

*Notes on
Spiritual Discourses
of Shri Ātmānanda*

*Notes on
Spiritual Discourses
of Shri Ātmānanda*

TAKEN BY NITYA TRĪPTA

Volume 1 of 3

Notes 1 to 472

NON-DUALITY PRESS
& STILLNESS SPEAKS

2nd edition published December 2009 by NON-DUALITY PRESS
& STILLNESS SPEAKS

Cover design © Non-Duality Press 2009
All rights reserved

Non-Duality Press | PO Box 2228 | Salisbury | SP2 2GZ
United Kingdom

www.non-dualitypress.com
www.stillnessspeaks.com



ISBN: 978-0-9563091-2-9

CONTENTS
(of all 3 volumes)

Volume 1

Changes in the second edition	vii
Transliteration scheme	viii
Preface	ix
Foreword	xi
My indebtedness	xiii
Introduction	xiv
Why such open talk?	xviii
On the life sketch of the Sage, Shrī Ātmānanda	xix
On devotion to a living Guru	xx
<i>Notes on discourses</i> (1 to 472)	1-234

Volume 2

<i>Notes on discourses</i> (473 to 1121)	1-251
--	-------

Volume 3

<i>Notes on discourses</i> (1122 to 1451)	1-160
Some spiritual statements of Shrī Ātmānanda	161
Life sketch of Shrī Kṛiṣhṇa Mēnōn (Shrī Ātmānanda)	203
Glossary	241
Index (for all 3 volumes)	253

Changes in the second edition

In this second edition of *Notes on Spiritual Discourses of Shri Ātmānanda*, there has been some minor editing (particularly of punctuation), to make the text more readable.

The notes are now numbered in a continuous sequence throughout the book, instead of the year by year numbering in the first edition.

The original 'subject war grouping' before the main body of notes has been replaced by an index at the end. The reader should note, however, that the index refers to note numbers, not page numbers.

Some added notes, explanations and translations are given in square brackets. Wherever square brackets occur, the contents are added by the second edition editor.

Editor of second edition, August 2009

Transliteration scheme

For ordinary readers, a simplified transliteration has been used for Sanskrit and Malayalam names and even for the titles of cited texts. But, for detailed quotations, a more exact transliteration has been used, for the sake of textual accuracy.

For Sanskrit, the exact transliteration is the standard one, using the usual diacritical marks, except that ‘e’ is written as ‘ē’ and ‘o’ as ‘ō’. This slight modification is needed to have a common transliteration scheme which applies to both Sanskrit and Malayalam.

For the simplified transliteration of Sanskrit characters, there are the following departures from standard academic practice: ‘ṛ’ is written as ‘ri’, ‘ṛ’ as ‘rī’, ‘l’ as ‘li’, ‘l’ as ‘lī’, ‘ñ’ as ‘n’ or ‘ng’, ‘ñ’ as ‘n’ or ‘ny’, ‘ś’ as ‘sh’, ‘ṣ’ as ‘sh’.

For Malayalam characters that don’t occur in Sanskrit, the following transliterations are used:

‘ഉ’ is written as ‘i’. Thus, ‘ഉള്ളിൽ’ is written as ‘ullil’.

‘എ’ is written as ‘ē’. Thus, ‘എപ്പോഴും’ is written as ‘eppōrum’.

‘ഓ’ is written as ‘ā’. Thus, ‘അറിവ്’ is written as ‘arivū’.

‘ഓ’ is written as ‘ā’. Thus, ‘പാറ്റി’ is written as ‘pāṭī’.

I apologize to Malayalam speakers for whom some of these usages will be unfamiliar. But I think that they are needed for the sake of those who do not know Malayalam.

For the ordinary reader, this scheme of transliteration is meant to indicate an approximate pronunciation, even if the diacritical marks are ignored. However, it may help to note that unmarked ‘c’, ‘t’ and ‘d’ are soft. In particular, ‘c’ is pronounced like ‘ch’ in ‘chat’; and ‘t’ and ‘d’ are pronounced as in the Italian ‘pasta’ and ‘dolce’. By contrast, ‘ṭ’ and ‘ṭ’ are pronounced more like the hard ‘t’ in ‘table’, and ‘ḍ’ like the hard ‘d’ in ‘donkey’. Where ‘h’ occurs after a preceding consonant, it does not indicate a softening of the consonant (as it may in English). Instead, it indicates an aspirated sound that occurs immediately after the consonant.

Second edition editor

Preface

Though I have been closely attached to Shri Ātmānanda Guru ever since 1927 (when I was accepted as his disciple and initiated), it was only in November 1950 that I made bold one day – at the instance of a distinguished friend of mine – to make an attempt to take some notes on that day’s talk, which had been particularly compelling. The friend left the same night. I wrote down the notes the next day and most hesitatingly submitted them at Gurunāthan’s feet, to see if they could be sent to the friend.

He gladly ordered me to read them and I obeyed rather nervously. He listened to them patiently, and suggested some small deletions to avoid controversy. At the end, he asked me with a luminous smile on his face: ‘How did you do this?’ I humbly replied, ‘I do not know’, and told him the circumstances. He laughed, and said: ‘I am pleased with them. You may send them to her and also continue the practice.’

I realized immediately how I was a simple tool at the merciful hands of the Absolute, and prostrated at his feet. He blessed me with both hands, and I stood up in tears. Thus encouraged and enriched, I continued the practice till the middle of April 1959.

