represent the gestures of silence. Speech is meaningful when it leads on to quiescence. Life is fruitful if it prepares the individual to face Death.

164. For Victory it is essential to wage a war; but the majority of people wish for victory even before the battle. As far as I can see, none but these gets defeated in the end.

165. Friend, be not afraid. Your contact with him of whom you are afraid is bound to be perpetual. Only he of whom you are afraid will follow you. Your defeat will be in proportion to the extent of your fear.

166. I was a guest in a household. The children there were about to take part in a race. They said, "Baba, what is the secret of winning the race." I answered, "Courage, dear children." I hastened then to add, "Be sure to remember this even in the race of life. There is no greater power of success than courage in the race of life."

167. One day, as we were walking along a field, we saw the farmers sowing seeds and singing merrily. While I was delighted by their songs, my friend accompanying me was gloomy. He wished to become a sannyasin. "Come on," said I, "let us see the farmers sowing seeds and singing songs." Verily I say unto you that our worldly existence is a vast field. Those who wish to sow seeds of Truth, love and sacrifice have to remember that seeds are not sown with tears in the eyes of the sower. It is not Truth or Love but sorrow and misery that is sown with tears. The harvest, too, cannot be that of bliss; but of tears alone. The technique of sowing seeds is the accompaniment of gleeful songs. The attitude with which we sow permeates the seeds sown. Taking to sannyasa, renunciation, and asceticism with a dispirited gloomy heart ends only in sorrow. The real sannyasa is born of bliss and hope.

168. Life is now here itself, and today. Tomorrow is far off. Tomorrow is at an infinite distance. That is exactly why it never comes. Will it not be proper that we live today itself? He who really lives, always lives today. Life is today, and tomorrow is death. If you have to live, live today. Well, if you have only to die, tomorrow also can be found useful.

169. Certainly it is very difficult to conquer the self. But it is impossible to conquer anything beyond the self. Moreover, let this also be remembered that he who conquers his own self, can easily win over all the rest too. I therefore assert that in life there is only one conquest and only one defeat. The defeat is of the self at the hands of the self. The conquest too, is of the self by the self.

170. A friend told me, "Will it not be good if we transform the world?" I replied, "It will be very good. But where is this world? I seek it very much but do not find it. I seek the world but I find myself. Hence I say: let the world alone. Let us transform ourselves. When we do the same, the world will be transformed. Because what else is it except our mutual inner contact.

171. I had a dream. The Day of Judgment had come. Every dead person was from his grave and questioned about his part. God himself was conducting the inquiry. A Pandit whom I knew well was standing beside me. He was quite carefree. He knew the Vedas, the Puranas, the Agamas, the Nigamas, etc. He hoped he would pass any test in Religion and Philosophy. But as God approached nearer and nearer his calm was disturbed. In the end he was excited and said to me crying, "How unjust is this! Nothing is being asked

about the scriptural texts. All inquiry is being made about life. You know what answer I shall make. I know nothing more than the scriptures. I have spent my life in trying to know them."

172. Don't we certainly get tired of those pleasures which we enjoy? Does not the pleasure of which we are tired turn itself into pain? But has any man ever been seen getting tired of those pleasures which he gives to others? No. Never has such a thing happened. And so I tell you a secret. Only that pleasure which we give to others and of which we are never tired becomes bliss, and there is no end to Bliss. Bliss is a nectar, endless and eternal.

173. A son had said to his father, "When shall I be big enough to do what I wish?" The father replied, "My dear son, I do not know. In fact no one has been seen till to-day growing so I too was present there. I said, "I know a secret. It is not possible to grow so big that you will be able to do always what you wish. And that is not possible because your desire is the outcome of your being small. But this is possible that you can like whatever you do. And that is maturity or growing big."

174. Why is there so much misery in man's life?

It is because there is a medley of notes in man's life but there is no noteless melody at all. It is because there is a veritable pandemonium of thoughts, but no thoughtless silence at all.

It is because there is plenty of turbulent, conflicting emotions in his life, but no affection free from fancy.

It is because there is plenty of breakneck races in different directions in his life, but no stable pause, no stir in any direction.

It is because there is an open exchange of activities in his life but no isolation at all, the isolation of inactivity.

And lastly because in his life his self is most prominent, but the Supreme Soul is altogether suppressed.

175. A friend had departed from this bank and shoal of life, and that too very early in age. He was young but his life was pure, beautiful, quiet and melodious. Somebody remarked, "What a tragic calamity! Death at this young age?" I said, "No. Do not say so. It is possible that a long life may not be auspicious, but life that is pure and auspicious, is profound, extensive and immense. Well, it may not be possible to measure it in terms of minutes and hours. But it proves limitation and inefficiency of our measuring-devices.