That was how these notes came to be. Subsequently, they were twice read out to Gurunāthan [Shri Ātmānanda] himself, and finally approved by him – as true to his exposition, both in idea and in rendering.

Though intended originally for the benefit of the disciples alone, who already had received directly from him the fundamentals of his exposition, they are now printed and published for the benefit of the general public as well. They have been found to be helpful to all those who have acquired at least a modest acquaintance with his method of direct approach to the ultimate Truth.

A preliminary knowledge of his book *Ātmānandōpaniṣhad* – in two parts, separately called *Ātma-darshan* and *Ātma-nirvṛiti* – is almost indispensable for understanding these notes, not only for those who have had no direct contact with Shri Ātmānanda Guru, but also for those who are already his disciples.

A word too has to be said about the English language used here. Born in a different climate and designed to describe experiences

somewhat different from those obtaining in spiritual India, the English language (now almost an international language) has perforce to undergo certain local modifications of idiom and punctuation. Sometimes, a bold departure from the accepted usage of a word or a phrase could alone yield the right meaning of Vēdānta. Such departures are inevitable, and they give force to the ideas and enrich the language.

He was insisting upon me ever since 1956 to print and publish these notes. It required a lot of time to compile and edit them. I was proudly privileged to utilize all my available time for direct services to his person. I was reluctant to divert any part of my time to other work which could well afford to wait. Therefore I could not take up this work of publication till he passed away. If any mistakes of expression or of any other kind have slipped into these notes without his knowledge, I am solely responsible. All the rest belongs to my Guru, the Truth.*

Nitya Tripta

*A word of caution in this context has become necessary. There are other persons and sannyāsins of different orders known by the identical name Ātmānanda. Let not the views or writings of any of them be mistaken for those of Shri Ātmānanda of Trivandrum.

Foreword

A NOTE TO THE READERS

The subject matter of this book being notes of discourses, certain conversational mannerisms, peculiar usages, repetitions etc. – though not strictly literary – have necessarily been retained. Their force, freshness and naturalness appeal particularly to those who have listened to the discourses direct.

I had to fight against odds in this maiden enterprise of mine in the field of publication, and I am conscious of the innumerable imperfections and oversights that have crept into these pages. Therefore, as an immediate remedy, I have added just a modest errata at the close of every year, for such mistakes alone that affect the sense directly. Minor imperfections can be rectified only in the next impression.

A subject war grouping and tabulation of the titles by numbers added after the contents would enable the reader to have an exhaustive idea of any particular topic whenever necessary. [In this second edition, the subject war grouping is replaced by an index, at the end of the volume.]

A glossary is added towards the end of the volume, in alphabetic order, giving simple Advaitic explanations of the important technical and philosophical terms and expressions occurring in the course of the book.

A list of about five hundred of Shrī Ātmānanda's spiritual statements (collected from these talks and from elsewhere, and added towards the end of the volume) will be particularly useful to those who had any direct contact with him, and will feed the spiritual inquisitiveness of many a thinking person.

A list of the original Sanskrit quotations referred to in the course of the talks is added in Sanskrit script at the end of the volume and the particular number is given for reference at the places where it is mentioned. [In this second edition, the list of quotations is omitted. Instead, available references are given where the quotations occur.]

An astrological chart of the planetary position at the moment of his birth is attached at the beginning of the life sketch. I believe the few readers who have an astrological insight will have much to read

Introduction

It will be helpful to define beforehand the subject, the approach, the field of enquiry and the stand taken in these notes. The subject discussed is the ultimate Truth or Peace. The approach is the direct perception method of Advaita (the strict Vicāra-mārga). The field of enquiry is the totality of human experience, comprised of the experiences of the three states and the awareness still beyond. The stand taken is strictly in the absolute Truth, and reference made only to the being inside. All this is discussed in detail in the ensuing pages. The readers also would do well to adopt the same standard and perspective, at least hypothetically, for the time being. The large majority of friends who cannot cease to think in relative terms, even for a short while, are earnestly requested not to dabble with spiritual pursuits. That will spoil even their enjoyment in the phenomenal world.

Great advancement has been made in all human walks of life. Methods of transport in space have progressed from walking to flying. The achievements of science and technology have almost annihilated space. Vēdānta, which is a deep and relentless enquiry into the nature of Truth, has also not lagged behind in improving its methods. Thus, what real aspirants experienced after a whole life's intense effort in the vēdic age, is made attainable in the present age in a comparatively short period of time by a more direct application of the higher reason in man. Such was the method adopted by Shrī Ātmānanda.

He had a two-fold mission in life. The first part of it – in his own words – was to expound the highest Truth, the ultimate Reality, in a manner and language understandable even to the kitchen maid. It is the belief of most men and pundits that a high proficiency in Sanskrit is the first prerequisite of knowing the Truth. They believe also that Truth can be expounded only in high-sounding and abstruse philosophical terms, technicalities and terminologies. The numerous vēdāntic shāstras of a cosmological type (of course with rare exceptions) have contributed much to the growth of this pernicious superstition.