176. There was this epitaph on a tombstone: "Here lies a man who did nothing between great deeds which he dreamt to undertake and small odd jobs which he hated to perform." Of course, all this is engraved on a single tombstone, but it ought to have been engraved on many tombstones. Isn't this the sum-total of the life-story of many men? And I wish to ask you a pointed personal question, "Don't you also wish to place such a stone on your grave?"

177. I knew a man who had never done an error in his life. I asked him what the secret was. He replied very gravely, "Fearing lest I should make a mistake, I did nothing and thus I escaped the risk of making any mistake." On hearing this, when I began to laugh he had said, "Sir, why are you laughing?" I had replied, "What greater mistake can there be if a man desists from action only because he fears that mistakes may happen?" To dread mistakes is to dread life. One should be ready to make mistakes. It is sufficient if a mistake is not repeated. He alone who avoids old mistakes but is not frightened of committing new ones, lives and learns. And it is only he who wins too.

178. Life takes us to deep oceans, not to drown us, but to sanctify us. But those who are frightened at the very thought of being drowned sink in it in vain: whom have the depths of life's ocean drowned so far? I see none. Those alone are drowned who keep on sitting on the shore of fear.

179. Knowledge says: "What am I? I am a void." And in this void itself it becomes Brahman.
Ignorance says, "I am everything. I am Brahman," and in this fancy of being Brahman, it remains void.
What knowledge realizes, ignorance deludes itself into thinking that it has realized.
What knowledge knows, ignorance admits and accepts.
What ignorance proclaims it never becomes.

180. It is from love that creation has sprung up. It is nourished by love. It continues to progress towards love, and eventually it merges into love. And you ask me why I say that love is God? I say this is the reason. This is why I say so.

181. You ask me, "What is the biggest merit in life?" I say that is daring, for without daring there is no freedom. Without freedom there is no Truth. Without Truth there is no right conduct. In fact daring does to the edifice of life what the foundation-stone does to a building.

182. Have you ever seen good men dying or bad men living? Just as bad men never live, so also good men never die.

183. My friend, it is possible that you cannot become a rose-flower. But, on that score, it is not necessary that you should become a thorn. And it is possible that you cannot become the twinkling star in the sky. But on that score, is it necessary that you should become the dark cloud that covers up the stars? In the end I disclose a secret to you. He who does not become a thorn becomes a flower and he who does not become a cloud becomes the twinkling star.

184. It does not lie in my hands how to die. It is not left to my choice. But how I should live is certainly dependent on my decision. Moreover, death is the completion of life. Precisely for that reason, by choosing how to live, I choose how to die also. Hence death becomes the index of life. What is sown in life grows into flowers in their fullness during death.

185. A friend had been ill. Somebody had brought a bunch of flowers for him fresh from the garden. After handing over the flowers, he returned. I realized that the fragrance of the flowers still lingered in his hands. The experience repeated itself many times and became the very life itself. Whatever we give, its fragrance or its foul smell always lingers behind. Those who wish to live in fragrance, always give out only fragrance.

186. I had a dream in which I saw some of my dead acquaintances. They were clad in the same garments as at the time of death. They were obsessed with the same thoughts, prejudices, and ideas as they had at the time of death. In life everything had changed but they had not changed at all. I made a mention of this to them. But they began to laugh and said, "We the dead never change. We remain staunch in our beliefs. There is no change in the world of the dead. Our principles are eternal. It is only life that is affected and afflicted by the sickness of transformation." I said, "But in life as well there are people who never change at all. Their principles too are eternal and they too keep their eyes shut against any change lest they too should be afflicted by the sickness of change. But aren't here too a few who do change?" The dead replied in a body, "No. No. No. How can that happen here? None of us is alive here." Well in life such a thing can happen because many people are dead before their actual death.

187. Do not build up life round the centre of futurity because life is present existence. It is in the present that all futurities are hidden and he who loses today loses all tomorrows. Do not all the flowers of all tomorrows lie asleep in the seed of today?

188. Did you say that life is miserable? No friend, life is only that which we make of it. As long as you do not make it a bliss, life will not become a bliss unto you. Life is but an opportunity. It is a blank, an empty something, a possibility. By living it we fill it up and make it full. It is not offered to man. He lives day after day and builds it up. Life is self-creation. And so man is not responsible for anyone but for himself.

189. I saw you worshipping God and heard you praying to Him. Now you tell me I must say something. What shall I say? Well, I shall say this much. If there is heart in prayer, but no sound or word, it is better than if there be only sound or words but no heart. But it is the reverse that happens. Precisely for this reason do prayers fail to become love, and worship remains lifeless. How can God be attained through these lifeless worships? And how can his portals be opened through these loveless prayers? If God had been a stone, these lifeless prayers and worships would have reached up to Him. But granted that God is present in stones, He is not a stone. Hence only they who approach Him with love and vitality are able to attain His very presence.

190. Do you wish that your life should be a hell? Then there is a very easy and infallible way. I shall tell you that. This specific method has been tried by thousands of people over thousands of years. There is no possibility for mistakes or inefficacy in this. It has always proved hundred per cent correct. What is this method? It is the building up of life round the sense of "I", of self-importance. Egotism is the simplest and continuously straight path leading to misery. He who gives up this path will not attain sorrow even if he wishes

to do so. Without it, no one can suffer or be miserable, for this is misery itself. Without being led by it, no one can go even to hell, for it is hell itself.

191. Realization of truth is a difficult process because it has to be sought and lived. But it is easy to accept the scriptural texts because they have just to be accepted. For the former, discrimination with wide open eyes is essential. For the latter, a blind belief is sufficient. It is for this reason that the scriptural texts become obstacles in the path of realizing Truth. For, discrimination never takes place where there is blind belief. Let this also be remembered that all beliefs are invariably blind. How can blind eyes see Truth? Blind eyes represent the closed doors of consciousness. Truth visits only that door where an impartial and un-prejudiced mind stands ready to welcome it. Are you ready to become impartial? Have you the daring to become free from beliefs? Are the doors of your heart open to welcome Truth? If yes, I affirm that there is nothing simpler than the realization of Truth. In fact, difficulties are the creations of our mind. Truth is simple, but we are not. Our belief, our recognized values and our convictions have complicated everything. He who breaks the web of these complications finds that Truth stands before him, It had been before him for ever. Only the eyes were not free to see it.

192. It is very easy to die, but very difficult to live, for the sake of religion. Actually, it is always easy to die for any cause. What is required for dying is just a sort of madness. And then dying takes place in a moment. Madness of this single moment is enough for it. But for living, alertness and wakefulness are essential. Hence I say only those who live for religion are able to know religion, not those who die for it.

193. What is religion? If you wish to know this you will have to forget religions at the very outset. Without abandoning all sects and religions, Dharma can never be known.

194. If truth does not appear worthy of being lived, it is not proper to consider it worthy of being honoured.

195. Who can deceive us so much as we deceive ourselves? Thus we alone are enemies to ourselves. But from this it becomes evident that, if we wish, we can be our own friends. Religion begins only from where friendship makes a start.

196. Belief and non-belief belong to the same family. There is no difference between the two. Their bodies are different, but not their soul. He who has to seek Truth must, therefore, be aware of both. If one is a well the other is a ditch. Both are all right for falling into, but he who has to move on, must take the middle path, for the mind becomes liberated only after being freed from both. He and only he who is neither a theist nor an atheist, neither a believer nor a non-believer, can undertake a journey to Truth.

197. What do you live for? If you let me know this, I will tell you what you are. Your life is fixed by the direction you are going. It is an incessant creation of the self. We ourselves build up our lives. What is thus built up is also ourselves. We constitute the sculptor, the stone, and the implement that make an image. Exactly, therefore, there is no art bigger and more complicated than life. It is to escape from the trouble of this tedious

labour and aspirational austerity that some people deny even life. Their life becomes akin to the stones which shape themselves according to the force of the current of the environs and their shocks and jerks. Their life, therefore, does not become sentient idols. This is the misery of life, the affliction and the distress. This alone, I say, is living death.

198. There is a friend whom I have known for years. Formerly he ran the race for money; now he is in the race for religion. The race is the same, but whereas formerly he was a householder, now he is an ascetic who has renounced everything. When I hear this, I am surprised Is not his desire to realize God the same in its depths as his desire to acquire riches? The paths of greed are very subtle. Is not the idea, the desire, of realizing God the ultimate development of greed? Man's greed is boundless. He desires to attain even salvation, though the fact is that he can never become liberated as long as his mind desires to acquire anything because the desire to acquire, itself, is the fundamental non-liberation. How can he who is not liberated know God? That alone which is known in the liberated state of mind, is God.

199. I know that you are in search of bliss. But can one search for bliss and attain it? Bliss is obtained by those who distribute bliss, those who give bliss. If you wish for bliss, distribute bliss, give bliss. Do not desire, but give, because by giving alone does it come to you. By distributing alone can it be had. Only by spending it lavishly does it shower back on you. Strange are the ways of God. Do not go to the threshold of bliss like a beggar. Go there like an emperor. Is it not known to you that all doors are closed upon beggars? Who is a beggar? He who begs, pleads and supplicates. And who is an emperor? He who gives. Hence I say; give, give, give. Give without any string, any condition. You will then realize that what you had given has returned to you manifold. Friend, everything comes back. Your entire asset is the echo of your own liberal gift. Do you remember ever having acquired any such thing as you had not given prior to getting it?