Shrī Ātmānanda, who was not a Sanskrit scholar himself, has successfully dispelled this wrong notion, both by his writings and by his discourses. His two books, *Ātma-darshan* and *Ātma-nirvṛiti* – written originally in Malayalam verse and which expound the ultimate Truth from various standpoints – are limpidly clear and simple. Most of the verses are written in the briefest and the simplest rhythm. They are so natural that they read like poetic prose. The English rendering of the two books by the author himself, though not in verse form, is equally simple and clear. Abstruse Sanskrit terminology has been avoided. He expounded the ultimate Truth even to illiterate women and children in simple Malayalam language, and to great lawyers, scientists and philosophers from home and abroad in simple and elegant English.

Some of the disciples who came from distant continents did not possess even a working knowledge of the English language, and even then they were able to grasp the Truth quite well. Therefore it is evident that no language is the language of Truth. All language is the language of untruth alone. Language is made use of to reach the very brink of untruth, beyond which the Guru – representing the languageless Truth – stands revealed in all his glory. The Truth is also revealed as the real nature of the aspirant himself.

The second part of his mission was to re-establish the dignity of the householder and his birthright to strive and to be liberated, while still remaining a householder. Since the time of Shrī Shankara, the fold of sannyāsa began to be looked upon with particular respect and regard by the people. Inflated by this undeserved title for reverence, some of these sannyāsins began to assert and proclaim that liberation is the monopoly of sannyāsins alone and that the householder is not even eligible for it. In their wild fury they even forgot the undeniable fact that the founders of the spiritual heritage of India were most of them householders (Shrī Janaka, Shrī Vasiṣṭha, Shrī Vyāsa, Shrī Rāma, Shrī Kṛiṣṇa, and the authors of many of the Upaniṣhads). The aphorism ‘Tat tvam asi’, which is meditated upon by every sannyāsin, was first composed and expounded by the householder sage, Uddālaka, to his son and disciple, Shvētakētu. There is no data for any argument in favour of the sannyāsin’s stand; but their capacity for mischief cannot be gainsaid. Therefore a solitary yet glowing example in the course of several centuries often becomes

necessary to blot out such superstitions. Such was the life of Shri Ātmānanda, the Sage. He was an ideal householder, an ideal police officer (upright and fearless, who ruled his subordinates as well as the criminals under his charge by love and love alone) and an ideal Guru to his disciples in all the continents of the world.

He used to meet a general gathering of the disciples and visitors usually at 5.30 p.m. at his residence. After preliminary enquiries and introductions, he would call for questions, to 'set the ball rolling' as he would often say. Then somebody would ask a question – whether pertinent or not was immaterial. That would be enough for the day. He would immediately take up that question, analyse it exhaustively and answer it from different standpoints one after the other, never stopping half way but pursuing the problem relentlessly to its very foundation, the ultimate background.

He would never approach a problem from a perspective short of the ultimate Truth, and would always make the listening disciple contact his own real nature many times in the course of each talk. The visitor, besides, would experience an uncaused Peace and solace several times in the course of the talk, and this naturally increased his earnestness to know the Truth more intimately.

Shri Ātmānanda's approach to every problem was direct and logical. He did not quote texts to establish his position. After establishing his own position by using deep discrimination and direct reason alone, he would sometimes, for the mere pleasure of it, cite parallels from texts of undisputed authority by great Sages. He never discouraged or discredited any particular path or religion; so much so that he had disciples from all castes and creeds: Christians, Muslims, Jews, Parsis and Hindus – brahmin as well as non-brahmin. They all continued quite smoothly in their superficial allegiance to their old religion, society and customs, even after visualizing the Truth through Vēdānta.

Shri Ātmānanda held emphatically that the basic error in man was his wrong identification with body, senses and mind. When this was replaced by the right identification with Ātmā, the real 'I'-principle, everything would be found to be perfectly in order and no change or correction in any walk of life whatsoever would be called for.

He asserted that one's own perspective alone had to be set right. He always stressed the point that the answer to any question of an

objective nature was never complete until it was ultimately applied to the subject; and the question had to be disposed of in the light of the ultimate Reality – the Self.

The evening discourse was a formal one, when all his disciples and strangers who had obtained previous permission were welcome. But he used to talk on spiritual problems for several more hours every day to the few disciples around him, who always waited upon him – eager to render any personal service needed. He expounded the Truth more unreservedly and informally during these unprovoked talks.

Questions were asked from different levels by different persons, and answers were always given in tune with the level and standard of the questioner himself. Therefore answers to the same question at different times might often seem varied, even contradictory, but they ultimately converge upon the same centre. Thus even repetitions have been really enriching and also entertaining.

Nitya Tṛipta

Why such open talk?

Shrī Ātmānanda expounded the ultimate Truth in the most direct and uncompromising manner, and he gives his reasons here below for adopting this drastic method.

13th January 1951

A disciple asked: Why was secrecy so strictly observed in expounding the Truth in the old śāstras?

Gurunāthan: Evidently, for fear of jeopardizing established religion and society. Religion had no place except in duality and social life. It was the prime moving force of social life in ancient times. But the concept of religion could not stand the strict logic of v̄edāntic Truth.

The sages of old, who recognized the great need of religion in phenomenal life, expounded the ultimate Truth under a strict cover of secrecy, thus enabling religion to play its role in lower human society. But religion in the present day world has been dethroned in many ways, and ungodly cults have come into existence in large numbers.

Therefore it is high time now to throw off the veil of secrecy, and broadcast the whole Truth in the face of the world which has already advanced much, intellectually.

[This is the text of note 51, which may also be found in the main body of notes below.]