200. Man cannot live on bread alone. Christ has truly said, "Bread alone is not enough." It does not mean that he can live without bread. Man cannot of course live without bread, but he cannot live solely on bread. What the roots are to the plants, bread is to a man. The roots are not for themselves, they are for flowers and fruit. If flowers and fruit do not grow on them, their existence becomes futile. Although flowers and fruit are not produced where there are no roots, yet flowers and fruit are not for the roots. They are for satisfying our hunger, for giving us the vital energy we all need, for keeping us alive. Man needs bread so that he may live and also satisfy his hunger for the truth and beauty of life. But bread becomes useless if there is no great hunger. It has no intrinsic value of its own. Its purpose lies in transcending itself.

201. Somebody had asked an old sage, "Is there such an advice as no one has ever given? Is there such an instruction as no good teacher has as yet imparted?" The sage said, "Yes, certainly there is. Indeed, there is an instruction which has never been imparted and an advice which has never been given before." The man began to ask, "Sir, can you tell me what it is?" The sage simply laughed and said, "It is not an object. Nor is it any thought."

Truth cannot be taught through any word. Know that which can be taught through the medium of words is not Truth.

Truth can be known but cannot be communicated. In order to know it we have to become worldless, silent and void. How can that which can be known in void, be uttered through words?

202. Truth liberates. But it is that Truth which is not borrowed. Acquired and second-hand truths become more binding because there is nothing more untrue than these truths.

203. Oh, look at the Ganges! It rushes to the ocean from the summits of the mountain. It is the symbol of righteous living. It is driven by a single purpose in its entire journey, namely, to unite with the ocean. It wishes to lose itself in the cosmic existence and cease to be an individual. Its bliss lies in the union with the ocean; there is no isolation, no loneliness, no pettiness of confinement, because it is in its fullness there. So long as it does not exist (as apart from the ocean and distinct), it is in fullness. As long as it exists separately, it is incomplete. Friends, be like the Ganges. Seek an ocean. Let there be a single aim -- the vast ocean. Let there be a passionate zeal -- the ocean. Let there be a single melody -- the ocean. And then flow on. If the vital breaths are impatient for the ocean, the feet will seek and find out the path thereto. Know then that the search of the river for the ocean is the search for losing itself into it; there is no other way of realizing itself. Into this single maxim is compressed all the essence of spirituality, religion and yoga. And this alone is the Truth and Bliss that man can attain.

204. Are we not like those fishes that have been caught in the net of the fisherman and are writhing and languishing? It appears so to me. Yet that is no reason why we should be desperate. Another truth too dawns on me, the truth that we are not only the fishes that have been caught but also the net and the fisherman as well. And therein lies the door opening on our liberation. We are the creators of all our bondages and miseries. All these are the creations of our own mind. And then don't we really have the vision of the possibility of salvation in this truth?

205. Does the intellect know anything? No, certainly not. The intellect just explains. It is a commentator. In regard to the external world, the sense-organs perceive and the intellect elucidates. In regard to the inner world, the heart perceives and the intellect explains. The intellectuals who accept the intellect as the knower are therefore mistaken. Nothing has ever been known through the intellect. It is not the path of knowledge. But due to the illusion that it is the path, it necessarily becomes an obstacle, a hindrance. What in reality is intellectuality? It lies in falsely assuming that the intellect can never become a hindrance. If the intellect does not stand between life and the self a sympathetic attitude is created which becomes the eye of Truth.

206. Life is a frustration because we ourselves have locked it up in the self! If it is liberated from the four walls of the self, it transforms itself into bliss. Life is neither in "I" nor in "you". It is a current that flows incessantly between the two. It is a commerce with the universal. But we have converted it into a debate, a conflict. This accounts for our misery, affliction, worry, death! All this is the result of our imprisoning the consciousness

in the islets of the ego. On account of this, life has become impeded, insentient and, indeed, waveless. It has become one long bondage, our prison. We are as much afflicted as the sprouting grain imprisoned within the hard shell of the seed. When the outer shell gives way, the seed comes to life, and begins to sprout and rise up. It emerges out of the dark pit under the ground and seeks the sun. Then begins the journey for which it exists. Man -- man, imprisoned within and surrounded by the self is the seed imprisoned in the shell of his ego. This shell is very hard because it affords the appearance of security. And therefore, instead of breaking it open, we go on nourishing it and making it harder and stronger. The stronger it grows the more crippled and lifeless the young sprout becomes. Thus in the illusion of making our life securer we lose our life itself.

I have heard a story. In his desire to protect himself, an Emperor built a mansion that had no doors. The passage through which he entered was later on closed. Hidden thus, he could not be harassed or harmed by an enemy. He was well protected in his doorless mansion. But the moment it was wholly closed he knew that it provided little security, for it was as good as death itself. The mansion itself became his grave. Similarly our concern for security gives rise to doorless egotism and eventually it becomes our death. Life consists not in remaining aloof from but in merging with the universe. Hence I say, that, if you wish to realize life and the bliss of liberation, give up this madness after security because that alone is the base of that vicious circle which eventually snatches off life itself in the name of protecting it. Life is insecurity. There is life only in insecurity. Security is sluggishness. What can security mean if not death? He who is ready to remain insecure, can break open the shell of egotism. The young sprout of life within him can shoot forth towards the unknown, towards the Supreme Soul.

207. A religious, virtuous life is not an impossibility. But the Truth of religion can be known only to the extent that it is lived. Without being lived, it cannot be known. Living it is knowing it. A religious life will appear to be wholly impractical to those who imagine that they can know it without living it. In the pitch darkness of the night if anyone walks about with a small lamp, only a thin stream of light illumines the path ahead. The path of religion, too, is of the same kind. But, if the man with the lamp stops and begins to think, "Oh, this is but a small lamp; its light is but faint, while the way is long and the night so dark", what wonder if it appears to be wholly impractical to him to traverse the path during that night with the help of that lamp!

208. Sometime back I had had a dream. On a mountainous track somebody has slipped and fallen. A crowd has gathered around him. The people are rebuking him for his weakness and are laughing at him in derision. A preacher is instructing him to shake off the weakness due to which he has fallen. A reformer is talking of punishing him, for if the people who fall are not punished, they will encourage other people too to fall. I see all this and am worried because nobody is trying to straighten him up. I squeeze myself through the crowd somehow. When I try to lift him up, I see that he is already dead. The crowd then disperses. Perhaps they will be gathering round somebody else who has fallen. The preacher too goes off. Perhaps on some other path somebody else has fallen and is awaiting his instruction. The social reformer too goes away. He does not wish to deny himself the opportunity of seeing other fallen creatures punished and reformed. Then I am the only person left near that dead man. His hands and feet are so weak that I cannot believe that he had walked at any time. It is not his slipping down but his ability to

move about that seems to be a wonder, something incredible. In this dismay I wake up from sleep and I now realize that it had not been a mere dream. The true state of human society, of all of us, is not different.

209. It is not an exaggeration to say that we have forgotten ourselves. Is not our very birth a forgetfulness? Then what can life resting on the foundation of self-forgetfulness be? Is it not a mere dream? What, if at all, is the difference between dream and wakefulness? In dream the dreamer is completely forgotten. The dream is on him -- the dream is just before him, but he is not present in the dream. In fact, his absence itself is the slumber because the moment he is present, there is neither slumber nor dream. What, then, shall we call the so-called life of ours? This is not wakefulness because we haven't the memory of the self. Is this also a dream? Yes friend, this too is a mere dream. As long as there is insensibility towards the self, life is but an empty dream.

210. What is this life of consciousness? The life of the mind is not the life of consciousness. When the movement of the mind is quietened, then alone is another stir inaugurated in the mind. This I call consciousness. Only when the mind becomes void does consciousness become full and receptive. The mind is an instrument, a medium. When it gets involved in the movement of the self, it ceases to be an instrument as well as the medium of consciousness, for it is engaged otherwise. To get acquainted with the life of consciousness it is necessary to bid goodbye to the life of the mind. The life of the mind is analogous to the usurpation of the master's place by the servant in his absence. How will such a servant wish for the master's return? His mind cannot accord sincere welcome to the returning master. He will set up every possible hindrance against him. The most basic of the hindrances will be his contention that he himself is the master, none else. He will simply deny the existence of any other master. Generally the mind does the very same thing. It becomes an obstruction and prevents the advent of consciousness. If you wish to proceed towards consciousness, let the mind be given rest. Let it remain devoid of activity. Let it be void and empty. That is to say, let it be disengaged, for the cessation of activity is the beginning of the stir of consciousness. The death of the mind heralds the life consciousness.

211. Why is life so purposeless, alienated, mechanical, and lonely? Why is it so insipid and boring? Because we have lost all sense of wonder; the power to marvel at things. Man has murdered all wonder. His so-called knowledge has sounded the death-knell of the marvellous and the wonderful. We are under the illusion that we know everything. We think we have the key to every secret and miracle. Naturally, what can be a miracle to him who has a ready explanation for each and every phenomenon under the sun? Nothing remains unknown to a mind that is thus filled with knowledge. There is no wonder where nothing is unknown. There is no miracle where there is no wonder. There is no charm or joy where there is no miracle, no challenge. Hence I urge you to eschew knowledge. What has been known has become dead for this very reason. Knowledge is a thing of the past. It is a hindrance to the unknown. Let it go so that the unknown may be ushered in. Alertness to the unknown is wonder, and that is the threshold of God who is always unknown. What is known is the world; what is unknown is God.