On the life sketch of the Sage, Shrī Ātmānanda

Its meaning, purpose and scope:

The life story of a Sage is a paradox. This is because life is only an appearance and therefore an untruth, while the Sage is the ultimate Truth itself – the impersonal. Shrī Kṛiṣhṇa Mēnōn (Shrī Ātmānanda) held that one should be known only for the principle one stands for. Therefore he would not agree to the writing of his life story, while he lived.

Nevertheless, modern practice obliges the author to write a brief life sketch of the person who shines through this book. A record of the phenomenal facts and aspects of his life is needed, in order to avoid wrong and exaggerated versions of his life gaining currency when genuine facts are no longer available. I make no attempt to point out anything extraordinary or miraculous in his life. My object is quite the contrary. Of course there was one thing quite extraordinary in him. He visualized the ultimate Truth and stood established in it. Therefore the so-called ‘life story’ of his, so far as he is concerned, is a misrepresentation of himself.

It is the transcendental essence, which the Sage is and knows he is, that makes him great in the spiritual realm. Therefore the so called ‘life story’ of a Sage cannot make anyone understand anything about the Sage. The Sage is impersonal. He has outgrown the shell of his own life, the shell called personality. The personality and the Sage are in two distinct and separate planes. Therefore it is quite futile to scan the life story of a Sage to measure his real worth.

This might seem quite an unusual warning. His life-sketch has very little direct bearing upon the body and theme of this book. Therefore I have incorporated at the end of this book [just before the glossary and index] a short life sketch of Shrī Kṛiṣhṇa Mēnōn, the ‘man’.

Nitya Tripta

On devotion to a living Guru

ācāryavān puruṣō vēda

Chāndogya Upaniṣhad, 6.14.2

This means: ‘He who is blessed with a Kāraṇa-guru alone knows the Truth.’

The following Malayalam verse is the instruction of Shrī Ātmānanda to the few earnest aspirants of Truth, as to how and when they should direct and express their sense of deep devotion.

bōdham yātorupādhimūlam udayam ceytō, bhajikkēṇṭatum
pūjikkēṇṭatum uḷḷaliññatineyām śrīdēśikōpādhiyāỹ,
ellām satguruvām upādhi maṛayunnērattatallāte
kaṇṭānyōpādhiyil aividham bhramam udiccīḍāt irunnīṭaṇam .

Shrī Ātmānanda, Ātmārāmam, 1.34

‘That particular person through whom one had the proud privilege of being enlightened, that is the *only* form which one may adore and do pūja to, to one’s heart’s content, as the person of one’s Guru. It is true that all is the Sat-guru, but *only* when the name and form disappear and not otherwise. Therefore, the true aspirant should beware of being deluded into any similar devotional advances towards any other form, be it of God or of man.’

This is confirmed by Shrī Ātmānanda’s letter on the subject, as translated in volume 3, on pages 215-6.

And it is further confirmed by Shrī Shankara’s bold proclamation, often quoted in this volume.

jīvō nā ’ham dēśikō ’ktyā śivō ’ham ..

Shrī Shankara, Advaita-pancaratnam, 1.2

‘By the word of my Guru, I am not jīva (the personal life principle). But I am Peace-ultimate.’ (God being comprehended as ‘samaṣṭi-jīva’ – the aggregate of all jīvas – and as the highest concept of the human mind.)

Nitya Tripta

Notes on discourses

20th November 1950

1. HOW IS DEEP SLEEP A KEY TO THE ULTIMATE?

Deep mental activity generates heat, which keeps off deep sleep. Cold in its intensity wakes you up. Deep sleep brings on a sense of happiness and peace with it. This experience we get only in the absence of all mental activity. When we direct our mind to this happiness aspect of deep sleep, we feel a sensation of gentle coolness, which wards off all sense of negation in sleep. So we get to our real nature by relaxing our mind from all forms of activity, and at the same time not losing sight of the happiness and peace experienced in deep sleep.

This positive aspect saves us from the probable shroud of negation and slumber. We should not allow the mind to be active and at the same time we should see that it does not become inactive. In other words: *'Sleep knowingly.'*

Thus, deep sleep can be utilized directly for establishing oneself in the real centre.

2. HOW CAN REMEMBRANCE BE FORGETTING?

Every thought merges into Consciousness and remains not as thought, but as Consciousness, pure. So your searching in that Consciousness for the resurrection of any thought, merged therein, is in vain. It can only result in your first forgetting your real nature of pure Consciousness, and in the subsequent creation of an entirely new thought, as though experienced some time earlier.

3. WHERE, WHEN AND HOW DO I SEE ME?

1. I see Me where the 'where' is not.
2. I see Me when the 'when' is not.
3. I see Me when 'I see me not.'

Explanation:

1. I shall see Me only when I transcend the gross body idea, which is governed by space as well as by time.
2. I shall see Me only when I transcend the subtle body or the mind, which is governed by time alone.
3. I shall see Me only on leaving both the gross and the subtle bodies – when I stop my objective search and turn inward to find myself as one with that which I was searching for; in other words only when the subject-object relationship vanishes.

23rd November 1950

4. WHAT IS THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF PERCEPTION?

A Jnyānin perceives the Absolute, diversified as objects. Ignorant men, identifying themselves with the gross body, perceive gross objects. Others, standing as mind, perceive only subtle objects.

Jnyānins, standing as Consciousness, perceive only Consciousness.