212. F. Dostoevsky makes a character say somewhere: "I wish to assure you that my love of mankind is increasing every day, but that with my associates it is decreasing in the same proportion." Oh! how easy is it to love humanity but how difficult to love men! And perhaps the less a person loves his fellow-men, the more he loves mankind! This attitude is an apology for the absence of love in ourselves. And thus we try to escape from the duty of love and the reproach of self-deception. That is why the people who profess to love humanity are hardhearted, ruthless and cruel. Genocide is resorted to without the slightest compunction in the name of love of humanity! Therefore, friends, I do not wish to use tall, hollow and worthless words urging you to love humanity. The so-called religions have often repeated such words. I have come here to tell you to love real men, your fellow-beings -- not mankind, but those men who are all round you. 'Humanity' is a mere word, a mere name. Hence loving it is very easy, because nothing has to be done except uttering words, in order to love it. But the problem centres around real men -- men who, like you, tread the ground around you. To love them is nothing short of penance. To love them is a great austerity, a noble task. To love them is passing through revolution from the very root. I invite you all to participate in such a love. Such participation alone is real religion.

213. Do we use two different standards in measuring ourselves and others? A Christian holy father was announcing the good news of some Hindus embracing Christianity. He said to his sons, "It is the mercy of God that good sense has dawned on so many Hindus." One of his sons reminded him, "But, father, you did not speak of any good sense when a Christian became a Hindu." The furious father burst out in anger, "Don't mention even the name of that rebel to me!" Certainly he who leaves one's fold is a rebel and he who comes to one's fold is a person endowed with sense! Because of such diverse measuring rods even the tiny mole in the eye of our neighbour becomes visible to us while the mountain in our eyes escapes our notice. But is it proper? Is it beneficial to us? It is not my function to ask you about all this. It is for you to put the question to yourself. In the path of religion he who uses these diverse measuring rods fails to transform himself. He cannot see the truths of his own life. He remains unacquainted with them. And this lack of familiarity with life and its basic truths leads to his escape from transformation. Adoption of two different measuring rods are the characteristic features of an unrighteous, irreligious mind. Even while measuring ourselves, we have to measure in the same way as when measuring others. Without this much of impartiality no person can pass through soul-revolution.

214. In the name of Truth words are being worshipped. Taking milestones on the wayside to be their goal, people have begun to stay permanently near them. Is not man's laziness the root cause for this self-deception? Otherwise, who could have accepted words as Truth and the idols as the Supreme Soul?

215. I do not consider thoughtful meditation true meditation. True meditation is free from thought, because freedom from thought itself is meditation. Where there is no thought, no deliberation, there is meditation. In deep slumber too there is no thought-process. Hence to say that the absence of thought alone is meditation is not enough. That would imply negation while meditation is not merely the negation of anything. It is also the positive

presence of something. That positive something is sentience, awareness, understanding. Hence wakefulness, full consciousness is meditation. Full consciousness is possible only when it is free from thought.

216. What is the method of realizing the self? At the outset, know the non-self in the self and recognize it. In doing so, when eventually nothing like the non-self remains, that is the self. That void is the self, because that which is void is full.

217. What is good conduct? The conduct behind which there is evil longing, a preconceived opinion, an ardent desire for some fruit, for the outcome, is certainly not a good conduct. Such an activity is impure and incomplete. It is impure because it is mixed with something other than itself. It is incomplete because it has to be filled up from outside, whereas good conduct is pure and complete. Good conduct is such an action as is complete in itself. No future thing is necessary to complete it. Good conduct is bliss in itself. Its mere coming into being is its bliss. Bliss is inherent in its very existence and not in any outside fruit or achievement. I had seen a man playing on his flute in a desolate forest. There was none to listen to that music. I had lost my way in the forest and had reached the spot on hearing of the flute. I said, "Brother, why are you playing on the flute in this secluded spot?" He replied, "Only to play on the flute. That is my bliss." Good conduct is a self-inspired action. Good conduct is not a reaction prompted by the external world. Reaction means a 'return action', a requital. We make the mistake of considering requitals as our own activities, whereas between the two there is a gulf as between heaven and earth. This mistake is due to the fact that there is an element of activity in both. The unfolding of these two is not only different but even opposed to each other. The action that takes place within an individual as a result of a stroke or blow from the external world or from the environment, is called a reaction. That which is inspired by the self, the inner self, is the real activity. Reactions bind us because the inspiration underlying them is external. Action liberates because it is the manifestation of the self. Reaction is dependence. Action is independence. Reaction is helplessness, a constraint. Action is the manifestation of the soul. Reaction is always a redundancy. Action is always fresh and lively. Living only in reaction is not salutary. To be established in action -- in pure and complete activity -- is good conduct. In reaction man has a downfall, for reaction is mechanical. In action there is an upward development because it is sentient and conscious.

218. Ethics cannot be religion, but religion is certainly ethics. Moral codes are something extrinsic, a set of rules for emulation and practice. It is a disciplinary measure imposed upon us from without. Hence a moralist is seldom liberated; he becomes more and more mechanical and dependent. In this manner, his consciousness does not wake up but continues to slumber. Eventually he degenerates into a mass of sluggish human being. The immoral person as well as the moralist is only a mass of habits. The immoralist follows the dictates of nature and the moralist follows those of society. Both of them live externally and obey rules imposed upon them from outside and are, therefore, dependent. Action is the search for the Self. Only the person who realizes the Self attains freedom. Freedom can originate only when there is the experience of the Self. How can freedom be possible when the existence of the Self is not known? And a kind of discipline definitely

comes from the experience of the Self also. It is not externally imposed. It is natural and self-inspired. It rises from within. The morality that springs up then is a different thing altogether. Then it is not the laboured imitation of any prescribed code but the unexerted manifestation of the inner self. The moral life thereafter is not for acquiring anything but for distributing what has been acquired.

219. Even the smallest piece of straw that falls into the eye hides the biggest of mountains. If the small eyelid comes in between the eye and the world, the world is hidden. For a clear, unobstructed vision, there must not be any obstruction between the seer and the seen. The obstruction becomes bigger in proportion to its nearness to the eye. In the spiritual life, too, a similar event takes place. It is only that object which is very near the seer that deprives him of the opportunity of seeing Truth. And what is the nearest thing to the seer? "I", the feeling of "I", is the nearest thing to me. What wonder is there if it becomes an obstruction between truth and me?

220. If God is to be known, it is necessary to identify ourselves with God. But this seems to be a paradox, for how can we identify ourselves with that God whom we do not know at all? And where is the question of knowing Him when we become one with Him? Certainly a paradox appears in this statement. But to understand this paradox is to understand the secret of spiritual practices. An artist was painting the sunset scene. I asked him, "What is it that you do at the outset?" He replied, "At the outset I become one with the scene that has to be painted." I said, "How is it possible? For example, how is it possible to become one with the sunset?" He said, "The moment an individual forgets himself he becomes one with all." Ah! what he had said was so revealing, so true! The Supreme Soul means all that which exists. Of course, the entirety of existence is God. And in becoming one with it, what other obstruction is there than my "I"? He is only there where "I" is not present. But how can we know that which we have not lived? The Supreme Soul can be known only from within, not from without. And for this, it is essential to identify oneself with it. When we look at this from without, it is the world that is seen but which is no other than the Supreme Soul. But when we see the world from within, that which appears is the Supreme Soul. The vision of truth from without is the world; that from within is the lord.

221. For the creation of beauty it becomes necessary to be one with beauty, because only then can beauty be known. We will call that artist mad who says, "I do not know beauty but I create beauty." But does this not apply to good conduct? How can Truth be practised without knowing Truth, without being one with Truth? In our normal, routine activities we talk about that which is known, of which we are conscious, don't we? If without knowing beauty, the artist dreams of painting the beautiful he is considered mad. That person is equally mad who without knowing it, tries to employ Truth in the practical affairs of life. Creation of beauty is the outcome of the experience of beauty. Truthful life is the outcome of the experience of Truth. Truthful life is not the staircase to the experience of Truth. Truthful life is the manifestation of the experience of Truth. The professed truthful life practised without realizing Truth is only the life of untruth, or, rather more fatal than untruth because it creates a false suggestion and fantasy of Truth.

222. Does God exist? A question like this is not proper, for what after all is the meaning of the word God? It means 'Entirety'. The entire existence is pervaded by God, is God. God is not a separate entity, individual or power. What exists is God. "God exists" -- this is not the proper way of putting it. Existence itself is God. In "God exists" there is tautology, circumlocution. Questioning the existence of God is questioning the existence of existence itself. All other things have their apparent existence but not so God, because He is existence Himself. All the rest possess power but not so God because He is power Himself. Moreover, how can the "full one" be known like other things? He cannot be 'knowable' to me, because I too am in Him and identical with Him. Yet, it is possible to be one with Him, to sink into Him. In fact, we are one with Him, drowned in Him. This can be known after losing the, "I". Knowing this is knowing Him. That is why I say love itself is knowing Him. He can be known only in love because the ego disappears in love. It is not found where the self exists. There is the parable of the salt that went to visit the sea. It saw the sea and knew it but it did not return because in knowing it, it became one with it. How would it know the sea except by becoming the sea? Man too has no means of knowing God except by becoming God.