5. WHAT IS THE CONTENT OF THE INTERVAL BETWEEN MENTATIONS?

Let us examine our own casual statements regarding our daily experiences. For example, we say: ‘He comes’, ‘He sits’, ‘He goes’, and so on. In these statements, ‘coming’, ‘sitting’ and ‘going’ are somehow extraneous to ‘him’. As such, they do not at all go into the make of ‘him’.

‘He’ alone stands unqualified through all time, continuing without a break. So it is this pure ‘he’ or ‘I’ (or Consciousness) which shines through and in between all thoughts, feelings, perceptions and states. During this interval [between mentations], one has no thought of the state in which one happens to be. So here, one is *Peace* itself; and that is the ‘I’, in its pure state.

Suppose you see a beautiful picture, painted on white paper. On closely examining the picture, you will be able to discover some parts of it where the original colour of the paper appears, unaffected by the shades of the picture. This proves to you the existence of the

paper behind the picture, as its background. On further examination, you will see that the picture is nothing but the paper.

So also, if you succeed in discovering yourself *between* two mentations, you easily come to the conclusion that you are *in* the mentations as well.

6. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF 'I'?

The same word, used in similar contexts, cannot carry different meanings with different persons. When I say 'I' meaning 'my body', another understands it in the same sense, meaning 'my body'. But when the other person uses the same word 'I', he means 'his body', which is entirely different from 'my body'.

Thus, in the case of everyone, the bodies meant are different; but the word used is the same 'I', always. So the 'I' must mean: *either* the individual bodies of all men – which is ludicrous – *or* it must evidently mean no body at all.

The latter being the only possible alternative, the 'I' must necessarily mean that changeless principle in which every body appears and disappears. This is the real meaning of 'I', even in our daily traffic with the world.

7. WHAT IS IT THAT APPEARS AS WORLD?

As soon as we wake up from deep sleep, the existence of a ready-made world – including our own bodies – confronts us. To examine it closely, we utilize our sense organs straightaway – one by one, relying on their superficial evidence without a thought.

The organ of sight asserts that the world is only form and nothing else; the organ of hearing that the world is only sound and nothing else; and so on. Each organ thus asserts the world as *its* sole and particular object. In effect, each sense organ contradicts the evidence of the other four organs, with equal force. This hopeless mess of contradictory evidence, and the stubborn denial by each of the sense organs of the others' evidence, form positive proof of the falsity of this world – as it appears.

But all the while, the existence of a positive something is experienced without a break, beyond the shadow of a doubt. This, on closer

analysis, is found to be that changeless, subjective 'I'-principle or Consciousness itself.

8. IS THERE AJNYĀNA [IGNORANCE] IN DEEP SLEEP?

No. The absence of any objective perception, thought or feeling – which is wrongly called 'nothingness' – is the svarūpa [true nature] of real, unconditioned happiness. Here, happiness alone is the positive experience in deep sleep, and the sense of nothingness is a relative inference when out of it.

Thus, there is in fact no ajnyāna in deep sleep. The ajnyāna of Truth is the jnyāna [knowledge] of objects, gross or subtle. To know any object means not to know the Truth. From the knowledge of an object, if the object part is discarded, what remains is pure knowledge alone, which is the essence and the background of all objects as well as of myself.

The jnyāna of any one object may also be said to be the ajnyāna of all other objects. In that sense, the jnyāna of Truth and Happiness in deep sleep can also be said to be the ajnyāna of all objects. Thus happiness alone is the experience in deep sleep.

9th December 1950

9. HOW IS DEEP SLEEP THE TOUCHSTONE OF ONE'S REAL NATURE?

The knowledge of one object implies the ignorance of all objects other than that particular object. The ignorance of all objects in deep sleep means really the positive knowledge of the self, which shines as happiness there. Consequently, the ignorance of the ordinary man in deep sleep is really the knowledge of his own self, which is happiness and Consciousness.

Our deep sleep experience, according to the lower shāstras, is ignorance coupled with the sense of subjective happiness. We have already proved that the so called ignorance of the world in deep sleep is nothing but the knowledge of the self, which is happiness itself. Thus the experience in deep sleep, if properly understood, is only *one*; and that is our own self, which is *Happiness* and *Peace*. The rest of the statement is but a commentary upon this.

There is only *one* there; and hence the ignorance of the many is no experience at all.

10. 'MIND AS MIND KNOWS NO PEACE, AND MIND AT PEACE IS NO MIND AT ALL.'

The most universal of all desires in man is unequivocally expressed in the spontaneous statement made by all alike: 'I want peace of mind'. It means that the activity of the mind is never our ultimate goal. Examining this statement closely and impartially, we find that *Peace* is the real goal of man's desire. But in his utter inability to extricate himself from the clutches of the mind, he links the mind also to that desire for absolute Peace, and claims himself to be the enjoyer. But alas, when the mind, freed from all its activities, comes into contact with the Peace it desired, it finds itself merged and lost in that peace, thus returning to its real nature.

Therefore, it is one's own real nature that everybody seeks, knowingly or unknowingly.

11. HOW TO ESTABLISH ADVAITA IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF AN OBJECT?

When I say 'I know an object', the knower and the object known both disappear; and the knowledge alone remains. Thus separated from the knower and the known, the knowledge can no longer be called limited. It is pure. It is absolute. So, during every perception, I remain in my real centre, as pure Consciousness.