223. What is the real proof of the existence of God? In regard to God the language of proofs is inapplicable. Thoughts, arguments and proofs do not extend to God. In thought, in argument, the ego is predominant and not God, who resides where there is no "I"-sense, no pride, no ego. What Kabir has said is true: "The street leading to Him is so narrow that two cannot pass through it at once. The name of that street is Love". Love is a state in which I am but my "I" is not. Only in such a state all obstructions from the consciousness is removed and His vision becomes possible. That vision itself is the proof. What other evidence of love than being in it can there be? There is no other evidence of God except being in God. But other proofs have also been advanced, and may be advanced, in future as well; because they who are unable to be in love deliberate on love and those who have no eyes deliberate on light. Deliberation and discussion with regard to God are resorted to only where there are no eyes to see and where there is no heart to experience. It matters little whether the discussion is for or against the problem. The pros and cons do not bring in any material difference. The theist and the atheist are but the two sides of the same coin. Both are bereft of eyes. And this want of eyes turns out to be a subject of controversy in regard to light. For the blind the acceptance or non-acceptance of light has no meaning at all. For him only the realization of his blindness has some significance, for only through that understanding does a search for the eyes start. Light has not to be searched for. It is the eyes that have to be searched for. And where the eyes are, the light too is. If there are no eyes, what proof of light will convince the blind? If there are no spiritual eyes, there can be no proof of God as well. Hence do not ask for the proofs of light. Know that you have no eyes. Similarly do not ask for proofs of God. Know that 'whatever exists' is unknown and you are ignorant. The light is unknown but the blindness of one's own self is known. God is unknown but the ignorance of one's self is known. Now, what can be gained by thinking about the unknown? Any thought or deliberation cannot be carried beyond the limits of the known. It proceeds only on the track of the known. The unknown cannot be known through it. The unknown comes only when the known removes itself and gives way to it. The advent of the unknown is in the rejection and removal of the known. It is only when we bid good-bye to the known that

the guest, the unknown, comes to the threshold of consciousness. He appears when discussions and analyses end. To remain busy in thought and discussion betokens our state of unconsciousness. Hence where discussion and deliberation are wholly absent while our consciousness is alert, one obtains those eyes which catch a glimpse of light called God. Hence I would call the ardent yearning for Truth the treatment of the blindness of the self but not a deliberation about light. Religion cures the blindness of the Self. What is the most irrefutable evidence of light? Eyes. What is the most irrefutable evidence of the existence of God? Eyes. What I myself see after gaining the eyes is that only God exists, nothing else. What I used to know in blindness was that while God did not exist, everything else did.

224. Truth is one. Hence splitting existence into two is the most deep-rooted of all blind beliefs. What exists is solitary and without a second. Nature -- God, body -- soul, insentient -- sentient -- such differentiation has no place in existence. Existence is but one, not manifold. Its manifestations are many. But in this diversity too, it is one. Among the different pieces it is the unsplit whole. But discussion and deliberation give rise to differentiation, for discussion views the upper surface and does not penetrate to the depths. Discussion views from the outside and does not enter within. From discussion the author of discussion emanates. This author knows himself distinct from the rest. This feeling of separateness and difference prevents him from entering into existence, because for entry, non-separateness is essential; for deep penetration non-difference is essential. He cannot attain non-separateness and non-difference without losing himself. He cannot lose himself without giving up intellection and thought, because he is no more than the shadow of his thoughts. He has no existence of his own. He is only an assemblage of thoughts. Hence, far from losing himself, he wishes to save himself. This he can do only by diving into further thoughts and discussions. Thus by deliberating on Truth he is farther removed from it. Truth is near, but only in being free from thoughts. But in intellection, the mind gets away from Truth. Discussion and deliberation separate Truth from the Self. In that perception, devoid of thought there is neither soul nor body, neither God, nor nature. But there is something which cannot be assigned a name. I call it the Supreme Soul. That . unknown, nameless, unsplit entity is Truth. When deliberated upon, it appears in pieces. But when freed of thoughts, it manifests itself in its unsplit form. That is its original real form. Deliberation breaks it, for deliberation is a process of analysis, and analysis cannot see anything before breaking it into pieces. The synthetic process looks at it as it is. It is but a mirror, and "what exists" is reflected in it exactly as it is. In the mirror of synthetic consciousness there is not even a line of duality. That unknown entity of life is body, soul, nature and God. All these are the notes of that single melody. All is life. There is nothing dead or insentient. All is nectar and life, far removed from death. Waves come rolling and surging in life's ocean and eventually merge therein. They are there both when they rise as well as when they disappear. They exist in both these conditions because the ocean exists. Individuals perish because they do not really exist. Theistic beliefs perish because they have no real existence. That which has no real existence perishes. What exists, exists always. But this is not my tenet. This is not my thought. This is how I look at things. Anybody who remains neutral in regard to opinions, thoughts and parties and keeps silent and calm, void and alert will have the same attitude. If we view the world with deliberation it would appear to be dual. But if we view it

synthetically, it would be non-dual. Consciousness devoid of thought is trance which is the gateway to Truth. Friends, shall I invite you all to experience this blessed trance-state in which there is no duality, no sense of time, and no self-consciousness?