It has already been proved that just before and after every perception, I am in my own real nature. The knower, knowledge and the known are themselves three distinct and separate perceptions, each appearing in a particular sequence corresponding to that in the expression 'I know it.'

Thus, it stands established that nobody is ever shaken from his own centre of consciousness and peace.

12. HOW CAN THE PHENOMENAL LEAD ONE TO THE ABSOLUTE?

Conceding that God created this universe, you have to admit that God existed even before creation. Man, with his created sense organs and mind, is capable of visualizing only the objects of creation, gross or subtle. So, in order to visualize God as he existed all alone, even before creation, we have to utilize some faculty which is present in us all and which transcends creation. This can be nothing other than the changeless 'I'-principle or Consciousness.

Reaching that, one is divested of all sense of duality. Even the conception of God does not arise there; and everything appears – if it ever does – as Consciousness alone. It follows therefore that the God that was there before creation was nothing other than the real 'I'-principle.

24th December 1950

13. HOW AM I THE WITNESS?

Every perception, thought or feeling is known by you. You are the knower of the world through the sense organs; of the sense organs through the generic mind; and of the mind – with its activity or passivity – by your self alone.

In all these different activities, you stand out as the one knower. Actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings all come and go. But knowingness does not part with you, even for a moment. You are therefore always the knower. How then can you ever be the doer or the enjoyer?

After understanding the 'I'-principle as pure Consciousness and happiness, always use the word 'I' or 'knower' to denote the goal of your retreat. The 'I' always brings subjectivity with it. It is this ultimate, subjective principle 'I' – divested of even that subjectivity – that is the goal.

Consciousness and happiness may possibly have a taint of objectivity in their conception, since they always express themselves in the realm of the mind. When one is deeply convinced that one's self is consciousness and happiness, one finds it as the nameless.

Whereupon, even this namelessness seems a limitation. Giving up that as well, one remains as the 'I'-principle, the 'Absolute'.

When you try to visualize the Absolute in you, nothing can possibly disturb you, because every thought or perception points to yourself and only helps you to stand established as the Absolute.

To become a Jnyānin [Sage] means to become aware of *what you are already*. In this connection, it has to be proved that 'knowing' is not a function. In all your life, you feel you have not changed; and of all your manifold activities, from your birth onwards, the only activity that has never changed is 'knowing'. So both these must necessarily be one and the same; and therefore knowingness is your real nature.

Thus, knowing is never an activity in the worldly sense, since this knowing has neither a beginning nor an end. And because it is never separated from you, it is your *svarūpa* (real nature) – just as 'shining' is the *svarūpa* of the sun and not its function. Understanding it in this way, and realizing it as one's *svarūpa*, brings about liberation from all bondage.

When you reach consciousness or happiness, you lose all sense of objectivity or duality and stand identified with the ultimate, subjective 'I'-principle, or the Absolute. Then the subjectivity also vanishes. When the word '*pure*' is added on to consciousness, happiness or 'I', even the least taint of relativity is removed. There, all opposites are reconciled, all paradoxes stand self-explained; and everything, or nothing, can be said about it.

14. HOW TO BE ALIVE AND AT HOME ALWAYS?

While thus talking of the Absolute at a high level, Gurunāthan noticed a disciple withdrawing himself into *samādhi* and asked him suddenly how many months his wife had advanced in her pregnancy. It took the disciple a few minutes to come down even to understand the question. The object of this question was just to show that one should be equally alive in *samādhi* as well as in worldly activity. To be thus 'at home' always, shows one's stand in the natural state.

15. IS ANY EFFORT NEEDED AFTER REALIZATION?

Yes. You realize the moment you hear the Truth direct from the Guru. All subsequent effort is only to remove every obstacle that might come in the way of establishing oneself in the Truth.

25th December 1950

16. WHAT IS THE 'THING IN ITSELF'?

The fundamental worldly experience of man is that something which was unknown subsequently becomes known. This statement clearly shows that the 'thing in itself' was the background of both the unknown and the known, and as such could not exactly be either the one or the other. Looking at the background closely, you find that some sort of a limitation was put upon the 'thing in itself' by the mind, to which it therefore appeared as the 'known' or the 'unknown'. Take away that mental limitation from the experience, and immediately it becomes the Reality itself; because it goes beyond the known and the unknown.

That which was called unknown is in the known as well, and is still unknown. It is the Reality itself. Take for example the 'I' in I think and I feel. The 'I'-principle can never be the thinking or the feeling principle, but is beyond both, and is present equally in the thinking as well as in the feeling.

Examining this from another angle, the 'unknown' means that which is not grasped by the sense organs or the mind. That which is not comprehended by these two, but which transcends them both, cannot be anything but the Reality. Therefore, what is called the 'unknown' is the Reality. And now coming to the 'known', when correctly examined, a sense object merges into Consciousness. Therefore, what is known is also nothing but Consciousness.

When an ordinary man – who believes himself to be the body – sees an object, he sees and emphasizes the object part of it and ignores completely the most important factor – consciousness. But when a Jnyānin sees the same object, he sees it not as object but as consciousness itself. He emphasizes only the consciousness part of it, and feels that it is the Self. Thus to him, every perception doubly reaffirms his knowledge that he is Consciousness. It is experience of

the Truth itself, repeated as often as there are thoughts or perceptions.

17. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE WORLDLY ACTIVITY OF A SAGE?

A subjective transformation alone is needed for ‘realization’. When one who has realized the Truth looks at the world, conceding the existence of the world, he finds that every object asserts one’s own self or consciousness, without which the object could never appear.

Perceptions are liable to mistakes regarding the object perceived; for example the stump of a tree is mistaken for a man. But regarding yourself, the ‘I’, there can never be any mistaking whatsoever.

18. THE ENJOYMENT OF PLEASURE BY AN ORDINARY MAN AND THE SAGE?

To the ordinary man, pleasure is an end in itself and he attributes it all to objects. But to the Sage, who apparently enjoys the same pleasure, it is all the expression of the happiness aspect of the Absolute or the Self, *purely uncaused*.

During the *sādhana* period of a disciple, experiences of pleasure sometimes occur, as a result of particular states of mind attained through discipline and practice. Because of their great similarity to the experiences of intense pleasure he may have had in worldly life, the disciple is likely to desire a repetition of these, as an end in itself. This worldly interpretation of spiritual experiences is likely to entangle him there, impeding his spiritual progress.

But, under the guidance of a *Kāraṇa-guru*, the disciple understands such experiences to be expressions of the Absolute in him; and he is enabled to proceed further in order to reach ‘what is expressed’, regardless of the pleasure experienced on the way.

To the Sage, every experience of happiness is only an expression – in the realm of the mind – of the happiness aspect of the absolute ‘Self’; and as such he never attributes it to external objects. To the Sage, all the activities of the mind and body are but expressions of the Absolute, and as such *purposeless* in themselves.

But the worldly man takes to activities with a definite purpose, as a means of enjoyment.

26th December 1950

19. WHAT CONSTITUTES A SAGE? AND HOW DOES HE CONDUCT HIMSELF?

Mere realization, as is usually understood, does not make one a Sage in the full sense of the term.

A Sage should be a yōgin to a yōgin, a bhakta to a bhakta, and a householder in every detail to his own family and to the other householders. In all his relations – with society, state etc. – he behaves exactly as any ordinary citizen. But, in reality, he is always a Jnyānin [knower] and is none of these.

You cannot express the Truth by word of mouth, by thought, or by feeling. But the Truth expresses itself, in all these varied activities.

20. HOW ARE OBJECTS RELATED TO ME?

All this world is my object, and I am the changeless subject. Each one of my objects serves only to point to me and to prove me. I need only make my stand there firmer and establish myself at the real centre, as the ultimate subject 'I'.

27th December 1950

21. HOW TO RETREAT INTO THE REAL 'I'-PRINCIPLE?

What do you mean when you say 'I'? It does not at all mean the body, senses or mind. It is pure experience itself – in other words, the end of all knowledge or feeling.

First of all, see that the body, senses and mind are your objects and that you are always the changeless subject, distinct and separate from the objects. The objects are present only when they are perceived. But I exist, always changeless, whether perceptions occur or not, extending through and beyond all states. Thus you see that you are never the body, senses or mind. Make this thought as deep and intense as possible, until you are doubly sure that the wrong identification will never recur.

Next, examine if there is anything else that does not part with the 'I'-principle, even for a moment. *Yes*. There is Consciousness. It never parts with the 'I'-principle, and can never be an object either. So both must mean one and the same thing. Or, in other words, 'I' is Consciousness itself. Similarly, wherever there is the 'I'-principle left alone, there is also the idea of deep peace or happiness, existing along with it.

It is universally admitted that one loves only that which gives one happiness, or that a thing is loved only for its happiness value. Evidently, happiness itself is loved more than that which is supposed to give happiness. It is also admitted that one loves one's self more than anything else. So it is clear that you must be one with happiness or that you are happiness itself. All your activities are only attempts to experience that happiness or self in every experience.

The ordinary man fixes a certain standard for all his worldly activities and tries to attain it to his satisfaction. Thereby, he is only trying to experience the self in the form of happiness, as a result of the satisfaction obtained on reaching the standard already accepted by him.

For every perception, thought or feeling, you require the services of an instrument suited to each activity. But to love your own self, you require no instrument at all. Since you experience happiness by retreating into that 'I'-principle, that 'I' must be either an object to give you happiness, which is impossible; or it must be happiness itself. So the 'I'-principle, Peace and Consciousness are all one and the same. It is in Peace that thoughts and feelings rise and set. This peace is very clearly expressed in deep sleep, when the mind is not there and you are one with Consciousness and Peace.

Pure consciousness and deep peace are your real nature. Having understood this in the right manner, you can well give up the use of the words 'Consciousness' and 'Happiness' and invariably use 'I' to denote the Reality.

Don't be satisfied with only reducing objects into Consciousness. Don't stop there. Reduce them further into the 'I'-principle. So also, reduce all feelings into pure Happiness and then reduce them into the 'I'-principle. When you are sure that you will not return to identification with the body any longer, you can very well leave off the

intermediaries of Consciousness and Happiness, and directly take the thought 'I, I, I', subjectively.

Diversity is only in objects. Consciousness, which perceives them all, is one and the same.

22. WHAT IS MY REAL GOAL? THE 'I'-PRINCIPLE.

The word 'I' has the advantage of taking you direct to the core of your self. But you must be doubly sure that you will no longer return to identification with the body.

By reducing objects into Consciousness or happiness, you come only to the brink of experience. Reduce them further into the 'I'-principle; and then 'it', the object, and 'you', the subject, both merge into experience itself. Thus, when you find that what you see is only yourself, the 'seeing' and 'objects' become mere empty words.

When you say the object cannot be the subject, you should take your stand not in any of the lower planes, but in the ultimate subject 'I' itself.

In making the gross world mental, the advaitin is an idealist. But he does not stop there. He goes further, examining the 'idea' also and proves it to be nothing but Consciousness. Thus he goes beyond even the idealist's stand.

The realist holds that matter is real and mind is unreal, but the idealist says that mind is real and matter is unreal. Of the two, the idealist's position is better; for when the mind is taken away from the world, the world is not. Therefore, it can easily be seen that the world is a thought form. It is difficult to prove the truth of the realist's stand; for dead matter cannot decide anything.

The advaitin goes even further. Though he takes up the stand of the idealist when examining the world, he goes beyond the idealist's position and proves that the world and the mind, as such, are nothing but appearances and the Reality is Consciousness.

Perception proves only the existence of knowledge and not the existence of the object. Thus the gross object is proved to be non-existent. Therefore, it is meaningless to explain subtle perceptions as a reflection of gross perceptions. Thus all perceptions are reduced to the ultimate 'I'-principle, through knowledge.

When a Jnyānin takes to activities of life, he ‘comes out’ with body, sense organs or mind whenever he needs them; and he acts, to all appearances, like an ordinary man, but knowing full well, all the while, that he is the Reality itself. This is not said from the level of the Absolute.

23. WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘NATURAL STATE’?

Without a thought or a feeling, the ordinary man knows himself to be the body and claims all its activities. In the same way, a Jnyānin, without a thought or a feeling, knows that he is the Reality – expressing itself in all perceptions, thoughts and feelings, without a change.

What you call *experience* is the real ‘I’-principle, shining in its own glory, beyond the realm of the mind. The use of the word ‘realization’ as an action is wrong, since it brings with it a sense of limitation by time.

You can never become conscious of an object unless you are ‘self-conscious’, beyond the realm of the mind. So even when you say you are conscious of an object, you mean you are conscious of the knowledge of the object, further reduced into knowledge alone, and again reduced into the subjective ‘I’-principle or Experience itself.

This means that you are always in your real centre.

28th December 1950

24. WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘SVABHĀVA’?

‘Svabhāva’ means one’s own real nature. All activities, like perceiving, doing etc., are ‘asvabhāva’ – the opposite of one’s real nature.

Svabhāva is knowledge without object, or happiness without object. For you are knowledge itself, or happiness itself, and cannot know anything else.

25. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SAY ‘I KNOW’ A THING?

You actually transform the thing into knowledge. At the moment of knowing, you realize yourself in fact. Knowing a thing means you absorb it into you.

Similarly, loving a thing also means you absorb it into yourself. Hence, knowing and loving actually destroy all illusion, all separateness.

26. WHAT IS THE END OF AN IGNORANT MAN’S ACTIVITY OF KNOWING?

The end of all knowing is pure knowing itself, or ‘vēdānta’ (the end of knowledge), or the ‘I’-principle. Knowing proves only knowledge, and not the object as is ordinarily understood.

In every perception, you are there as that and that alone. All the mischief of wrong identification is done only after the event.

27. I CANNOT BE LIBERATED BY KNOWING MY EXISTENCE ASPECT ALONE. WHY?

Both the *cit* [consciousness] and *ānanda* [happiness] aspects have also to be known. You must also know that all these three are one and the same, and that it is your real self. Thus transcending the three aspects, you reach the Reality beyond.

According to Vēdānta, the Reality can be expressed only by negative imports; because it is nameless and attributeless. But it expresses itself in all names and forms.

29th December 1950

28. HOW TO RECONCILE THE SPIRITUAL AND WORLDLY ASPECTS OF ONE’S LIFE?

The world is examined and proved to be non-existent, through your own experiences:

1. By comparing impartially the dream and waking state experiences, and finding them to be exactly similar.

2. By proving that the objective world has no existence, independently of the subject 'I' or Consciousness.

You understand this fact, and accept it completely and unreservedly. Think about it more intensely, until it descends into your heart, becoming experience itself. Then you become what you mean by 'jīvan-mukta', and all your problems automatically cease.

To an ordinary man, life constitutes actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings – one of these alone being experienced at any given time. In other words, you stand detached from all activities, excepting the one in which you seem engaged at the given time.

To this list of four categories [actions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings], the spiritual man adds just one more, which indeed is the most important one: 'Consciousness'. This last one is doubly important; because, over and above its importance as a separate entity, it shines in and through the four categories already mentioned. You are simply asked to direct to the consciousness aspect the attention legitimately due to it. This is all.

When you are engaged in thought, you are not engaged in action, perception or feeling. When engaged in action, you are not engaged in thought, feeling or perception. So also, when you are engaged in knowing, you cannot be engaged in any other kind of activity.

The presence and recognition of subjective Consciousness, your real centre, is the one thing needed to make your life possible and connected. Make it so, by knowing that knowing principle to be your real centre. You never go outside it, and you can never leave it, even if you will. This does not deny or negate your worldly life, as is ordinarily supposed, but makes it richer, firmer, truer and more successful.

To have deep peace and not to be disturbed from it, even for a moment, is the ardent desire of everyone. For this, you have necessarily to be at a centre which does not change. That is the real 'I'-principle or Consciousness. To *be* it and to establish oneself there is the end and aim of life. This alone makes real life possible.